

BE(COMING) THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD:  
SOCIAL JUSTICE TEACHER EDUCATION AS AFFECTIVE CRAFT

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## Abstract

This dissertation begins from the difficulty faced by the field of social justice teacher education (SJTE) in setting itself apart from other aspects of teacher education. SJTE's history of internal and external evidence pressures has distracted the field from reckoning with 'social justice' as a moving horizon and not a static outcome against which it can be found effective. If 'social justice' *cannot* be the outcome holding SJTE together and apart from other kinds of teacher education, how does SJTE work? To answer this question, I use Deleuzo-Guattarian and affect theories to position SJTE as an *assemblage*: an ever-becoming whole composed of the relations among its non-sovereign yet affecting/affected components.

In the first analytical chapter, I assemble what SJTE is, does and wants by analyzing 58 field-defining texts. Regardless of what SJTE may say about itself, the field is characterized by an affective capacity to inhabit irresolvable tensions; this capacity expresses assemblage becoming and, therefore, an incremental conception of social change. The second and third analytical chapters analyze the SJTE-assemblage at the level of everyday life. Through multi-sensory fieldwork at education conferences and experimental conversations with practitioners, I tracked moments of intensity bordering on rupture. These were frequently events unthinkable among 'equity experts' yet recalling familiar forms of student resistance. In the second chapter, I investigate what happens at these thresholds where SJTE threatens to come apart. In the third chapter, I assemble an emergent theory of resistance that challenges prevailing conceptions of SJTE practice 'gone wrong.'

My findings reveal the *implicit* ways in which SJTE reckons with 'social justice' as a moving horizon. Although SJTE tends toward political and conceptual *rigidity*, I identified its enacted and unspoken *flexibility* in how e.g., race or sexuality can emerge otherwise in everyday

life. This capacity of openness to the surprises of social difference or difference-to-come is a pivotal yet unnamed contribution of the field that is expressed in its *craft*. I conclude by envisioning how SJTE might *explicitly* attend to depth – the sovereign political will of teachers as agents of social change – *and* surface: what is affective, implicit and pre-personal.

## **Dedication**

To the many people who have talked to me about my study over the past few years, whether formally or no, and to all of the people caught up in the conference moments appearing throughout.

May my dissertation honour the intensive labour of social justice teacher education, and those who do this crucial and difficult work.

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If my dissertation is found to meaningfully bridge the theoretical and the political, it will be due in large part to the intellectual support of my committee members Drs. Aparna Mishra Tarc and Lisa Mazzei. Thank you for your faith that this project can be done. Your contributions made this a much stronger dissertation. I would also like to thank Dr. Jen Gilbert, who made me feel at home in my doctoral program well before I arrived and thereafter.

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## **CHAPTER ONE – Introduction**

Across North America, it is now standard for teacher education programs (TEP) to set aside time for issues of diversity, equity and social justice, whether in the form of lectures, whole courses or entire specialized programs (e.g., preparing urban teachers – for a Canadian example see Solomon, Singer, Campbell, & Allen, 2011). Providing this content is the responsibility of teacher educators who connect their work in some way to the conceptual and practical archive of social justice teacher education (SJTE). In SJTE conversations, both textual and face-to-face, the connection between what teacher education can do or produce and how the world needs to change is continually asserted. The SJTE literature is burgeoning with principles, definitions and lists of attributes: of the teachers who teach for social justice and the programs that prepare them for this work. As a field, SJTE exists because of its difference from ‘business as usual’ in teacher education and the ‘something else’ that it can provide.

Given that teacher education programs must fulfill a host of external requirements pertaining to teacher certification within a limited timeframe, however, SJTE must make a case for the time it is given. As a professional program located in the university and accountable to multiple levels of government and partner schools alike, teacher education writ large is pressured on all sides to provide empirical evidence of its effectiveness in order to justify its participation in these domains. In the United States, for example, TEP are increasingly asked to draw causal connections between their content and the classroom practice of their teacher candidates (TCs). Field architects have warned of the impossibility of these demands for evidence; to directly link teacher education programs to K-12 pupil outcomes requires the forging of several discrete evidentiary links from teacher education (itself multi-faceted) to TC development, from TC development to teaching practice, and from teaching practice to K-12 pupil achievement.

Although teacher education scholars have struggled to demonstrate *any* of these connections for many years, the call now to demonstrate *all* of them in sequence and with regard to a particular program is recent and controversial. The counter-argument to this demand for evidence is that teaching is complex and its timeframe vast; it is impossible to definitively account for all of the reasons why it goes well or flounders, including but not limited to how teachers are educated.

Among other things, teacher education prepares TCs to teach mathematics, reading and writing, constructivist inquiry in the sciences and musicianship, and a majority of K-12 students simply *does* learn the skills associated with these content areas. In most cases, tacit if not ‘gold standard’ (empirical, quantitative, double-blind) connections can be made between a TEP and K-12 students taught by its graduates. Even if a teacher educator specializing in literacy pedagogies never tracks down *their own* alumni to determine how *their* students read – i.e., directly connects their teacher education practice to K-12 student outcomes – the literature provides evidence from others who have drawn this connection through empirical research. In this way, many teacher educators can reach for literature to justify what they do on a daily basis. On an ordinary level, then, evidence offers the possibility of saying to one’s self or to another that *this* is the reason why I did *that* today.

SJTE’s difference from other aspects of teacher education renders its relationship with evidence even more fraught and complicated, and yet the possibility of being able to empirically justify one’s practice is as necessary for SJTE practitioners as for other teacher educators. For this reason, a dedicated field of scholarly inquiry has emerged to provide SJTE with the kind of evidence base equated with legitimacy in an increasingly accountability-focused culture. There is a sense in this literature, however, that SJTE is accountable for something quite apart from what is usually attempted in teacher education, as above. SJTE practitioners might teach teacher

candidates to lead high school students in a critical analysis of their history curriculum, or strategies for intervening in racist or homophobic harassment. We might then be able to assess students' critical literacy or gauge the degree of racism or homophobia in the school culture. However, SJTE does not stop here; it is not enough that K-12 students will embark on a critically complex inquiry into the oppressive conditions of their own lives and learning, or that school hallways will be less homophobic. Although there is value to these outcomes, they are facilitated by skill sets grown in SJTE and they can be substantiated through empirical research methods, *they are not 'social justice.'*

In fact, SJTE practitioners maintain that what we do – something about social in/justice – exceeds the empirical means by which other sub-fields of teacher education make evidence of their own effectiveness. Consider these statements by SJTE field leaders and the connection drawn between social justice and *feeling* (my emphasis throughout):

...culturally responsive teachers ... *have a sense* that they are both responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change that will make schooling more responsive to students from diverse backgrounds. (Villegas & Lucas, *Educating culturally responsive teachers: A coherent approach*, 2002)

...teachers who work against the grain must *wrestle with their own doubts, fend off the fatigue* of reform, and *depend on the strength* of their individual and collaborative convictions that their work ultimately makes a difference in the fabric of social responsibility. (Cochran-Smith, *Walking the road: Race, diversity, and social justice in teacher education*, 2004)

These scholars seem to suggest that SJTE envisions in its graduates a particular set of feelings toward social justice and their role in bringing it about. Feeling here does not seem to mean having 'feelings' in the sense of emotions, as though being sad about injustice, for example, might bring one into the fold of teachers like these. Feeling seems to be something else: something done. This is indicated by the italicized phrases above, in that these teachers wrestle

with doubts, fend off fatigue and depend on the strength of their convictions. They have a sense of themselves as capable of making change. Unlike emotions, which tend to come upon and then leave us (Massumi, 2002), these *affective* labours are ongoing, without beginning or end. *But the question remains of how the ongoing work of wrestling, fending, depending and sensing toward a better future relates to the work of teaching in the ordinary present.* Is ‘teaching for social justice’ a *sense* of one’s practice or is it the practice? Can we find this sense like an empirical outcome? Does a graduating cohort of TCs with this sense mean that SJTE was effective?

The pervasive answer in the SJTE literature is no. There must be other ways to ascertain that TCs are or will successfully become these teachers who are change agents, apart from appraising the degree to which they depend on the strength of their convictions, for example. The teachers whose formation is designed, assessed and studied by SJTE researchers and practitioners must somehow be found to differ *and* be effective in ways that can be causally connected to SJTE. However, SJTE has long been embroiled in a difficult conversation about its seeming inability to derive evidence of its effectiveness. Seasoned field leaders and more recent commentators alike have articulated related concerns for over twenty years (e.g., Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Dover, 2009; Gorski, 2010; Grant & Secada, 1990; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Zeichner, 2009). Evidence worries dominate in SJTE, something apparent across related panels at annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association where, again and again, SJTE practitioners implore colleagues to connect SJTE practice to K-12 student progress using empirical evidence (e.g., Bieler, 2012; Dover, 2012; Miller, 2012). In some quarters, SJTE is even seen as not accomplishing its goal and so unworthy of its place in crowded teacher education program curricula because it cannot link what it does to the outcome it desires.

Instead of heeding the clarion call for better evidence, I argue that questions of evidence distract us from understanding that SJTE's outcome – 'social justice' – is impossible and therefore cannot serve as a yardstick for SJTE's effectiveness and/as legitimacy. After all, if 'social justice' were to be realized, what would it be? Although things can certainly change and 'get better,' social justice is an image of the future based on an ever-receding present. It is forever unattainable, as this present recedes into other presents, each with its own image of a better future. As such, social justice is a moving horizon (Muñoz, 2009) not a static goal. I contend that 'social justice' is presently unknowable and so unavailable to the empirical means through which evidence is held to appear. Although SJTE researchers produce copious evidence surrogates such as TC work samples, pre- and post-surveys of TC attitudes and thick descriptions of good courses or evaluations, *the outcome of social justice remains out of reach.*

For this reason, I ask, if we claim to have 'cultivated social justice teachers' (Gorski, Zenkov, Osei-Kofi, & Sapp, 2012), for example, what have we done and done differently? On what basis do we claim that *these* TCs have been prepared to engage in the process of realizing social justice whereas *these* TCs over here have not? I propose that social justice simply will not behave like an outcome: an end from which we can look backwards and confer retroactive value on a process now found worthy of further time and resource investment. Even if 'social justice' did somehow arrive, this would spell the obsolescence of SJTE because it would cease to matter. Never the less, the everyday work of SJTE – or 'teaching the diversity class,' as this work is commonly if wryly characterized – carries on in the service of social justice, something paradoxically conceived as *far* from the teacher education classroom in space and time yet *near enough* that it can be affected by what we will have done today. I argue that SJTE's focus on evidence prevents a thorough engagement with the conceptual, pedagogical and actual

implications of its impossibility. These implications are the focus of my dissertation, most particularly with regard to SJTE's resolutely non-empirically verifiable contributions to the preparation of teachers for a less harmful world.

### **Research Problem and Questions**

My dissertation begins from a sense of wonder that a field with such a significant, defining outcome as 'social justice' is able to stay together and keep working when faced with the impossible task of determining the outcomes of its difficult labour. Some might say that SJTE is at risk of failure given this impossibility, a message as likely to be found within SJTE as without (see Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, Lahann, Shakman, & Terrell, 2009). Instead of claiming that SJTE 'doesn't work' because it struggles to produce empirical evidence, however, I turn away from measurable conceptions of social justice teacher dispositions, competencies or practices. I argue instead that SJTE *is working because it remains identifiable*, or carries on and carries on *as* SJTE, holding together without evidence because its holding-together occurs at a level that evidentiary rationalism cannot access. In other words, I argue that SJTE is and functions as an *assemblage*, a concept originating in the collaborations of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987, 1996, 2004). An assemblage is an ever-changing network of relations wherein agency is distributed among its infinitely interrelated human and non-human components. Agency does not belong to any one or any number of these components in isolation from others, or from the myriad other assemblages to which each component also belongs.

To study SJTE as an assemblage is to ask different questions and look for answers in places outside of the frameworks used by most education scholars. Whereas SJTE focuses on preparing teachers to be intentional about social difference and social justice, assemblage theory decenters the individual sovereign subject and their intentionality as privileged sites of social



change. I suggest that SJTE relies on this subject even when claiming that the difference of the other is difficult to imagine and work across. To think of SJTE researchers and practitioners not as sovereign subjects but variably affecting and affected components in the SJTE-assemblage is to displace particular intentions – e.g., produce change agents, develop cultural competence or even bring about social justice – as the essence of SJTE. An assemblage has no essence (DeLanda, 2006) and so cannot be said to *be different* from others in a static, categorical or definitional way. Rather, an assemblage is always in the process of *becoming-different*, or differentiation. To think about SJTE as an assemblage is therefore to stop taking at face value what it says about itself and what makes it stand out in the teacher education landscape. Assemblage theory can thus orient the work of creating less harming schools and social worlds – in which SJTE plays a pivotal role – toward emergence rather than evidence: toward an openness to the difference that emerges in the present and not only the difference that has come before, whose ways and characteristics we think we already know and can anticipate.

To recap, my research problem is SJTE carrying on and carrying on *as* SJTE despite the impossibility of producing evidence that its outcome is being achieved such that its effectiveness and/as its difference can be confirmed. SJTE does not come apart or stop doing despite the fact that there is no empirical, stable sign that SJTE on the whole does something different from business-as-usual teacher education. SJTE works or keeps moving and remains identifiable even though it should not according to the prevailing logic of outcomes in (institutionalized) education. I argue that SJTE works because it is an assemblage in which agency is displaced from individual sovereign subjects and diffused across a network of interrelated components that include but do not revolve around these subjects.

The following sequence of research questions has guided my study:

1. How does the SJTE-assemblage work (keep moving and remain identifiable)?
  - a. What are SJTE's thresholds of identifiability? What happens when they are neared or breached, or, how and when does SJTE de/re/territorialize?
  - b. What role(s) do practitioners, practices, norms, gestures, bodies, languages, concepts, customs, texts, structures, ideals and/or forms of address play in its de/re/territorialization?
  - c. What is the role of things that are less-than-present or have less positivity (e.g., silence, absence, the almost-event)?
2. When re-thought as an assemblage, how can SJTE emerge otherwise? What are its properties, capacities and contributions?

In keeping with my two main questions, my goal throughout the dissertation is two-fold. First, using moments from my fieldwork at education conferences and research conversations with SJTE practitioners, I illustrate what it means to think about SJTE as an assemblage. I expand and support my argument that SJTE is an assemblage and demonstrate the possibilities of 'thinking my data with Deleuze' to borrow a phrase from Lisa Mazzei (2010). Second, I aim to substantiate my contention that the ordinary lived experience of SJTE requires and fosters a powerful micropolitical capacity.<sup>1</sup> This capacity expresses a remarkable flexibility at SJTE's thresholds, or the sensate edges produced between SJTE and other things.

This affective flexibility on the surface of its encounters and at its thresholds, I argue, is not only how SJTE works. The associated capacity is rather *a singular and significant*

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<sup>1</sup> I use the term 'micropolitics' to mark and challenge a common separation between things that are held to 'really matter' in sociopolitical life and things that are held to be too small, too personal or in some other way insignificant in the arena of social struggle. Things not held to matter include, most pertinently, techniques of or obstacles to getting by in ordinary everyday life as opposed to e.g., dismantling capitalism or rebelling against other over-arching structures on a societal scale. As I shall discuss when I turn to Lauren Berlant and Kathleen Stewart in my theoretical framework chapter, ordinary life is an often over-looked terrain of political im/possibility, the navigation of which as a political site requires a different skillset than more familiar efforts at social change. My argument throughout the dissertation supports an integration of the micro alongside the macro in SJTE.

*contribution that SJTE offers as a social justice project.* The capacity takes shape as a prepersonal<sup>2</sup> and implicit tendency toward more ethical and less harmful ways of living with/in difference, including among people collaboratively engaged in minoritarian struggle. It is among others with whom we anticipate ourselves to be in solidarity that political disappointment can be uniquely, surprisingly devastating and rip apart whole lifeworlds. Overall, I argue that SJTE, as an assemblage, can be understood as a reservoir of affective capacity to remain when cherished a priori rules are broken. Regardless of the content of these rules, the coming of the new – and the justice that we will be called on to do on behalf of the new – is often signaled by the collapse of familiar rules. As such, I contend that SJTE practitioners are implicit experts on the micropolitics of difference-to-come despite the field’s tendency toward coded, stabilized or even juridical (Wiegman, 2012) – standardized, precedent-based – iterations of identity, privilege and oppression. This codification is undoubtedly an effect of coping with the burden of positivistic demands for evidence, and in this light the field’s capacity for affective flexibility might even be thought of as an emergent resistance to the hegemonic logic of standardization. We must begin naming and incorporating SJTE’s implicit micropolitical expertise into our work with teacher candidates as it carries great promise for their everyday efforts to welcome the new and help create worlds less hostile to difference in all of its un/imaginable forms.

### **Overview of the Dissertation**

I will conclude with summaries of the chapters to come. In the chapter immediately following, I review two literatures approaching the task I have set out for myself: studying the field of SJTE. First, I contextualize my study with an account of the historical and conceptual roots of SJTE including multicultural education, culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy and

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<sup>2</sup> The term ‘prepersonal’ is used in assemblage theory and Deleuzian affect theory (e.g., Massumi, 2002, 2011) to refer to the non- or super-individual agency of the assemblage as opposed to the individual agency of a person; it is particularly useful when linking the causes of individual behaviour to (being caught up in) assemblages.

Critical Race Theory. In the second half of the chapter, I read three recent book-length studies (Ahmed, 2012; Hemmings, 2011; Wiegman, 2012) authored by scholars from the affective turn in the theoretical humanities (see Clough, 2008; Hemmings, 2005) focusing on institutionalized academic projects connected to the pursuit of social justice outside the university.

Chapter Three details my theoretical framework, drawing simultaneously on Deleuzo-Guattarian assemblage theory and affect theory. With my assemblage theory touchstones (Bell, 2006; DeLanda, 2006), I define key concepts like assemblage, de/re/territorialization, different/ciation, dynamic system and chaosmos. I then move to affect, a term which I define in Deleuzian fashion as sensation or unqualified autonomous intensity (Massumi, 2002) as opposed to qualified owned emotion. I discuss the work of two affect theorists (Berlant, 2011; Stewart, 2007) committed to studying how affect so understood structures and sways ordinary life. I conclude the chapter by making a case for affect-as-sensation as a ‘way in’ to feeling one’s component status within assemblages by which one is variably caught up and let go.

Thinking of corporeal affect as a means to become – belatedly, incompletely – aware of the assemblage in motion is a cornerstone of my methodology, which is the topic of Chapter Four. First, I identify relevant ways in which assemblage and affect theories trouble the parameters of what Elisabeth A. St. Pierre (2013) has called conventional humanist qualitative inquiry. I outline how Deleuzian poststructuralists approach a world in constant motion with shifting networks of relations, as opposed to a world of static objects that can be isolated from their surroundings. I also flesh out a general skepticism toward language on the part of post-qualitative (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013) researchers, who invoke the crisis of representation to argue against the transparent relationship between, among other things, discursive data and experience. I then shift toward the practical and explain my own methods. I begin with quasi-

ethnographic notes on each of the four education conferences I attended as a researcher and describe my affective multi-sensory fieldwork practice in SJTE-related sessions and events. Through this practice I generated a series of field narratives bringing to life intensive moments in the midst of the SJTE-assemblage. At conferences I also identified SJTE practitioners for conversations either on site or after the fact via Skype. I conclude with some thoughts on research ethics within a Deleuzian, affective methodological framework, including the possibility that what participants believe to be ‘relevant’ might not be what I take from our encounter.

The remaining three chapters feature my original research. Drawing on Hemmings’ (2011) delineation of the dominant narratives in feminist theory, in Chapter Five: How SJTE Emerges Through Text, I use de-authorization strategies to assemble what SJTE is, does and wants across 58 field-defining texts spanning thirty years (1971-2013). I give an account of the demographic divides – SJTE’s (American)<sup>3</sup> raison d’être – and their significance as a proxy for ‘social justice’ as well as survey the goals of the field: changing society and changing teachers (both ability and mindset). I also consider the effects of calls for clarity and coherence across SJTE. I argue that, regardless of what SJTE may say about itself, the field is characterized by the capacity to inhabit irresolvable tensions. This idea of inhabiting tensions in practice while proclaiming fairly static truths serves to foreshadow my work in the subsequent chapters.

In Chapter Six – Intervention: What Happens at the SJTE Threshold, I draw from my archive of conference moments and practitioner conversations to explore how assemblage thresholds are produced and affect how things go in everyday life. I use the term ‘intervention’ to mean a non-sovereign and collective effort to change speed or direction in a series of unfolding events when assemblage thresholds emerge, becoming intensive and maybe threatening collapse.

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<sup>3</sup> I qualify SJTE as American here because I want to flag early on that my efforts at finding SJTE in the literature and at education conferences led me to a largely American field. However, there can be no clear separation between this work in the United States and Canada. I explore this further in the Addendum on Canadian SJTE.

I begin the chapter with thoughts on what intervention typically means in SJTE and offer an example: the ideal intervention in, for example, school racism or homophobia envisioned by SJTE practitioners on the part of their TCs. I then provide a thorough theoretical account of Deleuzo-Guattarian micropolitics, emphasizing its relationship to DeLanda's (2006) take on de/re/territorialization and Bell's (2006) chaosmos. The bulk of the chapter is devoted to the presentation and analysis of territorializing, re-territorializing and then deterritorializing interventions from my fieldwork and conversations, which I explore under the provisional rubrics of sexuality and race. I conclude by arguing for the mutually-producing character of intervention and threshold, seeking to destabilize any a priori or essential construction of an assemblage and its boundaries. I also argue that my deterritorialization examples express the capacity that I identified in the previous chapter on SJTE's field-defining literature.

In Chapter Seven – Plateau: Resistance and the Craft of SJTE, I draw exclusively from my conversations with practitioners, namely, our exchanges ostensibly 'about' classroom practice. I begin by substantiating a claim that TC politicized resistance in and to SJTE (particularly on the part of privileged TCs) is a central concern of practitioners, and that dealing with or pre-empting resistance is a pedagogical objective. I then offer a complete re-framing of resistance using Bell's (2006) conception of assemblages as dynamic systems moving back and forth between chaos (total meaninglessness) and cosmos (suffocating order). Rather than insisting that 'good SJTE' looks like the absence of TC resistance, I suggest that these practitioners exercise 'chaosmotic mindfulness' or the implicit awareness that resistance – that is, a plateau of dynamic resistance – is desirable and necessary rather than something to be avoided. Generating or provoking resistance is an integral aspect of what I call the *craft* of SJTE, which I argue can be extrapolated across the field in ways that language cannot. This craft is the

pedagogical enactment of the field's (assemblage's) capacity for threshold flexibility.

In the conclusion, I recap my trajectory from literature review through to my elucidation of SJTE capacity and the field's affective craft. I then offer a preliminary sketch of an SJTE classroom practice with teacher candidates that makes *explicit* use of the craft as well as some implications for preparing teacher candidates to practice the craft in their own right. I acknowledge that my dissertation poses a challenge to the necessary value of authenticity for SJTE and other similar projects. Finally, I argue that SJTE pedagogies must attend equally to depth – the sovereign political will of teachers as agents of social change – *and* surface: what is affective, implicit and pre-personal. Finally, in the Addendum I address the seeming absence of Canada from my study and consider what a Canadian social justice teacher education might look like, as well as the ways in which this may remain inextricable from the American field.

## CHAPTER TWO – Literature Review

In this chapter, I review two bodies of literature to set the stage for my analytical work in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. In the first section, I offer an account of SJTE’s historical and conceptual roots by surveying its inspirations and interlocutors. In the second section I read three book-length studies of other institutional university-based social justice projects authored by scholars who use theories of affect: *Why stories matter: The political grammar of feminist theory* by Clare Hemmings (2011), *Object lessons* by Robyn Wiegman (2012) and *On being included: Race and diversity in institutional life* by Sara Ahmed (2012). I introduce the different questions and conceptualizations enabled by my reading and discuss what they offer my study of SJTE.

### **The Roots of Social Justice Teacher Education**

Although SJTE has its own literature spanning thirty years or more, when taken historically and conceptually it is a composite of many other social justice, diversity and equity traditions in teacher education and education more broadly. The concerns of multicultural and social justice educators regarding the needs and strengths of diverse learners bound to questions of how to prepare teachers to encounter and support these learners in the classroom. SJTE field leaders<sup>4</sup> tend to contribute to both of these conversations in equal measure. Perhaps due to SJTE’s composite nature, the field has not been taken up as a singular object of study.<sup>5</sup> Rather, literature reviews are the sole means by which the field ‘as a whole’ has been investigated (Castro, 2010; Cochran-Smith et al., 2004; Furman, 2008; Garcia, 1996; Grant & Gibson, 2011; Grant &

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<sup>4</sup> Grant & Gibson (2011) generated a list of sixteen field leaders to guide their conceptual review of research on diversity in teacher education: Arnetta Ball, Marilyn Cochran-Smith, Linda Darling-Hammond, Donna Gollnick, Carl Grant, Martin Haberman, Etta Hollins, Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, Joyce King, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Sonia Nieto, Christine Sleeter, Linda Valli, Ana María Villegas, Lois Weiner and Kenneth Zeichner (p. 51 f.n. 2). Following their lead, my own use of the phrase ‘SJTE field leaders’ extends to the same group of scholars.

<sup>5</sup> The only scholar who has studied SJTE as a singular entity in any consistent fashion is Paul C. Gorski (Amosa & Gorski, 2008; Gorski, Davis, & Reiter, 2012; Gorski & Goodman, 2011; Gorski, 2009, 2010, 2012). There have also been a number of studies directly focussed on the work of SJTE practitioners as an identifiable group (e.g., Attwood, 2011; Cochran-Smith, 2003a; C. W. Cooper & Gause, 2007; DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2010; Gallavan, 2000; Galman, Pica-Smith, & Rosenberger, 2010; Moule, 2005; Zollers, Albert, & Cochran-Smith, 2000).



Secada, 1990; Grant, 1994; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Lowenstein, 2009; McAllister & Irvine, 2000; Mills, 2008; Montecinos, 2004; Sleeter & Milner, 2011; Sleeter, 1985, 2000, 2001, 2008; Trent, Kea, & Oh, 2008; Villegas & Davis, 2008; Wiedeman, 2002; Zeichner & Hoefft, 1996). In conducting a meta-review that included many of the preceding citations, Jim Furman (2008) found – and I agree – that reviewers offer variations on the same, familiar theme: SJTE suffers from a lack of empirical justification (read: evidence) and there are grave methodological concerns expressed about self-reported data, study length, lack of comparative studies, small sample sizes and the preponderance of self-study research. Instead of taking up other research studies of SJTE, then, I turn to SJTE’s composite roots. I discuss three traditions from and alongside which SJTE has grown, and from which it draws its conceptual architecture and political commitments: multicultural education, culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy and Critical Race Theory.

### **Multicultural Education.<sup>6</sup>**

Like many contemporary social justice projects, multicultural education traces its roots to civil rights and activist movements of racialized people in the 1960s and 1970s (Banks, 2010a; Ramsey & Williams, 2002). By that time, legacies of white European settler colonialism, slavery and genocide resulted in mass displacement and/or migration of de/colonized peoples from the ex-colonies. This exodus produced diverse yet highly stratified societies in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. Although multicultural education is now taken up all over the world as a framework for educational equity among diverse peoples, its development is

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<sup>6</sup> The multicultural education literature is incredibly vast and routinely synthesized. My discussion is therefore historical and conceptual rather than comprehensive. I did, however, review numerous sources for this section that are not directly cited (Aragon, 1973; Asher, 2005, 2007; Baker, 1974; Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Furman, 2008; Gay, 1977, 1983, 1997; Gollnick, 1992; Grant, Sleeter, & Anderson, 1986; Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Marshall, 1994; R. J. Martin, 1991; McAllister & Irvine, 2000; Nieto, 2009; Sleeter & Grant, 1987; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995; Sleeter, 1991; Vavrus, 2002).

inseparable from the racialized history of the United States, and particularly the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade. Foundational multicultural education scholar James A. Banks (2010a) asserts that “the early phases [...] developed first in the United States as a response to the civil rights movement” (p. 13) through which African Americans began to vigorously challenge racial segregation. Previous to the 1960s, World War Two exacerbated American ethnic and racial tensions by producing an employment boom in coastal cities, mass internal economic migration and, therefore, cracks in de facto (if not de jure) racial segregation. This created a situation in which “Anglos and Mexican Americans in western cities and African Americans and Whites in northern cities competed for jobs and housing” (Banks, 1993, p. 1) for the first time on a large scale. Furthermore, African American soldiers believed they “had fought to make the world free and safe for democracy and resisted being relegated to second-class status upon their return” (Ramsey & Williams, 2002, p. 11) to a segregated America with radically disparate prospects for Black people, white people and people of colour more broadly.

Although American schools were legally desegregated in 1954 as a result of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, it remained the case that the “goal of the common school was to help immigrant and ethnic group youths to acquire the cultural characteristics and values of Anglo-Americans” (Banks, 1977, p. 1). As Christine Bennett (2001) points out, *Brown* was both a landmark achievement and a lightning rod. The decision

reversed the legality of “separate but equal schools” and triggered rising expectations and aspirations for equal opportunity and social justice, especially in public education. Instead, disproportionately high numbers of the nation’s African-American, Native-American, and Latino children and youth were placed in special education for the handicapped or culturally disadvantaged. Others were suspended or expelled for

reasons of teacher discretion or attended schools where teachers and the curriculum reflected primarily Anglo-European American perspectives. (pp. 171-2)

In other words, whiteness explicitly remained the curricular and pedagogical standard in desegregated schools, where segregation found new, underground and devastating guises.

Although racial tensions were roiling in the post-war era and early 1950s, the first major educational reform movement to address this climate – the Intergroup Education Movement – was basically assimilationist. This movement had no regard for the traditions of distinct peoples and “emphasized democratic living and interracial cooperation within mainstream American society” (Banks, 1993, p. 15). Banks (1996) argues that Intergroup was “founded by [university-based] White professionals who were responding to a national crisis [... without] long-term ties to African American and other oppressed communities [so ... Intergroup] faded when the sense of crisis faded” toward the end of the 1950s (Ramsey & Williams, 2002, p. 12). In its institutionalized desire to ‘keep the peace’ by minimizing ethnic and racial differences (and therefore minimizing the effects of systemic racism), Intergroup is often compared with federal governmental initiatives stemming from the Immigration Act and Ethnic Heritage Studies Act, both of 1965. The first removed many barriers to immigration from Latin American and Asian countries. The unfolding demographic shift and ethnic revitalization contributed to the second, which “authorized schools to provide all children with the opportunity to study racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States” (Ramsey & Williams, 2002, p. 13). Although curricula were adapted, the new content was often tokenizing and merely appended to existing constructions of America as white, Anglo and European. Banks (2010a) notes that these measures, like Intergroup, aimed “to silence ethnic protest and discontent” (p. 13). However, “when the achievement gap remained after superficial changes were made in the school

curriculum, educators began to realize that deep structural changes were needed to increase the academic achievement of marginalized groups” (ibid.). Calls to close the ‘achievement gap’ resound to this day (see Chapter Five for more discussion).

In direct contrast to the institutionally-sanctioned and conservative ‘changes’ taking place in schools, anti- or subversively-institutional Ethnic Studies movements emerged on university campuses in the late 1960s and 1970s. Here, taking a cue from the separatist Black Power movement, “there was little demand for the infusion of ethnic content into the core or mainstream curriculum” (Banks, 1993, p. 18). Rather, African Americans and then Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, Asian Americans and women began demanding and slowly winning *separate* courses or programs of study in many colleges. However, these were often insecurely- or even community-funded and disconnected from central university workings. Nevertheless, these programs presided over a boom in scholarship by and for historically marginalized peoples as well as a return to seminal texts (e.g., those by W. E. B. DuBois and Carter G. Woodson) left out of white nation-building curricula.

Although multiculturalism is far from uniquely associated with the United States (indeed, Canada has an official policy of multiculturalism – see the Addendum), I offer a detailed American history because this was the world into which the founders of multicultural education *and* SJTE were born and came of age as scholars. Although multicultural education today is a highly institutional project and so could arguably take the Intergroup Education Movement and curricular changes under the Ethnic Heritage Studies Act as antecedents, Banks (1993) is vehement in proclaiming that this is not the case. Rather, “the current multicultural education movement is directly linked to the early ethnic studies movement” and multicultural education’s “major architects [...] were cogently influenced by African-American scholarship and ethnic

studies related to the other ethnic minority groups in the United States” (p. 19). Field founders and shapers Geneva Gay, Carl Grant and Banks himself “were working in ethnic studies prior to participating in the formation of multicultural education” (ibid.). In fact, Banks argues, the ‘first phase’ of multicultural education was an ethnic studies phase whereby educators and teacher educators with related specializations lobbied schools and universities to incorporate ethnic studies into curricula. The ‘second phase’ emerged, for Banks, when these scholars realized that curricular inclusion was insufficient and that systemic structural change was required. The ‘third phase’ involved women and people with disabilities (and now gender and sexual minorities) applying the systemic and structural lens of multicultural education to sexism and ableism (and now transphobia and homophobia). The ‘fourth phase’ “consists of the development of theory, research, and practice that interrelate variables connected to race, class, [...] gender” (p. 20), ability and sexuality.

In a 1993 article, Banks argued that all phases of multicultural education existed simultaneously. This can also be argued twenty-one years later. In her incredibly successful multicultural teacher education textbook, for example, Sonia Nieto (2004) explicitly defends her focus on race, ethnicity and language to the exclusion of gender, class, sexuality, religion and ability as a result of space constraints. She adds a worry that a broader umbrella for multicultural education could result in students having too many ‘other things to talk about’ that eclipse race because they are less uncomfortable (see also Gay, 1983). Nieto offers sexism and classism as ‘less uncomfortable’ than racism, but the ‘comfort’ level attending homophobia and sexuality may pose other challenges for the field.

In the current climate, multicultural education finds itself directly called on to address not only race, ethnicity and language issues and inequities, but also those pertaining to gender and

sexuality. Invoking Audre Lorde and her famous insistence that there is no hierarchy of oppression, Paul C. Gorski and Rachael D. Goodman (2011) analyzed forty-one multicultural education syllabi from teacher education courses and found that such a hierarchy does, in fact, exist: “race-related constructs tend to receive more critical considerations, generally speaking, than those related to gender, sexual orientation, class, religion, or disability” (p. 496).

Furthermore, they found that over 40% of analyzed syllabi contained no mention of sexual orientation. Patricia Marshall (2009) analyzed the board meeting minutes of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) and revealed how the inclusion of sexual diversity and homophobia under the banner of multicultural education has sparked a highly generational conflict in a field founded by ethnic studies scholars and grounded in racialized struggle. Marshall observes:

Like their Civil Rights counterparts over the years, members of the older generation of multicultural education scholars have won many battles (e.g., inclusion of a diversity standard in teacher education accreditation, greater numbers of scholars of color on college and university campuses, the founding of NAME) and sturdy conceptual frameworks have been formulated to serve as foundations for high-quality scholarship. (pp. 191-192)

And yet, the tension around including gender and sexual minority issues has “implications for the continuing vitality of multicultural education as embodied in NAME, an organization desiring to be the nexus of movement activity” (p. 192). We are most certainly living through all ‘four phases’ of multicultural education at once, in that the third and fourth phases are noticeably still in processes. This may forever be the case given the mutability of social difference.

Like the field’s ethnic studies roots and allegiances, other lessons from the history of

multicultural education persist today. Early difficulties on the order of assimilationism, inadequate curricular reforms and ‘changes’ that reinforce the status quo are today reflected in a pervasive awareness that the moniker ‘multicultural education’ is vulnerable to misuse or misapplication when mainstreamed. Some scholars (Kanpol & McLaren, 1995; May, 1999a, 2009; McLaren, 1995) have worked to stabilize the term ‘critical multiculturalism’ in education precisely because of the historical and contemporary misdirection of space, time or resources earmarked for ‘multicultural education’ away from structural change and toward neo-liberal tokenism. The term ‘multicultural education’ has in some ways been so gravely misappropriated that it is possible for Stephen May (1999b) to proclaim that “over the years, multicultural education has promised much and delivered little” when introducing an edited volume featuring chapters by none other than field founders Sonia Nieto and Christine Sleeter. Clearly, his ‘multicultural education’ is not the one to which these scholars have contributed for decades.

In fact, one of the most highly-cited articles in the field – Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant’s (1985) inaugural review of the multicultural education literature – offered a five-part typology still in extensive circulation thirty years later and often used to determine how close a particular approach comes to the deepest, most effective multicultural education.<sup>7</sup> At the ‘shallow end’ is *education of the culturally different*, an assimilationist approach whereby transitional bridges are offered to marginalized students but the system remains unchallenged and unchanged. Next is *ethnic studies*, an additive approach whereby content about distinct ethnic groups is appended to existing curricula. Third is *human relations* which focuses on the development of tolerance and compassion so as to bring about the peaceful or conflict-free co-

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<sup>7</sup> Theirs was not the first typology (Gibson, 1976) or the last; Castagno (2009) included at least twelve in a fairly recent synthesis of multicultural education typologies that resulted in – wait for it – a new typology. None of these, however, has served to displace Sleeter and Grant’s.

existence of diverse groups.<sup>8</sup> *Multicultural education* itself comes next and is, they find, the most prevalent; this approach advocates for the respect and strengthening of cultural pluralism in direct opposition to assimilationism. The salient difference between multicultural education and *education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist* – the fifth and final, most desirable approach – is “attention [paid] to issues of social structural inequality and the relationship of culture to social structure” (p. 101). The purpose of social reconstructionism, therefore, “is to teach students to analyze critically why some groups in society are oppressed, and to take a more active and collective role in restructuring unequal relationships” (ibid.).

In their sample of almost 200 articles, Sleeter and Grant found that abstraction (e.g., purposes, goals or ambitions) was concentrated at the ‘deep end’ and that practice-based accounts were solely available for the ‘shallower’ versions of multicultural education. The authors offer a criticism echoing SJTE’s evidence troubles, which lie at the heart of my own research problem; namely, across ‘multicultural education’ as a whole they found “insufficient conceptual work on the translation of goals into models for practice” (p. 111). Although Sleeter and Grant expressed surprise that all five approaches call themselves ‘multicultural education’ they do not pronounce sentence on the ‘shallower’ approaches. In subsequent years, however, other scholars (e.g., R. J. Martin & Van Gunten, 2002; R. J. Martin, 1994) have taken on ‘social reconstructionism’ as the very definition of true multicultural education in the image of its historical lineage in the ethnic studies movement. Like SJTE, this multicultural education must consistently link its efforts to larger structural problems ‘outside of’ yet exacerbated by

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<sup>8</sup> Interestingly – and with far reaching implications for the present study – Sleeter & Grant say that the reviewed studies expressing a human relations approach “were among the *least specific and descriptive* about what they would like to see happen in schools. Their goals were couched mainly in *affective* terms, such as ‘sense of belonging’, ‘sensitivity among peoples’, and ‘individual identity’” (p. 100; added emphasis). As I have alluded to in the introduction, in later chapters I go on to proclaim the value of more implicit and less specific ways of conceptualizing social justice and justice work.



education. This work of linkage between practice – what we do together, today – and social justice – something distant in space or time – is the prevailing theme of the second half of the literature review on affect theory and institutionalized social justice projects.

Today, multicultural education is both thriving and wary, under the same attack from neo-liberal proponents of standardization that also pushes SJTE into an empiricist corner. The SJTE that I am studying aspires to social reconstructionism as defined by Sleeter and Grant, and many SJTE field-defining texts included for analysis in chapter five bear the ‘multicultural teacher education’ label (e.g., Gay, 1997; Larkin & Sleeter, 1995; Vavrus, 2002). With the exception of specific teacher education policy – which I also take up in Chapter Five – the history and context of multicultural education are shared by SJTE, culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy and Critical Race Theory in education.<sup>9</sup>

### **Culturally Relevant/Responsive Pedagogy.**

Recalling Sleeter and Grant’s (1985) claim that (deep) multicultural education had not been translated into practice at the time of their review, ‘culturally *responsive* pedagogy’ or ‘culturally *relevant* pedagogy’ is today the means by which teachers are held to be able to exercise social reconstructionism in their classrooms; it is, in short, the style of radical classroom practice that SJTE envisions on the part of our teacher candidates. The phrase ‘culturally *relevant* teaching’ was coined by Gloria Ladson-Billings (Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1994, 1995a, 1995c, 1998b) whereas the phrase ‘culturally *responsive* pedagogy’ is most closely associated with Geneva Gay (2002, 2010), Ana María Villegas and Tamara Lucas (2002a, 2002b).<sup>10</sup> The

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<sup>9</sup> I will also add that ‘social justice education’ is virtually indistinguishable from ‘education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist’ and also frequently juxtaposed with shallow approaches to multicultural education (see Gewirtz, 1998; Gorski, 2006; North, 2006, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> The phrase ‘culturally responsive pedagogy’ has a long tradition largely uncited by the authors who have come to symbolize CRP (see Phuntsog, 1999 for a review eschewing the usual suspects). Based on a cursory review of one exemplar (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995), this might have to do with a more ‘humans relations’ approach taken. Gay’s (2002, 2010) projects could be construed as efforts to re-claim the phrase for social reconstructionism.

two phrases are used interchangeably – including by these authors themselves (e.g., Gay, 2010, p. 30) – and I will address them simultaneously using the acronym CRP, to leave ‘CRT’ for Critical Race Theory in the next section.

When Ladson-Billings (1992) began writing about CRP, she situated its roots in her own and Joyce King’s early (1980s) research on African American student experiences as well as critical pedagogy, referencing the work of Paulo Freire, Peter McLaren, Henry Giroux and Stanley Aronowitz; these authors “suggest some features of what successful teachers of minority students must do to emancipate, empower and transform both themselves and their students. Aspects of this kind of teaching form the basis of what I have identified as ‘culturally relevant teaching’” (p. 109). CRP is identified here as the antithesis of assimilationist education that seeks to strip away the culture from the student. Rather, good CRP “uses the students’ culture to help them create meaning and understand the world” (p. 110). Ladson-Billings directly identifies CRP’s compatibility with Sleeter and Grant’s (1985) social reconstructionism. It is also worth emphasizing that CRP did not emerge as a proposal or idea but as a research finding from Ladson-Billings’ studies of successful teachers of African American students (see Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995a). Given how, from the get-go, CRP satisfied Sleeter and Grant’s oft-repeated critique of abstraction in the ‘truly’ multicultural education literature, it is no surprise that CRP has become the term most widely-used to describe what SJTE wants teachers to do.

From her findings, Ladson-Billings (1995c) assembled a theory of CRP grounded in Black feminist thought, relational epistemologies and thoroughgoing critiques of psychological models of pedagogy that “have failed to include the larger social and cultural contexts of students” as well as cultural ecological theories that “have failed to explain student success” (p. 483). Prioritizing sociocultural context and cultural pluralism, Ladson-Billing’s three ‘pillars’ of

CRP are “an ability to develop students academically, a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and the development of a sociopolitical or critical consciousness” (ibid.); in short, these are *high academic expectations*, *cultural competence* and *critical consciousness*. In order to flesh out the three pillars, I will briefly synthesize the findings of Morrison, Robbins and Rose’s (2008) comprehensive review of the operationalization of CRP via studies of what culturally responsive teachers are reportedly doing in their classrooms. Their findings thoroughly reflect Geneva Gay’s (2010) celebrated approach to CRP wherein she notably prioritizes the importance of caring – or attending to how teachers relate to students – and communication – or attending how teachers and students interact with each other – alongside curriculum and instruction. Nieto (1999) concurs:

Because all education is embedded in a particular sociopolitical context, multicultural education cannot consist simply of lesson plans that differ in content from traditional curriculum, nor can it be just new or innovative pedagogical strategies with no connection to the lives of the students with whom they are used. Multicultural education needs to be placed within a framework of empowering attitudes and beliefs rather than viewed as just pedagogy or curriculum. (p. 84)

With regard to *high academic expectations*, culturally responsive teachers have been found to offer “intensive modeling, scaffolding, and clarification of the challenging curriculum” (Morrison et al., 2008, p. 435), “[use] students’ strengths as instructional starting points” (p. 436) in order to create positive first experiences with new curricula, demonstrate a personal investment in student success within and beyond the classroom, create nurturing and cooperative learning environments, and articulate high behavioural expectations of students. Teachers sought to develop their students’ *cultural competence* in relation to their own ethnic heritage by

reshaping mainstream mandated curricula for greater relevance, and encouraging relationships to flourish between school and community. Most importantly, teachers built on the cultural and heritage knowledge that their students brought with them to school. This required teachers actively studying and moving about within the community, activating student prior knowledge about lesson content, honouring or (as much as possible) speaking heritage languages or dialects with students, and

[building] bridges between students' home discourse and interaction patterns and school learning. Interaction patterns include elements such as the style of speaking (terse, flowery, metaphor-laden, etc.), the back and forth of discussion, frequency of speaking, use of humor, movement during interactions, and periods of silence or simultaneous speaking. (p. 439)

The third pillar – *critical consciousness* – “involved preparing students for acting upon issues of social justice, preparing them for the power dynamics of mainstream society, and empowering students within this society” (Morrison et al., 2008, p. 441). This included cultivating students' critical literacy by taking mandated curricula as objects not privileged sources of fact, directly engaging students in social justice work through community service, making explicit the power dynamics of mainstream society, and sharing power in the classroom. Even from a cursory overview, it is clear that full-on CRP stands to structurally change schooling altogether.

Faced with the rising tide of neo-liberal accountability and standardization movements in the late 1990s, Ladson-Billings (1998b) would translate these three pillars into a proposal for the culturally relevant assessment of *teachers*. Crucially, she asks: “how is it that African American teachers so regularly and predictably fail current assessments, yet the presence of White teachers is no assurance that African American or other students of color will achieve” (p. 265)? This

question mirrors the radical disbelief with which CRP scholars regard standardized test data ostensibly showing, for example, sub-standard literacy among poor students and students of colour. The argument that measures of literacy are Eurocentric, assimilationist and therefore culturally *non-responsive* reflects CRP's core belief that all students can learn, regardless of what is 'known' about them on the basis of standardized tests.

Instantiating this core belief in teacher candidates – who continue to be overwhelmingly white, English-speaking and monolingual – requires considerable labour on the part of teacher educators committed to CRP. As Howard (2003) warns, the requisite critical reflection “often becomes painful because it may result in individuals recognizing that close family members harbored racist and prejudiced notions of racially diverse groups that were passed down from generation to generation” (pp. 198-9), including a belief that the system is just fine and that its results are natural and meritocratic. Teacher candidates very often resist the learning demanded by CRP, a phenomenon which I take up once again in Chapter Seven.

Resistance and other challenges of preparing teachers to deliver CRP have become the focus of a growing body of literature (e.g., Barnes, 2006; Edwards & Kuhlman, 2007; Hefflin, 2002; Seidl & Friend, 2002a, 2002b; Seidl, 2007; Shujaa, 1995). Guidance is provided by Villegas & Lucas' (2002a) book-length call for a coherent approach that spans all aspects of a teacher education program. In their rendering, “the fundamental orientations for teaching a changing student population” via CRP are: gaining sociocultural consciousness, developing an affirming attitude toward students from culturally diverse backgrounds, developing the commitment and skills to act as agents of change, embracing the constructivist foundations of culturally responsive teaching, learning about students and their communities, and cultivating the practice of CRP. A lynchpin of all six strands is the capacity of teacher candidates to seek and

build knowledge of themselves and their marginalized students. To this end, and although their model is for all teacher candidates regardless of race or ethnicity, a key contention of the text is that teacher candidates from minority and/or marginalized backgrounds are an untapped resource who “bring into teacher education a heightened awareness of the relationships among race, ethnicity, and economic status and an intimate familiarity with the language and way of life of minority students” (p. xx). From the perspective of CRP and SJTE, this brings a considerable advantage to becoming the transformative teacher envisioned by these fields.

Although other approaches like critical pedagogy are frequently invoked under the SJTE umbrella, the idea that teacher candidates should ‘become culturally responsive or culturally relevant’ is so pervasive that it no longer seems to require any citation of Ladson-Billings, Gay or Villegas and Lucas. Despite its pervasiveness, however, CRP is consistently under attack. In a recent article on the marginalization of CRP’s focus on localized and particular education in favour of increasingly scripted and standardized curricula, Sleeter (2012) argues that “neoliberal reforms, by negating the central importance of teacher professional learning, as well as context, culture, and racism, reverse the empowered learning that culturally responsive pedagogy has the potential to support” (p. 563). The prevailing ideology that has come to characterize (not only) American education in the present is inherently hostile to everything that CRP represents. Sleeter’s reasons for CRP’s marginalization include pervasive mischaracterization and misappropriation (recalling my discussion of multicultural education and foreshadowing my discussion of ‘SJTE impostors’ in Chapter Five), and a paucity of research connecting CRP to student achievement. SJTE, it would seem, is not alone in its troubles with evidence; CRP suffers as well despite its original emergence as data from Ladson-Billing’s studies of successful African American students.

## **Critical Race Theory.**

The final major influence or ‘fellow traveler’ of SJTE that I will review is Critical Race Theory (CRT), a legal studies field with a visible place in education. CRT contends that race and racism are central (if intersectional) forces in American society (Yosso, 2002) and remain so despite the changing legal landscape.<sup>11</sup> The CRT intervention in education was inaugurated by Ladson-Billings and William Tate (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Tate, 1997). Contending that “race remains untheorized as a topic of scholarly inquiry in education” (Tate, 1997, p. 196), these scholars found in CRT a means to move the analysis of race beyond merely an ideological construct or an objective condition. [...] Neither of these understandings of race gets to the racialized nature of society, the extent to which race contemporarily and historically has been constructed and institutionalized (via policies and practices), in ways that impact the daily lives and experiences of all races including whites. (Zamudio, Russell, Rios, & Bridgeman, 2011, pp. 7–8)

It is this emphasis on daily lives and experiences that sets CRT apart from the objectivist mainstream legal tradition that delivered landmark victories for the American civil rights movement. Whereas racism is instantiated in law as racist acts that differ from ordinary behaviour, the first tenet of CRT is that “racism is normal, not aberrant, in American society [...] such that] formal equal opportunity – rules and laws that insist on treating blacks and whites (for example) alike – can thus remedy only the more extreme and shocking forms of injustice, the ones that do stand out” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, p. xvi). Given that CRT scholars understand

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<sup>11</sup> See Aylward (1999) for an account of Canadian CRT based on a thorough appraisal of similarities and differences in Black Canadian and African American history: “the prevailing myth in the United States is that Americans have overcome their racist past and are no longer racist; and the prevailing myth in Canada is that we are a country without a history of racism” (p. 12). However, Aylward argues that “although most Canadians would deny the existence of widespread racism and, in particular, anti-Black racism in their country [...] the fact remains that Canadian history, legal and nonlegal, does not support such denials” (p. 14). I concentrate on American CRT in this section given that ‘SJTE proper’ is an American field.

racism to be normative, legal and policy measures that address exceptional circumstances in a purportedly ‘colour-blind’ or objective fashion are viewed with suspicion.

It is ordinary, partial and situated perspectives on race and racialization that are privileged in CRT, which emerged in the 1970s post-civil rights era as a response to the disappointments of rights-based jurisprudence for African Americans. In the post-segregation moment, the legal story of racial equality contrasted sharply and painfully with ongoing experiences of racism in the everyday lives of people of colour. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) offer the celebrated *Brown* decision as an example; while voicing their tremendous respect for Thurgood Marshall and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) who led the litigation,

with forty years of hindsight we recognize some serious shortcomings in that strategy. Today, students of color are more segregated than ever before. Although African Americans represent 12 percent of the national population, they are the majority in twenty-one of the twenty-two largest (urban) school districts. Instead of providing more and better educational opportunities, school desegregation has meant increased white flight along with a loss of African-American teaching and administrative positions. (pp. 55-56).

CRT scholars argue that the legal framing of school segregation as immoral or unjust was unwise because it served to obscure the fact that segregation was motivated by the desire to shore up white domination of public education. If the latter had been foregrounded, the *means* by which white domination is truly secured could have been dismantled, for example, through money not student re-distribution, or proportional African American representation on school boards, or equalization of all school facilities (see Tate, 1997, p. 213). However, by situating segregation



within the logic of an objectivist ‘colour-blind’ legal system, the *Brown* decision functioned to make racism illegal and ‘un-American’ at a time when the Truman government was competing with the U.S.S.R. for influence in rapidly decolonizing countries across the global south (see Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 219; Tate, 1997). A second tenet of CRT gleaned from the racialized history of the United States is, therefore, ‘interest convergence’ or the idea that “white elites will tolerate or encourage racial advances for blacks only when such advances also promote white self-interest” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, p. xvii; see also Milner, 2008). CRT’s inherent critique of neo-liberalism (individualism and meritocracy) is thus revealed: individual rights can be given to people of colour in order to *ensure* that nothing actually changes or that any change effectively preserves the status quo. In other words, “Whites have been the primary beneficiaries of civil rights legislation” (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 213).

In addition to the ordinariness of racism and white interest convergence, the third major tenet of CRT is counter-storytelling, or, the use of counter-narratives to document the perspectives of people of colour on the racism in their everyday lives. Counter-storytelling is a practice of revealing through situated and partial narratives that race ‘still’ matters even in contexts (like universities or other bureaucracies) where there is extensive ‘diversity’ or ‘equity’ policy (see my discussion of Ahmed, 2012 in the chapter’s second half). CRT is therefore deeply grounded in a constructivist theory of narration and in the insistence that stories are personally *and* politically significant. Here, storytelling is a practice not only of representation but construction, although Solórzano and Yosso (2002) maintain that “counter-storytelling is different from fictional storytelling. [...] Instead, the ‘composite’ characters we develop are grounded in real-life experiences and actual empirical data and are contextualized in social situations that are also grounded in real life, not fiction” (p. 36). CRT scholars use a variety of

forms including parable, chronicle, poetry, fiction and revisionist history (see Ladson-Billings, 1998a) to challenge master narratives like meritocracy, ‘post-raciality’ or wholesale improvements in racial equality in the post-civil rights era. Even CRT scholarship in leading law review journals

tacks between situated narrative and more sweeping analysis of the law. Many of the arguments found in CRT are best described as an enactment of hybridity in their texts, that is, scholarship that depicts the legal scholar as minimally bicultural in terms of belonging to both the world of legal research and the world of everyday experience. (Tate, 1997, p. 210)

The same ‘hybridity’ in-between research and ‘the real world’ is also an aim of educational research that begins from and proceeds via CRT (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).<sup>12</sup>

While some scholars have sought to develop CRT pedagogies for teacher education, usually around helping white teacher candidates to notice and encounter the pervasiveness of race and racism (e.g., Marx & Pennington, 2003; Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, 2002), most CRT interventions in teacher education have been conceptual. Critical race theorists in teacher education have used the hybrid CRT lens to offer powerful critiques of the institutionalization of ‘multicultural education’ in the preparation of teachers, particularly to contrast a surplus of multicultural policy rhetoric with an increasingly racialized achievement gap. Juárez and Hayes (2012) call out teacher educators and policymakers for continuing to wonder why teachers still enter the classroom unprepared to teach all students: “we find this kind of wondering [...] to be disingenuous and dangerous. We believe that, collectively, we in teacher education already know what must be done” (p. 2). For Chapman (2011), this knowledge goes largely unimplemented because “current and historical contexts of higher education and teacher education policies limit

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<sup>12</sup> See Chapman (2011, p. 241) for an overview of how CRT has been deployed in education to date.

the reform of teacher education in order to maintain the core assimilationist principles of whiteness and middle-class morality that normalize particular values, behaviors, and ways of knowing the world” (p. 239). In writing the counter-story of SJTE,<sup>13</sup> Ladson-Billings (1999) argued that maintaining the master narrative of ‘Public School Way Back When’ (PSWBW) – before desegregation when ‘things were simpler’ because they were monocultural – is an implicit priority of teacher education: “the only logical response to difference for the PSWBW adherents was to create a new and different set of rules and regulations *to add on to current practices*. Totally revamping the current practice would mean that something was wrong with PSWBW” (p. 222; added emphasis). Instead of critiquing the failure of teacher education to meet the needs of underserved students down the line, then, Ladson-Billings and others argue that this failure serves the very real purpose of domination. Thus, “there is no desire to disrupt the discourse of PSWBW in teacher preparation programs” (p. 223) which continue to marginalize issues of race and racism while admitting monocultural white candidates with no assessment of their cross-cultural competence.

In sum, CRT-based proposals for education reform begin from the field’s realist approach to education’s problems: that they do not only harm marginalized students, but actively scaffold whiteness and middle-class privilege. Juárez and Hayes (2010) articulate five things teacher education programs need to understand in order to integrate the insights of CRT: that racism is an endemic part of US society; that programs cannot practice true colorblindness; that academic ‘merit’ is problematic in the racialized context of the US; that experiential knowledge is extremely important in people of colour discourses; and that whiteness has a property value which is consistently being defended against attempts to redistribute power (through, for

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<sup>13</sup> Ladson-Billings actually takes up ‘multicultural teacher education’ but in a way that makes clear her object is ‘(teacher) education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist’ (Grant & Sleeter, 1985). This is what ‘social justice teacher education’ refers to in the present study.

example, reforming a systemically unequal education system). Ladson-Billings (1998a) suggests that, beyond appealing to legal and policy frameworks with their colour-blind notions of right and wrong, “a more fruitful tack is to find the place where the interests of Whites and people of color intersect” (p. 12). This means that a tactical shift may be required in order for teacher education to change, one that brings together – by any means – the interests of the ‘PSWBW’ teacher education establishment and the critical scholars whose work I have cited throughout this section on the roots of social justice teacher education. In the next section, I glean some insights from affect theorists on how university-based institutionalization hinders ‘social justice’ projects and produces a wide range of unintended consequences.

### **Affect Theorists on the Institutionalization of ‘Social Justice’**

As a teacher education field, SJTE is just one of many ‘social justice’ projects situated in universities. I devote this second section to three recent book-length studies of such projects by scholars from the affective turn in the theoretical humanities (see Clough, 2008; Hemmings, 2005). Although our objects are different, these authors’ methods and theoretical commitments are closer to my own than the scholars and field leaders whose work I have synthesized above. Two of these texts explore interdisciplinary academic fields. In *Why stories matter: The political grammar of feminist theory*, Clare Hemmings (2011) examines the conjoined fields of Women’s Studies and feminist theory. Robyn Wiegman (2012) also takes up Women’s Studies in *Object lessons*, but considers this interdiscipline alongside other ‘identity knowledges’ including Queer Studies, New (internationalized and anti-colonial) American Studies, and the ethnic studies fields. As we have seen, ethnic studies is a foundational influence for SJTE upon which it consistently draws in constructing the body of knowledge that TCs require to enact CRP and serve historically marginalized students. Lastly, in *On being included: Race and diversity in*

*institutional life*, Sara Ahmed (2012) turns from academics to the world of diversity workers. SJTE is often taken to symbolize the university's commitment to diversity, and Ahmed's observations on diversity work are germane and instructive.

The experiences of reading the multicultural education, CRP, CRT and SJTE literature, and reading Hemmings, Wiegman and Ahmed's accounts of their objects are strikingly resonant. Overall, I am interested in what challenges and particularities attend projects that connect critical or institutional practice with anti-oppressive political aims. How have those outside of the fields I addressed above taken up the question of evidence and outcomes, or, what do these projects *actually* – in the Deleuzian sense (Massumi, 2005) – do in everyday life? In what follows, I present relevant arguments from each text before synthesizing responses to these questions.

#### **Hemmings on feminist theory.**

In *Why stories matter: The political grammar of feminist theory*, Clare Hemmings uses both narrative and affective strategies to track the stories told by Western feminist theory about itself. Hemmings identifies feminist theory's (and/as Women's Studies') propensity to create divisive narratives of progress, loss and return that are strikingly consistent across the body of its peer-reviewed literature. Proponents of each narrative claim a difference from the others as well as a unique clarity regarding the discipline's past and future. Progress narratives proclaim that feminist theory has come a long way via poststructuralism from the bad old days of essentialist accounts of women's experience that do not interrogate either 'women' or 'experience'. In the other corner, loss narratives hold that poststructuralism carried feminist theory away from the real lives of women and as such has little real-world political significance.

Return narratives are more complex and offer a compromise between progress and loss: a turn to the material that is more self-conscious than essentialism and more realistic than

poststructuralism. Proper subjects of the contemporary return narrative situate the ‘cultural turn’ toward poststructuralism as decidedly over, and Hemmings shows how Western feminist return narratives compel agreement from everyone: “I was too stubborn, I see that now, says the former subject of a loss narrative; I was too concerned with critique and didn’t listen to your warnings, says the former subject of a progress narrative” (p. 98). The return narrative “resolves anxieties about who is more co-opted or political by asking its subjects to ‘take stock’ and focus on justice over infighting” (ibid.). Being the subject of a narrative is to be the subject of its particular affective pull, and all three narratives generate the necessary force.

Their *basic similarity* is Hemmings’ major finding. This similarity makes feminist theory complicit in what is often lamented as its co-optation by the hegemonic forces of global capitalism and neo-colonialism. The similarity is historiographical; all three narratives use the same cut-and-dry chronology that makes it possible for feminism to be over or in the past. For example, while progress and loss narratives debate whether lesbian feminism of the 1970s was visionary or tragically essentialist, they both maintain the co-extensiveness of the 1970s with ‘lesbian feminism’ in feminist historical time. Further, if a particular wave, movement or period of feminism can be encapsulated developmentally in the past, then feminist temporality is complicit in positioning Western (white) women as quintessentially post-feminist and liberated. Women living in developing and/or global south and/or non-white countries can then be uncritically deployed as objects of Western ‘gender equality’ projects joined with military intervention and capitalist exploitation. The bad lesson of feminist historiography – that feminism *can* be ‘over’ – does not ‘just happen’ to feminism when co-opted by hegemony. It is, for Hemmings, something that feminist theory does and for which it bears some responsibility.

One wonders how the three narratives can emerge so consistently across a broad field and

the hundreds of articles Hemmings surveyed. This is where affect emerges as a cornerstone of the text. All three narratives use affective textual strategies to create and position heroines and anti-heroines, or ‘real’ feminists and impostors. At the heart of these compelling distinctions is the relationship of one’s academic practice to ‘the real struggle.’ Loss narratives “indict increasingly abstract and obscure language use within feminist theory as constituting [...] *the sign* of a current lack of political engagement” (p. 67; original emphasis). Here, the bad feminist subject is corrupted by the institutionalization of academic feminism and her work is inaccessible to those ‘outside, in the fray.’ Progress narratives entreat the feminist subject “to leave behind homogeneity and essentialism, which we now know are racist and homophobic as well as anachronistic” (p. 57). Here, the bad feminist subject fails to completely jettison the bad past and its bad politics.

These palpable differences are obscured by a generational linearity that defies logic: “it does not make sense to blame an entire generation for the demise of feminist politics” (p. 81). Regardless of whether it makes sense, generational linearity remains *affectively* compelling. As Hemmings shows through analysis and first-person commentary on her own affective relationship to the narratives, whether this ‘makes sense’ has no bearing on whether it matters as a lived condition feminist scholarship. Each narrative’s anti-heroine is situated outside of struggle, outside of time because she is not from the decade valued by the narrative as expressive of ‘real feminism’. She is also necessarily outside, affectively:

Should [the feminist subject] refuse the terms of [... narrative] interpellation altogether, refuse the framing of available options, she cannot be understood as a participant in the ‘common sense’ of Western feminist theory, and will remain peripheral at best. The feminist reader is thus highly motivated to remain staked in these narratives. (p. 134)

The commonality that Hemmings tracks is a sign of what is *speakable* within feminist theory and also affects each theorist's sense of belonging within the field as its proper subject. These are high stakes, for to abandon 'real struggle' is to have drifted in no uncertain terms from the roots of feminist theory and its reason for being: its connection to human liberation and social justice. Pivotal, it is also to lose one's place and everyday life in a community of one's peers. The struggle over narrative – which lineage one lays claim to, whether it be ethnic studies and social reconstructionism or 'human relations' – as well as the consequences of being out of touch with 'the real struggle outside' are as salient in SJTE as they are in Hemmings' feminist theory.

**Wiegman on identity knowledges.**

In *Object lessons*, Robyn Wiegman analyzes interdisciplinary academic fields that “identify themselves in both historical and theoretical terms according to their proud avowal of [Left] political intentions” (p. 4). Wiegman's task in focusing on, among other things, Women's Studies, Whiteness Studies, New American Studies and queer theory is to account for how critique is keenly *felt* – not just understood – to equal action toward social justice. The gap between critique and action is repeatedly, necessarily sutured. The suturing imperative is the unspoken means of field consolidation, and it is how these 'identity knowledges' keep going. Wiegman's principle object of study is their 'field imaginary' or “the operation of the political as it generates the affective force that constitutes the psychic life of a field” (p. 15). When academic work is continually sutured to social justice, ordinary scholarly tasks become affectively excessive: “moral judgments (whether admitted or not) accompany nearly everything we touch, from critical rubrics, research topics, and objects of study to methods and arguments” (pp. 15-16). One's responsibility to the identity object – to changing its lived conditions – is affectively compelling. In identifying this excess, Wiegman seeks to map how affect forms fields.



No matter what *the* object is, Wiegman argues, identity knowledges must grapple with the ways in which objects of critique-as-justice-doing will always exceed their use: “let’s not pretend [...] that what we want from [objects] is adequate to the ways in which they inhabit and transform how we grasp the world” (p. 8). Objects do so much more than what they are allowed to do when domesticated by critique or justice work or both. In fact, she suggests, we are nothing without them. This affective investment in identity objects, for Wiegman, explains “how various fields reach or exact a limit, become disciplinary instead of interventionist, and mimic radicality instead of teaching us how to become radically undone” (p. 12). Keeping a field together means keeping our objects intact *even as they may change*, or as we seek to change their real worlds.

In the first two chapters, Wiegman takes up Women’s Studies and queer theory. She arrives at a similar conclusion to Hemmings: that proclaimed differences – between the former’s old and new objects (women and gender) as well as the difference claimed by queer theory from Women’s Studies – are greatly overstated. In Wiegman’s analysis, Women’s Studies expresses a hope that *if only the right object were found* the relationship between critique and social justice would materialize. This enables the turn to ‘gender’ and allows it to be appear different from ‘women’ despite the fact both were/are the identity object held to suture the gap.

Commensurability of an object of study and a field’s political desire is, however, impossible because the object will always be more and other than what we want.

Although suturing SJTE practice to ‘the world outside’ is a tricky business, as we shall see when I turn to the ‘demographic divides’ in Chapter Five, Wiegman’s analysis of Whiteness Studies is perhaps the most troublesome for a self-consciously anti-racist endeavour like SJTE. Although she focuses on Whiteness Studies the field, she is really addressing anti-racist education as a whole and therefore what SJTE practitioners do with our teacher candidates (to a

variable extent, recalling Sleeter & Grant's typology). It is "*consciousness* itself as an antiracist political instrument [and the] idealism that Whiteness Studies bestows on a knowing and fully conscious subject" (p. 29; added emphasis) that Wiegman finds unstable. The white Western subject's disavowal of white supremacy relies on a rational-logical self-awareness and self-mastery, both of which have been repeatedly used to justify colonial violence. Whiteness Studies and the anti-racism it espouses are tragically "founded on *the belief in knowledge* [... and how it] can survive what others will try to do with (or to) it" (p. 189; original emphasis). To "reproduce knowledge as outside the province of affective attachments or the unconscious" (ibid.) is to participate in the very system of thought that anti-racism seeks to vanquish.

Similarly, the New American Studies field imaginary is organized around a disavowal of "the white masculine subject at the heart of Cold War exceptionalism" (p. 201) and "directed toward particularity and de-universalization" (p. 202). Reflecting on her own Americanist history, Wiegman is haunted by the field's "implication [...] in the extensive power of the U.S. knowledge industry" (p. 213; added emphasis). The new moniker 'American American Studies' reflects the field's recent turn to internationalization as a promising object that might allow it to step away from "its authority as the defining discourse and geopolitical center of the field" (p. 204) as if it could cease to be implicated in American global supremacy. Again we find the wish that changing an identity object will suture critique to politics 'outside.' Wiegman demonstrates how "the critical force of the charge and the assurance it routinely delivers that critics are not only in control of their object attachments but that *what we say about [the attachments] is the surest truth of what they mean*" (p. 30; added emphasis). In her analysis of Whiteness and New American studies, then, Wiegman shows how disidentification with a 'bad critique' is as powerful as identification with a good object. Disidentification with, say, 'impostor' forms of

SJTE or multicultural education more broadly can be as formative as identification with the proper objects (beneficiaries) of social struggle and education reform.

In a prolonged engagement with intersectionality in the fifth chapter, Wiegman uses a case study of a fertility clinic mistake – whereby a white woman delivers a Black baby – to point out the problems of stabilizing juridical conceptions of equality as a way of connecting critique to justice. Intersectionality – that which “circulates today as *the* primary figure of political completion in U.S. identity knowledge domains” (p. 240; original emphasis) – originates in the particular experience of Black women, excluded from remedial race equality measures and theoretical models on the grounds of gender, and from gender equality measures and models on the grounds of race. In Wiegman’s reading, intersectionality has rendered this experience institutionalized and monolithic. Whereas “intersectionality draws its critical courage and reputation by positing particularity in the face of universalizations of all kinds” (p. 241), its particularity is no longer particular. Intersectionality evidences a practice of *paradigmatic reading*, which proceeds “as if the imbrications of race and gender actually conform to juridical logic such that knowing which side to take in one case can serve as the precedent for knowing which side to take in every case” (p. 32). For Wiegman, intersectionality demonstrates some challenging consequences of making objects ‘stand still’ or remain unchanged such that the shaky relationship between academia and ‘the world outside’ can be stabilized.

The concluding chapter contains a caution. In the “ongoing quest for a *we* that can survive its confrontation with difference to stage a cogent, if contingent collectivity” (p. 328) or field, we must avoid privileging some distant ‘political reality’ and ignoring the affective reality in which identity knowledges are themselves lived. This is the ordinary life of scholarship. There are no ‘real objects’ untouched by desire: “what [objects] offer is no match for what we want from them”

(p. 343). If the ‘right objects’ cannot be found then the affective forces that animate social justice-related academic fields are compelling objects in their own right. Thus, Wiegman’s call is a direct source of inspiration for the present study on what could be termed the affective life of SJTE, or what actually emerges when SJTE ‘happens’ in everyday life.

### **Ahmed on institutional diversity work.**

Turning now from the academic side of university-based social justice projects to the administrative, in *On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life* Sara Ahmed (2012) focuses her phenomenological lens on the experience of being a diversity practitioner (i.e., administrator, officer, manager or trainer on race issues). We might assume that institutional diversity work seeks to make the university more inclusive of diversity and, therefore, more socially just. To investigate this assumption, Ahmed brings together interviews with practitioners in the UK and Australia, textual analyses of institutional policy and her own experiences as a senior faculty member of colour involved in diversity work. Echoing the goals of CRT as we have seen, her goal is to describe the university from the perspective of diversity instead of whiteness, or that which is normally unapparent. This perspective is not visual but affective in that its difference has somatic effect; to inhabit a university from the standpoint of the diversity practitioner feels like going the wrong way in a crowd. For this reason, “diversity work [...] requires insistence. You have to become insistent to go against the flow, and you are judged to be going against the flow because you are insistent. A life paradox: you have to become what you are judged as being” (p. 186).

The collective momentum of university culture is experienced as stasis by the diversity practitioner. The flow is experienced as encounters with solidity, like a brick wall. And “those who are not going the way things are flowing are experienced as obstructing the flow” (p. 187)

and become the obstruction. Racism effectively recedes from view and diversity practitioners – who are very often people of colour – become ‘the problem’ because they obstruct the flow. Thus, Ahmed finds that diversity work is a phenomenological practice and practitioners are “institutional plumbers” (p. 186) who map the unapparent, unstated and yet resolutely material blockages within an institution that disallow change despite an appearance of willingness. In fact, the production of this appearance could be the de facto role of institutionalized diversity work.

For example, Ahmed finds that recent legislation on institutional race equality in the UK, with mandatory provisions for hiring diversity officers and writing diversity policies, created a world in which “an appointment of a diversity officer can [...] represent the absence of wider support for diversity” (p. 23). To be the diversity person can be to shoulder or symbolize the institution’s commitment to diversity such that diversity becomes no one else’s concern. Paradoxically, however, the goal of practitioners is to make diversity everyone’s concern such that it becomes unspoken and organic, habitual and given: “practitioners do not simply aim for diversity to become part of an organizational body or machine; they want diversity *to go through the whole system*” (p. 29; original emphasis). When actualized, getting diversity ‘through the whole system’ can mean getting diversity language placed toward the beginning of a policy or alongside valued terms such as ‘excellence.’ But if “the word ‘diversity’ appears as if it is everywhere, [...] that appearance might be part of what it is doing” (p. 57). Suspicious of its ubiquity, Ahmed finds that diversity’s circulation “allows it to accumulate positive affective value” (p. 67) that engenders the desire to participate in ‘shallow’ – to recall Sleeter & Grant’s typology (1985) – diversity efforts.

In addition to circulating diversity language, doing institutional diversity work can also involve circulating diversity documents such as policies, reports or mission statements. Unlike

terms such as antiracism or equal opportunities, the friendly emptiness of ‘diversity’ may help in the organic circulation of its documents. However, “if circulatability relies on friendliness, then documents might even be passed around *more* when they are doing *less*” (p. 96; original emphasis). Diversity work can consist almost entirely of writing, maintaining and circulating documents, but when “the success of the document is presumed to reside in how much it is passed around, this success might ‘work’ by concealing the failure of that document to do anything” (p. 97). Having a ‘good race policy’ – which, Ahmed finds, involves approximating the genre of ‘good race policy’ and not creating a site-specific, authentic document – can stand in for ‘race equality’ within a university. Ahmed worries that “if equality can be a way of ‘going through the motions,’ [...] the motions themselves direct attention” (p. 111). Going through the motions does not mean a university is inactive, but rather that it is highly active in going through the motions of social justice.

One of Ahmed’s key contributions is revealing the level of institutional commitment and energy devoted to maintaining the flow and absorbing would-be obstructions. In her re-orientation, we find a university committed not to anti-racism but to making anti-racist statements. The institutional ‘commitment to diversity’ is a ‘non-performative’ in that

the failure of the speech act to do what it says [...] *is actually what the speech act is doing*.

Such speech acts are taken up *as if* they are performatives (as if they have brought about the effects they name), such that the names come to stand in for the effects. As a result, naming can be a way of not bringing something into effect. (p. 117; original emphasis)

Part of diversity work, then, is spreading diversity fervour so that (non)performative language yields to ‘institutional will.’ As institutional will, diversity “does not need to be made into an object of will” (p. 129) by a particular individual or committee in order to be taken up. The

hoped for outcome is not to successfully force, but *to not have to force*, the issue of diversity.

In the final chapter, Ahmed highlights the perspective of people of colour and considers how racism has become unspeakable in the ‘diverse university.’ Turning to micropolitics, Ahmed explores accounts of how ‘just turning up’ to a meeting as a person of colour “can cause tension if your arrival is a reminder of histories that have receded from view” (p. 159). A pressure to make whiteness comfortable is expressed by Ahmed and many of her interviewees. There is pressure to inhabit the particular spaces for bodies of colour and “[pass] as the ‘right kind’ of minority, the one who aims not to cause unhappiness or trouble” (p. 157). This passing extends to taking up diversity positions; “when people of color turn up at equality and diversity committees, it is not scripted as a becoming” (p. 158) or otherwise laudable, as in the case of whiteness, but as something expected or tacitly required. To be included and to be inclusive can be experiences of racism. Indeed, within the ‘diverse university’ a person of colour’s very presence is held to negate the existence of racism as something already gotten over.

Ahmed advocates against taking up the subject position of happy diverse other, and for exercising angry instead of happy speech on the grounds that, like non-performative statements of commitment, institutional diversity is working well and doing what it is supposed to be doing: *not* diversifying the university. Although ‘diversity world’ provides crucial sites of interaction for people of colour and/as diversity practitioners within institutions, the effects of treading its officially sanctioned pathways are pre-determined. The ‘diverse university’ becomes ‘not racist’ over and over again, regardless of whether its institutional culture becomes socially-just.

### **Synthesis: The Trouble with Language**

In identifying some unintended consequences of carving out ‘social justice’ spaces in the university, Wiegman, Hemmings and Ahmed demonstrate the problem of relying on language –

what we might *say* about our political commitments – to learn about what our commitments *do*. In the first section on SJTE’s roots, however, each of the three endeavours I discussed – multicultural education, culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy and Critical Race Theory – tend to rely on the power of language to claim and negotiate an authentic relationship to struggles for social justice outside of the academy. Multicultural education is characterized by a series of typological efforts that assess whether or not the field’s language has been misused and misapplied. Culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy foregrounds particular uses of language (those belonging to underserved communities) as well as particular kinds of (critical, reconstructionist) conversations as characteristic of CRP classroom practice. And Critical Race Theory is founded on the importance of representing the realities of people of colour through stories that accurately incorporate CRT terms and concepts pertaining to whiteness. Language – what we say about who we are and what we do – does seem to be a primary way in which SJTE, its interlocutors and inspirations locate their difference from business as usual in education.

It is ‘in education’ – institutionalized – where Hemmings, Wiegman and Ahmed are particularly instructive. Taken together, they identify a common difficulty: that institutionalization has consequences exceeding the object or intended beneficiary of social justice practice, whether the object is a nebulous force like racism or a historically marginalized community. To become institutionalized as a social justice project is to participate in an economy of scarcity in which space, air-time, visibility, authenticity, authority, funding or other necessities *feel like* winnings in a competition on the basis of proximity to ‘the real’ of justice: where it lies, what it is, who it is for. Connecting our work to social justice – a perpetual labour of suturing – can be *what we do* on a daily basis if not *what we are (here to be) doing*. The imperative to proceed ‘as if’ social in/justice can be found where we (a field, a program, an



office, a policy, a curriculum) say it can and ‘as if’ our methods (initiatives, procedures, pedagogies) can bring it about is negotiated by theorists and practitioners alike. This is part of securing one’s own legitimacy and authenticity as well as that of the field to which one belongs.

Legitimacy and authenticity are tricky; they pose problems for evidence because they are *affective* or are prior to and beyond the register of language (as I shall set out in the next chapter). Hemmings charts the affective force of feminist historiography and its compelling demand that the feminist theorist position herself within the correct decade and use the correct terms or else risk political irrelevance. Wiegman marvels at identity knowledges’ continual performances of gap-suturing such that today’s object relations become *the only way* that practitioners can keep on believing that our own critical practice (including teaching and teacher-educating) is justice-doing. Ahmed reveals how diversity workers and faculty engaged in related activities (like SJTE) are pulled in two directions by the institution and ‘the movement’ outside, unsure which they serve but beholden to both for myriad compelling reasons. While the task of social change is always ‘bigger than you’ its injuries and exhaustions are not. And it does not necessarily follow that academics including teacher educators and educational researchers are less susceptible to the vicissitudes of institutionalization – or less likely to foster ‘institutionality’ amongst ourselves – than other university workers because of some storied critical sophistication.

From these authors, then, we learn the difficulty of knowing what one’s commitment to a social justice – that emerges *somewhere* or *somewhen* else – is *actually doing*, or what this commitment does in the present. We also learn that this difficulty, as a kind of evidence problem, is far from unique to SJTE. Furthermore, in all of these fields and related endeavours, I argue that it is impossible to identify impostors – people or projects not ‘really doing the work’ or involved in shallow versions thereof – given that the connection between practice and justice is

heavily affective. As we have seen with SJTE and its roots, institutionalized social justice work is also personally and collectively precarious. After all, the reason this work is given space by the ‘benevolent’ institution is because its projects somehow line up with the kind of ‘doing’ recognized by the university *as doing*, on the one hand, and *as* doing something *about* the object, on the other. There is pressure to be sure that one’s doing is ‘the real deal’ of bringing about social justice given the risk that the institution will take up the language or other trappings of ‘justice’ to its own ends (such as making racism unspeakable, or making Women’s Studies obsolete due to the ‘success’ of academic feminism, or talking about ‘meeting the needs of all students’ instead of restructuring society altogether). Further risks abound: that one’s very presence is counter-productive or even complicit in injustice, regardless of conscious intent; that one might cease to be affectively compelled by one’s field but have nowhere else to go; that one’s institutional work is not actually precarious such that you don’t know who you are anymore or worse (you can no longer be allied with the ‘truly’ precarious); or – most importantly for my dissertation – that our objects or intended beneficiaries are not who or what we think they are because they are always becoming.

In sum, institutionalization creates particular conflicts for social justice programs, initiatives, etc. that are ‘about’ the struggles of marginalized peoples for resources and recognition, including SJTE. When resources and recognition accrue instead to university-based projects founded in the name of the oppressed, the distance between the project and the people can and must be managed by any means necessary in order for practitioners to remain intelligible to themselves on a daily basis and for the project to survive: for the practitioners involved (e.g., researchers, theorists, writers, teachers) to be able to muster the requisite time, energy and commitment to what the project stands for in the absence of a stable evidentiary connection to

justice-doing. Wiegman, Hemmings and Ahmed express a mistrust of language and an unwillingness to read across the gap between saying and doing as if it were not in play. In short, no matter what you say or how, saying cannot be taken as ‘the real’ of your institutionalized commitment to justice. However, ‘the real’ might be altogether inaccessible in the present. This is the problem that I seek to engage in the remainder of my dissertation.

As a professional field, teacher education is certainly *more* institutionalized than the objects of Hemmings and Wiegman, and even Ahmed’s, given that diversity work in the university is a recent development. The many difficulties these scholars identify may be even more acute in education, particularly given that teacher education programs are subject to forces of internal *and* external institutionalization (e.g., NCATE, regional higher education accreditation bodies, university-wide standards, faculty enrolment targets, etc.), and accountable to several levels of government. Both individually and collectively, SJTE practitioners are accountable for preparing students to enter a profession with increasingly structured requirements. The ‘outcomes’ of teacher education writ large are far more solidified than those of the fields covered by these authors. Further, SJTE’s object relations must be far more (provisionally and therefore precariously) stabilized given that its objects are so stabilized: historically marginalized students, their families and communities. Justice is made to equal some kind of tangible effect on these students, and the troublesome seamlessness of this equation is symbolized by SJTE’s struggles with evidence: with what counts and where it can be found.

As much as SJTE aims to affect the well-being and life chances of marginalized K-12 students down the line, however, there is far more to learn about the field than whether or not it succeeds. Wiegman, Hemmings and Ahmed share my own commitment to finding capacities and contributions in relation to social difference that are produced by the everyday negotiation of the

gap. Ahmed's suggestion that diversity workers are institutional plumbers by virtue of their going against the flow is the most explicit. They are adept at *really* knowing how to get things done, to the extent that the semantic relationship between signifier – 'diversity worker' – and signified – what this work actually entails – becomes meaningless. Ahmed thus encourages us to look beyond semantics to find other powerful contributions of fields like SJTE. Wiegman repeatedly insists that scholars in identity knowledge domains have a wealth of analytical fodder and experience given their inhabitation of such peculiar fields. This is rich enough to become the field's own object, studied from an entirely unique perspective: how identity and institutionality interrelate conceptually, affectively and practically. Given that SJTE seeks to intervene in how (educational) institutions affect their constituents, this is a useful suggestion. For her part, Hemmings paints feminist theorists as storytellers whose narratives are compelling, surprisingly unified and given (selective) authority within decidedly non-left arenas. What are SJTE's less explicit capacities that are amenable to 'bona fide' social justice ends, if indeed one could know what these are? Learning more about these capacities is a good place to begin.

### **CHAPTER THREE – Theoretical Framework: Assemblage and Affect**

My research problem highlights SJTE’s difficulty in matching what it says about itself to what it does, or, the impossibility of connecting the activities of particular teacher educators – what they say they do – to social change. In the preceding chapter I situated SJTE’s historical and conceptual roots alongside affective studies of institutionalized social justice projects in order to think about how we might look outside of language. In the ruins of language, looking for how social justice teacher education ‘works’ – how it ‘carries on’ as itself regardless of the impossibility of ‘social justice’ behaving like an outcome – and what it can do must proceed with a different set of tools. For my purposes, these are theories of assemblage and affect.

In building my theoretical framework, I draw simultaneously on Deleuzian assemblage theory and theories of affect developed across the theoretical humanities and social sciences. Because I am interested in the actual surface of social life as a site of political significance, my study takes place on the surface: in innumerable conversations, encounters and spaces shared briefly with shifting constellations of SJTE practitioners, whether ‘in the flesh’ at conferences or via the mediation of Skype (more to follow in my methodology chapter). In these moments, I mapped the unfolding experience of being ‘caught up’ in the SJTE-assemblage as something “directly compelling” (Stewart, 2007, p. 3). For this reason, and although many affect theorists are not Deleuzians and Deleuzians are not all interested in affect, I take up affect theory as an archive of writings on the ordinary, everyday registration – at the level of corporeal sensation – of our being caught up in things far exceeding ourselves, our intentions, our consciousness and our reasoning: assemblages. My dissertation research insists that an assemblage can be studied on the visceral plane of affect, or, that the broader interrelations of networked belonging that compose the assemblage ‘make landfall’ directly in the lives and on the bodies of its human (and

non-human) components. So understood, the assemblage is materially apparent to human experience despite its diffusion and decentered agency. Moving around in the midst of the SJTE-assemblage and becoming attuned to rises and falls in affective intensity is one way to study the field that precedes and exceeds the words with which practitioners or field leaders speak and write about our work. In what follows, I discuss theories of assemblage and affect in turn.

### **What is an Assemblage?**

My primary theoretical touchstones on the assemblage are two in-depth scholars of Deleuze and his work with Guattari: Jeffrey Bell (2006) and Manuel DeLanda (2006). In *Philosophy at the edge of chaos: Gilles Deleuze and the philosophy of difference* Bell traces the philosophical heredity and metaphysics of Deleuze's assemblage, which he terms a dynamic system at the edge of chaos. Taking a different tack, in *A new philosophy of society: Assemblage theory and social complexity* DeLanda gives greater priority to assemblage theory as sociological. DeLanda is interested in how we might study society and its components as a series of nested and interconnected assemblages of ever-increasing scale and complexity, from conversations and groups on up to cities and nations. On the other hand, Bell takes up Deleuze and Guattari's charge of finding thresholds at which assemblages come apart or cease to be identifiable: when they succumb to the constitutive instability he identifies. Along with selected forays into Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) and help from noted Deleuze scholars Claire Colebrook (2002) and Brian Massumi (2002), Bell and DeLanda's accounts of assemblage allow me to think about *the thresholds of the assemblage in everyday life*. As I will detail in my methodology chapter, this is what I tried to study via my fieldwork and conversations.

#### **Bell: Dynamic systems at the edge of chaos.**

The metaphysical assumptions and implications of assemblage theory can make it

counterintuitive to the ways in which we have learned to think about the world. Assemblage theory arises out of the metaphysical tradition in philosophy focused on the being-ness of being. This is the study of what one might call the ‘form’ of being (how it takes shape) as opposed to its ‘content’ (what is or can be). Bell grounds his theory of assemblages as dynamic systems in Deleuze’s Spinozan roots in order to articulate the difference between Spinozan metaphysics, in which being is immanence (what emerges in the present), and the more familiar metaphysics of Plato and Hegel in which being is transcendence (what withstands or exceeds the present).

The immanence-transcendence disjuncture is key to understanding Deleuze’s novel contribution to ontology in Western metaphysics. Immanent being is always in process and without a model whereas transcendent being is always relative to a static ideal that is above or prior to being and serves as its model and yardstick. God is the most common yardstick of transcendent being, although some visions of ‘social justice’ could also be described as ontologically transcendent given their connotation as a perfect ordering of the world. Because transcendence is always relative to an ideal, all other expressions of being are somehow lacking and on their way to being the ideal. The transcendent ideal, however, is unaffected by the flow of life and is outside of time. By contrast, in Deleuzian metaphysics there is no transcendence. Nothing can determine in advance *what is* let alone *what is good*. In Deleuze’s philosophy, of immanence, being is always a becoming and identity – what a thing is – is not essence but rather *identifiability* or becoming-identity. The process of becoming-x does not cease or arrive at a certain point when its criteria are complete: when x, finally, is. Rather, there are no certain points or exhaustible criteria, and completion means something else entirely, as we shall see.

In reference to this particular metaphysical inheritance, Bell uses several synonyms for assemblage, most notably *abstract machine* and *dynamic system*. Assemblages are *abstract*

because their logic is sufficiently abstract to account for the functioning of all identifiable systems regardless of form or content. They are *machinic* because they are a contingent whole, or a network of connective relations among components that work together (in unpredictable ways) like a machine to create. Assemblages are *dynamic systems* because they are always in motion and always multiple. Abstract, machinic, moving and multiple are assemblage keywords, although in what follows I mostly use Bell's preferred term 'dynamic system' for ease of reading.

Dynamic systems are first and foremost expressions of a fundamental *both/and* (referred to as *the Abstract Machine*), which allows for identities – things, people, language, elements, qualities, properties, etc. – *to become and become identifiable*. These are one and the same operation, which upsets the temporality of representation by removing the gap between a priori signified and signifier. The condition of becoming identifiable is all there is to being. 'Both/and' is the *double bind* of being which is the closest Deleuze and Guattari will come to articulating an ideal or God. Within the traditional metaphysics of transcendence, being reaches its fullest expression when stable identities emerge and maintain unchanging such that they are 'complete.' The criteria against which their completion is judged are images or ideas of the perfection commonly – but not always – associated with divinity. In this model, things are *either perfect or they are not*, and completion is perfection. In Deleuzian metaphysics, however, being is the infinite expression of the both/and: things are *both complete and in process*. As such, Deleuze turns transcendence on its head by suggesting that while there *is* something eternal that exceeds being, it is not a static image or referent (e.g., social justice) that exists apart from beings. What is eternal is the continual process of both/and, which Bell figures as *chaosmos*.

Chaosmos is at once *both* cosmos, or "stable, structured strata that are in some sense complete" *and* chaos, or "unstable, unstructured, deterritorializing flows" (p. 4). As Bell



elaborates, a dynamic system expresses chaosmos in two ways: “as the condition of possibility for a system which is constantly changing and in flux, that is, which is dynamic” and “as the limit it must avoid (its condition of impossibility) if it is to remain a dynamic, functioning system” (p. 199). All dynamic systems navigate the two poles of chaosmos without succumbing to stasis through an excess of order (e.g., perfection, strict coherence), or collapse through a chaotic lack of order. The cosmic assemblage resists crucial adaptation to a continuously becoming-world, and the chaotic assemblage loses all meaning or identifiability. A complete and identifiable dynamic system has sufficient consistency to function but “is forever open to an outside it presupposes, an immanent chaos which both threatens the system and allows it to create novel adaptations” (p. 178). Completeness is not, therefore, a matter of reaching the end of a trajectory or the pinnacle of development, but of continually moving, where all movement is between the two poles. As such, both/and is the condition *and* the possibility of being. Being is immanent; it is *becoming*, an expression of the double bind of chaosmos. This is why dynamic systems are *self-organized*, or not subject to any external and transcendent principle of organization.

Every identifiable dynamic system expresses this double bind *in its own way*. All identifiable things that emerge within and from an assemblage – ideas, behaviours, actions, products, qualities, etc. – are singular and creative responses to the necessity of coping with chaosmos. Each assemblage has a protocol that develops from this response. This protocol is its *purposiveness*, which is not the same thing as purpose, or a static and transcendent *raison d'être*. The only ‘purpose’ of an assemblage is to become (without static or transcendent content), and purposiveness is *how* a particular assemblage becomes, or walks its fine line between the two deaths of stasis and meaninglessness (absolute cosmos and absolute chaos). The protocol is “determined by the practical needs of the functioning assemblage, whether this assemblage be

human, social, natural, etc.” (p. 109) but “cannot, nor should it be used to determine what the order will be in the future” (p. 110). It is immanent and also pragmatic; an assemblage must experiment in order to keep going and manage the double bind. Bell describes what a dynamic system does – and how we ourselves can think about its doings – as ‘Deleuzian pragmatics’ which “attempt to clarify the plateaus, planes of consistency, and assemblages that are themselves constitutive and constituted exemplifications of [...] purposiveness without purpose” (ibid.). ‘To experiment!’ is the pragmatic command issued by Deleuze and Guattari in the face of the double bind: see what works in coping well with chaosmos such that creativity is possible. Make a new *plateau*: a way of life *both* more stable *and* more adaptable, or that works better. Follow a *rhizome*: a becoming that issues from anywhere and not only from the top or brain or command centre of a hierarchy. See what happens: what can *actualize*, or, emerge into apparent sensation – become identifiable – within this system.

Such experimentation, expressed by my own study, is necessarily concerned with the threshold or limit of the dynamic system, or where *territorialization* and *deterritorialization* occur in cycles, continually stabilizing and destabilizing the identifiability of an assemblage, remaking it anew. In my discussion of DeLanda below, I describe territorialization and deterritorialization in greater detail and with reference to a more concrete analysis. According to Bell, Deleuze and Guattari’s goal in their collaborative work was “to trace and map processes of transformation whereby non-formed flows and processes of becoming are selected, territorialized, and stratified, and [...] show how these territorializations are in turn susceptible to deterritorializing flows” (p. 111) and lines of flight. When studying the SJTE-assemblage, I am charged with determining “the limits beyond which the abstract machine collapses into either the cancerous body or the fascist body” or to theorize how SJTE works “without being too abstract

or not abstract enough” (p. 212). Being too abstract would be missing what happens on the ground, and being not abstract enough would be a failure to link what happens back to chaosmos by privileging things like human agency or transcendence. This is the task I undertake in my dissertation: to study SJTE’s thresholds while bearing in mind the risks of abstraction.

Before I turn to DeLanda’s assemblage theory, I will continue with Bell in an elaboration of Deleuze’s theory of *difference*. This is important, given that difference usually operates within a logic of either/or: *either* x is this *or* it is that, where this and that are presumed in advance to be categorically different. However, assemblages cannot be said to differ in this way because they are inseparable networked flows with overlapping and interrelated components (more on this shortly). It is impossible to separate two assemblages to the extent that we could say they categorically differ. This is the promise and challenge of conceiving of a networked, moving multiplicity or multitude (Hardt & Negri, 2005) as an object of study instead of something that stands still. Difference is not transcendent, or relative to a floating rule or standard, but immanent to the dynamic system itself. The assemblage does not become radically something else as it becomes, but instead moves into a different organization still identifiable as *this* dynamic system. If all goes well, this will be another plateau amidst chaosmos; if not, the assemblage will deterritorialize into its components. Within this logic, the world is too complex, too multiple to make categorical either/or statements of difference and account for all variables in order to be sure.

Because they are “simultaneously complete and open” to chaos, dynamic systems are “self-differing (i.e., constantly changing and becoming different) and self-identical” (Bell, 2006, p. 199). Change – the process that brings about self-difference in a dynamic system – is caused not by the agency of humans but through the emergence of consistency through repetition. Put

simply, a new (and maybe better) way of life emerges slowly and is not created on purpose. This is where it becomes useful to think with the figuration of the Body without Organs (BwO). A BwO is called a body because it is a unity like bodies are, but “a ‘strange unity’, such that the elements are in a relationship of consistency with one another” (p. 165) *but* are not yet identifiable as having particular roles, characteristics, names or functions as is the case with the human heart, lungs or skin. A BwO is a deterritorialized flow, some of the undifferentiated substance that all ordered, differentiated things pre-suppose.

The production of identifiability and the stability (cosmos) it requires can only happen if the BwO makes a series of two *articulations* while plugged into a dynamic system. Consistency is the first, whether in terms of rhythm, speed or proximity in space and/or time (e.g., layers of sediment being organized by a flow of water, as in Deleuze and Guattari’s classic example of sedimentation, or bodies inhabiting a space together). Nothing can be produced without this consistency, or differentiation; the internal plane of consistency of the BwO is just the inevitability of consistency (form, not content), and is the only inevitability in Deleuze and Guattari’s metaphysics aside from the Abstract Machine, which is a *process* as is the emergence of consistency (so only things in motion are inevitable). Once consistency begins to emerge, the second articulation – differentiation – forms a plane of consistency or a greater stability that allows for identifiable processes and products or *identities* to emerge (e.g., as above, the layers become sedimentary rock, or the bodies become a community). This does not always happen, but remains the purposeless purposiveness of the functioning assemblage: to avoid either chaos or cosmos, totalitarian shut-down or cancerous proliferation, an avoidance requiring a creative response (where creation is production). What identities might do or become is never known in advance, but the need to experiment in order to survive requires that the assemblage create

through this process of continual *emergence*. Creation is also Deleuze's definition of thought, and assemblages are in this way accorded an agency of (pre-personal or non-human) thought usually reserved for human beings alone.

To clarify, and taking up again my examples in parentheses above, the BwO or unstructured flow that is territorialized such that sedimentary rock emerges is the unorganized (yet consistent) movement of sediment through water. The BwO of a community is the unorganized flow of bodies into and out of a space (however construed). The assemblage that territorialized, creating rock or community – that plugged into the unstructured flow of the BwO – is becoming-rock, becoming-community, changed by its own movement of production but not categorically different from what it has produced. Once again, a seemingly paradoxical both/and logic is at work. Thus, assemblages produce identities that can be a BwO for still other processes, which can in turn plug into other assemblages in the process of differentiation/differenciation. Things are multiple and play infinite simultaneous roles. This is why difference is positive and not lack in the Deleuzo-Guattarian universe, in that it produces ever greater ways and opportunities to create and affect, increasing the power to be and live creatively.

The double articulation is particularly conducive to new plateaus, and as such tends to be gradual. This is not the only way that change can come about, although difference is always immanent for Deleuze. Deterritorialization can be sudden, swift and catastrophic, resulting from a line of flight that destabilizes an assemblage before consistency can emerge anew, or where there was not enough stability in the first place, or where the flow (BwO) escapes rigid segmentation.<sup>14</sup> However, a working dynamic system does not shy away from chaos but thrives at the edge, where it is at its most productive yet most vulnerable. Stability is an asset until it

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<sup>14</sup> I reserve a more detailed discussion of segments and lines (e.g., lines of flight, associated with deterritorialization) for my second data chapter where they begin to structure my argument.

becomes a liability and nothing works anymore. In the next section where I turn to DeLanda's assemblage theory, I pay greater attention to these processes, compiling an account of assemblage more friendly to empirical social research than the primarily metaphysical account given by Bell, although there are clear resonances between them as we shall see.

### **DeLanda: Bridging assemblage and social theory.**

Manuel DeLanda's (2006) contribution – among many – to *social* (and not, for example, biological or genetic) assemblage theory has been an effort to make Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual universe interact with the work of well-known social theorists (e.g., Weber, Goffman, Tilly, etc.) who begin with exteriority not interiority as the model for how different social entities interact and affect each other. This has involved a sort of domestication of Deleuze & Guattari, which is exegetically useful and yet limiting if one does not share DeLanda's exact goals.<sup>15</sup> Assemblages, for DeLanda, are “wholes whose properties emerge from the interactions between parts” (p. 15) or components, where heterogeneous components are not constituted by their relations to each other (relations of interiority) as these are always only contingent. Rather, relations of exteriority – which do not depend on the components' properties – are what matters: “the properties of the component parts can never explain the relations which constitute a whole” (p. 11). Crucially, the properties of an assemblage are not merely an aggregate of its components' *properties*. Rather, the properties of the whole only emerge during “the actual exercise” (ibid.) of

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<sup>15</sup> A unique feature of DeLanda's theory is his use of spatial scale to posit that society-as-a-whole is an emergent property of innumerable smaller assemblages at increasing spatial scales. The subject emerges from an assemblage of prepersonal components, and the nation-state emerges from an assemblage of cities. Organization assemblages, from which cities emerge, themselves emerge from assemblages of interpersonal networks composed of subjects. Each assemblage has its own ‘diagram’ or ‘body-plan’ “that would structure the space of possibilities associated with the assemblage” (p. 30). As DeLanda himself notes, however (p. 126, f.n. 7), Deleuze does not use multiple scales in his assemblage theory and rather asserts that the diagram extends to the entire social field. While I am uninterested in situating SJTE at the particular spatial scale of organizations – which seems in some way to imply an *essential scale* for organizations, against DeLanda's own critique of essences – DeLanda describes the workings of assemblages well and deeply. Assemblages have emergent properties, and if we take organizations – of which SJTE is one – as *just one* and not *the only* possible emergent property of consistent networks among individuals, there is no need to follow DeLanda into his strict line of ascendance to the nation, at least for my purposes here.

its components' *capacities*. As such, there are no totalities – or seamless, organismic wholes – and no essences, or things that just *are* without reference to how they come about. There is no city, but there is a city-assemblage. An assemblage has properties and capacities of its own that are irreducible to those of its components and their relations; these properties and capacities are, rather, *emergent*. Therefore, to study an assemblage involves studying its components, their properties and capacities, and the emergent properties and capacities of the assemblage 'itself.'<sup>16</sup>

Deleuze and Guattari proposed that an assemblage is defined along two axes, and I am taking up DeLanda's useful account of what these are and how they work. The two axes are the roles of its components and the processes of territorialization and deterritorialization in which its components participate. Components have roles that can be either expressive or material but are usually mixtures on this continuum.<sup>17</sup> *Expressivity* is in no way limited to language (more on this below) but can include movement, gesture, grooming, heat, light, perspiration, sound, touch or any other affecting and potentially causal expression. In social assemblages, components playing a *material* role "at the very least involve a set of human bodies properly oriented (physically or psychologically) towards each other" (DeLanda, p. 12) but can also include food, labour, tools, machines, body parts, technology, geography and physical structures. None of these is rendered in a simplistic fashion, and many if not all are assemblages in their own right.

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<sup>16</sup> It is worth noting that DeLanda's assemblage theory, as an analytic, is relatively devoid of experimentation except as bounded by spatial scale. For example, "analysis must go beyond logic and involve causal interventions in reality" but "these interventions are needed because [...] the entity under study may be composed of parts operating at different spatial scales and the correct scale must be located" (p. 31). Experimentation, here, is for explanation and not exploration, with the latter being exhorted by Deleuze and Guattari, as is made clear in Massumi's (1987) foreword to *A Thousand Plateaus*.

<sup>17</sup> DeLanda makes an alteration here that I accept given its utility in the study of social entities like SJTE. Deleuze and Guattari "distinguish the substance and form of the materiality and expressivity of assemblages" (ibid.) such that one must be concerned with material form / material substance and expressive form / expressive substance. For them, e.g., language is a form of expression and facial expressions are substance of expression. Again, DeLanda works instead with the material and expressive roles of components given that he is tailoring assemblage theory to the study of social entities. Form and substance on either dimension are especially hard to discern in components of these entities. For example, bodies in social assemblages perform almost all four roles in an almost perfect mixture. I therefore follow DeLanda and confine myself to two, understanding that substance/form are implicit.

This duality – material and expressive – of components is the basis for Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) claim that an assemblage is at once “a machinic assemblage of bodies, of actions and passions, and intermingling of bodies reacting to one another” and “a collective assemblage of enunciation, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies” (p. 88).

Territorialization, for DeLanda (2006), takes two forms, one literally spatial and one not: “processes of territorialization [...] define or sharpen the spatial boundaries of actual territories [...] and] increase the internal homogeneity of an assemblage” (p. 13). Processes that blur or weaken boundaries or increase internal heterogeneity are deterritorializing. To recap, territorialization is analogous to differentiation, or the second articulation as set out in the preceding section.

Through territorialization, “a whole emerges from its parts and maintains its identity once it has emerged” (p. 14). At this point, DeLanda makes a useful and well-supported adaptation of the schema developed in *A Thousand Plateaus* and elsewhere; whereas Deleuze named two kinds of ‘actual entities’ – assemblages and strata, or more or less coded systems of lines and segments – DeLanda adds the processes of coding and decoding as a third axis defining an assemblage. In other words, he names ‘strata’ as assemblages in which authority is rigid and consolidated. I come back to strata, coding, lines and segments when I discuss Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of micropolitics in Chapter Six. For now, it is enough to say that DeLanda’s third axis of de/coding (similar in form to de/territorialization) proceeds because of the participation of components that are also “specialized expressive identities” (p. 14), the prevailing one being language, in social assemblages. Language, itself an assemblage, is specialized due to its “separation between the substance and forms of expression” (p. 122, f.n. 13), or the unique autonomy of the content of language (words, meanings) from the forms of language (facial expressions, body language) such that a linguistic expression can outrun and outlast its material



vehicle. This third axis is, according to DeLanda, particularly characteristic of social assemblages (although genes are also specialized) and serves to complexify them.

Territorialization and coding are therefore both synthetic processes of assembly, with coding in some cases rigidifying and consolidating an already identifiable assemblage.

In addition to elucidating components, properties, capacities and the three axes of definition (roles of components, de/territorialization, de/coding), DeLanda insists that our task is also “causal, concerned with the discovery of the actual mechanisms operating” (p. 31) within and among assemblages.<sup>18</sup> There is no linear causality (‘same cause, same effect, always’) in assemblage theory, as this implies essence. Rather, the multiplicitous, moving internal organization of assemblages means that simple cause-effect relations are unreliable. Rather, DeLanda sketches several forms of non-linear, *productive* causality, where the latter signifies “a relation in which one event (the cause) *produces* another event (the effect)” (p. 20; added emphasis) and not only *implies* it in theory (in advance). An emphasis on productivity here echoes the relationship between an assemblage’s properties being determined by its components’ *actual exercising of their capacities* and not simply being a hodgepodge of component properties. For example, within an assemblage framework we look at SJTE’s collective *doing* – the exercise, in real time, of its capacities – and not the properties of practitioners and students in thinking about what makes SJTE different from business-as-usual in teacher education. This rethinking of what makes SJTE itself directly challenges the field’s identity as the people who narrow the demographic divides. Linear cause and effect chains – e.g., a greater number of particularly-propriety people lead to a necessarily more socially-just outcome – are re-examined given their dependence on internal (to the component) causality.

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<sup>18</sup> DeLanda is also concerned with what he has often termed ‘quasi-causal operators,’ or the quasi-causality of the assemblage that is its virtuality or diagram. I will address this later on with reference to DeLanda as well as Colebrook and Massumi.

Forms of non-linear causality are instead “defined by thresholds below or above which external causes fail to produce an effect, that is, thresholds determining the capacities of an entity to be causally affected” (p. 20). In other words, non-linear causality is interested in degrees of responsiveness to provocation. At one extreme, external causes are merely catalytic triggers where an effect depends on the component not the catalyst. The same cause can therefore have a different effect if it triggers different components. An additional form of causality underscores DeLanda’s commitment to *social* assemblages which, for him, are made up of human subject-assemblages (the actors) and their interrelations. *Redundant causality* is DeLanda’s way of engaging the lack of clarity in concrete social processes as to whether “causal actors are the minor components or the macro-whole” (p. 37). This bears directly on human agency: “assemblages of people must interact by means of the activity of people and at the same time [...assemblages] do have their own causal capacities” (ibid.). In other words, DeLanda allows for *both* human agency (while insisting that the subject is an assemblage) *and* the composite agency of the assemblage, but wisely shies away from according any priority to either. Most importantly, thinking with redundant causality allows that *individual explanations at the component-level are redundant when accounting for the emergent properties of and capacities exercised by an assemblage*. This has two key consequences for the agency of assemblages as (composite) actors. First, their agency is always structured by their infinite connections to other assemblages, as nothing is inseparable from external influence. Second, their agency can be considered dynamic and affecting without a thorough inventory of each idiosyncratic component’s actions. With regard to human components, this means that a single person’s beliefs, reasons or motives can be held redundant as long as the collective property or capacity still emerges. This is a direct reference to DeLuze and Guattari’s (1987) critique of the self-

knowing humanist subject. Mechanisms of external causality produce *collective* unintended consequences, even of actions that can be said to *involve* human agency but only as one variable among many. Pivotaly, once an assemblage has emerged from the actual exercise of its components' capacities in its agency it can affect its own components, whether by placing limitations on their capacities or enabling their novel exercise.

In this section I illustrated many points of connection between Bell's assemblage as dynamic system at the edge of chaos and DeLanda's assemblage as a composed whole emerging from the actual exercise of its components' capacities. In my reading, Bell provides a sense of the conditions (the double articulation of all things) in which assemblages emerge and function, as well as the reasons why change and difference are not clear-cut or transcendent. The effects of clear-cut and transcendent difference are often effects of the language used to describe difference. From Bell, I take the understanding that things are never what they are, definitively, regardless of what they say. Rather, things are what they do in order to be stable-enough and malleable-enough to remain and become themselves over and over again. This is the same as being themselves, and there is no separation (analogous to there being no separation between signifier and signified as in much of poststructuralism). For his part, DeLanda makes the (social) assemblage into something that can be researched, distilling from Deleuze & Guattari some ways to approach the study of things that are not essences or totalities. Combining Bell and DeLanda's assemblage theories allows us to think about studying how SJTE remains SJTE in the midst of chaosmos, at the level of discernible inter/action in everyday life. I argue that the key to such an exploration is the relationship between assemblage and affect, or the vehicle through which assemblage movement and capacity exercise become discernible at the level of corporeal sensation. In a phrase, (a particular conception of ) affect is the lynchpin of (post-)qualitative

research on assemblages, or what makes it conceivable.

### **What is Affect?**

Affect theory comprises a broad and diverse field with areas of active scholarship devoted to a wide array of human (and non-human) spheres. My use of ‘affect theory’ to describe my own theoretical grounding requires qualification. Nigel Thrift (2004) usefully identifies several different yet intertwined ‘translations’ of affect theory, the most prominent being grounded in phenomenology (e.g., Ahmed, 2006, 2010), psychoanalysis (e.g., Eng, 2010; Ngai, 2009; Sedgwick, 2003) and writings by Deleuze and his ‘descendants’ (e.g., Grosz, 2008; Massumi, 2002). Although there has been prolonged disagreement – notably between the latter two camps – Thrift notes how all of these ‘translations’ trouble the sovereign, individual subject of the Enlightenment:

none of these approaches could be described as based on a notion of human individuals coming together in community. Rather, [...] each cleaves to an ‘inhuman’ or ‘transhuman’ framework in which individuals are generally understood as effects of the events to which their body parts (broadly understood) respond and in which they participate. (p. 60)

It is useful to note the assemblage quality of Thrift’s description: that individuals are effects of their components’ participation in events. Or, the individual’s identity/identifiability is what their components *do*. Whereas for psychoanalytic theorists our non-sovereignty is rooted in the *internal* opacity of our unconscious, for Deleuzians we are non-sovereign because we are caught up in infinite *external*, productive processes channeling desire or the Body without Organs (see Colebrook, 2002, pp. 104–105 for a concise account of the disagreement at its root in desire).

Despite this and other divergences, however, contemporary affect theorists – to varying

degrees – draw from a whole host of writings such that divergence tends to be less important than a shared interest in the ‘something else’ or palpable excess of everyday life, whether this is our ‘caught-up-ness’ in assemblages or no. In their introduction to the first affect theory reader, for example, Gregory Seigworth & Melissa Gregg (2010) draw from Freudian psychoanalysis *and* Deleuze to sketch the body “as much outside itself as in itself – webbed in its relations – until ultimately such firm distinctions cease to matter” (p. 3). Consequently, they insist that “there is no single, generalizable theory of affect” because “there can only ever be infinitely multiple iterations of affect and theories of affect: theories as diverse and singularly delineated as their own highly particular encounters with bodies, affects, worlds” (p. 4). Although Seigworth & Gregg’s largesse is both common and comforting, my project hinges on being able to account for collective experiences that exceed the singular subject, however unconscious. For this reason, my use of affect theory precludes extensive engagement with its more psychoanalytic constituencies, although I certainly do not rule out a return to psychoanalytic theory in subsequent projects.<sup>19</sup>

In my study I conceive of affect as the means by which one’s component-status in assemblages becomes apparent in somewhat, everyday, unexceptional life to the extent that we are caught up in things. My tasks in this section are therefore to assemble a concept of affect that is friendly to assemblage theory and to account for ordinary affective life as a site of sociopolitical significance, regardless of its scalar differences from what we usually think of as the realm of politics or, with particular regard to SJTE, social justice. In what follows I bring together a number of contemporary scholars who are mainstays of the ‘affective turn’ (see

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<sup>19</sup> For example, readers of Eve Sedgwick and psychoanalyst Melanie Klein will recognize that my project is thoroughly steeped in a reparative sensibility in its search for something other than critique as a medium through which to engage SJTE as an object of study. As my citation in the preceding paragraph indicates, Sedgwick is a conceptual ‘founder’ of the more psychoanalytic school of affect theory although her influence permeates them all.

Clough, 2008; Hemmings, 2005) in the theoretical humanities, namely Brian Massumi, Kathleen Stewart and Lauren Berlant. Beginning with Massumi, I define affect and illustrate its parameters through a juxtaposition with emotion, one of its frequent synonyms. Next, I take up recent projects by Stewart and Berlant in order to argue that ordinary life can be a register in which larger non-individual forces and entities – assemblages, perhaps – are directly affected and affecting.

**Affect, not emotion.**

While there can be no doubt that emotion is affecting, it is not the first or only way in which we are affected. It is common and comforting to construe affect as something arising from within a subject's experiences that can resonate with others on the basis of their own history, expressed in a language used by all parties in the same way. For example, *your* 'sadness' will be comparable or not with *my* 'sadness' because we are both 'sad;' these are connected or made equivalent through the language in which they have been qualified such that their singularity is pre-emptively erased. This one reason why, for Deleuzians, affect is not the same thing as emotion. Affect is not a subjective quality sometimes intensifying and complicating objective rational logic. Attending to the emotional *and* the rational is not to do justice to affect. Rather, things are always *intensive* – affected and affecting – as their condition of possibility and very power to be (Hardt, 1993). In fact, *affect is intensity* that precedes our individual and idiosyncratic self-awareness, which is why we use the term 'prepersonal' to describe affect as something prior to what is personal or directly about the affecting/affecting subject. In his translator's glossary preceding *A thousand plateaus*, Massumi (1987) similarly defines affect as "a *prepersonal intensity* corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act" (p. xvi;

added emphasis).

In this view, that affect is *prepersonal and yet directly formative of the subject's experience* is one of the more challenging burdens of subjectivity. Massumi (2002) helpfully separates emotion and affect with reference to subjectivity: “an emotion is subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal. Emotion is *qualified* intensity [...]. It is intensity owned and recognized” (p. 28; added emphasis). I would add that qualification includes an element of narration, which is always for an other, however present or absent; this might be how language can so often and invisibly come to mediate the understanding of what affect is and does. For Massumi, however, affect is *unqualified* intensity because we are affected prior to narration of emotions proper to ourselves as subjects. Or, the qualified personal experience that we call emotion is not the first thing that happens. Rather, affect precedes (personal) experience entrenched through narration. For Colebrook (2002), “‘affect’ is what happens to us when we feel an event” and is not “the meaning of an experience but the response it prompts” (p. xix). This response could be anything, which Spinoza famously argued with the axiom that we do not yet know what a body (indeterminate) can do.

It is also important to note that affect does not originate within the subject (‘these are my affects’) before being ‘transmitted’ to others, but is rather an intensive flow channeled by bodies, both human and non-human. Bodies and subjects are to be understood as permeable (Brennan, 2004) in addition to being non-sovereign (Berlant, 2011). Given that it is not a transmissible ‘product’ of subjects, affect is *autonomous*. Even when unowned and unqualified, affect circulates and does its work. Affect is thus a fleetingness of *sensation* through which we can sense (then perhaps narrate later on) that something has happened because it has moved on and

moved through. This change is what the subject can apprehend through sensation. Massumi defines sensation as “the direct registering of potential [...] as yet unextended into analytically ordered, predictably reproducible, possible action” (p. 98). The body apprehends much more and prior to the individual subject – the person in ‘personal’ – in its capacity as a conduit and impressionable surface for autonomous, circulating intensities (affects): “actually existing, structured things live in and through that which escapes them” (p. 35). With Spinoza, Massumi insists that the autonomy of affect and its belated apprehension are “nothing less than the perception of one’s own vitality, one’s sense of aliveness, of changeability (often signified as ‘freedom’)” (p. 36). To channel intensive flows of affect and tingle with the sensation of becoming, is to be vital in one’s being: to become.

It is not that optimism (Berlant, 2011), depression (Cvetkovich, 2012), happiness (Ahmed, 2010) or other concepts usually qualified on the order of emotion cannot be studied under this rubric, or that they must remain somehow unspeakable for Deleuzians because they have made their way into the personal through language. There are many ways to study emotion, and the most Deleuzian are those which keep emotions moving, or allow that they are becomings unowned by individual, wholly-sovereign subjects. This is to decidedly avoid freezing a particular emotion in place by forcing its equivalence with the language we use to narrate its contours (i.e., only studying happiness through what ‘makes us happy’ or ‘makes us smile’ and so reproducing what has always been ‘happiness’) or refusing its surprises whereby, for example, “one can be excited by anger, disgusted by shame, or surprised by joy” (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 19). For Massumi, emotion is what happens when affect is captured in the body, closed, blocked and building before it inevitably escapes again: “this is why all emotion is more or less disorienting, and why it is classically described as being outside of oneself” (p. 35). Bringing this experience



‘inside of one’s self’ could be another way to describe the making of emotions from affective intensity, which does not have to happen in order for the subject to be affected *and* affecting.

This can happen without our knowledge, consent or understanding, later or at the time.

To study emotion without beginning from its constitutive relation to autonomous affects and the body as their conduit, and without considering how intensities become sensations of potential on the corporeal body is to depart from Deleuze: to represent as static something definitionally in motion. When in motion, the power to affect and be affected is a force of change and becoming in the world. When frozen, however, it is no longer a force but an archive of signs: past relationships between words and the world that fix what came before as the only thinkable possibility for what can become. This stops thought, becoming and change. As Deleuze & Guattari (1987) remind us, however, “it is not impossible to make a radical break between regimes of signs and their objects” (p. 7). This is an objective of the present study.

**The ordinary without ordinariness: Affect and everyday life.**

My study takes place at what DeLanda (2006) would call the ‘lower’ levels of a social assemblage, or conversations and other encounters among people. I am claiming that we can learn about the workings of the larger SJTE assemblage from the workings of these more immediate components, or that they are in some way analogous. It does not follow, within my framework, that studying SJTE means beginning ‘at the top’ within an arborescent hierarchy and interviewing field architects and observing exemplary programs (although I did begin with a rhetorical analysis of SJTE’s field-defining literature, with the expressed purpose of exploring what the field says about itself). Rather, I am insisting that the ordinary life of SJTE, lived out in SJTE courses and classrooms as well as when SJTE practitioners get together to speak of their courses and classrooms, is not insignificant for its being ordinary. Ordinary things happen that

can territorialize or deterritorialize, stabilize or destabilize the identity of the assemblage. Or it can feel like ‘nothing is happening’ because a plateau has been created that is stable enough but always (if it is viable) wavering at the edges. The ordinary of SJTE is where the sensation of these larger prepersonal processes makes contact *affectively*, “[catching] people up in something that feels like *something*” (Stewart, 2007, p. 2; original emphasis) even if we know not what. In this final section of my theoretical framework, I assemble a conceptual vocabulary for addressing the ordinary, a sphere of life often passed over in the search for political significance. The two theorists I bring together here are well-known for their practices of paying attention to ordinary life in order to study how people live with and get by within larger forces and forms of sociality.

In *Ordinary affects*, anthropologist Kathleen Stewart (2007) uses a novel textual methodology to study and stage how ordinary life is animated by the unfolding of potential. This enters our awareness affectively, when “*something* throws itself together in a moment as an event and a sensation; a something both animated and habitable” (p. 1). Stewart is less concerned with what this something is or portends – which we cannot know in advance, a rather repetitive theme in Deleuze – and more concerned with throwing ordinary life into relief as a place where infinite indeterminate-as-such things are unfolding, as well as with what this experience is like: how false starts, odd moments, awkwardnesses, queasinesses, momentary fixations and the like exert a powerful, diffuse influence on what happens. Her flagship concept, *ordinary affects* are the varied, surging capacities to affect and be affected that give everyday life the quality of a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies, and emergences. They’re things that happen. They happen in impulses, sensations, expectations, daydreams, encounters, and habits of relating, in strategies and their failures, in forms of persuasion, contagion, and compulsion, in modes of attention, attachment, and agency. (pp. 1-2)

Stewart insists that ordinary affects “give *circuits and flows* the forms of a life” (p. 2; added emphasis). This is an indirect reference to Deleuze & Guattari and particularly the idea that, as abstract machines, assemblages plug into unformed, undifferentiated *circuits and flows* of desire (BwOs), bringing them into consistency and actualizing potential, or creating. Ordinary affects are “rooted not in fixed conditions of possibility, but in the actual lines of potential that a *something* coming together calls to mind and sets in motion” (ibid.; original emphasis).<sup>20</sup>

Stewart’s project is to study “not whether [ordinary affects] are good or bad in an overarching scheme of things, but where they might go and what potential modes of knowing, relating, and attending to things are already present in them” (p. 3). In suggesting that ordinary affects feel like something and are significant regardless of their small scale (i.e., that they are events in their own right and not only the beginnings of ‘true’ or larger events), Stewart aims to unsettle meaning, representation and linear causality in accounting for why the ordinary matters. She is interested in what the unfolding of things exerts on the ordinaries of people with whom she comes into contact, and on textually staging the intensities that flare regardless of whether anyone can put a finger on why. Her “complex and uncertain objects [...] fascinate because they literally hit us or exert a pull on us” (p. 4) and in so doing make someone’s ordinary take on a new tack or shift into another gear. One of her examples is how “a shift in the kid’s school schedule or the police at the door” (ibid.) can have incredible ripple effects even though they may barely register as events if ‘nothing comes of them’ while in fact everything becomes anew.

Conversely, things that ‘over-register’ as capital ‘E’ events precede *and* exceed their

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<sup>20</sup> Berlant might call such moments – when potential is being actualized, and sensation makes the ordinary resonate with its intensity – ‘situations’ or states of things “in which *something* that will perhaps matter is unfolding amid the usual activity of life. It is a state of animated and animating suspension that forces itself on consciousness, that produces a sense of the emergence of something in the present that may become an event” (p. 5; original emphasis). In this, and other ways that I endeavour to reflect here, Stewart and Berlant are incredibly compatible despite the latter’s highly particular attention to the *historical* present i.e., the priority of context.

moment of impact precisely because of how ordinary life unfolds. When staging a scraped-up biker couple's entrance into a diner after an accident that killed a deer, Stewart intones:

It's as if the singularity of the event has shaken things up, lightening the load of personal preoccupations and social ruts. As if everyone was just waiting for something like this to happen. A 'we' of sorts opens in the room, charging the social with lines of potential. (p. 11)

A strange solidarity emerges from the sharing of stories formerly disconnected (about other accidents, road conditions, friends and relatives' driving habits, ways things used to be), and from a shared attentiveness to the bikers' bodies, narratives, body-narratives, things said and silent. And "the habit of watching for something to happen will grow" (p. 12). While the crash was an event decidedly out of the ordinary, the ordinary is affected in multiple, powerful ways that *are* decidedly ordinary. For Stewart, the sheer power and resonance of ordinary affective life ensures that "matter can shimmer with undetermined potential and the weight of received meaning" (p. 23) regardless of whether anything 'happens' at all, or whether an event stays within its spatial and temporal zones of emergence. As such, the scale of empirical and ethnographic interest is pared way down in Stewart's work.

Pivotaly, when the ordinary "throws itself together" it may congeal or it may falter, "but either way we feel its pull" (p. 29). The sensation that things are throwing themselves together can be thought as a kind of undifferentiated substance from which larger and more totalizing systems come into being, that have more demonstrable and qualified effects. Not getting too caught up in something – what Stewart calls 'mainstreaming' – can be to exercise one's capacity of "being in tune without getting involved" or making "a light contact zone that rests on a thin layer of shared public experiences" (p. 52). Staying light and only barely attentive to, for

example, the effects of racism, homophobia or neo-liberalism is often constructed as a *choice* born of privilege, as though ‘mainstreaming’ is a capacity only possessed by privileged people as opposed to everyone who struggles for an ordinary that sustains and is sustaining. Stewart poses a direct challenge to the explanatory power of totalized systems (e.g., capitalism, various hegemonic systems of privilege and oppression, etc.) that “do not in themselves begin to describe the situation we find ourselves in” (p. 1) at the level of everyday life. While “the forces these systems try to name are [...] real and literally pressing” Stewart seeks to “bring them into view as a scene of immanent force, rather than leaving them looking like dead effects imposed on an innocent world” (ibid.). Racism, for example, can be thought as bringing together various modes of ordinary coping with excessive speeds and intensities of encounter *as well as* expressions of white supremacy and legacies of colonial violence (see also Holland, 2012). Thus, Stewart paves the way for affect theory to shift into a quasi-empirical mode of sensing and feeling the ordinary affects that stick to, propel, confound or drain the life out of our most cherished macropolitical social justice concepts. Hers is a decidedly micropolitical project which seeks to return our attention to what is close to home and near to hand.

In composing her study, Stewart is in frequent dialogue with the collection of essays brought together in Lauren Berlant’s (2011) recent book *Cruel optimism*. Berlant is likewise interested in the intensive ordinary as a site of political significance, but from a much more historically- and temporally-situated perspective. She asks and answers a key question about the historical present shaped by global neoliberal capital and its effects on everyday life:

Why do people stay attached to conventional good-life fantasies – say, of enduring reciprocity in couples, families, political systems, institutions, markets, and at work – when the evidence of their instability, fragility, and dear cost abounds? (p. 2)

Her reply is not ‘neo-liberalism’ or ‘global capitalism’ but something much smaller: cruel optimism, being “a relation of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility whose realization is discovered [not necessarily by the subject themselves] to be impossible, sheer fantasy, or too possible, and toxic” (p. 24). The cruelty of this optimism – for a fraying, increasingly impossible fantasy (for many) of the good-life – lies in the subject being unable to give up the optimistic object despite its being deleterious to their well-being: “whatever the content of the attachment is, the continuity of its form provides something of the continuity of the subject’s sense of what it means to keep on living on and to look forward to being in the world” (ibid.). If optimism about an object is gone, optimism itself might altogether go. Berlant therefore tracks the movements and productions of subjects (mostly artists) who have developed alternative, less harmful strategies for living with cruel optimism that, while necessarily relating to (macro)politics by stopping *decidedly* short of revolution in the strata, are more diffuse and so micropolitical. These strategies are often enacted within what Berlant terms ‘intimate publics’ or collectivities that promise “the sense of being held” (p. 226) in “a more livable and intimate sociality” (p. 227) if not the creation of a ‘better world’ altogether. Intimate publics do a good-enough job of changing how things feel, if not how they are. As such, Berlant reveals ordinary affective life as a reservoir of capacities for carrying on and keeping in motion.

Berlant’s analysis leads her to a helpful re-framing of political significance that recognizes this character of the ordinary. In the historical present, *the desire for the political* “as that which magnetizes a desire for intimacy, sociality, affective solidarity, and happiness” can and in many instances has been differentiated from *politics*, or “a scene of antagonism” (p. 252) that increasingly fails to deliver on its promises. This lived differentiation is a creative response to the *impasse* that characterizes life here and now: “a stretch of time in which one moves around

with a sense that the world is at once intensely present and enigmatic, such that the activity of living demands both a wandering absorptive awareness and a hypervigilance” (p. 4). Thus, Berlant introduces *particularity* to affective capacity, derived from living in this time and place: moving around in the impasse, or in what Deleuze and Guattari might call a plateau. Berlant arguably offers a study of ordinary life at a particular plateau.

Berlant’s characterization of the present as impasse in which relations of cruel optimism keep ordinary lives and intimate publics going leads to her critique of sovereignty, which is pivotal for my study and the methodological connection I draw between assemblage and affect. With Berlant, we might ask: why not change everything if nothing is working? Or, where are the masses rising up for progress and justice, the arithmetical result of individual disenfranchisement à la classical Marxism? Berlant points out that *practical sovereignty* – that practiced by people in their everyday lives – is most often thought to be like state sovereignty such that “the human is most fully itself when assuming the spectacular posture of performative action” (p. 96). Berlant counters, at length, that the sovereignty we exercise everyday is nothing like that of a highly active citizen-subject because the ordinary is problematically brushed aside:

we need better ways to talk about a more capacious range of activity oriented toward the reproduction of ordinary life: from the burdens of contemporary compelled will that fuel everyday employment and household pressures, for example, to the pleasures of spreading-out activities like sex or eating, aleatory modes of self-abeyance that do not occupy time, decision, or consequentiality in anything like the sovereign registers of autonomous self-assertion. (p. 98)

The truly “self-cultivating” (p. 99) subject who is fully expressive of intention and authentic emotionality at all times does not belong to our present-as-impasse. Rather, a novel form of

agency is being developed and expressed. This is *lateral agency*, exercised

within a zone of temporality marked by ongoingness, getting by and living on, where structural inequalities are dispersed and the pacing of experience is uneven and often mediated by way of phenomena that are not prone to capture by a consciousness organized by archives of memorable impact. (pp. 99-100)

Lateral agency is a slowing down in the midst of the speeding up that capitalism engenders in the scheduled striation of work life and home life.<sup>21</sup> The diffusion of global capitalism's effects on the ordinary – it has no centre to blame or change – ensures that it is most often not felt as a 'memorable impact' but as relations of changing speed and duration. Berlant's classic and problematic example of lateral agency is the obesity 'epidemic' which she characterizes as the result of "a practice of ordinary inefficiency" through which people counter the double-bind of capitalism. Obesity "makes living possible *and* produces contexts for thriving, *merely* living" (p. 115; added emphasis) or living as a gradual wearing-out. As with the formation of intimate publics, taking a break through eating or other aleatory pleasures is a way to cope with a good life fantasy that is fraying, in Berlant's words, even though its worn out promises continue to narrate the workings of the world and its pressures drive our lives.

In sum, while Stewart makes a case for the intensity of the ordinary as the place where things emerge, unfold and throw themselves together, Berlant makes a case for ordinary life as its own end and not only a stop on the side of the road leading to bigger things worth thinking

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<sup>21</sup> Ann Cvetkovich (2012) coined the phrase *utopias of ordinary habit* to express her contention, contra Berlant's notion of lateral agency and moving about not forward, that "daily life in all its ordinariness can be a basis for the utopian project of building new worlds in response to both spiritual despair and political depression" (p. 191). For Cvetkovich, "the *utopia of ordinary habit* [...] suggests that within current forms of domestic life are the simultaneously utopian and ordinary desires and activities that can remake the affective cultures of nuclear family life, consumerism, mass media, and neoliberal culture. But it does not seek to gloss over the dire state of contemporary politics, nor to deny the feelings of sadness, apathy, isolation, or anger that are often manifest in the practice of small daily gestures" (p. 193). It is unclear what Cvetkovich is proposing by way of transformation, however, as most of *Depression: A public feeling* is about how to just get by in something like Berlant's impasse.



about, sustaining or bringing down. Both recognize the largely unsung complexity of things that happen just adjacent to or outside of consciousness and without apparent meaning: the workings of assemblages, perhaps. Moreover, both Stewart and Berlant's orientation toward an affected and affecting not-so-sovereign subject draw them toward the concept of capacity and not ability to describe the processes whereby subjects affect things and each other. In the brief conclusion that follows, I describe capacity and foreshadow its implications for my study.

**Conclusion: Assemblage + Affect = Capacity**

In concluding my theoretical framework, I will draw some crucial connections between assemblage and affect. This is important as I wish to deploy such a connection methodologically: to sense assemblage thresholds when they are neared or breached, through variations in intensity registered in and as sensation (affect). This is as close as we can get to ascertaining the 'identity' of an assemblage: by analyzing what it *does* in the unfolding, intensive present. My arithmetic in the section heading is not intended to suggest a facile equation, but to point out that *capacity* is a fruitful point of intersection among the concepts and bodies of scholarship I have addressed. A keyword for all of the included theorists is *capacity*. Although capacity shares a root with 'capable' and so suggests individual capable subjects, its usage in these literatures offsets subjectivity as the only site of agency or getting things done, or at least that of the traditionally sovereign (human) subject. Both human and non-human entities have capacities, which leaves the term open for use in post-humanist conversations (see Barad, 2007; J. Bennett, 2010), as well as for application to assemblages, as we saw in DeLanda. Like one more drop breaks the surface tension of a glass of water, for Deleuze a new identity emerges when a critical threshold of consistency – or inconsistency – is reached and differentiation occurs, as we saw in Bell. Creativity is the exercising of capacities proper to assemblages and not only to human beings

ourselves. In Massumi's Spinozan take on Deleuze and Guattari, affect is a capacity to affect and be affected that animates life regardless of whether the subject comes to narrate affect's fleeting sensation. And for Stewart and Berlant, ordinary life is a terrain where capacities are exercised in the interest of maintaining one's everyday momentum, even if this is not necessarily the way to a better future or outcome. Moreover, capacities do not require sovereign agency in order to be exercised *but are not passive*. Rather, capacities are expressive of a laborious habituation or a kind of visceral expertise that, in my usage, is the condition of being caught up in something far exceeding one's self, one's intentions and one's cultivated relationships: the assemblage. In the next chapter I discuss my methodology, through which I seek to bridge my theoretical and analytical framework and the ordinary, everyday world of social justice teacher education.

## CHAPTER FOUR – Methodology: How to Study an Assemblage

In the SJTE literature, the field is routinely portrayed as fighting for mainstream inclusion or even survival. The sense that one's participation in teacher education is under threat might be akin to a sense that one is unwelcome. After all, SJTE's existence makes real something teacher education would surely rather forget: that whatever education is, thus far, it is not the thing that makes social ills go away (or narrows the demographic divides). Overall, the teachers we prepare are not doing this, and a specialized sub-discipline must step in to rectify. The existence of SJTE in teacher education programs is conceivably similar to the existence of diversity workers in universities, where "even to name racism is to describe a series of actions that the organization is not allowed to permit" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 49). The SJTE body, out of place, is likely buffeted and prevailed upon to shift or speak words that touch others in the way they like to be touched, like 'diversity' or 'equity.' As opposed to 'justice' or 'anti-racism,' "diversity as a speech act might be understood as generating its own promise, as if we can catch the positivity of diversity from repeating the word" (p. 67). Education likes success. Embodying its failure, SJTE's ordinary life must be wearing, pressing, fatiguing, even, on many levels.

Several times a year and for a few days at a time, however, SJTE practitioners can be together in rooms where our words alight upon bodies similar to ours, if only because these bodies can all remain, attend and be present when SJTE lets fly its own language. This is not the depleted language required to do its work at other times and places without the SJTE substrate and concentrate of the conference. SJTE bodies resonate together in the right ways, along the right frequencies of the right words. These are relations among components from which the assemblage is made. Bodies that do not resonate, that are not swept along by the forces animating the SJTE-assemblage one way or another, are for once the bodies 'out of sync.' SJTE

will be the way things go. It will have gravity. What can we learn about SJTE from tracking what *actually happens* when it is gathering together en masse, where it is *expected* in the manner of an affective genre (Berlant, 2011)?

My research questions are oriented toward these actual happenings. I first ask how SJTE works (keeps moving and remains identifiable) and then branch into SJTE's thresholds, the roles of components and other less-than-present things in de/territorializing these thresholds. In order to address my research questions, I sought out SJTE in concentration: where I could study the thresholds of its identifiability as opposed to gauging its habitual alienation in isolated contexts. I attended four educational research conferences with a foreseeable mass of SJTE practitioners, sessions, events and groups, deliberately seeking to place myself 'in SJTE's midst' as opposed to locating events and interactions where SJTE was in its more familiar position of outlier or killjoy (Ahmed, 2010). The common narrative of SJTE involves practitioners taking on precisely such a role in their home departments, whereas conferences offer a body of 'people like me' usually unavailable to those who do this work.

For these reasons, I selected annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) and the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE), as well as the Annual Bergamo Conference on Curriculum Theory and Classroom Practice (Bergamo). At each of these four conferences, I conducted fieldwork and recruited SJTE practitioners for conversations. These initially took place on site but later changed to Skype conversations after the fact. In this chapter, I detail the pragmatics of conducting my fieldwork at the conferences I attended as well as what happened in my conversations with practitioners. The ways in which I have constructed my object of study within a Deleuzian, affective theoretical framework bear heavily on these pragmatics. Therefore,

I begin with a discussion of what it might mean to study an assemblage through the immediate sensory experience of being affected. I draw on the work of Deleuze scholars as well as the body of post-qualitative (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013) scholarship being developed in education.

### **Assemblage and Affect Theory Meet (Post-)Qualitative Inquiry**

Making an assemblage the object of inquiry requires a different conceptualization of what a research object is and what it demands of us. To study something, even qualitatively, tends to involve efforts to isolate it from ‘background noise’ or ‘irrelevance’ and the like. There is an assumption here that the object of one’s inquiry can and must somehow be subtracted from other things, even if only for the purpose of looking at contextual factors (‘variables’) that might influence the object. This tacit separation structures the practice of research, from where one seeks the object down to the script that keeps an interview or focus group ‘on topic.’ The idea that ‘staying on topic’ is possible, necessary or even desirable is one of the first casualties of a Deleuzian shift toward assemblage. First, staying on topic is *impossible*, because the assemblage is not a topic, totality or essence (DeLanda, 2006). It is a network of shifting, infinite relations among heterogeneous components. One cannot ‘stay on’ something that shifts and changes – becomes – as its very definition, or determine in advance what ‘staying on topic’ means. Second, this imperative to stay on topic is also *unnecessary* because privileging stasis over movement or isolated objects over networks does not have to be the way that inquiry proceeds, despite being the norm. Finally, ‘staying on topic’ is *undesirable* within a Deleuzian frame because it stops thought, or presupposes what can happen by requiring the process to behave like a topic, at all: something that we, together, can ‘stay on’ where ‘staying on’ is established by attending only to language in use. From this very cursory analysis, it follows that the difference expressed by a Deleuzian and affect theory-based methodology congeals around two sticking points: motion |

stasis and affect | language. I address these in turn.

### **Movement (and/)not stasis.**

In traditional qualitative inquiry, static research objects are constructed by using language to arrest moving processes. In relying on the power of language, classic ethnographic objectives like thick description are, to use Massumi's (2002) phrase, "stop-operations" (p. 7) that limit becomings to whatever can be captured in a spatiotemporal freeze frame. The study of abstract objects like assemblages, which "are never present in position, only ever in passing" (p. 5) entails objectives other than complete representation or saturation. The identity of an assemblage cannot be determined by this means, even when properties (e.g., degrees of centralization, density, homogeneity, stability, strength, presence/absence, reciprocity)<sup>22</sup> or components have every appearance of being static. For example, organizations like NAME are assemblages with components that have material roles (infrastructure, gatherings, facilities) and that have expressive roles (publications, official titles, customs, hierarchies). The NAME-assemblage is highly centralized and stable yet not very dense, primarily because its constituents are spread across the United States and abroad, interacting only infrequently.<sup>23</sup> NAME itself

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<sup>22</sup> DeLanda's (2006) description of these properties regarding the emergence of recurring social links (which become social network assemblages) within conversation assemblages is as follows: "The properties of links include their strength, that is, the frequency of interaction among the persons occupying given positions, as well as the emotional content of the relation; their presence or absence, the absences indicating the existence of borders separating one network from another [...]; and their reciprocity, that is, the symmetry or asymmetry of the obligations entailed by the link. In addition, the overall network has properties of its own [... like] density, a measure of the intensity of connectivity among indirect links. [...] Another important property is a network's stability, a property that may be studied either in terms of the attitudes of the persons involved or in terms of some systematic interdependence between attitudes due to positions in a network [...] Density and stability, in turn, may endow a community with a high degree of solidarity [...] whereby] some members may be motivated by the feelings of togetherness [...], others by altruism, and yet other by strict calculations of reciprocity" (pp. 56-7). Recall that DeLanda is firmly invested in making assemblage theory intelligible to the 'hard' social sciences. With such a strict interpretivism, he likely runs afoul of many poststructuralists who decry calls for intelligibility as hegemonic and paradigmatic (not the rule) (see St. Pierre, 2000). My position on the problem of intelligibility (or how 'out there' we can get with Deleuze and Guattari) is somewhere in the middle at present, but certainly (or not) subject to change.

<sup>23</sup> NAME also has state chapters which meet more frequently than the main organization. The degree of inter-meeting activity varies by state, however, and even state chapters would be somewhat decentralized even if they did hold regular meetings given that members would likely be somewhat dispersed.

plays material and expressive roles as a component in the SJTE-assemblage, which is, for example, centralized in some ways (there are field leaders, a literature and lexicon) and not others (there is no formal organization), and at least rhetorically homogeneous as I have already argued. However, enumerating components, roles and properties is neither where research stops nor how we establish what the assemblage *is*. NAME and SJTE rather emerge as the exercise of assemblage *capacities*. After all, assemblages are “wholes whose properties emerge from the interactions between parts” (DeLanda, 2006, p. 5). With Deleuze, we look for what the assemblage *does*, not what it is, or motion not stasis.

This leads us to Deleuze & Guattari's (1987) distinction between mapping and tracing. When inquiry traces, we search for confirmation of things already known. This most often involves a reliance on language as transparently representational (more below), as if events similarly described in one instance can be held to equal or repeat events described with the same or similar words somewhere else. Language is not the only tracing tool, however. Tracing can also happen when we assume that things are the same. For example, wherever people sit quietly in a room and take turns speaking we might assume that a ‘meeting’ is happening, and apply our own understanding of what meetings are and do. This is like placing a transparency over top of an image already drawn and following the lines as carefully as possible. In its presumption of essences, tracing can stop thought, and for Deleuze thinking is the production of the new. When inquiry maps, however, we do not rest with words or images of the familiar but rather ‘map out’ the new: that which research produces in relation to what is being studied. This is why Martin & Kamberelis (2013) suggest that mapping is a “productive orientation to inquiry” (p. 670).

Assemblages require a mapping approach because they are *rhizomatic*. Deleuze & Guattari's *rhizome* is figured by a mangrove which, unlike a tree, has no central root structure,

no hierarchy of thicker than thinner branches than twigs. Stems shoot up anywhere along the root system, the structure of which is determined only by immediate, local conditions, or by what (unforeseeably) actualizes, regardless of what we know in advance. Figuring the relations of exteriority that keep the assemblage together (recalling DeLanda, relations that do not necessarily alter the related components themselves), “a rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 7). The rhizomatic assemblage’s capacity for connectivity is irrepressible even though connections can be severed. Any point on a rhizome can connect to any other point, and these connections are multiple and infinite. Further, no connection is more significant than any other, even those seemingly expressive of hierarchal authority or familiar forms of power.

Since assemblages are rhizomatic and in motion, tracing is an unsuitable approach to investigating the actual exercise of assemblage capacities in the unfolding present. This is because tracing can only reveal what we already know, or what we found out in the past:

A tracing is a copy and operates according to ‘genetic’ principles of reproduction based on an a priori deep structure and a faith in the discovery and representation of that structure. Tracings are based on phenomenological experience that is assumed to be essential, stable, and universal. Defined thus, the findings from most research projects are tracings. Deleuze and Guattari use psychoanalysis as an example of a historically powerful regime of truth within which tracings are always at work. No matter what an analysand utters, it is read against Oedipus, the phallus, lack, desire for the mother, rage against the father, etc. (Martin & Kamberelis, *ibid.*)

Although following a twig back to the deep roots of an arborescent knowledge structure is



frowned upon, this is not to say that Deleuze & Guattari's theories cannot be deployed in the manner of a trace. It is entirely possible and not uncommon for qualitative researchers to apply poststructuralist theories as metaphor or interpretive framework and avoid reckoning with poststructuralism's disruption of the deep structures, representation and signification embedded in traditional qualitative research designs. As Mazzei & McCoy (2010) insist,

The point is not merely to 'use' select metaphors presented by Deleuze and Guattari [...] and to illustrate these metaphors with examples from data, but to think with Deleuzian concepts in a way that might produce previously unthought questions, practices, and knowledge. (p. 504)

They acknowledge, however, that tracing is impossible to avoid, and total avoidance is even undesirable. It is not that we must

view the intrusive trace as an error: 'What the tracing reproduces of the map or rhizome are only the impasses, blockages, incipient taproots, or points of structuration' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980/1987, 13). [...] The trick is to fashion a map that 'is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification,' one with 'multiple entryways' that produces encounters that come up against and move through these blockages, inhibiting a return to 'the same' [ibid.]. (p. 506)

In other words, as long as we do not presuppose stasis (blockage, impasse, codification) as a 'natural state' but rather an aberration in a universe invigorated by flows of desire (BwO), tracing has its uses. For example, many assemblages have become highly coded due to specialized expressive components (DeLanda, 2006) like language, which are used to create laws, statutes and procedures that attempt to narrow possibilities for behaviour. Recalling Bell (2006), such assemblages are highly 'cosmotic' but must express some degree of flexibility in order to

withstand ceaseless becoming and change.<sup>24</sup> There is much here to trace given that highly coded assemblages reproduce as a condition of their cosmotic state. Martin & Kamberelis suggest that superimposed tracings bring into high relief the dominant discursive and material forces at play [...]; but the map also discloses those forces that have been elided, marginalized or ignored altogether and forces that might have the power to transform or reconfigure reality in various ways [...]. Ultimately, mapping discloses potential organizations of reality rather than reproducing some prior organization of it. (p. 671)

Even when studying highly coded assemblages and tracing their blockages, it is still incumbent upon the Deleuzian researcher to map lines of potential with which the assemblage becomes, or to follow the actual exercise of its capacities in managing chaosmos. My research questions regarding how SJTE works at its thresholds are efforts to orient my study toward this goal.

**Affect (and/)not language.**

*Qualitative researchers can no longer directly capture lived experience. Such experience, it is argued, is created in the social text written by the researcher.*

*This is the representational crisis. (Denzin, 1994, p. 295)*

In addition to movement (not stasis) and mapping (not tracing, *tout court*) as guiding principles, a second key difference between prevalent qualitative methodologies and my own approach in the present study is the power attributed to language. Deleuze & Guattari's critique of the trace invites suspicion toward any reliance on language as means or end in itself. The imperative of providing as thick a description as possible of one's research context – which I also

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<sup>24</sup> As an aside cum example, we might wonder why increasingly computerized motor vehicles are not equipped with enforcement mechanisms that, say, would register infractions like rolling stops or excessive speeding. Or, we can wonder at the public outcry against photo radar deployment in British Columbia whereby drivers would receive a photograph of their vehicle in the mail long after an infraction, with no chance of avoiding or appealing to a police officer at the time. These various degrees of 'wobble room' in highly codified legal scenarios are perhaps degrees of chaos or flexibility that maintain the stability and viability of seemingly inviolable clear-cut systems.

critiqued as a ‘stop-operation’ – is an instance of this reliance. Many conventional coding practices take language as the equivalent of experience, holding the ‘experience’ under study to equal the language used by participants to describe it (e.g., in an interview). The manifest ‘aboutness’ of chunks of decontextualized data, grouped according to semantic content, goes generally unquestioned. Scheurich’s (1995) comments on the excesses of interviewing, or what escapes the semantic coding of a transcript, are worth quoting at length:

Some of what occurs in an interview is verbal. Some is nonverbal. Some occurs only within the mind of each participant [...], but it may affect the entire interview. Sometimes the participants are jointly constructing meaning but, at other times, one of them may be resisting joint constructions. Sometimes the interviewee cannot find the right words to express herself or himself and, therefore, will compromise her or his meaning for the sake of expediency. There may be incidences of dominance and resistance over large or small issues. There may be monologues. There may be times when one participant is talking about one thing but thinking about something else. A participant may be saying what she thinks she ought to say; in fact, much of the interaction may be infused with a shift between performed or censored statements and unperformed and uncensored statements.

(p. 244)

What Scheurich highlights is the “wild profusion” (ibid.) of the interview, or the limitations of language in accounting for ‘what happened’ and the onto-epistemological implications of semantic analysis. What can we know, from interviewing? Who are we as knowledge producers without language and the trace? Although the interview is no lost cause, there is so much more there than the language with which interviewers ask and participants respond.

Just as the trace is inescapable, however, so too is language. At bottom, researchers must

communicate. And it is not that language cannot ever be a clue, for example, as to when one is following an assemblage around in the form of its component(s). After all, assemblages are both material *and expressive*. Language features rather prominently in DeLanda's (2006) account but does not overshadow "nonlinguistic social expressions" (p. 13) which include *how* and not only *what* is said. Doing inquiry with Deleuze, however, requires that language be continually displaced from its privileged epistemic role because significance in the field (see St. Pierre, 1997b for a Deleuzian critique of 'the field' as determinate or spatiotemporally bound) might not come into the researcher's awareness through language. When everything is in flux, language can remain the same, even as things begin to *feel* different. Working with assemblage theory thus turns the researcher into a reader of both language *and* affect.

Recalling Bell (2006), an assemblage is an abstract machine or elusive collectivity that, I contend, can be *sensed* in fluctuations of intensity. My methodology hinges on the connection I have already drawn between assemblage and affect, or, that affect is a corporeal indication of the subject's becoming caught up in assemblages. This is not to say that one is ever not caught up, but that – recalling my research questions – the intensity of being caught up rises and falls on account of how close the assemblage has come to its thresholds: to chaos or cosmos, where it threatens to come apart. Affect as a sensation of unqualified intensity, then, is a way to stay alive to what happens and what can happen at the thresholds of assemblage becoming. Being caught up, a component therein, might be a secular analogy to spiritual possession, with the proviso that there is no singular 'Being' infiltrating the body. Rather, assemblage ontology is another way of insisting on the subject's non-sovereignty (Berlant, 2011). Bringing an affective orientation to one's methodology carries powerful implications for 'data' and how the necessarily non-sovereign researcher-subject is thought to be in relation with affected *and affecting* data.

When language is displaced as the predominant means and end of inquiry, data is no longer limited to what is said by particular people called participants, or to the literal content of field notes. ‘What happened’ is not restricted to things finding their way into language. In *Ordinary affects*, Stewart (2007) describes how we might stage or detect “a contact zone for analysis” (p. 5) of things that cannot be found or pinned down through standard language-based research methods, such as SJTE and its thresholds. In both staged and immanent contact zones, things like narrative and identity become tentative through forceful compositions of disparate and moving elements: the watching and waiting for an event to unfold, the details of scenes, the strange or predictable progression in which one thing leads to another, the still life that gives pause, the resonance that lingers, the lines along which signs rush and form relays, the layering of immanent experience... (pp. 5-6)

Like most of her prose, Stewart’s descriptions of ‘watching and waiting’ in the contact zone are intended to stage the affective experience of being ‘in the field.’ Allowing one’s self to be carried away by detail (to go ‘off topic’) or dwell in the emergent strangeness of seemingly predictable chains of events is to become attuned to what is not (usually) narrated, perhaps because it has fallen into routine. Mazzei (2009) is similarly evocative in encouraging us to give up on the ‘full voice’ or straightforward participant narrative as the holy grail of research:

This uncertainty, this dislocated mapping, this different listening seeks to find the stories that have been cast aside as unimportant, that have become lost in the cracks, that are lying on the cutting room floor, and that don’t make the reel designed to appeal to a mass audience. We risk tripping up on these cuttings and getting stuck in the cracks in order to escape being bound to a tracing/text that produces the expected outcome and response. (p. 59)

The goal is not to ‘give voice’ to cuttings but to avoid a humanist and post-positivist (Lather, 1993) delimitation of significance to the speaking subject and what they speak. What is unspoken or unasked can become sensorially available to the researcher as an excess of intensity or a flat line (sensations of nothing or nothing much happening). Recalling chaosmos, the fluctuating middle is the norm. This is why ordinary, everyday life is remarkable.

Stewart’s ordinary affects and Mazzei’s cuttings are distinctive for their lack of (conventional) narratability. Within a post-qualitative frame, we are suspicious of Data’s arrival to a scene of ‘irrelevance,’ signaled as it is by the palpable ‘event-ness’ of ‘something that happened.’ These events are already thinkable and their very familiarity can stop thought. Most capital ‘E’ events of research (the things that happened that can’t be missed or ignored, that we can’t imagine are *not* significant) are signaled by a speech act or by their susceptibility to narration. The genre of the Event (e.g., outright conflict, betrayal, celebration, allegation, disclosure, violence, breakdown, etc.) is further susceptible to a *unanimity* of narrative that is almost juridical i.e., multiple eyewitnesses can confirm or deny something that happened, and their stories match. Conversely, data – what matters – is not necessarily born of an ‘aha!’ moment that anyone could detect, when something seems to stand apart from the perceiver due to its very obviousness. Data and significance are rather *simultaneously* produced in the research encounter. Coleman & Ringrose (2013) suggest that Deleuzian methodology “begins with singular experiences and traces the ways in which the virtual is actualized, and may be actualized differently. [...] this is to attend to *the ways in which social realities are made* through methods, and might be made in other ways” (p. 11; added emphasis). We say that data is produced and not found in order to open up the possibility of what data can be, and not necessarily something juridically or objectively verifiable.

If data is indeterminate, then doing fieldwork involves monitoring one's own need for closure, or a time when 'nothing is happening' when the researcher can rest. When things feel like they are over, when no one is saying anything, when 'nothing is happening' such that 'now at last I can sit down and write my field notes' it is in actuality time to keep listening: to "[listen] to ourselves listening" (Mazzei, 2009, p. 51; added emphasis), with ears, sensory organs and sterna. Bringing an affective sensibility to fieldwork involves feeling for (non-)events that might not become apparent or stand out through other methods that take a rest outside of particular traceable demarcations. It is also a willingness to follow something that resonates with a strange relevance, prepositional only to the unknown. MacLure (2010) borrows Massumi's (2002) 'exemplary method' of theory-building via examples that have a *sensate* singularity: that stand out for reasons that are mappable not untraceable, becoming apparent through affect not language. MacLure figures the emergence and coming into sensation of examples as a *glow*. The glow is an intensity of sorts, but mild and kindling:

It is hard to describe how this happens, since you cannot recognise an example right at the point of its emergence. [...] a fieldnote fragment or video image [...] starts to glimmer, gathering our attention. Things both slow down and speed up at this point. [...] there is an affective component (in the Deleuzian sense) to this emergence of the example. The shifting speeds and intensities of engagement with the example do not just prompt thought, but also generate sensations resonating in the body as well as the brain – frissons of excitement, energy, laughter, silliness. (p. 282)

The glow is contagious, bubbling up in the researcher's body and over into the bodies of others, becoming-expressive in sound and becoming-material in movement. To be 'infected' with glow is like being caught up in assemblage. It is a method whereby becoming caught-up in things (or

becoming so aware, belatedly) is allowed to overrule language and the mastery of the trace.

In sum, following around an assemblage by mapping affective intensities means becoming alive to previously unthinkable kinds of data, emerging from perhaps unrecognizable yet palpable events with shifting, murky thresholds. It is always unclear where and when data will arrive and emerge into sensation or significance, and what data will be. Following St. Pierre (1997a), data can be emotions or the ways in which bodies respond to the landscape. Data can arise in dreams and in conversations when others respond to our work, or to something else entirely. The glow can find us anywhere, anytime and not necessarily in one place called ‘the field.’ Whereas ‘data collection’ techniques like interviews, focus groups, participant observation and photo or video elicitation are generally considered finite and separate from a subsequent analytical stage, this is rejected by Deleuzian researchers including those I have cited. This inseparability of data collection and analysis arises from *data’s effect on the researcher*. In other words, it is not only the researcher who produces data from the infinite other ‘irrelevances’ of a field site. Humans are not the only actors (J. Bennett, 2010).

Working with the feminist materialism of Donna Haraway (1997) and Karen Barad (2007), Hultman & Lenz Taguchi (2010) suggest that “data itself can be understood as a constitutive force, working upon the researcher” (p. 534). They differentiate their approach from that of the now-familiar *reflective* researcher. Taking the dynamism of data into account is not a matter of reflection alone, they argue, but of allowing our methodology to be altered by data’s capacity to affect the researcher, or to find *us*. Data also produces the researcher. Reflection is conceived as something that happens when the researcher ‘steps away’ from the data. This implies a free space where we can remove ourselves from a project and think or write in ways unrelated to and unaffected of the research. There are tacit appeals to objectivity here, in the



omniscient researcher who can pause, unmoved by the buzz or glow of data and the flow of intensities. Hultman & Lenz Taguchi propose a *diffractive* method instead, where “thinking is not something that is grounded on a decision or a rational cataloguing of different external objects: rather, it is an event that happens to us – it ‘hits us’ or ‘invades us’” (p. 537). Thinking is not just what comes after an event, but is a singular event in itself: “the event of diffractive ‘seeing’ and ‘reading’ the data is an entirely other event, emerging only with the reading of the data. [...] It is an effect of being affected where thinking exceeds us as subjects” (ibid.).

Thinking in post-qualitative research is the dynamic interaction of researcher bodies and data bodies, a singularity that comes not before or after ‘data collection’ in time or significance. This is research as assemblage, and assemblages create (think). Colebrook (2002) insists that research can be an immanent form of thought in and of itself: “we do not begin *from* an idea, such as human culture, and then use that idea to explain life. We chart the emergence of the idea from particular bodies and connections” (p. 82). To do inquiry that allows for affect to interfere in straightforward signification is to *experiment*. In the translator’s foreword to *A thousand plateaus*, Massumi (1987) invites the reader to be promiscuous with the content: to try things, to poach and to leave behind what doesn’t work (actualize new potentials). In one of their most famous passages, Deleuze & Guattari (1996) exhort us to do the same:

This is how it should be done: lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. (p. 161)

Experimentation is the ultimate rejection of merely reproductive inquiry where the same things

are found over and over again by dint of language. To the best of one's ability, then, the goal is to produce something new: a map of things unfolding otherwise. In the next section, I move on from methodological theory and offer an account of the four conferences where I endeavoured to produce a new mapping of the SJTE-assemblage.

### **Field Sites: The Conferences**

Between October 2012 and April 2013 I attended four education conferences in order to seek out SJTE events and practitioners. On several occasions, I had already attended Bergamo and AERA annual meetings. However, I attended NAME and ATE annual meetings for the first time as a researcher. Although each conference is ostensibly 'about' education, they differ from each other on logistical (size, scope, layout, duration) and intellectual (theory, method, questions) levels, reflecting the breadth and interdisciplinarity of the educational field. The particularities of each, including my history and relationships there, are worth considering in terms of how my fieldwork played out in real time and how I found SJTE. In what follows, then, I discuss each conference, highlighting their features and some of their complexities.

#### **Bergamo: October 17-20, 2012, Dayton.**

For over thirty years, the Bergamo Conference has been held every October at a 1950s-era former convent nestled in the hills well outside of Dayton, Ohio. Bergamo is the first conference I visited for the purposes of my study as well as the smallest and most radical in terms of norms (form and content) for presentations and conversations among attendees. It is also the 'home' of North American curriculum studies, although Bergamo tends to bring together scholars on the basis of minoritarian – in education – theoretical commitments (e.g., neo-Marxist, psychoanalytic, postcolonial, poststructuralist) and less so on the basis of shared objects (e.g., curriculum, taken literally). Landmark critiques of mainstream curriculum theory – what

‘curriculum’ even means in addition to what curricula ought to contain – have been levied by Bergamo founders and distinguished regulars including William Pinar, Madeleine Grumet, Deborah Britzman, Patti Lather, Janet Miller, Bill Ayers and others.

Inspired by the Occupy Wall Street movement, and with great serendipity for my study, the 2012 conference theme was “Crisis, compassion, and curriculum of global imagination: Toward inter/trans/national activism, occupation and advocacy.” The intersections of education and activism, including the role of teachers who, at Bergamo, are commonly styled as *de facto* activists by virtue of their engagement in necessarily political work, were visible throughout the conference program. Given that Bergamo sessions often address the need for social and educational change, ‘teacher education’ at Bergamo stands a good chance of ‘being’ SJTE in some manifestation: about diversity, equity and social justice via teachers as change agents. Paper titles such as “Reimagining study abroad within empire: Opportunities for advocacy and activism with ‘tolerant’ conquistador preservice teachers” signal both business as usual on the fringes of SJTE *and* surprising departures enabled by the Bergamo milieu. At Bergamo, therefore, I was able to locate sessions and other moments where the broadly, theoretically-inflected social justice ethos of the conference was brought into teacher education.

The peculiarity of Bergamo as a field site emerges equally from presentations *and* their particular reception given the evolving character of the space. One session I attended at the 2011 Bergamo conference was a pivotal source of inspiration for the present study. The room was packed. The three doctoral student presenters unveiled their model for a ‘less-superficial’ SJTE program, drawing heavily and uncritically on the writings of SJTE field leaders Zeichner, Cochran-Smith, Grant and Ladson-Billings. The paper turned out to be an experiment that threw Bergamo into relief against other kinds of less theoretical (or perhaps less poststructuralist)

educational milieu. The audience had clearly expected something else, and the ensuing discussion was marked by a suffocating, excessive (affective) intensity. There were even tears. This was miraculously normal, provoking no sideways glances and no rupture of the gathering.

The everyday Bergamo experience is characterized by close quarters. Almost everyone stays at the convent in converted nuns' quarters, taking occasional walks through the beautiful fall colours in the adjoining regional park. All three daily meals are eaten together in the dining hall. Regulars greet the notoriously awful food with a surprising degree of affection such that the character of one's participation in food-related complaint can index one's belonging. The dining hall becomes a pub in the evenings with beer and wine for sale, and for two years the organizers attempted a cabaret of sorts called 'Club Bergamo.' It has been discontinued, much to my chagrin. Regardless, the Bergamo Centre layout provides myriad opportunities for sustained, repeated interaction among attendees. In fact, at Bergamo I was worried about practitioners feeling unable to leave a conversation because there is no pressing need to go elsewhere, or that they might consent out of awkwardness; I did, after all, see everyone at every meal. Moreover, the pool of SJTE scholars and practitioners was miniscule given the conference's overall small size. I once found myself eating dinner with a group containing several of my participants who I had recruited on-site for conversations and who were necessarily unaware of each other's participation in my study. As such, one of my methodological goals at Bergamo was to be open to the possibilities for interaction and observation unlikely to arise at AERA, for example, given the sustained proximity of the convent and the fact that there is really nowhere else to go.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Bergamo feels most like my intellectual home on the conference circuit. A family analogy would cast the above distinguished Bergamo regulars as my intellectual grandparents (or great-grandparents, even) given their conceptual and in some cases personal

mentorship of my own professors. My graduate program, whose design owes much to Deborah Britzman, could perhaps be termed the ‘Bergamo’ of education graduate schools in Canada because of its uniquely interdisciplinary and open-ended approach to the study of education. Being ‘close to home’ at Bergamo I was most worried there, among all four field sites, about causing embarrassment or offence with my on-site efforts at participant recruitment. Would I receive strange glances in the dining room? Would news spread? Would people see me coming and run away? Would people seek me out by reputation? Is this ‘worse’ than running away? How will this sort of acclimation to my presence and research project affect not only my fieldwork and conversations, but also my future participation in this venue as an emerging scholar? Moreover, how could I ever know, within a post-qualitative frame, about any of these ‘effects’ except as they register for me in waves of awkwardness and seamlessness?

The Bergamo community’s openness, quirkiness and intellectual generosity are well established. For this reason, however, my anxiety – primarily about being out of place or awkward or otherwise not there in the right way – is particularly telling. It is data. Surely at this education conference, where a Deleuzian and affect theory-based project would be most understood, where other education scholars would be most likely to embrace my own theories *and* feelings about social justice in/as teacher education, I ought to be most at ease. But I was not. What can be learned here about affective disciplinary belonging, about belonging within a field whose insider/outsider status shifts and changes in each of its sites of emergence?

**NAME: November 28 – December 1, 2012, Philadelphia.**

The annual meeting of the National Association for Multicultural Education was the second conference I attended as a researcher and the first conference I had never attended prior to conducting my research. My perception of NAME, gleaned from my knowledge of its officers,

stories told by colleagues and friends as well as my own perusal of its online materials, is that it is the most ‘concentrated’ instantiation of SJTE to be found on the education conference circuit. A browse of past conference themes reveals an exclusive (rhetorical) commitment to social justice issues. As with Bergamo, the Occupy movement left its mark on NAME such that the 2012 conference theme was “Realizing the power of movements through multicultural education.” NAME executive officers, board members, presidents and founders include and have included major contributors to SJTE such as Carl Grant, Christine Sleeter, Donna Gollnick, Paul Gorski and H. Prentice Baptiste. The phrase ‘culturally relevant’ (a characteristic of the field-defining SJTE literature) is liberally sprinkled all over the website and conference program. NAME endorses and takes a position on myriad social justice issues within and outside of education (e.g., on the anti-immigration bills passed in Georgia and Arizona), and its mission statement commits itself and its members to the pursuit of social justice through education.

With a membership committed to this sort of mandate, a large proportion of the presentations at NAME 2012 unsurprisingly pertained to SJTE. On the whole, NAME attendees are scholars with research interests and teaching activities germane to my study, brought together by a shared affinity. Whereas at other conferences I sought out SJTE among teacher education (ATE), curriculum studies (Bergamo) or general education-related offerings (AERA), at NAME almost everything bore at least a surface relevance to my study. In planning and adjusting my schedule, I selected sessions, etc. with an explicit teacher education focus.

With regard to the physical experience of NAME, the conference in Philadelphia took place in the conference facilities of a major chain hotel, a fact noted with some irony by a few of my participants given the organization’s frequently anti-capitalist rhetoric. The flow of the conference was therefore mundane and predictable in terms of organization and offerings, with

the exception being the slow elevator; one regularly rubbed shoulders and made awkward small talk with the field leaders of SJTE in the long minutes spent waiting for the doors to open. In addition to the presence of field leaders, a unique aspect of NAME is the presence and continual veneration of the NAME Founders, a group of mostly African American (and now) older scholars guaranteed representation at all levels of the organization and whose leader is a permanent member of the Board. A participant remarked that the norms of interaction among, for example, speakers and audiences or Founders and non-Founders are cultural inheritances from Black church and sorority traditions. This includes call-and-response styles of dialogue, a frequently ceremonial aesthetic in an otherwise formal academic setting (e.g., placing roses in front of the principle founder whose first name is Rose) and religious discourse. The latter was particularly striking given the secularism that tends to characterize self-identified ‘social justice’ communities, for better or for worse. Interestingly, almost everyone with whom I had sustained conversations would detail histories of generational conflict at NAME. An abiding source of tension, apparently, is the expansion of NAME’s ‘multicultural education’ framework beyond race, ethnicity, culture and language to gender and sexual orientation. At times this conflict erupted in formal question periods, but was more often vouchsafed to me in private.

An ever-present aspect of my fieldwork at NAME pertained to its status as the disciplinary ‘hub’ of SJTE, where its concepts and commitments are not marginal but mainstream. From the get-go, I anticipated that the familiar social mores and rules around anti-racism and anti-oppression conduct – particularly for white people like me, who ten or twelve years ago may very well have been greeted as teacher candidates potentially resistant to SJTE content (more on this to come in a later chapter) – would be in full force at NAME and in varying degrees of absence at other conferences. This – and/as my sense of this – certainly

informed my activities there, from the relationships I established with other attendees and my participants to my sense of larger conference happenings. In many ways, I came to think of my time at NAME as a study of what happens for/to/as SJTE in a ‘sympathetic’ environment where disagreement or contestation are likely presumed to be absent: where ‘we’ agree on the most important questions, from the get-go. What is life like at the epicentre?

**ATE: February 15-19, 2013, Atlanta.**

The third conference I attended was the 2013 annual meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators, held at a major chain hotel conference centre in downtown Atlanta. Whereas Bergamo was a specialist theoretical gathering with pockets of overlapping interest in teacher education and social justice, and NAME was effectively a social justice education gathering where I looked for teacher education practitioners, at ATE I looked for social justice practitioners among teacher educators. Having never attended ATE and without prior exposure in the form of conversations with those in the know (as with NAME), I had no idea of what to expect. The program was only available on-site in hard copy. Reading through the offerings, I noticed that the language was different from that used to denote SJTE offerings at Bergamo (where anti-capitalism and poststructuralism seemed to meet in the middle) and NAME (where ‘social justice’ was explicit). At ATE, anything like ‘social justice’ was far less explicit and tended toward cultural competence, urban education, diverse learners and ‘teaching all students.’

Although the theme for the conference – “Living and learning across a lifetime” – was not directly related to social justice, all of the keynotes but one took up related topics. The two ‘headliners’ were Joyce King and Bill Ayers, both figureheads in social justice education. Having heard them both speak before, I was interested to note how each one averted familiar ‘trigger’ points for fairly mainstream professional white audiences (which ATE seemed to



represent based on a continuous visual survey). Joyce King spoke of everyone's susceptibility to prejudice *including* people of colour, whereas Bill Ayers spoke at length about the well-being of children – always a neutral topic – and told numerous family anecdotes that seemed to follow right on the wings of his controversial asides (e.g., a prison inmate's poem about lacking access to abortion).

Over the course of the conference, ATE shaped up to be a markedly different space in which to do my fieldwork. First, by all appearances the organization is committed to creating a sense of community and belonging. As a newcomer, I was invited to the Newcomers Breakfast where we played stranger bingo and were given speeches by ATE members at various stages in their careers who extolled the virtues of the ATE family. Current, past and future executive officers circulated around the medium-sized room, asking me why I wasn't eating the complimentary muffins (I wasn't eating wheat at the time for health reasons) and remarking on the novelty of my being Canadian. Throughout the conference, high level ATE people would thereafter appear to recognize me in the corridors and greet me with marked enthusiasm.

This indefatigable inclusiveness contrasted with another of my experiences at and pertaining to ATE. Several of my participants – SJTE practitioners all – heavily criticized the conference for a lack of criticality, or praised it only as a 'safe place' to bring first-time presenting graduate students or a 'slam dunk' where every proposal is accepted. When I attended SJTE sessions, audience members numbered fewer than presenters and more than one session was entirely empty. These I tended to pass by out of a desire to locate dynamic concentrations of SJTE where conversation was more likely. However, in one instance I ended up alone in a big room with a presenter. Despite knowing each other, we continued in the familiar roles of presenter and audience member while sitting two feet apart. This almost felt like a resistance to

the room's emptiness: we will have a SJTE session, even if no one shows up.

ATE has several Special Interest Groups (SIGs) for whom time is set aside for annual business meetings, all at once so that one is precluded from taking an active role in more than one. In addition to studying the program offerings, I immediately located the Multicultural Education (ME) SIG and attended their very few listed events, all of which were sparsely attended save for the business meeting and research panel. I would learn from a participant that the SIG had been the birthplace of NAME in the 1990s. NAME today is a far more radical organization, perhaps a clue to the reason why it burst forth from within a seemingly mainstream organization like ATE. In fact, the 'Founding Mother' of NAME (Rose Duhon-Sells) was ATE President at one time. Several of the connections that I had made at NAME stood me in good stead at ATE, where I found myself among new friends and seemingly unable to 'fly solo' for the purpose of conducting my research. This was most welcome as I arrived at ATE knowing only one other person and was gradually integrated into their group of friends and colleagues. For although I was heavily courted at the Newcomers Breakfast, I just didn't feel like I fit in.

**AERA: April 27 – May 1, 2013, San Francisco.**

The last and largest conference I attended, in terms of intra-disciplinary breadth and number of attendees, was AERA. The printed program rivals a small city phone book and each time slot features several dozen separate sessions. The conference usually spans five or six hotels and/or convention centres. My fieldwork was necessarily affected by this geography. Whereas at the other three conferences SJTE practitioners tended to coalesce together in an array of identifiable small sessions such that a 'SJTE contingency' or 'mini-conference' was formed, AERA's vastness precluded any such emergent cohesion and familiarity. Given its size, however, AERA is sub-divided into many divisions, special interest groups (SIGs) and committees, all

hosting their own receptions, keynotes, and social events. I divided my time among events and sessions sponsored by Division B – Curriculum Studies, Division K – Teaching and Teacher Education, the Committee on Scholars and Advocates for Gender Equity, the Committee on Scholars of Color in Education, the Social Justice Action Committee, the Critical Educators for Social Justice SIG and the Queer Studies SIG, where I serve on the executive committee. While there is no sub-organization devoted to SJTE in particular, the above generally feature concentrations of SJTE sessions, particularly when they co-sponsor sessions together. Last year I managed to locate at least a dozen SJTE sessions by browsing session titles and relevant division or committee listings. This year my analysis of the SJTE literature yielded a list of scholars to track down whose sessions tend to be SJTE groundswells (or sinkholes).

At AERA I had the peculiar experience of attending sessions with ten people and a hundred people, all on the theme of SJTE or other social justice-focused aspects of education. Sessions featuring Linda Darling-Hammond, Marilyn Cochran-Smith or Kenneth Zeichner exploded out of mid-sized rooms and comfortably filled partitioned ballrooms. Question and answer periods, which feature prominently in my data chapters, were invariably non-events: remarkable for their seamlessness or lack of intensity. Given the size and scale of these sessions, people came in and out at will, with a mass exodus at the Q+A being common. Perhaps practitioners' relationship to the SJTE field leaders is not publicly one of engagement, but rather of receiving dispatches on the 'state of field.' This was certainly not the case in the smaller, markedly SJTE sessions that I attended, where the audience was extremely reactive and tended to spring to life in the Q+A, not pack up and move on now that the Event had concluded.

As was the case with the three preceding conferences, AERA's 2013 theme – "Education and poverty: Theory, research, policy, and praxis" – also pertained to social justice but indirectly

so by naming education as a way out of poverty providing that it can be done right (which opens the door for familiar debates as to ‘what counts’ as good educational research that can show whether this is the case). This particularly mainstream gloss on a social justice issue reflects AERA’s character as the largest educational research organization in North America and the world. Unsurprisingly, AERA has assumed an ‘establishment’ role in that it is frequently described among activist-educators as a monolith, a hegemon or worse. Social justice educators allied with anti-capitalist movements, while the ‘norm’ at Bergamo, defiantly position themselves in opposition to AERA’s big business and bureaucracy ethos, even in a climate where the organization’s mission statement takes up poverty (i.e., potentially indicating a friendliness to social justice priorities). The resulting counter-culture thrives in the space of the sub-organizations that I listed above, which very often take positions directly against AERA itself or lobby the organization to act in a way reflective of activist goals (e.g., moving the 2013 conference from Atlanta due to the Georgia immigration law, or boycotting the Hyatt in San Francisco that same year in solidarity with striking workers). In San Francisco, the Critical Educators for Social Justice SIG (which prominently features several of SJTE’s more activist-oriented field leaders) led the most widespread grassroots mobilization in recent AERA memory. This was sparked by the AERA president Bill Tierney’s invitation to US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to deliver a keynote address. Duncan is widely held to be an adversary of social justice commitments in education given his role in the increasing privatization and corporatization of American schooling. The SIG staged walkouts, picket lines and real-time acts of civil disobedience during the presidential address as well as Duncan’s keynote. This conflict had a high degree of visibility at AERA, which stands in sharp contrast to the more generationally- and interpersonally-inflected conflicts among NAME members.

Overall, SJTE emerged at AERA in different times and places as a stridently minoritarian field *and* part of the established order in that SJTE and multicultural education field leaders Marilyn Cochran-Smith and James Banks are past presidents of AERA, with entire ballrooms assigned to their sessions. This echoes many of the field's both/and tensions that I identified in my analytical review of SJTE's field-defining literature.

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My notes on each conference were intended to give the reader a feel for the diversity of the field in which SJTE 'takes place', as well as a sense of my own process and experience of being there as a researcher. However, my remarks are not to be taken as hypotheses to be proved or disproved in terms of what affected my fieldwork and how. It will always be affected and affecting such that isolating or ruling out influences is a practice incommensurate with the kind of post-qualitative methodology I am assembling. This is nevertheless a strange balancing act, in which I have temporarily given into my own suspicious desire for something like the thick description which I have invoked as a bad object throughout this chapter. In giving in, I hope I demonstrate the uses of mapping *and* tracing – or at least the inevitability of the trace – but without any sense that what I have written can indeed tell The Story of what happened. In the remaining sections on my fieldwork activity and conversations with practitioners, I detail my actual attempts to produce the data featured in the coming chapters.

### **Fieldwork**

As someone attempting to bring Deleuze & Guattari into the practice of research, my task involved finding ways to get a handle on a moving target without stopping thought in terms of what that target could do. In practice, and to borrow a phrase from Sara Ahmed (2012), my fieldwork methods can be described as 'following SJTE around' in the places where it tends to

appear. As I discussed in the introduction, to study institutional diversity initiatives in universities, Ahmed followed ‘diversity’ around. While this often meant doing discourse analyses of policy documents, it did not mean taking diversity-related facts or intentions as reflective of what diversity *is*. She also did not stop at discourse as ‘the data’ but used her habitual phenomenological lens such that ‘diversity’ took shape as a particular orientation to every day life in an institution. In addition to reading policy, Ahmed interviewed diversity workers – those who are so oriented – and followed around the things they do, see, encounter, produce, value, deride, etc. She found that ‘diversity’ was not necessarily ‘itself’ – a range of markedly different things or people – but a perspective on the micropolitics of university bureaucracy: what mattered, what was harmful, what was important, what was not. Officially, ‘diversity work’ meant fostering diversity, a common definition. But Ahmed found that ‘diversity work’ was actually getting the signature of the university provost and not a low- or mid-ranking official on a particular policy, seeing ‘diversity issues’ moved to the top of a meeting agenda, or managing one’s continually chilly reception at meetings around campus. ‘Diversity’ sometimes required an expertise at getting things done and, at other times, strategies for simply remaining in place as The Diversity Person. It was not, day in and day out, making the university ‘more diverse’ in any commonsensical way that paired signifiers to signifieds with gay abandon. But it was ‘doing diversity work’ nonetheless. ‘Diversity work’ became something dynamic and, I would argue à la Deleuze, a site of multiple becomings that just happen to be signed with the same language.

Language was similarly multiplicitous in my own fieldwork, beginning with the bare fact that I selected conferences that are manifestly ‘about’ education. Finding ‘SJTE’ at each one began with an in-depth reading of the conference program in order to select sessions and events

most likely to contain or constitute my object of study in that time and place. Sometimes I was guided by variations on the exact phrase ‘social justice teacher education’ (Bergamo and NAME) and at other times I sifted through diversity, equity, multiculturalism, cultural responsiveness, cultural competence and other terms deployed to variable degrees of synonymy (ATE). With scant exception, I prioritized sessions that posited teacher candidates as change agents, or, where session/paper titles or descriptions articulated a goal of producing certain kinds of teachers as a means to achieve social justice. I learned early on that symposia were a better guarantor of finding what I was looking for. When several papers were grouped around a topic, the discussions and encounters tended to be more resonant than in cases where one ‘SJTE’ paper sat in isolation. I also sought out meetings of SIGs or other sub-organizations devoted to social justice, whether explicitly teacher education-focused (e.g., the Multicultural Education SIG within ATE) or not (e.g., the Critical Educators for Social Justice SIG within AERA), and selectively attended their sponsored sessions. When presidential sessions or conference-wide keynotes addressed SJTE or related themes, I also attended in order to get a sense of how these were played out away from the specialized enclaves in which I did most of my fieldwork.

At each conference, then, my first goal was to find SJTE in its particular manifestation, which was both characteristic of that conference and remarkably similar across all four in terms of people, organizational structures and vocabulary in use. As I have alluded to already, the particularity of the SJTE that emerged each time perhaps had something to do with where I was. ATE is a teacher education conference where social justice interests are specialized but everyone is interested in teacher education, whereas NAME is a multicultural education conference where teacher education interests are specialized but everyone is interested in social justice. AERA is a broad education conference where ‘SJ’ and ‘TE’ are *both* specialized (SJ more minoritarian than

TE, to be sure), whereas Bergamo is a tiny curriculum studies conference operating on a conception of curriculum so broad that almost everything is ‘specialized’ because the work presented is incredibly diverse. Coincidentally, as I detail below, each of the four conferences this year featured an overarching theme somehow (rhetorically) connected to social justice.

At the three smaller conferences (Bergamo, NAME and ATE) I would gradually begin to recognize a constituency whose focus on and interest in preparing teachers to be change agents meant that ‘following them around,’ more or less, would lead me to SJTE-related presentations and conversations. Although I tried to exercise a degree of freedom from new or renewed acquaintances and friends in order to ensure that my activity flowed from my research, this was most often unsuccessful as I was organically ‘drafted.’ This led me into intensive encounters and events of various shapes and sizes that I would otherwise have missed, and so I learned with diminishing reluctance to go with the flow and be swept along in an experimental spirit. Sometimes I altered my schedule based on who was in a room that I happened to pass by, and this was almost always fruitful. Things were different at AERA, however, given the scale and layout of the conference. Scouring the entire mammoth program was impractical and AERA’s distribution across six or more large hotel conference centres precluded my identifying a constituency of ‘SJTE people’ except via their names in the searchable online program. However, given that AERA was my final site, I was able to navigate the online program with a seasoned grasp of SJTE language – for better or for worse – as well as recurring names from other conferences and the SJTE literature.

Once I had ‘found’ SJTE, a process with no clear beginning or end in keeping with my theoretical and methodological commitments, I engaged in a kind of multi-sensory observation predicated on my own sense of belonging within the field. Given my familiarity with/in this and



other social justice communities, I have a sense of what can happen (admittedly, of what has already happened) in the midst of SJTE or in other similarly social justice-oriented contexts. My field notes are an archive of my own becoming-SJTE and becoming-other to SJTE, processes that cannot be fully distinguished. In addition to using my eyes and ears, I mobilized my own somatic resonances – tensions, hunches, burnings, oscillations of alertness and boredom – to follow the tone and rhythm of a situation. My copious notes often took the form of free-writing during sessions as I registered intensities as well as the flat ordinary, both of which often surprised me in terms of form and content. At times I would pause and ‘take the pulse’ of the room; this involved looking and feeling for how things were going in terms of atmosphere, comings/goings, modes and degrees of attentiveness, nods, vocalizations, twitches, etc. relative to what was ‘happening.’ My scare quotes around ‘happening’ are intended to convey that ‘what happened’ was not limited to a speaker’s presentation, but included all other movements and utterances before, within and after a session’s official timeframe. After all, an event can be someone getting up and leaving a room, even if The Event itself – i.e., the reason for being there – is a keynote speech. The Event can be a non-event. Among other things, the affective relation between Events and events was of great interest to me. SJTE is not alone in so far as it could be said to desire congruence among its Events (intended significance) and its events (emergent significance that matters, in the sense of being materially affecting), where an unfolding *incongruence* is perhaps more characteristic of life in the throws of becoming.

Recalling Bell’s (2006) chaosmos, I tried to plot the course of the assemblage in productive motion between its two poles of chaos and stasis, oscillating between the total absence of order and complete suffocation. Corporeal, affective intensity and its ‘absence’ – its ebb – was my barometre, and different elements of sessions became reliably intensive to

differing degrees. While speakers were presenting, I was alert and alive to audience members in relation to what was being said or done at the front. The customary Q+A afterwards emerged as a focus of my inquiry given its greater openness, which is in part illusory as its rules are more nebulous but no less available to sensation or mobilized in judgments of many kinds, both immediate and belated. Questioners connect in highly variable ways to what has been shared by presenters; presenters then respond (or not) to these stimuli. I would frequently take note of moments in presentations which seemed to tremble the room, and watch or wait for their engagement (or lack thereof) by audience members later on. Silences were of equal interest to me as moments of clear presence for consensus or disagreement. Above all, I was interested in everything that actualized – including silence – as never merely accidental or coincidental in the midst of the SJTE-assemblage (as this allows an erroneous separation of Data from the irrelevant), but as something that kept SJTE on an even keel, chaotomic.

At the end of each conference, I would read through my field notes and read or recall things that were particularly or peculiarly intensive, or, that threw SJTE's thresholds into sensate relief even as they would shift and expand. These were moments when its capacities became apparent in relation to its emerging thresholds. Using my memory and my field notes, I would write up these moments into a series of narratives with the goal of affectively staging their intensity. These feature prominently in Chapter Six. Following Stewart (2007), my criterion of 'success' for these narratives is not their degree of verisimilitude with what 'really happened' (as this is impossible), but rather their capacity to affect the reader. These moments vary widely by scale in that some are flashes and others are entire discussion periods. In either their standalone or composite forms, then, my narrated moments staged the affective capacity for flexibility that I am studying and often yielded prospective conversation participants.

## Conversations

In addition to this multi-sensory fieldwork at conferences, my second strategy was conversations with SJTE practitioners.<sup>25</sup> The latter designation was fairly fluid, meaning people who teach or have taught ‘the diversity class’ in teacher education *and* who showed up in/around SJTE at conferences. Presence was key; more key, in fact than a participant’s teaching area or record. To be drawn in by and caught up within SJTE in its instantiation at whatever conference emerged as my main criteria. A minority were content-area specialists whose emphasis was on diversity, equity and social justice but who did not teach ‘the diversity class.’ Several participants only became known to me as ‘the diversity person’ in their department after they had accepted my invitation, or after they had become apparent to me. As above, the particular moments that I noted and later narrated frequently yielded prospective participants, whether people who intensified spaces or who resonated with the intensity (or its lack, the flat line) characterizing that particular moment. For example, in the following chapter I discuss interventions in the flow of SJTE spaces and conversations, both those that ‘took place’ and those that did or could not. I documented several moments of intervention during my fieldwork, seeking out people who catalyzed the intervention *and* who were caught up in other ways. Unsurprisingly, I did not seek to recruit a particular number, although I had conversations of varying lengths with twenty participants, most of which took place over Skype in the aftermath of a conference. For theoretical reasons that will hopefully become clear below, I provide as little

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<sup>25</sup> In what is the first of two slightly awkward asides in this section, I’ll point out that everyone (with perhaps two exceptions) with whom I spoke was senior to me. My participants spanned non-tenure-track, tenure-track and tenured faculty including full professors and SJTE leaders, as well as up-and-coming stars. It is in some ways foolish to think that what made these conversations ‘relevant’ or otherwise ‘about’ my study was that everyone involved does SJTE, or to isolate this ‘variable’ from all others such as rank, notoriety or whether I was already known to someone when we spoke ‘on the record.’ Then again, it is also foolish in a post-qualitative study to rely on pockets of time for ‘gathering data’ regardless of whether I call these interviews or no. To my mind, all of these wrinkles are indications of the trace and its inevitability or moreover its inescapability. There is nothing that doesn’t have a history, and this can be one of profound sedimentation as is the case with things like academic rank, protocol, etc. It is the researcher’s job to work against this history’s becoming all that can ever be known, over and over again.

information about my participants as possible, to the extent that I use gender-neutral pronouns unless gender is otherwise revealed within an example. This is an effort to stage the kind of de-personalization that allows assemblage theory to shift the focus and trouble the foundations of traditional social research. It is also a refusal of essences (DeLanda, 2006), and the concomitant logic that what we can say about someone's race, gender or age (the three most present 'variables' in my experience of SJTE) can determine an encounter prior to its unfolding. I have chosen to use the term 'conversation' in lieu of 'interview' to describe my method of interacting with other SJTE practitioners in pre-arranged, time-limited encounters. The language of interviewing carries a lot of hierarchal and humanist residue; the interviewer more or less guides the interview according to their conscious intentions, and the interviewee is more or less guided, fulfilling the interviewer's requirements (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Scheurich, 1995). In this frame, an interview is manifestly about what it is about and does what it does: it is about the research topic and it provides data for the study. Furthermore, the data is derived from the voice of the participant speaking in response to questions.

Following Mazzei (2013), however, I brought a Deleuzo-Guattarian sensibility to these conversations. Mazzei's concept of the VwO, or voice without organs, plays on the more familiar body without organs (BwO) or flow of desire that can be plugged into and channeled by the assemblage. Like the BwO is not yet the organ-ized body with hierarchal determinate relationships among body parts, the VwO is not yet 'organ-ized' or associated with speech organs, speech acts and particular speakers. The BwO is rather the potential of the body, and the VwO is the potential of voice. VwO denotes how "a voice [...] does not emanate from a singular subject but is produced [...] in an enactment among researcher-data-participants-theory-analysis" (p. 733). The organs do not line up in the BwO for simple input-output, and these components of

the research process do not line up sequentially, either. As in my discussion of affect and methodology, the VwO disturbs ‘self-reflexivity’ as something that can halt the mixing of interviewer-interviewee agency through claims to a higher knowing subjectivity (see also Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010). Once again, the requisite separation from the data (St. Pierre, 1997a) is impossible within a post-humanist or Deleuzo-Guattarian methodological frame. Rather, “there is no separate, individual person, no participant in an interview study to which a single voice can be linked – all are entangled” (Mazzei, p. 734). Voice is relationally produced in an interview or research encounter, and is not the property or sign of intentionality proper to its emanating body-subject (Blaise, 2013); it is the VwO.

As such, my method insists that conversations express a *mixed or assembled agency* on the part of interlocutors. DeLanda’s (2006) point that the subject is an assemblage of sub-personal components, and that conversations are (fleeting) assemblages of subjects is well-taken. We often say or do things sporadically, immediately in conversation that express some sort of agency but not one that is pre-meditated or sovereign. We erupt, interrupt, start and stop at speeds greater than pre-meditation allows. We surprise ourselves, by sitting still and quiet or by standing up, whether literally or figuratively. This can be a function of habit and history, and here psychoanalysis would invoke the subject’s unconscious. I am interested in habits without histories and individual subjects: the ways in which bodies carry out their roles as assemblage components in ways that may bear elsewhere than on *individual* histories of affect, or that are causally redundant (i.e., because the outcome for the whole assemblage is the same regardless of a particular component’s actions or motivations) given what is *actually*, in the Deleuzian sense, produced. Staying well in a conversation that keeps moving – going with the flow – requires capacities that are less related to particular content than general form. For example, entering and

leaving well are as important as taking turns. Conversations can be of any duration or depth, although parameters on these are far from limited to the circumstance of the conversation itself but extend backwards, forwards and laterally across time and space. No conversation unfolds along a perfectly scripted (but there can be scripts), well-controlled (but there can be control) trajectory where no one says things they would like to recant or that do things they cannot control. Very seldom, in my experience, does someone read their own interview transcript and not find themselves to some extent an automaton or at least a stranger.

My goal, put simply, is to account for ‘how things go’ in SJTE practitioner conversations that skirt the edges of what it means to belong in the field. This belonging is not only what the conversation is ‘about’ but also what is produced and producing in the midst of the conversation. In looking at ‘how things go’ I seek to map the conversation-assemblage that plugs into the VwO in order to see what can actualize. Recalling Bell (2006), and similarly with regard to conference moments, I track the conversation as a dynamic system that is both chaos and cosmos – chaosmos – such that it constitutively wavers between totalizing order and a chaotic absence of meaning. Some conversations waver better than others, some suffocate and some collapse; some form plateaus, however fleetingly, such that nothing seems like it is happening: everyone and everything just goes with the flow. However, following Mazzei (2004, 2008) into the methodological study of silence, when ‘nothing is happening’ on the register of sensation I become curious about this flat line, or what this flat-lining of affect produces. Stewart (2007) might refer to flat-lining as ‘mainstreaming,’ or staying on the surface of something in order to keep moving and not become bogged down, static.

My analysis of conversations involved repeatedly and simultaneously reviewing the

written and auditory<sup>26</sup> records (see Mazzei, 2004 for a detailed account of why listening to interview recordings is a useful postmodern or poststructuralist method). In so doing, I would simultaneously *read and feel* for the VwO produced between us and producing us in part as ‘people who do this work.’ This is a flag we would both always raise, however un/intentionally, through various means and at unforeseeable times. If an interview is being read for what exceeds the two or more (almost) strangers involved or for a kind of negative imprint of what brings them into intelligibility and comfort with each other, then I use degrees of intensity to mark what must be greeted as old news, or things that must already be known by all parties versus things that (can, because they do) elicit visceral reactions or direct performances of shock and surprise. I endeavoured to divorce myself from a fantasy of self-knowledge or unique insight, making my own utterances and behaviours as unknowable as those of my participants: attending to what happens and not to what things ‘mean’ or signify. On the other hand, in listening to my own voice for hours, I did develop a sense of my own laughter, for example: when it is forced, when it is free, when it surprises me, when it comes too early or too late, when it is not infectious. There are also many different kinds of laughter. Along with laughter, my goal was to also track the movement of chaosmos in a conversation by following inflections, outbursts, flat lines, speeds and durations of speech, sound and silence. I use verbatim excerpts and my own recollection of conversational moments to explore both what can actualize in an SJTE conversation and what threatens to make things stand still or fall apart.

It would be disingenuous to say that I had no interview guide. Rather, the conversations

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<sup>26</sup> Although I used a Skype recorder that can record audio and video, I elected to only record the audio of my conversations. However, I did have visual contact with participants throughout with scant exception (one was a Skype phone call and in another case the participant couldn’t see my video for some unknown reason but was okay with my seeing of her). I know that the audio-only decision came very easily to me, perhaps because my initial Bergamo interviews were audio-only and recorded on my iPhone. However, there is certainly more thinking to be done about the effects of this interface, even if we can never be sure what they are. What would be more fruitful, to take another page from Deleuze & Guattari, would be to experiment with varieties of conversational interface in a subsequent project instead of going back to things that happened here.

entailed a degree of preparation on my part. If I encountered participants in moments of SJTE conference intensity, I would often make note of things I wanted to bring up but would seldom prepare specific questions. However, the content of questions is not the only factor and in no way assures the simple reproduction of intent across multiple research encounters. This is a familiar Deleuzian and poststructuralist critique of traditional qualitative practice (e.g., the interview guide) and its positivist aspirations. Rather, the way in which I brought things up, if I did, was not planned in advance, and was often surprising or unfamiliar to me in its aesthetic (tone, word choice, speed, diction, preamble, etc.). In this way, my own contributions to the conversation are as significant as those of the participants themselves, in keeping with the VwO.

In addition to questions about moments of intensity – where my shiftiness in the asking became as much data as their response – I would ask broad questions about their classroom experiences, encouraging speculation and generalization. My questions here were an effort to stage the threshold of what ‘social justice teacher education’ feels like: what is authentic, not good enough, bad or insufficient. This was deliberately experimental, in that I would directly pressure some of the ‘sore spots’ of SJTE, particularly the problems of evidence (my own research problem) and SJTE impostors, in that I often asked whether practitioner intention or effect makes something ‘SJTE.’ What I wanted from these encounters was a staging of SJTE’s thresholds and/as the exercise of its practitioner-components’ capacities for managing their intense proximity. Thresholds are abstract *and* real, doing (everyday, ordinary) life-giving work.

One final note is in order before I move to the conclusion of my methodology chapter. In several places, I have alluded to a shift in the scene of my conversations from on-site to Skype. Inviting participants for conversations on-site during the conference was easy at Bergamo, where my fieldwork ‘began’ (something that I want to put under erasure, as I have been working



through many aspects of this project for many years). As I discussed, the Bergamo layout is small and rather intimate, allowing for repeated meetings and the organization of meet-up times because people do not disperse to their separate hotels at the end of the day, or even at meal times. There is plenty of down-time between sessions, for example, that doesn't have to be taken up with finding another meeting room a kilometre away. I did, however, end up conducting half of my Bergamo conversations over Skype because I had to leave abruptly upon becoming acutely ill. It is unclear whether I would have initiated my subsequent practice of Skyping with participants had I not been forced to adopt this strategy as a result of my early departure.

Although NAME was held in a single hotel conference centre and many conference attendees appeared to also be staying there, I learned quickly that the size of the conference and the number of goings-on impeded my recruitment for precisely the reasons that Bergamo was easy. At NAME I introduced myself to prospective participants and acquired their contact information, articulating my explicit intention to 'interview' them for my dissertation research. At ATE I began introducing myself either explicitly or as someone interested in a participant's presentation or comments; when I got in touch after the fact, I would come clean. At AERA, the overwhelming size of the conference and of many conference events meant that sometimes I didn't introduce myself at all but rather made 'cold calls' after the fact via email.

What this shift in practice might mean is something that I am still thinking through, unsure of how to integrate its significance. I do know that my conversations over Skype were more strictly delimited and as such traced the 'genre' of research interview more so than my on-site conversations at Bergamo. I had to tell people what to expect in my email invitation, particularly on cold calls, and 'about an hour' seemed like something I could ask busy – and especially senior – scholars to give over to my cause. My in-person conversations at Bergamo

varied in length, and I even conducted one with two people at the same time: co-presenters who had been teaching SJTE courses together for a couple of years. Because I am working with Deleuze and poststructuralist methodological theory, it is important to note that spending twenty minutes or an hour or a day or a year with someone is *both* significant *and* devoid of any essence that would enable an accounting of this significance. It is, as in all things Deleuzian, a both/and instead of an either/or. My use of standard-ish one or one-and-a-half hour segments of time in which to talk with SJTE practitioners in their far-flung homes or offices (over Skype) was in many ways a tactical experiment: ‘something else’ in the familiar trappings of the research interview that made everyone feel comfortable and in control of the situation; ‘it’s only an hour’ or ‘I’m a researcher myself so a research interview is something I can handle.’ I explore this further in my concluding discussion of ethics below.

### **Conclusion: Where Does Inquiry End?**

*What would it mean for ethics if we could no longer install or restore subjectivity as the foundation of responsibility? What would it mean for relations if they did not involve pre-existent, self-contained individuals identifying and interacting with each other within the structure of some a priori space/time but, instead, were an individuation that was always starting up again in the middle of a different temporality, in new assemblages, never fully constituted, fluid, a flow meeting other flows? (St. Pierre, 2004, pp. 290–291)*

I will conclude by suggesting some provocations of my theoretical and methodological approach for research ethics, particularly of the more implicit variety i.e., not limited to the purview of the Research Ethics Board (REB). I believe that the Deleuzian concepts of mapping and immanent difference provoke novel thinking about what is and is not ethical in research.

Moreover, they offer a way for me to think about some sort of emergent criteria for what could be called satisfaction but what is usually called validity and what is really a sense of where inquiry can stop (with basically all of this sentence placed in scare quotes). I use the language of ethics because traditional constructs of validity (e.g., trustworthiness, credibility, triangulation, member checking, grounding, etc.) are largely inadmissible. My framework directly challenges language, representation and signification as well as the act of confirming or denying the congruence of one's findings with what has been found already (in this or other studies), or with what the subject already sees fit to narrate and recognize about itself.

At least two noted qualitative methodology theorists (see Denzin, 1994; Lather, 1993, 1995) have investigated the troubles posed by poststructuralism for traditional conceptions of validity, with Denzin concluding his survey of proposed alternatives as follows: "None of the above measures are completely satisfactory. They are all reflexive and messy. That is how it should be, for the world we encounter is neither easy to make sense of nor neat" (p. 300). I want to resist tidying things up, and so I emphasize ethics in the sense of a path forward – what one shall do – rather than a path prohibited, or what one shall not do. And what one shall do, as a researcher beginning from assemblage and affect theory, is to remain as open as possible to becoming as it actualizes in one's midst. 'In one's midst' is a demand for co-presence but also a compromise with the pragmatics of going somewhere and doing something with/in this body, which is what a lot of not-only-textual research amounts to, including my own.

The ethical principles that I have followed, as above, relate to mapping and immanent difference. I have already discussed mapping (not tracing) at length, but not with regard to its ethical implications. Briefly, mapping entails something other than a confirmatory either/or stance with regard to one's research object. To map and not trace is to avoid, as much as one can,

the impulse to resort to prior understandings or experiences as a barometre of truth or relevance. It is to follow, through affect and sensation as I have argued, where one's object goes: what it does and what actualizes in these doings. It is to avoid doing something because 'this is how it is done' and to avoid drawing parameters on the basis of language (alone). It is to resist the need for comfortable closure in one's research and the corresponding allure of comprehensiveness. For comprehensiveness (e.g., as in the total application of a coding scheme through methods of constant comparison) is never truly comprehensive if it attends only to language. In this scenario, affect is only included in its capture and encapsulation as emotion: narrated and proper to one human subject. It has ceased to become (Deleuzian) affect, at all.

Immanent difference is a second Deleuzian concept with research-ethical implications. In my theoretical framework chapter, I discussed the double articulation of becoming: differentiation then differenciation. Difference in Deleuze is not a matter of saying that x is not y, but of x and y continually differentiating from themselves in their own singular ways of becoming, or, coping with chaosmos in the effort to remain identifiable and stable-enough to create. Because every assemblage is singular in its becoming *and* infinitely connected to other assemblages, separating x from y cannot be done. Differentiation is not the process whereby things are 'differentiated' from other things (as in the isolation of a research object or the adjudication of true and false claims), but a gradual stabilization: an emerging consistency among components. When there is enough stability, rhythm and refrain, differenciation happens and the new emerges: a new way of life and the actualization of new potentials. This process of double articulation (of becoming) is driven by an agency far more diffuse than that of the sovereign subject and more closely analogous to the composed agency of always-in-process assemblages. This is difference immanent to the object and not transcendent: it is not a floating

criterion of goodness or badness to be applied (usually) on the basis of language.

As a research ethic, immanent difference marks an aversion to critique: to the practice of saying ‘x is not y’ or ‘x is insufficiently y’ or what have you. Massumi (2002) provides another way forward born of his attention to movement not stasis:

Prolonging the thought-path of movement [...] requires that techniques of negative critique be used sparingly. The balance has to shift to *affirmative* methods: techniques which embrace their own inventiveness and are not afraid to own up to the fact that they add (if so meagerly) to reality. [...] It is not that critique is wrong. [...] Rather it is a question of dosage. It is simply that when you are busy critiquing you are less busy augmenting. (pp. 12-13; original emphasis)

My goal is to augment SJTE by identifying certain of its capacities that are conducive to less harming social relationships, but which are as-yet unclaimed as contributions of the field. I do not approach SJTE with the goal of determining whether or not it is capable of bringing about social justice (and/as narrowing the demographic divides) nor whether it is doing so at present. I am equally uninterested in whatever could be called its ‘failure’ or ‘success’ because these are not of the unfolding, ordinary present where my research takes place and where the capacity I am tracking is actually exercised.

Although immanent, positive (i.e., not based in lack or negativity or ‘not x’) difference without essences and opposites may seem to evacuate the critical possibilities of research, this is not necessarily so. Criticality (here meaning an alertness to the problems of normalization) can be a matter of form and not only of content. How have our concepts, including our most cherished critical terms like racism, homophobia, whiteness and oppression *stopped*: stopped becoming, delimiting thought? How can we reboot the engine of thought and therefore creativity,

creating ways to make life more bearable on the ground? Taking immanent difference as a research ethic means attending to “the specificity or singularity of a thing; not to what of a thing can be made to fit into a pre-existent abstraction [...], but [...] the ‘something new that is produced’ through the becoming of the thing” (Coleman, 2009, p. 62). It means giving things the benefit of the doubt on the grounds that, if they are identifiable, then they are enabling a sustaining form and way of life. Or, recalling Berlant’s (2011) cruel optimism, they are enabling a way of life that is not sustaining or sustainable but nevertheless allows myriad possibilities for sociality and (immediate) flourishing. What matters is that we stay with immanent, actual, affecting life.

The difference between an ethical obligation toward the object versus an ethical obligation toward one’s participants is particularly interesting when taken up alongside these two concepts of mapping and immanent difference. So far I have only addressed the former. The utility of the trace is very much expressed in the research encounter because there is usually such a severe delimitation – in the interests of security, safety, well-being, etc. – of what can happen. The goal is to make participation in research as much of a non-event as is humanly possible for participants. This is what it means to make participants comfortable. The pleasant novelty of being a research participant and not the researcher was something that many of my participants commented on. I imagine the pleasure arose out of an experience that is new enough to be interesting and yet familiar enough that one does not feel out of one’s depth. Out of roughly twenty-two SJTE practitioners solicited for conversations, only two said no (and only one of these said nothing at all). Overwhelmingly, all seemed delighted to participate and almost completely devoid of suspicion, mistrust or anxiety about what we were doing and what it was for. Of course, this is something that was produced and worked for in our conversations and not

something that necessarily *was*, tout court. However, this kind of ease marked an expectation of the traceable research interview. To what extent am I bound to honour that expectation?

I am uncertain as to whether I have an ethical obligation to my participants to make use of our conversation in a way that they might expect, or, whether it is ethical to focus on parts of an ‘interview’ that are not ostensibly what the interview itself is ‘about.’ While it is important to trouble ‘about-ness’ given my theoretical framework and its distrust of language, ‘about-ness’ may well remain a reasonable expectation on the part of participants. There might be something more exposing or less consensual about going ‘off-topic’ even as we went ‘off-topic’ all the time. Is it therefore disingenuous to proposition someone for a highly topical encounter (‘this is about x’) and then take an interest in everything that was not topical? Mapping my conversations with practitioners often meant taking all of these risks at once. Whether they are ethical risks, however, remains to be seen. To bring us full-circle to the REB, with the rather de-personalizing goal of studying an assemblage (by looking and feeling for a collective subjectivity in inter-subjective encounters), whether I used deception in my recruitment or engagement of participants is unclear. Ironically, I know that language – the institutionalized meaning of ‘deception’ – will keep me safe. These were, after all, ostensibly just conversations with someone sharing similar views and whom they happened to meet at a conference.

## CHAPTER FIVE – How SJTE Emerges Through Text

In anticipation of studying SJTE at conferences and in conversations, in this first analytical chapter I bring an affect and assemblage theory sensibility to SJTE's field-defining literature. I analyze 58 texts (see Appendix B) purporting to describe, shape or give direction to an *already-existing* field, but which I take up in a Deleuzian and affective frame as *producing* the field. The selected texts date from 1971 – 2013 and include journal articles, book chapters, reports and editorial introductions to topical compilations (e.g., Ball & Tyson, 2011; R. J. Martin, 1995; Michelli & Keiser, 2005; Westheimer & Suurtame, 2009). Although citational frequency played a role in selection, my main criteria was field leader authorship.<sup>27</sup> Scholars widely held (see Nieto, 2009, pp. 88–89) to be SJTE field leaders at present include Marilyn Cochran-Smith, Ana María Villegas, Linda Darling-Hammond, Geneva Gay, Kenneth Zeichner, Christine Sleeter, Sonia Nieto and Gloria Ladson-Billings. Each is active in other fields like multicultural education (Nieto, Sleeter) and teacher education policy (Cochran-Smith, Zeichner, Darling-Hammond), where they are also considered leaders. My guiding questions were: what is SJTE in its field-defining literature? What techniques have field leaders and commentators used to direct the efforts and attentions of this field and the public, and to what purported ends? Finally, what are its areas of consensus, urgency or common concern, and how do these become apparent?

Given my argument in the preceding chapter that post-qualitative inquiry unseats (spoken or written) language as a privileged object of study, a brief justification for including this literature work is in order. In scholarly writing, what an author says is generally held to be co-extensive with a text's meaning or significance, and the contribution of a text is taken to equal the contribution of the research or theory (or, in my case, field) described. The work of writing

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<sup>27</sup> In some cases I selected a text solely due to an explicit authorial or editorial intention to account for or address the field as a whole (e.g., the afore-mentioned compilations; Ambe, 2006; Heybach, 2009, etc.).



here comes afterwards and involves representing something already over. Here, our experience of reading a text is held to be an unmediated experience of what it contains. In a post-qualitative vein, however, reading as a researcher is a singular event (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010) unfolding in the present of one's engagement with a text. To read is not only to decode meaning but to be affected, recalling MacLure's (2010) invocation of glowing data that materially *affect* the researcher. In this way, SJTE scholars do not only *write about* how the field is different from business as usual in teacher education; we also *affectively stage* this difference and produce the thresholds of the SJTE-assemblage for the reader. The field's thresholds – where SJTE begins and ends, where *this* is SJTE and *this* is an impostor – are continually produced in the affective relation of reader to text as much as in affective relations among real live bodies, as we shall see in the subsequent chapters. In keeping with the displacement of individual sovereign agency effected by assemblage and affect theory, however, I am not suggesting that affective staging is a product of individual authorial intent. Rather, in this chapter I approach SJTE's field-defining literature for the sensation of *collective intent*: for the agency of the assemblage manifested in a text's (component's) power to affect or directly compel the reader.

My method closely follows that of Clare Hemmings (2011), who read widely and strategically in feminist theory to generate a sense of how that field's collective identity has been produced over time. Hemmings delineated what she called feminist theory's 'dominant narratives' by tracking "technologies of the presumed" (p. 16), aiming "to highlight which aspects of these stories are presumed to be held in common, which statements or glosses do not require evidencing" and notice "that which tends to pass unnoticed [...]; or assumptions that are framed by a particular certainty" (ibid.). Her methods are anchored in the unintended consequences of peer-review, such as certain kinds of statements becoming *glosses*. Glosses are

implicitly collective statements that stand as disciplinary commonsense because they are broad and sweeping yet do not require citation or qualification. In reading, Hemmings paid attention to “gloss paragraphs, introductions or segues in articles that told a story about feminist theory’s development, whether or not the article otherwise centred on that development” (p. 18). Pivotal, when reporting on her findings, Hemmings emphasizes the collectivity of these peer-reviewed narratives by ‘de-authorizing’ her texts, or citing only journal name and date of publication instead of author.<sup>28</sup> For Hemmings, “taking authors out of the frame is thus a way of focusing attention on repetition instead of individuality, and on how collective repetition actively works to obscure the politics of its own production and reproduction” (p. 22). In the broad field of feminist theory, Hemmings finds a collectively-produced disciplinary history and identity: a consensus unintended and perhaps unconscious, that materially compels a reader belonging to the field, or, catches them up as an assemblage component.

In addition to looking for rhetorical themes and patterns, following Hemmings’ method I too home in on genres of gloss, overview and summary, particularly where these are of ‘the problem’ or ‘the solution.’ what, exactly, must SJTE do about what, exactly, and why? I also attend to citation practices, textual affect, binary pairs (e.g., justice-injustice, good-bad SJTE) and subject/object relationships such as that of SJTE practitioners to teacher candidates, K-12 pupils or community members. Below, I begin with the prevailing concern around which SJTE organizes itself and which has not changed much over time: the demographic divides.

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<sup>28</sup> Hemmings’ selected texts were entire issues of peer-reviewed feminist theory journals, beginning with special issues on the ‘state of the field’ and proceeding to entire issues from 1998 onwards. In lieu of citing the author and year of publication, Hemmings only cited journal titles and years. This strategy is unavailable to me given that I include monographs and edited books in my survey of field-defining SJTE literature. As a side note, however, I question formalized Peer Review as the only process of ‘peer review,’ or, the only or even most salient point of contact between a scholar and external, disciplinary influence.

## Why Are We Here? The Demographic Divides

The first demographic divide indexes the prevailing trend whereby people of colour are becoming the majority in American classrooms – particularly in urban areas – but are overwhelmingly taught by white, monolingual, middle-class women from the suburbs. In the field-defining literature, this divide appears alongside a second: the ‘achievement gap’<sup>29</sup> between white students and students of colour that persistently characterizes the aggregated results of standardized tests of basic skills (literacy and numeracy).<sup>30</sup> The tandem appearance of these demographic divides in a teacher education text is almost sufficient to signal its belonging within SJTE, or the field that addresses these divides as the twinned manifestation of injustice perpetuated in education. Narrowing the divides is synonymous with doing (social) justice, and failing to do so is a failure of SJTE or a sign that SJTE is not working the way it should. In a ten-year retrospective, Nieto & McDonough (2011) make the following emblematic juxtaposition: “a growing number of teacher preparation programs are experimenting with [e.g.,] new models of faculty collaboration to promote a focus on equity. In spite of these advances, consistent and satisfactory achievement of typically marginalized K-12 students has yet to be realized” (p. 365). This gloss on marginalized K-12 students as a whole requires neither specificity nor citation, even of large scale quantitative data sets (I return here momentarily).

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<sup>29</sup> The nomenclature of ‘achievement gap’ is disputed precisely on the grounds of social justice. Milner (2010) cogently summarizes Gloria Ladson-Billings’ objections: “there is not so much an achievement gap as an education debt that the system owes to so many students it has poorly served” (p. 124). Milner also references Irvine, who asserted that “attention should be placed on closing the other gaps that exist in education that lead researchers and others to believe there is an achievement gap” (ibid.). Examples include “the teacher quality gap, the teacher training gap, the challenging curriculum gap, the school funding gap, the digital divide gap, the wealth and income gap, the employment opportunity gap, the affordable housing gap, the health care gap, the nutrition gap, the school integration gap, and the quality child care gap” (ibid.). I acknowledge these powerful critiques and use the phrase throughout in such a way that hopefully evokes its limitations.

<sup>30</sup> A third if less prevalent ‘demographic divide’ is the whiteness of teacher education faculty relative to the constituencies that SJTE hopes to better serve through *inter alia* preparing culturally responsive teachers. Ladson-Billings (2011) has gone so far as to call this the “‘dirty little secret’ of teacher education” which, “as much as it champions diversity for its students, [...] is not a diverse field” (p. 395). See Zeichner et al. (1998) for more on the recruitment of a diverse teacher education faculty that “is a living example of multicultural education” (p. 164).

The implication most frequently wrought from the divides' textual proximity to each other is that the K-12 schools producing most of the nation's teachers and with which they are most familiar are not serving and perhaps cannot serve traditionally marginalized students, who are not achieving at the level of their white Anglo counterparts. Tabachnick & Zeichner (1993) issue a caution that teacher education risks remaining a form of cultural imperialism that "[continues] to prepare teachers for some mythical homogeneous society where everyone shares the characteristics of the dominant cultural group" (p. 115). SJTE is held to palliate the risk that teacher education will exacerbate either divide, by increasing the enrolment of people of colour in teacher education programs and preparing all teacher candidates to teach all children. The latter requires unseating racist and white dominant norms of scholastic behaviour and interaction against which students of colour have been systemically found wanting.

Although the presence of SJTE (content, courses, values, etc.) can be thought as *risk prevention* for a teacher education program (i.e., that it will be found to widen not narrow the demographic divides), risk sticks to SJTE itself such that an affect of threat or crisis permeates renditions of the demographic divides. In 1971, Hazard & Stent opened their edited collection of papers from one of the first North American teacher education conferences on 'cultural pluralism' (that had come about through a public protest by scholars of colour at another conference) with a dramatic demographic reversal: "the so-called cultural and ethnic minorities constitute a majority" who "no longer accept the culture or proclaimed wisdom of white America" (Hazard & Stent, 1971, p. 18). Here, the increasing proportion of people of colour in the United States was cause for alarm in terms of the risk posed to the social order. Forty years later, the opening and closing sentences of Villegas & Lucas' (2002b) foundational SJTE text *Preparing culturally responsive teachers: A coherent approach* affectively stage student diversity as a still-unfolding crisis: a

‘critical factor’ demanding an ‘imperative response.’ The divides have been cloaked in ‘big reveal’ aesthetics for decades in SJTE, and there has been no rhetorical shift or denouement although they are now ‘old news.’

Given this refrain, it is difficult for SJTE to position diversity as a celebratory or unambiguously positive attribute of students and communities although one goal of the field (as we shall see) involves changing teacher candidates’ deficit conceptions (see Milner, 2010, pp. 124–5) of minoritized students. Supporting (white) teacher candidates in coming to believe that all children can learn is one of the pillars of Villegas & Lucas’ (2002b) widely adopted formula for culturally responsive teacher education. And yet diversity is paradoxically both crisis and boon. In a moment of chastising mainstream educational reform movements, Martin (1995) exemplifies this conflict, framing diversity as emergency even as she proclaims its added value in education:

Researchers abstractly quote the increasing numbers of students from diverse cultural backgrounds who will populate schools in the future; however, few discuss the positive implications that diversity can have upon the school setting. *In the next century, success in the academic arena will be dependent more than ever upon the ways in which educators are able to translate the needs of a diverse student population within the context of an academic environment that has historically ignored those needs.* (p. 78; added emphasis)

When projected into the future, diversity becomes unfailingly synonymous with the ever-widening demographic divides, which Dilworth (1992) tellingly brought together in the phrase ‘the demographic imperative.’ In the italicized text above, we can recall Nieto & McDonough’s gloss on ‘typically marginalized K-12 students,’ echoed in form by Martin’s open-ended gloss on

the next century. In SJTE, the future is cast as the land of horrible things that look much like the bad present or the ‘badder’ past, and changing that future is our calling:

Unless [teacher education institutions] make significant reforms to accommodate these students, the future of school education is not promising. Nonwhite public school children will be instructed by white female teachers who were trained in conventional teacher education programs, many of which will not have significantly changed since the 1960s. The schools will operate with anachronistic administrative structures and hierarchies designed in the 1900s and will depend on the financial support of an aging, white, middle-class population. (Irvine, 1992, pp. 79–80)

In the field-defining literature, then, SJTE is marked by a rhetorical use of the *badder* future as a place of threat but also by the *better* future as a place of promise, balancing the deployment of diversity as present threat. Although present and future change over time, both continue to bear either stark characterization.

Given that ‘diversity threat’ rhetoric conflicts with SJTE’s ideological grounding, I read its pervasiveness in the field-defining literature as an accommodation to a hostile climate: a sign of the field’s constant outward address or orientation toward critics, nay-sayers and conservative reformers to whom it must defend its place in teacher education (hence the evidence crisis in which my research problem is situated). In a concertedly practice-focused SJTE volume, editors Gorski et al. (2012) lament the degree to which SJTE literature has been characterized by a defensive address to critics, skeptics and naysayers who must be convinced of SJTE’s value and urgency. In teacher education, they write,

There is a growing body of scholarship defining contemporary forms of [e.g.,] patriarchy, examining intersectionalities around patriarchy, using patriarchy as a conceptual lens for

critically analyzing all sorts of educational phenomena, and even documenting student resistance to discussions of patriarchy or feminist pedagogy. However, there is very little on exploring how to teach these concepts in teacher education contexts. The result is that we, the collective ‘we’ of social justice teacher educators, seem to spend considerably more of our scholarly and pedagogical energies examining resistance to the notion of patriarchy and explicating the significance of patriarchy than considering how we might improve the ways we help future educators understand its influence on schooling. (p. 3)

This lament regarding the field’s defensive or even primarily exegetical address is paired with a wish for a field-specific ‘how-to’ literature characteristic, I would argue, of a constructive inward address to the field itself instead of ‘those outside.’ There is desire here for an archive of ‘things we shouldn’t have to keep explaining’ such that ‘we can get down to business’ and fine-tune the practice of doing this work, in ways that outsiders cannot – and do not need to – understand.

There is a sense here that, if SJTE scholars and practitioners could devote more energy to constructive as opposed to defensive pursuits, the field would have recourse to other glosses (i.e., sweeping normative statements attesting to the need particularly for social justice approaches to teacher education) and would not have to rely on an ambivalent invocation of ‘diversity threat.’ In a less hostile climate, perhaps SJTE could also shed an additional counter-intuitive gloss: nationalism. In many places throughout these field-defining texts, the demographic divides are not only unjust in the case of marginalized and under-served students. Rather, they also do an injustice to the nation. King & Ladson-Billings (1990) write that “[in] a democratic and multicultural society like the United States, the need for teachers who can participate in transforming inequitable schooling that reproduces social inequity is as much a threat to the nation’s well-being as a weak economy” (p. 16). These authors exemplify SJTE’s ability to cast

itself as a nation-building project that can allay diversity threat, or, safeguard national stability or prestige by preparing teachers who can fix ‘the problem’ presented by demographic change. At least rhetorically, this chafes at SJTE’s ideological commitment to struggles against American imperialism, both at home and abroad (see Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1993).

Taken together, SJTE’s tacit attention to the ‘un-American-ness’ of the divides – whereby it is the country’s well-being at stake as much as any marginalized student’s – and persistent diversity-as-crisis rhetoric are perhaps effects of a perennial external critique of the field: that social justice-minded teacher educators seek to indoctrinate teacher candidates with particular (left) world views, acting as biased gatekeepers to an otherwise ‘apolitical’ profession. Cochran-Smith (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009; Cochran-Smith, 2009) has famously countered by insisting that calls for an ‘apolitical education’ are just as politicized (albeit conservatively so) as social justice frameworks. Heybach (2009), however, denies the charge via soft nationalism: “[if] social justice in education were taken to its most extreme end, where would it arrive? Perhaps the most radical end of social justice involves the principle at the heart of the Declaration of Independence – equality” (p. 241). Here, indoctrination is not only un-American, but conceptually incompatible with SJTE’s patriotic foundations. Larkin (1995) also takes the latter route, claiming that the liberal philosophical perspective<sup>31</sup> underpinning SJTE “questions the appropriateness of a teacher education curriculum which attempts to impose a particular ideology on its students” (p. 4). For King & Ladson-Billings (1990), anti-indoctrination is to be modeled by SJTE practitioners. In the course anchoring their text, they write,

Students are encouraged to draw their own conclusions *using this course as a case in point*. They are reminded that the instructor *has consciously modeled* an alternative

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<sup>31</sup> Many would debate Larkin’s suggestion that liberalism underscores SJTE writ large. Never the less, my point here is less about liberalism and more about the existence of claims that indoctrination runs conceptually counter to SJTE, whatever the rationale.



teaching approach whose purpose is not to impose a particular vision of schooling or society on students but to help them think critically about their own world view and to make conscious choices about their professional practice. (p. 26; original emphasis)

Still, the demographic divides function as their own bulwark against charges of indoctrination and are stronger than claims to nationalism, conceptual incompatibility or ‘just good teaching.’ Contra Cochran-Smith, the divides are usefully *apolitical*. They are a call that surely touches everyone regardless of political affiliation or connotative resistance to ‘social justice,’ for surely everyone deserves the right to a high quality education.

The ways in which the demographic divides are *repeatedly* staged is telling in this regard. Across the field-defining literature, authors devote many pages to itemizing the causes, effects and future trends proper to the demographic divides. Within journal special issues and edited books on SJTE, it is not uncommon for each article or chapter to feature its own fresh construction of the divides. Given that scholars typically access the same large-scale data sets (e.g., the census, reports from the National Centre for Education Statistics, etc.) for this purpose, it is noteworthy that a majority of authors assemble their own statistical narration of the divides as if they were a new phenomenon in need of illumination. The divides are a commonplace in SJTE, but paradoxically cannot be allowed to become common or fade into a citational backdrop. They must be repeated again and again, even to the point of becoming a refrain that ‘everybody knows’ and, I imagine, skims over in order to arrive at the original contribution of a particular text (perhaps looking for the desired ‘inward address’ as above). It is as if the demographic divides, for the most part, cannot just be cited like other pieces of information despite the many detailed and citation-ready expositions thereof that already populate the literature (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 2003b, pp. 4–5; Gay, 1997, pp. 151–3). The divides are seemingly ‘re-discovered’ and

affectively re-staged over and over again.

The use of large scale statistical data sets also backgrounds another intractable conflict manifested in field leaders' collective exposition of the demographic divides. SJTE is committed to the notion that "teacher education that is not multicultural cannot be quality teacher education" (Zeichner et al., 1998, p. 164), or, that the kind of teacher education that will ultimately close the divides *is just good teacher education*. Teachers prepared in authentic (more on this in the coming section on clarity and coherence) SJTE programs that prioritize multicultural education as a means of attaining social justice emphasize teachers as public intellectuals. In good SJTE, teacher candidates learn about constructivism, cooperative learning, varied instructional methods and fostering learning communities. These are flexible strategies that can meet the diverse needs of all students. However, the growing standardization movement prioritizes nation-wide comparative high-stakes testing, scripted curricula (where teacher becomes technician) and test scores as the sole outcomes that matter (see Cochran-Smith, Piazza, & Power, 2013).

From my analysis of how demographic divides structure the field, it is clear that SJTE is conflicted with regard to testing and standardization. How do we assess the divides, or figure out their condition at a given time such that they can continue their life as our object? Narrowing them, whether by graduating greater numbers of teachers from historically marginalized backgrounds or preparing teacher candidates to help historically marginalized students close the achievement gap, is *a large scale pursuit*. "Every small change that we make," write Villegas & Lucas (2002a), "alters the overall configuration, but these changes have tended to take place in a piece-meal and unsystematic fashion" (p. 201). To show systematic change on the scale of the gloss requires data of such a dizzying breadth that only quantitative data sets will serve; in other words, to make 'typically marginalized K-12 students' an impossible, obsolete and nonsensical

utterance or, at least, something requiring citation or qualification (which it does not at present, as we have seen) would require the kind of national (or even international) data set that only quantitative and positivistic measurements can deliver. SJTE field leaders walk a line, then, between the critique of standardization and the necessity of big data (including standardized tests, in the case of the ‘achievement gap’) to show the narrowing or widening of the divides. This is yet another example of how the field’s necessarily defensive posture in the face of strident politicized backlash (that does not find itself to be political, at all – more on this momentarily) creates impossible conditions for SJTE practitioners do their work. I argue that this dance of scale – between locally-based, culturally responsive pedagogies and national test score data sets – is the singular creative response of the SJTE-assemblage to these conditions.

At this point, I will reiterate my contention that the foregoing uses of and attentions to the demographic divides signal SJTE’s rhetorical homogeneity *and* affective capacity to carry on moving in the midst of incompatible extremes. So far, these are: diversity as promise and diversity as threat; future badness and future possibility; (American) nationalism and anti-imperialist ideology; emergency and commonplace-ness; a reliance on longitudinal statistical data sets to gauge the divides and a deep-rooted opposition to the high-stakes tests from which the data is gleaned; and ultimately, local contextualization and national emergency. I suggest that the capacity to navigate these risky, counter-intuitive and therefore field-specific tensions in one’s own scholarship is an expression of SJTE belonging, and one more compelling and complex than the simple (textual) recitation of the divides.

### **What Do We Want? Field Goals**

In this section, I turn to moments in the selected literature when field leaders and others identify the goals of SJTE. Although my research problem gestures at the impossibility of social

justice as a measurable outcome, I am not concerned here with the possible or likely fulfillment of SJTE's goals but with their enunciation as an attempt at field definition and delimitation.

Taking a cue from the previous section, the simple answer to 'what does SJTE want' could be 'narrowing the demographic divides.' However, this would do a disservice to the field's complexity, as I hope to further demonstrate.

Whereas I adapted Hemmings' (2011) strategies of attending to citation, textual affect, binary pairings and textual positioning to the previous section, this section prominently features her method of de-authorization.<sup>32</sup> This entailed removing identifiable information in order to "emphasize the role of journal [and broader academic] communities – editors, boards, peer reviewers, and responses to publishing conventions and expectations – in the establishment of [...] knowledge practices" (p. 21). I share Hemmings' commitment "to non-corrective approaches [... ,] focusing attention on repetition instead of individuality, and on how collective repetition actively works to obscure the politics of its own production and reproduction" (p. 22).

In what follows, I seek to illuminate the production and reproduction of SJTE goals as a field-defining gloss, largely uncited and nevertheless crafted to extend across countless institutions, scholars, publications, conferences and contexts. The way in which I present the uprooted quotations in the text below is faithful to the notion that they are collective.<sup>33</sup> I seldom

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<sup>32</sup> My rationale for using de-authorization in the remaining sections and not in the first section on the demographic divides relates to how the demographic divides appear. De-authorization requires reading across a range of examples, but the demographic divides are homogenous (as I argued above) to the extent that de-authorizing them would result in a list of (narrated) statistics. I chose instead to focus, as above, on citation, textual affect, binary pairings and textual positioning. A secondary reason for this choice is readability, in that I wanted to include some instances of 'real' citation in order to introduce the field leaders to the reader in the beginning of the chapter.

<sup>33</sup> I would like to flag a possible consequence of de-authorization – that I risk universalizing the field of SJTE – and anticipate the objection that the selected literature does not and cannot speak for the field as a whole. This is an important objection particularly because practices of universalization or homogenization run afoul of SJTE's anti-colonial and anti-racist political heritage. However, how do the stakes or connotation of universalization necessarily shift when one approaches their object as an assemblage? It seems to me that assemblage theory (see Delanda, 2006) – with its emphasis on redundant causality (i.e., one person-as-component's actions are redundant if the aggregated effect on/of the assemblage is unchanged) and, therefore, pre-personal agency (i.e., what one person does or intends frankly matters less than the collective exercise of assemblage capacities) – enables a different use of

engage thoroughly with a single quotation but rather offer the reader a selection. In so doing I aim to stage their collective character, asking the reader to experience their repetitious quality by reading several in succession. I present goals in two categories: changing society and changing teachers. The latter is further divided into changing teacher ability and changing teacher mindset.

### **Changing society.**

These following statements gleaned from my selected field-defining texts span objectives, priorities and outcomes ascribed to the field as a whole:

*among the most important goals of teaching and teacher education are social responsibility, social change, and social justice*

*prepare teachers to work to contribute through their work in classrooms and schools to the realization of a more decent and humane society for everyone's children*

*bring about meaningful change in the current status quo, and ensure justice and educational equity for all students especially racially diverse groups who have so far been marginalized in many aspects of the US society*

*make a significant contribution to the realization of greater social justice within and beyond schooling*

*the achievement of social justice, i.e., fairness and a fair share for everyone*

*social justice is a valid outcome and an essential purpose of multicultural teacher preparation that runs much deeper than traditional measures of achievement but, in the final analysis, undergirds the future of our society*

SJTE goals on a societal scale take as their tacit pre-condition the possibility that what happens in schools can (help) change society, and that what happens in teacher education can change schools to this end. What social justice teacher educators do can ‘change the status quo,’

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universalization. Yes, I am claiming that 58 texts purporting to define or direct the field can tell us something about the field as a whole, and this is a universalizing gesture. As in the chapter’s introduction, however, I make the claim that these texts actually *produce* the field, its thresholds and its outside by making these palpable, sensate and intensive. With Hemmings (2011), I argue that, among other things, textual affect and the gloss (uncited ‘commonsense’ utterances) tell us something about the broader collective in which a text takes shape and is received. Universalizing, then, is a strategy of getting at what exceeds the individual: the assemblage. I will add, though, that I am not defending any and every practice of universalization, just this one.

‘realize a more decent and humane society,’ and achieve ‘a fair share for everyone.’ Social justice is a *possible* outcome of teacher education, or something we can work for by virtue of doing particular things with the people we are training to be teachers. SJTE connects a particular kind of teacher education (curriculum, pedagogy and program design) to something called ‘social justice.’ The connection is well-illustrated in the following:

*The elimination of racism, classism, sexism, and discrimination against the disabled, children, and the elderly within society is the goal. The recognition and elimination of these behaviors within schools is the beginning. [...] The task for teacher education is to help teacher candidates begin the process of critical examination of the practices of educators and schools.*

Here the author traces the outcome of social justice backwards from society to school to teacher education. This rhetoric exemplifies what we might call the *never-now temporality* of SJTE.

Here, social justice is of the far future, school is of the intermediate future, and teacher education is of the present. The teachers we prepare now *will* (hopefully) be able to have a particular effect on their students who *will* (hopefully) carry this effect into the world with the hope of bringing about systemic change that can satisfy the variable criteria (see North, 2006) of ‘social justice.’ Regardless of what social justice contains or looks like, however, I want to highlight how these societal goal statements situate the field’s namesake outcome somewhere down the line (see Wiegman, 2012). This differs from what can and must be done in the present with teacher candidates today. In other words, practice in the present will bring about a particular future, in theory. The present is the domain of future-directed efforts and energy expended now is for later.

Giving the far future – where social justice resides – some purchase on the immediate future is the figure of the social justice teacher-activist whose efforts at school catalyze the hoped-for SJTE chain reaction, as follows:

*the goal of teaching for social justice is indeed freedom – [...] the freedom that unites the efforts of individual teachers with broader educational goals related to*

*the common good.*

*[teachers who] deliberately claim the role of educator as well as activist based on political consciousness and on ideological commitment to diminishing the inequities of American life*

*rich learning opportunities for all students, [students'] preparation for participation in a democratic society, teacher candidates' commitments to social justice goals, and their retention in careers as social justice educators*

*to help prospective teachers become change agents who can impact power relationships through curriculum, instructional practices, and individual and collective action toward more just personal and structural relationships in schools, districts, and communities.*

*preparing teachers to recognize, name, and combat inequity in schools and society*

*teaching and teacher education for social justice are fundamental to the learning and life chances of all teachers and pupils who are current and future participants in a diverse democratic nation and who are able to both imagine and work toward a more just society.*

While every kind of teacher education envisions a particularly-oriented teacher as its outcome – indeed, how else could disposition, for example, be ‘measured’ except against an ideal or exemplar – in SJTE this teacher is more than an outcome. They<sup>34</sup> are rather the sign of the future in the present and, more specifically, the manifestation of its possibility. This is as if to say that, when teachers ‘recognize, name, and combat inequity’ these are signs that *we are on the road* to inequity being vanquished in a time to come. Whatever combat looks like in the present – e.g., a teacher doing or saying particular things in response to an oppressive or unjust event (Airton, 2014) – this ‘on the road’ quality of SJTE temporality is perhaps *enough* in an affective sense: on the level of a hunch or gut feeling that these teachers we prepare can or will light the way. For SJTE, then, the crucial connection between grand social change and teacher education seems to

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<sup>34</sup> Throughout my dissertation in places, I use singular ‘they’ and its derivatives (their, they’re, etc.) as standard gender-neutral pronouns. For more information on using singular they in written and verbal communication, visit [theyismypronoun.com](http://theyismypronoun.com).

be a particular kind of teacher, produced as a sensation of futurity's potential. In a field resistant to neo-liberal test-score 'accountability,' this teacher is a material – felt – SJTE outcome.

### **Changing teachers.**

Much is written about the teacher who literally and figuratively stands between what teacher educators can feel responsible for in their everyday practice and the social justice of the future. Field leaders construct this teacher's practical ability, understood as knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the classroom, and what I will call their mindset, or a quality variably cast as consciousness or awareness pertaining to the 'bigger picture' of systemic injustice that culminates in the demographic divides.

### ***Teacher ability.***

To begin with, the holy trinity of teacher education – knowledge, skills and dispositions (KSD)<sup>35</sup> – is very much in evidence in the SJTE literature:

*the goal of multicultural teacher education should be to develop in preservice students the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to teach within the framework of multicultural education.*

*preparing future teachers with the dispositions, knowledge, and skills needed to interrupt inequitable policies and practices in schools and classrooms.*

*teachers need to develop the knowledge, awareness, dispositions, and interest to become effective teachers of all students, particularly those who have been least served by the public schools*

*it is more important than ever that teachers be prepared with the attitudes, skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to become excellent teacher for students from racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds that differ from their own.*

The prevalence of this familiar phrase, prominent and uncontested across the board in teacher

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<sup>35</sup> KSD grew out of the push toward accreditation over the past thirty years of American teacher education. They have now become the standard ways in which the field constructs its outcomes in relation to teacher candidates. Further, "teacher education programs seeking NCATE accreditation *must* develop and implement an assessment system that uses multiple performance-based measures that assess preservice teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions" (Flowers, 2006, p. 478; added emphasis).



education writ large, signals SJTE's mainstream sensibility and aspirations. Whereas field leaders devote space to the specialized *content* of SJTE KSD as well as what they 'look like' in SJTE curricula designed for their development, the *form* of KSD is most often left to the common sense of the (teacher education) reader. For example, critiques of canonical school or teaching knowledge abound in this literature, but the remedy proposed most often involves introducing a different 'canon' gleaned from diverse K-12 students' experiences. Or, there remains a particular knowledge base that has special currency in the classroom. SJTE field leaders' uses of KSD are friendly to mainstream conceptions of what these are and how they are acquired, changing what they contain but not their form or value. Although SJTE has its eye on social justice beyond school walls, it is by and large not a fringe or radical field. Hope and possibility are carried by time-honoured conceptions of what teacher educators do with teacher candidates: develop their KSD.

A similar emphasis in these field-defining texts is the imperative of practicality in the social justice preparation of teachers:

*The goal should be that graduates of teacher education programs are actually able to transfer this knowledge and these skills to their own classrooms when they begin to teach.*

*It is important that social justice teacher education programs help give prospective teachers the practical tools that they need to transform their good intentions into effective actions.*

*How can schools of education develop teachers who are appreciative of and foster cultural diversity and who have the skills necessary to highlight the abilities and unique perspectives of a diverse generation of learners?*

*when teacher education programs focus on social justice, teacher candidates know how to teach kids to read, and they also know that the inequities of schooling and society make it much easier for some groups of kids to learn to read than others.*

*Faculties need to focus on putting these lofty statements into practice by preparing teachers to help their students face the challenges of a pluralistic and*

*rapidly changing society.*

Conversely, practices like isolating SJTE in foundations courses support “a dangerous dichotomy – a separation between [...] subject matter and pedagogical content knowledge and [...] knowledge of students from diverse backgrounds” (McDonald & Zeichner, 2009, p. 598).

Although statements abound as to the dual importance of practical and conceptual or foundations knowledge, the *teacher candidate*'s desire for practicality provokes a powerful field anxiety.

Westheimer & Suurtame (2009) reference

the complaint often heard from students and novice teachers: that the ‘theory’ about social justice they’ve learned in school is not ‘practical’ for the classroom [ref. removed].

It is especially important that new teachers are able to see the importance *and* applicability of social justice education, lest they leave it at the academy doors upon certification. (p. 591; original emphasis)

This ‘ability to see’ becomes a goal of SJTE practitioners but not without a sense of loss, captured well by DiAngelo & Sensoy’s (2010) article titled “‘OK, I get it! Now tell me how to do it!’: Why we can’t just tell you how to do critical multicultural education.” “it would be so much easier if we had a toolbox with its easy to understand lists of dos and don’ts. Yet such an approach would avoid the life-altering changes critical multicultural education asks of us” (p. 102). Their emphasis on the lifelong character of being (or becoming) a social justice teacher is emblematic of the field-defining literature. Practicality is thus double-edged in SJTE. It is something that the field knows it must offer but, when demanded by students, is felt to conflict with the spirit of SJTE that evokes a hard-won future and a long road. The teacher we seek to cultivate as our outcome, then, is adept at the practical skills required of teachers but understands that these are somehow insufficient to the task at hand. This is another intractable conflict that SJTE practitioners manage in our own practice and in relation to our students.

The question of who SJTE is for, or which students the teacher-activist must be particularly prepared to serve, expresses yet another fine line or irresolvable tension. The surveyed literature emphasizes a kind of generalist flexibility in this regard:

*Practicing and prospective teachers [...] need to learn how to promote the learning of all students, and to develop educational environments that are fair and affirming.*

*preparing teachers who are committed to and capable of educating all students to high academic standards*

*Ultimately, a transformed teacher education curriculum engages teachers in aspects of social action that can pedagogically benefit all K-12 students. enable a teacher to intervene in the relationship between schools and students in order to improve what happens for children*

*help to ensure diverse communities equitable access to quality teaching, prepare teachers to advocate for diverse children, and prepare all students for democratic participation in a diverse society.*

*preparing teachers who can teach all students*

This generalized commitment to all students is articulated alongside a more specialized commitment to historically marginalized students, as in the following examples. The first is particularly evocative of this dual-focus:

*bridging the chasm between the school and life experiences of those with and without social, cultural, racial, and economic advantages*

*preparing teachers to improve the educational opportunities and experiences of students of color, low-income students, and more recently, English language learners*

*We feel that it is critically important that every educator have the ability to meet the needs of historically marginalized students; [and] to identify the challenges and contradictions that are impacting the classroom lives and literacy development of underachieving students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds*

*have university students become (1) skilled in teaching children from low-income families and children of color; (2) committed to doing so after graduation*

*preparing teachers who see themselves as both educators and activists, who work with others to do what I have called ‘teach against the grain’ of the institutions of schooling that are dysfunctional and inequitable for large numbers of minority students, and who know how to learn to meet the needs of students within particular local contexts.*

The duality of the focus is perhaps only a matter of optics. Because some students have been historically marginalized and under-served in dominant culture-serving schools, then the goal of ‘teaching all students’ may be less general and more compensatory: to teach the students who have been left out *as well as* the ones who are not. However, there is also a sense that SJTE’s envisioned teacher-activist should transform schools altogether and not only open wider the school doors. Or, as in the last example above, this teacher must be prepared with the institutional and bureaucratic know-how to do what must be done behind the doors of their own classroom if indeed school transformation is impossible.

Whether isolated at school or no, the envisioned teacher is expected to be able to connect with broader social justice movements. This expectation is based on the understanding, expressed throughout the field-defining literature, that “teachers cannot substitute for social movements aimed at the transformation of society’s fundamental inequities [but] their work has the potential to contribute to those movements in several ways” (Cochran-Smith, 2004, p. 65). This suggests a powerful distinction. What SJTE’s ‘outcome teachers’ can do with and for students – whether of the dominant culture or those historically marginalized within it – *both is and is not* the site of social justice. As I previously discussed, a line can be drawn *and also not drawn* connecting teacher education (through teacher candidates, schools, and K-12 pupils) to social justice. Our teacher must have a futurity-driven or vertical “sense that they are both responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change that will make schooling more responsive to students from diverse backgrounds” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a, p. xiv) and a more

present or horizontal sense that their efficacy on a societal level lies only in working with others.

The tensions appearing in the field-defining literature relative to teacher ability as an SJTE goal express the SJTE-assemblage capacity to move about in the midst of conflict and walk fine lines. SJTE labours in the present for an elusive future; draws on the familiar KSD rubric *and* works to re-construct traditional teacher education; foregrounds practical skill development *and* recognizes that student desires for practicality compromise its social justice mission. Its sought-after teachers must teach all students *and* specialize in teaching historically marginalized students, and must realize their ability *and* inability to bring about social change through their practice. Next, I turn from teacher ability as an area of SJTE goal-making to teacher mindset.

### ***Teacher mindset.***

In addition to particular teacher abilities as SJTE goals, these field leaders also stress a particular ‘teacher mindset.’ The need to gauge or even formally assess what teacher candidates know and how they think, reflect or analyze regarding the ‘bigger picture’ of systemic injustice and the demographic divides appears to be unique to SJTE in teacher education. While this may be the ‘theory’ quotient relative to the ‘practice’ quotient of ability, many field leaders combine teacher ability *and* mindset to the extent that these cannot really be separated (except for expository purposes). For example, this twinning undergirds the notion of culturally responsive teaching (CRT) developed by Geneva Gay (2002, 2010) and adapted for teacher education by Villegas & Lucas (2002a). CRT is one of the most pervasive discourses and frameworks in SJTE, and Villegas & Lucas make explicit its ‘flow’ between mindset and ability:

Culturally responsive teachers understand that the classroom is not a neutral setting where all students can participate in instructional events equally and display what they

know freely. They further understand that embedded in their own teaching are implicit rules that govern what counts as knowledge, how questions are used, how stories are told, how access to the floor is gained, how knowledge is demonstrated, how space is organized, and how time is used. To gain awareness of the specific sociocultural demands of their classrooms, culturally responsive teachers reflect on their teaching. Then they use the insight gained through such reflection to create inclusive classroom communities in which all students understand the appropriate ways of participating in learning events. This includes making explicit to children the sociocultural expectations built into different learning activities, whenever needed. (2002a, pp. 107-8)

In this rendering, culturally responsive teachers come to their task with a body of knowledge (things they understand) *and* an ability to reflect, both developed in teacher education. The ability to reflect is dependent upon this complementary store of knowledge pertaining to educational inequity in its macro (i.e., what is sociocultural about a ‘sociocultural demand’) and micro (e.g., how questions are used) forms. Reflection involves situating everyday happenings *alongside the knowledge acquired in SJTE* in order to develop a practice oriented toward the realization of social justice, particularly for children whose norms of social interaction and knowledge use do not match those valued at school: those are who historically marginalized. Reflection, then, involves the acquisition of a particular body of SJTE knowledge as a backdrop or screen for the events of teaching. Vavrus (2002) drives this point home: “[to] ensure productive multicultural reflection, an institution needs to help teacher candidates make an ideological move away from a meritocracy that blames children of color and those from lower socioeconomic classes for not succeeding academically” (p. 48).

Teacher mindset is not only a matter of acquiring knowledge of the oppressive forces

affecting marginalized students, but also expresses a particular orientation toward the students themselves. This author goes into great detail about a ‘frame of mind’ (that spans ways of understanding, valuing, respecting, and self-reflecting) complimented by an ‘attitudinal infrastructure’ related to working with historically marginalized students:

*At a minimum, [teacher candidates] need to understand and personally value the goals and philosophy of cultural pluralism as a basic tenet of multicultural teaching, and they need to genuinely respect the behavioral expressions of cultural diversity. [...] [Teacher candidates] need to understand and positively reject the manifestations and the consequences of prejudice, racism, sexism, and other group-debilitating forces. [...] Moreover, students must develop a willingness to explore honestly and discuss openly their own feelings, values, attitudes relating to race, class, gender, and other difficult dimensions of multicultural teaching. [...] Beyond the frame of mind reflected by the above, however, students must also develop an ‘attitudinal infrastructure’ [ref. removed] which more directly expresses a positive disposition toward teaching and working in urban, multicultural schools.*

On its own, knowing about structural barriers to academic achievement and economic success is not enough. On the other hand – referring to back to practicality – knowledge of and orientation toward working with marginalized students is also not enough in isolation from ability:

*If teacher education programs were successful in educating teachers for diversity, we might not have today such a massive reluctance by beginning teachers to work in urban schools and in other schools serving poor and ethnic- and linguistic-minority students. Just educating teachers who are willing to teach in these schools, however, only begins to address the problem of preparing teachers who will successfully educate the students who attend these schools.*

The task of SJTE practitioners, then, is to cultivate a particular mindset (knowledge plus orientation) in teacher candidates, complemented by a particular body of practical skills. Balance, as in all things SJTE, is key.

Perhaps the key to managing a tension I identified above – between having a sense that one can change the world and knowing that teachers (even collectively) cannot do so in isolation – is *the* SJTE mindset. For example, if one is equipped with a structural analysis (in relation to

the SJTE ‘canon’) of society’s badness,<sup>36</sup> this badness itself can be the reason why one seeks to bring about justice through one’s teaching *and* why one can’t make it happen alone. What the development of such an analysis requires is fleshed out along several lines:

*all teachers need knowledge of the social and cultural contexts that shape education as well as knowledge of the role of culture and language in mediating learning.*

*provide all [teacher candidates] with the best possible chance of developing deep and complex comprehensions and applications of social justice-related [...] concepts*

*facilitate in our [student teachers] an understanding of foundational concepts and competencies [...], if only to help provide building blocks for their ongoing development as social justice educators.*

*Multicultural Teacher Education is closely related to ethnic studies; one of its major goals is to make teachers aware of minority perspectives that often differ from dominant White viewpoints*

*to sharpen the ability of the students to think critically about educational purpose and practice in relation to social justice.*

*Encouraging culturally astute teachers from all segments of the population*

*become multilingual and multi-cultural [...] become critical colleagues, that is, teachers who are capable of developing respectful but critical relationships with their peers*

Overall, we might say that SJTE’s teacher candidates ideally develop deep and complex comprehensions of foundational concepts including the role of language and culture in learning, minority perspectives and critical thinking. They are multicultural, multi-lingual and culturally astute. Furthermore, they must know why they are here:

*We have been asked, ‘What do you want student teachers to do as a result of what you teach?’ Above all, we want them to make a conscious choice about the kind of*

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<sup>36</sup> I use the term ‘badness’ in order to keep open, as much as possible, the macro things that SJTE and social justice education tend to name as the targets of their efforts. These include catch-all things like systemic structural oppression, marginalization and injustice as well as more specific things like racism, white supremacy, heteronormativity, colonialism, etc. Recalling my theoretical framework – and in particular my discussion of Stewart (2007), Berlant (2011) and the ‘micropolitical’ – I contend that watered-down terms like ‘badness’ preserve the possibility that familiar over-coded phenomena can be understood to emerge differently or otherwise in everyday life. This emergence is a priority of my study and features prominently in the next two chapters.



*teachers they want to be. This means they must be aware of the ideological viewpoints they may have internalized.*

*[SJTE] helps prospective teachers develop the commitment to be change agents who work to promote greater equity and social justice in schooling and society.*

*enable prospective teachers to envision possible ways they can help make the United States more just and democratic.*

And because this is teacher education, with external certification requirements as well as internal assessments, doing SJTE necessarily involves the difficult task of *assessing* the mindset of teacher candidates and therefore tacitly linking one's practice to the goals of the field. Space limitations prevent me from going into detail on this point, but I suspect that 'disposition' (as in knowledge, skills and dispositions) does a lot of work in making the 'SJTE mindset' of understanding, reflection, orientation and also purposefulness, as above, into something that teacher educators can reconcile within the framework of their everyday practice.

I will conclude this section on changing teachers as an SJTE goal by turning to a final area of overlap between ability and mindset. To be a teacher candidate in SJTE, as collectively glossed by field leaders, is to understand that one's prior knowledge of learning and teaching gleaned from one's exposure to schools that (odds are, given the demographic profile of teachers) met one's own sociocultural needs is insufficient for teaching historically marginalized students. Being aware of one's experiential insufficiency as well as the need to teach all students demands the ability, also grown in SJTE, to inquire into the local contexts and out-of-school lives of students, their families and communities:

*Because all prospective teachers, including candidates of color, will eventually teach children from cultural groups different from their own, all will need to develop strategies that they can use to learn about their future students.*

*Diversity is a fact of life in American society. In order to construct pedagogy in which students can actively participate, it is necessary to incorporate relevant and meaningful classroom experiences that investigate dimensions of diversity in*

*the society that can then affirm student identity and enable them to appreciate the familiar and the unknown.*

*Teacher education institutions must help prospective educators find ways to link the cultural traditions of the home with those of the school.*

*those completing preservice programs of teacher education could be expected to have a vision of what culturally responsive teaching entails and an understanding of what culturally responsive teachers do. They could also be expected to demonstrate an innate ability to tailor their teaching to particular students within particular contexts – the salient quality of a culturally responsive teacher.*

*Culturally relevant teachers are skillful at constructing curriculum that is based on students' needs and interests; justifying their work based on external, sometimes bureaucratic demands (i.e., standards); and using data to refine and improve practice.*

To this end, SJTE field leaders (see Milner, 2010; Sleeter, 2009; Zeichner, 2009) have begun to promote the placement of teacher candidates in local community service organizations so they might practice inquiry skills and become accustomed to their role as learner (of communities and cultures) and not only teacher (of content knowledge). This use of the field experience, altering content and not form, echoes SJTE's use of knowledge, skills and dispositions, which as I previously suggested expresses SJTE's mainstream aspirations within teacher education. Although the setting of the field experience (albeit one among several) changes from school to community, there remains a sense that the teacher educator can construct a 'laboratory' experience of a studiously fixed duration in which a specific kind of learning can occur, as well as facilitate or guide students in reflection that renders the experience appropriate or useful. Given the specificity of the SJTE knowledge base required as a backdrop for the reflection and analysis that SJTE demands, there may be a greater specificity to SJTE's expectations than to those accompanying more traditional field experiences, at least in terms of what teacher candidates 'bring home' from the (community) field. Whether embedded in community field experiences or no, the seeming open-endedness of inquiry and 'learning to learn about' one's

students instead of ‘learning about’ particular historically marginalized and under-served groups might not be so open-ended in practice.

To sum up, these accounts of the ‘outcome teacher’s’ mindset combines a particular knowledge base with a reflective orientation. Reflection is not form without content, however, as there are particular ends in mind that reference the field’s form of sociocultural critique (i.e., that the divides exist, persist, and why). The reflective mindset is a cornerstone of inquiry, or the means by which culturally responsive teachers learn about their students in order to tailor their pedagogical and curricular choices, as well as understand why this is critical. Overall, this mindset may underpin the teacher’s ability, as in the previous section, to know why they must work toward changing the world through their practice as well as why this is not possible (as a direct result of their solitary efforts). Lastly, SJTE’s preference for community-based field experiences expresses a by-now familiar contention of mine: that the field grapples simultaneously – and well – with its radical social justice vision *and* its aspirations to be relevant and comprehensible in mainstream, institutional teacher education.

### **The Medium Not the Message: Clarity and Coherence**

If what I have presented up to now can be thought as a crucial ‘message’ of SJTE (why it exists and what it wants), then this final section is about the field’s ‘medium’ or what these field-defining texts have to say about the ways in which the message should get out. I now return to a more familiar (not de-authorized) method of engagement in order to explore calls for *clarity and coherence* in SJTE.<sup>37</sup> Explicit references to the field’s ‘dangerous lack’ of either characteristic – or quality, in that they are widely expressed as desirable qualities of a ‘legitimate’ academic field – do two things. First, they challenge the utility of the field’s capacity to manage tensions and

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<sup>37</sup> My rationale for this shift away from de-authorization is the contextual and historical grounding characteristic of calls for clarity and coherence. The goals of changing society and changing teachers are more friendly to being treated like a collective gloss because they generally do not reference the field’s particular history.

walk lines. This because these authors and (mostly) field leaders tend to express a tacit preference for the obsolescence of these capacities, in that they would rather there were no tensions to manage or lines to walk. Second, calls for clarity and coherence paradoxically exemplify such a capacity because they are hardly straightforward in and of themselves.

### **Calls for clarity.**

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, 'clarity' is "the quality or state of being clear" ("clear," 2014). The most relevant definitions of the adjective 'clear' include "free from obscurity or ambiguity; easily understood; unmistakable." Conversely, many field leaders have found SJTE's message and particularly justifications of its importance in teacher education to be fraught with obscurity and ambiguity. This is felt to risk the meaning of pivotal concepts like social justice itself: that they will be misunderstood or mistakenly applied. Too many applications of 'social justice teacher education,' its derivatives and descriptors, and the phrase 'social justice' may come to mean nothing at all. McDonald & Zeichner (2009) warn that

the lack of clarity in the field at large about what constitutes social justice teacher education, and the lack of knowledge regarding the practices that support such an effort make it possible for institutions with differing perspectives, political agendas, and strategies to lay claim to the same vision of teacher preparation. (p. 595)

Their examples of disparate programs sporting a 'social justice' moniker include a 'liberal' program interrogating race, class, gender and sexuality hierarchies juxtaposed with a Christian program that claims to prepare teachers for 'justice' with no such hierarchal emphasis. It is not that the second program *cannot be* contributing to the realization of social justice, but rather that they have fundamental differences. Cochran-Smith (2009) similarly notes how "both internal and external critics assert that 'teacher education for social justice' is conceptually ambiguous with

multiple instantiations and inadequate theoretical grounding” (p. 445). This is likely because “some [SJTE] programs emphasize teachers’ beliefs and identity, others focus on democratic education, and many others concentrate on multicultural issues” (ibid.).

McDonald & Zeichner (2009) propose that SJTE labour to clarify its use of the phrase ‘social justice’ by consulting other disciplines as well as external social movements. Cochran-Smith (2009) agrees in principle but goes farther, charging that SJTE’s trouble is not only a matter of *clarifying* an extant theoretical framework but performing basic conceptual work because the philosophical and political roots of the ‘SJ’ in SJTE are under-theorized. In an article talking back to SJTE’s critics, Cochran-Smith et al. (2009) actually side with those – conservatives included – who point an accusatory finger at the ambiguity of social justice concepts as a means and measure of teacher preparation:

Although we are advocates of teacher education for social justice, we must admit we agree with the ‘anything and everything’ version of the ambiguity critique; it is rightly intended to push the field forward by demanding clarity, consistency, and incisiveness. (p. 627)

Cochran-Smith and her colleagues are not alone in making similar assertions, which begs the question of what ‘clarity, consistency and incisiveness’ might look like on the ground in SJTE. How might the field respond to these charges?

Keiser (2005) insists that, as is the case with large-scale (and mostly conservative) standardization policies (e.g., No Child Left Behind, which marked the beginning of institutionalized high stakes testing in American education), “so too must teacher educators set goals and benchmarks to both underscore successes and *codify* teaching and teacher education for social justice” (p. 52; added emphasis). His emphasis on codification is telling, and echoes teacher candidate anxiety at having to complete community placements that are felt to detract

from time spent learning to administer mandatory high stakes assessments. Keiser suggests that community placements can be given legitimacy and value by adding an ‘affective component’ – what these placements apparently develop – to standardized teaching examinations. McDonald & Zeichner (2009) similarly suggest that the “explicit incorporation of social justice elements into the assessments that are used in [a] program reinforces the message that these are areas of importance for prospective teachers” (p. 603). Zeichner (2009) insists that a greater standardization of SJTE is the appropriate remedy, recalling my discussion of SJTE’s perhaps more rigid norms of reflection despite a sense of greater epistemological openness via the inquiry aspect of CRT. For Zeichner, effective programs of all stripes feature “a clear articulation of the performance standards by which candidates’ teaching is judged” (p. 153) including their ability to practice in a way that can be held to narrow the divides.

For field leaders, clarity is not only a source of difficulty (in its absence) or a mark of effectiveness but also a source of field growth. A clearer SJTE will be a better SJTE, as Westheimer & Suurtame (2009) express:

A thoughtful response to criticisms ‘from the outside,’ involves defending our programs, but also honestly and critically examining the project, *strengthening our sense* of what social justice teacher education entails, and working to develop programs that fulfill our goals [ref. removed]. (p. 590; added emphasis)

This pursuit of clarity exacerbates several SJTE tensions that I have already identified. Calls above for a standardization of affect, assessment and teaching performance benchmarks as well as a ‘strengthening of our (collective) sense’ of SJTE all entail a degree of alienation from the immediate, localized contexts for which SJTE teacher candidates are prepared and destined. Calls for clarity are calls for abstraction and generalization. McDonald & Zeichner (2009) are

keen to indicate their awareness of this paradox and assuage related concerns:

We are not arguing that the field of teacher education should develop a prescriptive or narrow notion of [SJTE] given that the context of individual programs and communities in which they are situated will inform the nature of the work. However, we do urge teacher educators engaged in such work to challenge themselves and the field to develop a range of conceptions and practices that would provide some guidance [...]. (p. 606)

Tellingly, this call for a ‘range of conceptions and practices’ contradicts the spirit of clarity, which is also a strategic scarcity. Where clarity reigns there is no obfuscation or ambiguity because there *can be only one response* to each important question such as, for example, what is social justice?

This singularity of response is especially important in cases where the ‘other side’ has an inconvenient yet accurate assessment of what social justice entails. In their editorial conclusion, Michelli & Keiser (2005) share an anecdote gleaned in the process of publishing their book:

One contributor was told by his university’s press office to never use the word social justice with the press. [...] the Board of Governors of the university *thought ‘social justice’ meant taking their money and giving it to others.* [...] *There is a need to define what we mean by social justice and what it entails.* He cites Darling-Hammond’s view that it involves understanding self in relation to others as well as understanding the societal construction of privilege and inequality. (p. 246; added emphasis)

Although articulated here as a financial concern, what the Board of Governors fears is the redistribution of wealth common to many if not most conceptualizations of social justice (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 2009; Fraser, 1995; North, 2006). While redistribution is not about a direct transfer of funds from one person to another, it is about equalizing the landscape of material

resources which, under capitalism, derive their value in part from their scarcity i.e., from that fact that not everyone has them in abundance. The contributor's 'clarified' conceptualization from Darling-Hammond is *seemingly* structural but articulated as a highly individual transformation of knowledge and understanding about the inequitable social order: an individualized shift in mindset that is one of the goals of SJTE, as above. What is 'clear' here is the strategic necessity of presenting an individualization of social justice in the face of strident high-level resistance. In essence, it is not that the Board of Governors is 'unclear' on the definition of social justice or, in this case, that 'social justice' is badly defined. Rather, they have hit upon a contextually unfortunate truth of social justice movements. Calls for clarity and clearer definitions are not always what they seem, to the extent that achieving 'clarity' can become a means to avoid what is uncomfortable or inconvenient about SJTE's political commitments.

The recent history of SJTE is given considerable attention across these field-defining texts, and offers a lesson on the paradoxical nature and function of clarity as a strategy of SJTE legitimation. Gollnick (1992) details this history, beginning with the first reports advocating a 'culturally pluralistic' teacher education given the encroaching demographic divides: *Teachers for the Real World* (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1968) and *No One Model American* (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1973). The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) took this cue and added a standard pertaining to teacher preparation for multicultural education in 1979. Although the separate standard was eventually broken down and its components distributed across the document, this insistence that teachers must take student diversity into account was a significant first step. As of 2001, NCATE asked each accredited teacher education program for "a conceptual understanding of how knowledge, dispositions, and skills related to diversity are integrated" (quoted in Vavrus,



2002, p. 35) across its structures and offerings.

These bureaucratic steps represented a widespread, formal demand for the clarification of diversity (and later on, social justice) as an area of official concern for teacher education, seemingly addressing field leader calls. However, Martin (1995) invokes the spectres of obscurity and ambiguity in her critique of the supposedly clarifying accreditation process:

even when institutions are monitored by accreditation standards suggested by agencies such as NCATE, compliance with multicultural standards is subject to interpretations of individual evaluators and administrators. Thus, *great variation* from institution to institution and from state to state occurs, and it is important to note that the variation is not due to cultural difference within the various institutions but rather to *the subjective interpretations of teams of examiners*, many of whom remain unacquainted with issues of diversity in any meaningful way. (p. xiv; added emphasis)

Vavrus (2002) concurs, lamenting the fact that NCATE leaves the task of defining ‘diversity’ to universities themselves: “The goal to eliminate racist exclusionary practices in a teacher education program continues to be severely limited as long as accreditation teams conduct evaluations with *indeterminate operational language*” (pp. 71-73; added emphasis). These critiques by Martin and Vavrus throw a wrench into clarity’s function of engendering singularity and scarcity, or the production of the one clear definition of diversity, social justice, etc. that can unequivocally guide program development and assessment across the field. Even a large-scale definition, when operationalized, has problems of localized implementation that defeat the power of ‘clarity’ to deliver SJTE from difficulty. And yet, field leaders continue to suggest that a ‘lack of clarity’ is the root of SJTE’s legitimation problems within the broader public sphere (recall my discussion of indoctrination fears in relation to the demographic divides). This continues

despite the demonstrated troubles with making clarity ‘happen’ on the ground through accreditation and other similarly vast accountability processes that have every appearance of embodying what clarity is supposed to be and do.

In 2009, NCATE erupted into controversy when conservative critics vocally challenged its inclusion of the phrase ‘social justice’ in a single sentence about teacher candidate disposition development. NCATE relented, removing the phrase for reasons of its alleged political bias. For one SJTE commentator, this removal signaled a lack of clarity: “[for] those of us committed to social justice education, we should begin the task of rescuing ‘social justice’ from the *distortions* that have been imposed upon it as a result of the NCATE controversy” (Heybach, 2009, p. 242; added emphasis). In this instance, SJTE found itself in the strange position of alternately proclaiming SJTE’s contention that teaching *is* deeply political work *and* arguing that conservative fears regarding ‘social justice’ could be addressed through greater clarity as to its meaning and significance for teacher education. ‘If they only, really, knew what we meant, perhaps they would understand that what SJTE seeks to do is benefit the nation’ (recalling my previous discussion of nationalism). Heybach is not alone and extends a line of reasoning threaded throughout the writings of field leaders. Gay (2005) has argued that “[as] the need for multicultural education grows and competes with other reform initiatives (such as the current standards movement), *confusions* surrounding it increase exponentially, which in turn exacerbates the political fervor” (p. 223; added emphasis). Confusion and fervour increase in tandem, the implication being that the reverse is also true. Cochran-Smith (2003b) insists that:

Those who are committed to multicultural teacher education will [...] need to make a compelling argument for the necessity of a multicultural agenda in a democratic and increasingly diverse society. Our voices will need to be heard *much more loudly and*

*articulately* in the policy-making arenas that are dominated by conservative and well-organized forces [...]. (p. 9; added emphasis)

To be articulate in this case is to be the one who can make things clear: clear enough, perhaps, that the politicized threat posed by SJTE can be explained away. What this suggests, however, is that *SJTE does not pose a threat* to the social order that is threatened. The perception that it does is an effect of the field's lack of clarity: of one voice (singularity) and one message (scarcity).

Along with Westheimer & Suurtamme (2009), we might be driven to wonder how the meaning of 'social justice' could possibly be unclear:

The words themselves are straightforward. *Social* implies that educators are talking about concepts and practices that relate to human society and how it is organized. *Justice* implies fairness or reasonableness in the way people are treated and decisions are made [ref. removed]. (p. 592; original emphasis)

At bottom, 'social justice' under this rubric requires a changed social hierarchy that would bring about a greater fairness in governance. Writing at the gestation of a 'cultural pluralist' focus in teacher education over forty years ago, Davies & Clasby (1971) issued the following warning: "[because] such an education challenges existing styles, it will arouse controversy. Careful attention, therefore, must be given to clarifying objectives and validating means" (p. 139). But what if these two sentences do not logically follow? What if the clearest, most univocal expression of SJTE's mission *is controversial* in that it seeks to critique and change the social order? Perhaps even more controversial is SJTE's goal of preparing teachers to do so by educating K-12 students empowered in their heritage language and culture *and* fluent in the culture of power. Is this not what narrowing the demographic divides is all about?

The call for clarity in SJTE is a strange beast, readable for the field's mainstream

aspirations that seem to perennially conflict with its basic goal of scaffolding a different distribution of material and other resources through education (i.e., narrowing the demographic divides). In the United States, however, anti-capitalism and patriotism do not easily hold hands. For SJTE to have access to power of any kind in the present climate of increasing test-based accountability and standardization – both expressions of a hyper-marketization and capitalization of education – it must, as always, move about in the muddy middle between two extremes.

### **Calls for coherence.**

In addition to calling for clarity, the authors of these field-defining texts also routinely call for *coherence*. ‘Coherence’ is defined in the Merriam-Webster (“cohere,” 2014) dictionary as “the quality or state of cohering” (n.p.), where to cohere is “to become united in principles, relationships, or interests; to be logically or aesthetically consistent” (n.p.). Calls for coherence in SJTE are calls for programs on the one hand and the field itself on the other to be united and consistent in expression, action and appearance. Clarity is in some ways primary to coherence, in that coherence is prepositional (e.g., ‘united *in* principles’ as above). What coheres are things like statements of principles, models, mission statements, and conceptual or theoretical frameworks. For example, Larkin (1995) combines a standard call for field clarity with a call for program coherence, arguing that “concepts [such] as ‘cultural diversity’ and ‘multicultural education’ [...] are sufficiently broad and diluted to engender widespread support among teacher educators, but they are inadequate as organizing principles capable of giving direction to program development” (p. 2). Villegas & Lucas (2002a) are similarly emblematic in this regard:

programs of teacher education need to *articulate a vision* of the role of schools and of the processes of teaching and learning in a multicultural society. Such a vision, we think, is what *lends conceptual coherence* to the ongoing work of teacher educators [...] to prepare

prospective teachers for diversity. (p. 197; added emphasis)

To attain the consistency that coherence demands, then, begins with clarification of what will be held consistent. In other words, if SJTE were to solidify its disciplinarity in the form of an internal regulating body, for example, a program's use of clearly articulated definitions of social justice could be appraised for its degree of consistency with those of other member programs. To the extent that the membership consistently uses the same definitions is arguably the degree to which SJTE as such could be said to cohere. This rendition of the clarity-coherence connection is impossible, both because it presumes a perfect congruence between what definitions contain and what happens (between signifier and signified) *and* requires a robotic hyper-rationalism which, recalling Martin's critique of subjective accreditation processes, disavows the necessary 'human element' in any human endeavour. It is also ironic and conflictual because SJTE's desires for mainstreaming and inclusion in systemic accreditation processes are not entirely immune from the veneration of technical rationalism and its legitimating force.

My discussion of clarity addressed its function of singularity, or clarity as the production of a unified voice that can 'speak' with a lesser risk of confusion or distortion. Because this function of clarity is analogous to coherence across the field, here I will focus instead on calls for coherence within programs. Briefly, however, there are examples of whole-field calls in the surveyed literature, namely Milner's (2010) call for curricular coherence, which in his proposal takes the form of a unified SJTE curriculum:

*the* teacher education curriculum needs to include certain concepts, constructs, and related experiences that are common across programs. With such an approach, it would be unacceptable and unconscionable, for example, for teachers not to examine their conceptions of race as they are learning to teach. (p. 120; added emphasis)

Here coherence across programs becomes a mechanism to determine what is and is not acceptable or even thinkable in/as SJTE. Pang & Park (2011), writing in Ball & Tyson's (2011) widely-cited collection of perspectives on SJTE research, suggest that SJTE would benefit from "a shared theoretical framework based on tested sociocultural learning theories" (Pang & Park, 2011, p. 77). Echoing Milner's call, Pang & Park emphasize the 'testedness' of the theoretical framework with its connotations of pass and failure. Some theories can fail to pass the test and be found illegitimate, whether as SJTE-worthy or teacher-education-worthy. This, too, is a whole-field call for coherence that determines SJTE truth or acceptability. I return here shortly.

In the field-defining literature, calls for coherence *within* teacher education programs abound. Coherence is generally opposed to the segregation of SJTE or its related concerns in one or a few courses, whether mandatory or no, across the teacher candidate life cycle. Program coherence is described by Gay (1997) as an 'infusion' which includes "multicultural education as an area of specialization *and* as embedded in all other aspects of teacher education" (p. 167; added emphasis). In other words, teacher education should be generally characterized by an orientation toward narrowing the achievement gap *and* provide an option for teacher candidates to further specialize in this area. Although using the term 'infusion' somewhat differently, McDonald & Zeichner (2009) suggest that the "infusion of social justice into the teacher education curriculum includes attention to the general education and content preparation of teachers in addition to professional education courses" (p. 605). Certainly, this degree of coherence across all areas of a particular program "requires a programmatic investment – one that examines and likely reforms policies" and without which "efforts to address social justice will likely become peripheral to the core work of teacher preparation" (p. 606). Fragmentation and isolation are the very opposite of coherence. Making clarity a precursor to coherence, Martin

(1995) insists that integrating diversity “at all levels of the teacher education institution [...] requires [...] a clear conceptualization about the nature and type of multicultural approach [...] whereupon] issues of diversity can be incorporated into discussions, projects, research papers, and classroom activities” (pp. 81-2). Overall, coherence seems to imply a centralization of teacher education programs, determining tone and structure in all areas and with the force to channel material and affective investment in SJTE. The institutional capacity (Zeichner et al., 1998) to deliver coherence therefore requires commitment on the part of the administration.

The subtitle of Villegas & Lucas’ (2002a) landmark book, widely cited throughout this chapter, speaks volumes to the centrality of coherence as an SJTE value: *Preparing culturally responsive teachers: A coherent approach*. They state their case with great urgency, resonating with McDonald & Zeichner above (and indeed many others):

without a conceptual coherence across [program] learning experiences, derived from a common vision of teaching and learning in a multicultural society, prospective teachers may never see the relationships among key ideas or make the connections between theory and practice they will need to become effective teachers. (p. xiv)

Coherence is not a point of view but an imperative given that the impact of a one-off SJTE course will almost certainly be overshadowed or drowned out by contradictory messages in courses before and afterwards. When isolated, SJTE practitioners can become swamped by “the general messiness of feeling like we are teaching [...] against virtually every other influence in some of our students’ lives” (Gorski et al., 2012, p. 3) including that of our colleagues. A lack of coherence is both a threat to SJTE delivery as well as the capacity of some SJTE practitioners to ‘stay alive’ and keep going. There is little grey area: coherence or bust.

Sometimes, however, how the process of attaining within-program coherence is described

downplays both the urgency of narrowing the divides *and* the necessity of coherence to ensure that ‘real’ SJTE is in place to address this urgency. McDonald & Zeichner (2009) paint a picture of a process that “will require grappling with differing political views of social justice and teacher education both amongst program faculty and with other members of the community” (p. 598). Presumably, coherence does not pre-exist in this case or the process would be redundant. At the end of the grappling process, however, the necessary objective is clear: “[changing] the structure of programs that tend to marginalize concerns for justice and diversity and separate such foundational concerns from the actual practice of teaching” (ibid.). There both is and is not room for debate and discussion, or at least, debate and discussion that might return us to an incoherent ‘SJTE.’ Bennett (1995) also has a contradictory appearance of latitude:

Conceptual models can help clarify what multicultural education is, *question the degree to which we advocate it, and (if we value it)* articulate ways of infusing multicultural perspectives into the existing campuswide curriculum [including arts and sciences faculty] or move toward total transformation of the curriculum. (p. 262; added emphasis)

But the stakes addressed by SJTE – ongoing structural violence toward underserved communities as well as the cumulative threat to the nation – are too high for incoherence to prevail once everyone’s views have been reconciled. Some views cannot even begin to be reconciled, it seems. In analyzing competing teacher education reform agendas, Cochran-Smith (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009; Cochran-Smith, 2009) has found that, regardless of agreeing on what kind of political framework should guide education, critics in the divergent camps are seldom able to agree on whether education – let alone teacher education – is political, at all.

What is a call for coherence, then, in SJTE? In my reading of its field-defining literature, SJTE is *already* rhetorically coherent – or homogenous – in terms of the field’s priorities,



nemeses, means and desired outcomes. Whether this bears out in actuality is something I will take up in the following two chapters. In the literature surveyed here, ‘coherence’ is less a political, ideological or even pedagogical discourse and more so *a discourse of institutionalization and normalization*. This is apparent even though SJTE coherence is deemed necessary for the realization of social justice. Coherence here requires dialogue and consultation among stakeholders as well as a centralization of administrative power in order to compel stakeholders’ affective (buy-in, support and acceptance of processes and outcomes) and material (time, space and resources) investment through various means. This chapter’s familiar refrain emerges anew in that this two-sidedness of institutionalization – at once ‘empowering’ stakeholders and consolidating authority – is a tension that must be lived carefully by a social justice-focused *and* deeply institutional field. Because we live in the unfolding present (even as SJTE’s telos lies somewhere in the distance, forever arriving), what coherence *does* is as significant as its radical promise. Calls for coherence are calls for a united front in the face of ongoing oppression and tragedy, but are also calls for a uniformity of pedagogy and curriculum among teaching faculty, many of whom expect a guarantee of academic freedom (albeit decreasingly) as a condition of their professional lives. I am not advocating a liberal ‘free speech’ model of social justice, but rather illustrating a sticky irony of SJTE: that diversity is positive (albeit an urgent matter affectively congruent with threat) and negative, in that a diversity of views on the subject of changing education is unwelcome and even dangerous lest the prevailing inequities remain unchecked. In a field self-positioning as ‘the answer’ to a devastating and systemic set of problems there can be no diversity of message.

I will conclude my discussion of clarity and coherence with a cautionary tale from field leader Christine Sleeter (2009):

The more ambiguous multicultural educators are about their theoretical perspective, the more readily their ideas can be couched in the prevailing perspective, whatever it is, and the less powerfully they have positioned themselves to critique that perspective. Further, the likelihood is heightened that newcomers to the field will conceptualize it in a way that falls short of major change in schools or society. (p. 218)

Sleeter highlights an important function of clarity and coherence: clear and coherent SJTE can be more readily distinguished from SJTE impostors. Impostors are those who pay “lip service” (Spalding, Klecka, Lin, Odell, & Wang, 2010, p. 192) to social justice, using it as a “clichéd phrase that lacks real meaning in practice” (ibid.). Here, ‘real meaning’ is something both possible and possible to determine, such that ‘real SJTE’ can and must be separated from ‘fake SJTE.’ Zeichner (2009) worries that the proliferation of ‘social justice’ in teacher education means “it is not always clear from the literature *what these programs are like or what they are preparing teachers to do*” (p. xvii; added emphasis). The proliferation of impostors is thus directly a problem of obfuscation, confusion, incoherence and a general lack of standards or litmus tests for SJTE, a field that generally opposes standards for teaching and learning.

In sum, calls for clarity and coherence seem to correct for a troubling explosion of ‘social justice’ across teacher education by pinning down its meaning (clarity) and its programmatic expression (coherence) so that we can find instances of its misattribution. A program might pat itself on the back for preparing teachers to enact social justice while perhaps even doing the opposite. Field anxieties about clarity and coherence, then, are anxieties related to identity. Who are we who do this work, if we cannot say for sure how we differ from the impostors? What I call the ‘impostor worry’ expresses a longing for a sign both reliable and credible that SJTE *works*, or really makes the difference it proclaims as essential and promises to deliver. Coming

full circle to my research problem, this sign is empirical evidence.

### **Conclusion: Living Intractability as Becoming-SJTE**

The purpose of this chapter was to rhetorically analyze a body of texts that seek to shape and direct the field of social justice teacher education. I approached these texts via the following questions: what is SJTE in its field-defining literature? What techniques have field leaders and other commentators used to focus or direct the efforts and attentions of this field and the public, and to what purported ends? Finally, what are areas of consensus and how do these become apparent? Overall, I found that SJTE is rhetorically characterized by homogeneity and a lack of apparent conflict or even disparity, which is particularly remarkable given how these 58 sources span forty years or more (with most falling between 1990 and the present).

In the introduction to this chapter, I argued that the field is not merely *reflected by* these authors but *produced* in the encounter between reader and text. And so, in keeping with my post-qualitative framework and its suspicion of language, I ask what this rhetorical homogeneity does: produce a clear and coherent field that can be easily set apart from its impostors and its opposites, and with a particular vision of social justice that can be tied to classroom practice and outcomes (i.e., closing the demographic divides). This homogeneity also produces the field's outside (the nemeses, the impostors) and, after Hemmings (2011), the affective possibilities of (reader or SJTE practitioner) relation toward this outside. As I have suggested, however, the excess of this tidy production is a series of irresolvable tensions that, when taken literally or explicitly, do not make logical sense and so defeat SJTE's presentation as a coherent, unified field with straightforward object relations (Wiegman, 2012). The tensions I have identified are:

- diversity as promise *and* diversity as threat or emergency
- mainstream aspirations (intelligibility and integration) *and* radical politics

- urgency *and* commonplace-ness (of the demographic divides)
- (American) nationalism *and* anti-imperialism
- reliance on longitudinal statistical data sets to gauge the divides *and* opposition to the high-stakes tests from which the data is gleaned
- local, contextual specificity *and* whole-field clarity and coherence
- open-ended inquiry *and* highly-directed reflection
- practicality as duty *and* practicality as betrayal of principles
- teaching all students *and* specializing in teaching those historically marginalized
- the belief that a teacher can change the world with their practice *and* the knowledge that they cannot (in isolation and through schooling alone)

Even in its field-defining literature, then, I argue that the SJTE-assemblage functions as a dynamic system (Bell, 2006), defined not by any essence but by the necessity of holding incompatibilities in tension. To think about what makes SJTE itself (its *identity*) we need not confine ourselves to what it says about itself; rather, the SJTE-assemblage's *identifiability* – the process through which it continually becomes-SJTE, over and over again – could well be how practitioners move about within these intractable conflicts for the purpose of getting things done: doing the work we know (sense, feel) to be important. It becomes possible here to think about SJTE as a style of moving about at the plateau of incremental change, or, about SJTE's *identifiability* as its singular response to what Bell terms 'chaosmos.'

In sum, the SJTE produced (not merely represented) in these field-defining texts is equally characterized by a series of irresolvable tensions *and* the capacity to inhabit these tensions in a politically deleterious climate for (left) social justice projects. I argue that this capacity is exercised because the very *identifiability* of the SJTE-assemblage continues to be

produced, at all (i.e., we still have a field). Stemming from my overall research questions, my objective here has been to describe how SJTE works and highlight what this working produces that might contribute to the building of less harming social worlds (schools and classrooms included). In this chapter, I have begun to articulate this contribution: the capacity to sustainably negotiate intractable tensions, or to hold two irreconcilable positions without resolution.

My literature work in the preceding pages marked the beginning, in my dissertation, of looking for what makes SJTE itself without resting at what it says about itself. I expand on this contribution in the subsequent analytical chapters, and offer a full account of its implications for SJTE practice in the conclusion. In Chapter Six, I bring this line of inquiry to the midst of the SJTE-assemblage, and explore what happens at the thresholds of the assemblage in everyday life. In Chapter Seven, I explore the emergence of one of SJTE's most cherished concepts – student resistance – in my practitioner conversations, and suggest that the field's capacity for (threshold) flexibility is expressed by its *craft*: SJTE's generalizable classroom practice.

## CHAPTER SIX – Intervention: What Happens at the SJTE Threshold

In this chapter, I turn from SJTE's field-defining literature to what happens when bodies are collectively caught up by the SJTE-assemblage. In particular, I attend to moments when SJTE's *thresholds* emerged into sensation: when intensity sounded the alarm as if to indicate that the assemblage was veering too close to the edge or what is 'not' SJTE. 'Thresholding' may carry a particular urgency for SJTE, a field with a long history of being hounded by critics seemingly bent on misunderstanding whatever it does and misappropriating everything it stands for. What happens when things threaten to become other than what we have come to expect or rely on for our very identity and sense of purpose?

In my fieldwork at conferences and in conversations with practitioners, SJTE's *sensate thresholds* emerged with regularity. In these moments, what happened was *intervention*: a movement of threshold management produced by the proximity of affected/affecting bodies to these material and discursive edges of the assemblage. In what follows, I use annotated examples featuring the emergence of sexuality and race to illustrate three intervention genres: those that *territorialize*, those that *re-territorialize* and those that *deterritorialize* SJTE. In preparation, I elucidate the concepts at the heart of the chapter and bring together my touchstone assemblage thinkers (Bell, 2006; DeLanda, 2006) in conversation with Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) theory of micropolitics. In addition to de/re/territorialization, keywords include line, segment, molar, molecular, supple segmentation and rigid segmentarity. I define and situate each one in relation to Bell's *chaosmos*, or the dynamic system of chaos and cosmos that every assemblage navigates *in its own singular way*. This singular navigation – its form and not its content – is the closest we can come to determining the identity of an assemblage. This is what I aim to track with my analysis in this chapter.

## The Teacher Intervenes: Prevention-Reaction-Recuperation

Before I turn to theory, however, it is important to consider the prior history of ‘intervention’ in SJTE as the (teacher’s) duty to intervene in particular kinds of events. As I have emphasized throughout, SJTE affixes a particular hope to the teachers we prepare: that they will become change agents who can (ability) and will (mindset) enact a socially just practice in their classrooms.<sup>38</sup> We can organize conceptions of the teacher ‘doing something about social justice’ into three categories of responsibility. First, the teacher as change agent teacher works toward a safe, welcoming, inclusive, anti-racist, queer-positive, etc. classroom. This is a *preventative* responsibility that looks to get out ahead of bad things and remove the necessity of intervention altogether. *Reactive* responsibility is the intervention itself. It is immediate, like a tripwire (Airton, 2014) that launches the teacher into the middle of an unfolding bad event. Thirdly, the teacher has a *recuperative* responsibility in the aftermath. To be recuperated, perhaps, are the welcome of the welcoming classroom climate or the anti-racism of the anti-racist classroom community. These three temporalities of form can be generalized across SJTE curriculum and pedagogy, even as their content – what prevention, reaction and recuperation must be in order to signify and be narrated as such – must be locally filled in.

Preventative, reactive and recuperative responsibility suggest a linear temporal sequence: the bad thing was not *prevented* and so the teacher *intervened*, speaking *afterwards* with students and planning a related class activity, for example. From the intervention are drawn lines backwards and forwards in time. The past becomes a failure and the future a time of never-again. The past is coded as a bad exemplar and the future is coded as its inversion and absence (we

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<sup>38</sup> There are many aspects of this envisioned ‘socially just practice’ that are not – at least on the surface – about classroom climate or community, which is arguably the terrain of the teacher’s intervention. These include but are not limited to enacting culturally responsive/relevant pedagogy and curricula, fostering community collaboration, navigating restrictive educational policy, balancing standardized test preparation and meaningful instruction, etc.

hope). Although teaching teachers to exercise preventative responsibility might involve, for example, introducing explicit constructions of homophobia (e.g., images of homophobic graffiti or narratives of queer youth driven to suicide), the success of preventative responsibility is very hard to pin down. How many days, weeks or years without an event are required to determine success? This might be impossible or aporetic, where aporia (Derrida, 2000) is a condition of ethical obligation where no completion or satisfaction are possible and yet the obligation remains. The success of recuperative responsibility is similarly unclear. A classroom community might go on to function well enough, but if the bad thing happens again, will getting-by have mattered? Will recuperation have been successful *only since the event*, and does this count toward the teacher's satisfied responsibility?

In addition to linear temporality, preventative, reactive and recuperative responsibility also suggest a curriculum of practical skills development for teacher candidates. The SJTE practice-based literature overflows with examples of the bad event and the 'intervention' that can make education safer, more welcoming and more socially just. This three-part conception of intervention privileges the classroom as the site that matters, and the teacher as the actor who matters. It also makes knowable in advance, through language, the form that the 'bad thing' will take. The teacher's actions are here thought to have knowable consequences; the teacher knows what they are doing and acts from this knowledge. In SJTE – whether instantiated as lectures, units, courses or entire specialized programs – things tend to become pinned down in this way due to the exigencies of the 'real world' awaiting TCs, that they are thought to encounter in dosages through the field experience. SJTE deals in *stuff* – credits, portfolios, competencies, field experiences, assessments, licenses – even if it cannot deal in far-away outcomes like social justice, as I have argued throughout. The bare economy of teacher education involves inputs and



outputs: people who come in and people who leave, and a host of things happening in the middle that are supposed make their time spent with us worthwhile. The temporal logic of intervention – these are things that can happen, this is how you can prevent them or react to them if they do, this is what to do afterwards – is almost inevitable in SJTE because we need objects to teach with.

This kind of intervention also reaches into the field's troubles with evidence, which undergird my research problem. For example, teacher education programs explicitly aligning themselves with social justice goals and practices expect their graduates to know how to intervene in (react to) enacted forms of oppression. The ideal intervention would be informed by SJTE principles and involve critical reflection on the part of the intervening teacher, even if this reflection is not of the moment but rather borne of habits acquired in teacher education *or* in life before and beyond.<sup>39</sup> A best case scenario may see K-12 students responding creatively and intellectually to the intervened-upon incident, where recuperation itself becomes curriculum. This kind of 'outcome' would be a worthy and celebrated object of study for SJTE researchers, as well as a source of institutional pride for the SJTE program that graduated the teacher. It could well be a finding: written up as evidence of SJTE's effectiveness (which is still not evidence of 'social justice' but is frequently taken up in the literature as its equivalent).

This very stabilized and stabilizing intervention begs the Deleuzian question: what can intervention *do*? In this chapter, I explore intervention not as an ideal-type to which individual teacher educators or TCs can aspire, but a site of becoming in the present. The familiar prevention-reaction-recuperation intervention *and* the emergent intervention I track in my examples both take place at a threshold: where something must (because it does) happen given

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<sup>39</sup> This interchangeability indexes the field's growing preference for teacher candidates of colour over white teacher candidates given that the former have been found to "bring a richer multicultural knowledge base to teacher education than do White students" (Sleeter, 2001, p. 95), which is thought to enhance the development of culturally responsive pedagogy. See Sleeter (2001) for an account of the research in this area at the time of her review.

how things are going. However, the interventions I found through my fieldwork and practitioner conversations are not individual (initiated by a single facilitator) but collective. Intervention here is a collective and pre-personal effort to change speed or direction. It is collectively calibrated, adjusting the degree of sensory (felt), aesthetic (seen or heard) and signifying (broadly expressive) shock required to move bodies (including practitioners) into a new holding pattern. Although a particular person might visibly catalyze the featured intervention, the intervention is irreducible to their conscious agency or even their impulsive actions. It is rather the collective exercise of an assemblage capacity which, recalling DeLanda (2006), is produced through the exercise of (individual) *component* capacities but irreducible to what individuals do.

### **Key Concepts: Lines, Segments and De/Re/Territorialization**

In order to account for the collective character of intervention, I use a range of specialized terms that were not introduced in my general theoretical framework. In Chapter Three, I discussed how DeLanda combines Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) notion of more or less dense and homogeneous assemblages with their notion of more or less rigidly coded strata composed of lines and segments. To the two axes of assemblage 'becoming-identity' – the material or expressive roles of its components and how they participate in gradual processes of territorialization and deterritorialization – DeLanda adds a third: how components participate in processes of coding and decoding. Echoing the double articulation of becoming (differentiation/emergence of consistency, which enables differentiation/emergence of the new) (Bell, 2006; Deleuze, 1994), DeLanda suggests that "territorialization provides a *first* articulation" whereas coding "supplies a *second* articulation, consolidating the effects of the first and further stabilizing the identity of assemblages" (p. 15; added emphasis). While DeLanda insists that, in social assemblages (as opposed to biological ones), coding is performed by language as a

specialized expressive entity, his examples run from bureaucratic activities to informal conversations between friends. The latter are not limited to spoken language, but engage a spectrum of bodily expressivity. Coding and decoding are not, therefore, limited to language but can be said to *stabilize* many material and expressive component roles.

Lines are key to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) elucidation of micropolitics. In their rendering, modern societies are characterized by an increasingly rigid *segmentarity* whereby flowing lines of desire (in Deleuze this is not lack, but force, affect, intensity or a Body without Organs) are slowed down because they are 'chopped up' into segments. This is a key means of producing order from infinite possibility, or organ-izing (making particular functioning organs out of) components into prescribed roles. Segmentarity is not necessarily bad, but it is necessary for societies (assemblages) to exist. Segments can be binary (e.g., race, sex, class, age, etc. where one is of this not that), circular / spatial – “my affairs, my neighbourhood's affairs, my city's, my country's, the world's...” (p. 209) – and linear / temporal where “each segment represents an episode or ‘proceeding’” (ibid.). *Power centres* which vary in form, scale and number produce and organize *resonance* among segments to greater and lesser degrees. The more segments resonate, the lesser the likelihood that the new can emerge.

Critically, *molar segmentarity* is different from *molecular segmentation*. The example of mass versus social class helps to flesh out the distinction between the two:

social classes themselves imply ‘masses’ that do not have the same kind of movement, distribution, or objectives and do not wage the same kind of struggle. [...] *the notion of mass is a molecular notion* operating according to a type of segmentation irreducible to the molar segmentarity of class. Yet classes are indeed fashioned from masses; they crystallize them. And masses are constantly flowing or leaking from classes. (Deleuze &

Guattari, 1987, p. 213; original emphasis)

Class is molar and mass is molecular. The first has *rigid* segmentarity (where lines are split into stabilized, coded *segments*) whereas the second has *supple* segmentation (a destabilizing process whereby lines are always becoming *more and less segmented*). Molar segmentarity and molecular segmentation overlap and serve as each other's excess: "the stronger the *molar* organization is, the more it induces a *molecularization* of its own elements, relations and elementary apparatuses" (p. 215; added emphasis) whereas "*molecular* escapes and movements would be nothing if they did not return to the *molar* organizations to reshuffle [the latter's] segments" (pp. 216-17; added emphasis). The difference between the molar, rigid, segmented line and molecular, line with fluid degrees of segmentarity is not, however, "between the social and the individual [...] but between the molar realm of *representations*, individual or collective, and the molecular realm of beliefs and *desires*" (p. 219; added emphasis).<sup>40</sup> It is useful here to bring in Bell's (2006) account of assemblages as dynamic systems at the edge of chaos, where their enabling condition is the both/and of cosmos (stasis, suffocation, order – a surplus of linguistic/semantic coding) and chaos (disintegration, collapse, meaninglessness – a surplus of affective intensity). DeLanda's adaptation of de/coding is enhanced, in my view, when Bell's chaos/cosmos (chaosmos) is also brought into play.

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<sup>40</sup> Deleuze and Guattari claim that rigid forms of segmentarity are "always expressed by the Tree" (p. 212) or arborescence, where the coming of the new is pre-empted by the continual reproduction of an essential structure. This is also their critique of psychoanalysis (see their *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*, 2004).

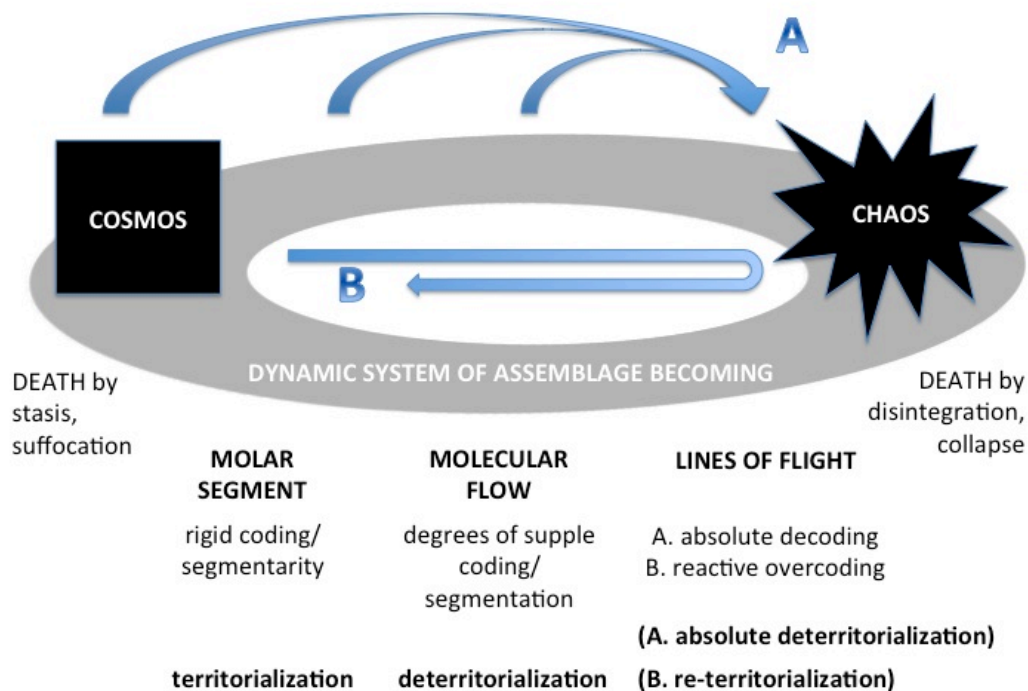


Figure 1. *The Dynamic System of Assemblage Becoming*

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) differentiate among the “line of molar or rigid segmentarity, line of molecular or supple segmentarity, [and the] *line of flight*” (p. 204; added emphasis). Lines of flight breach both the molar and the molecular, swiftly rupturing thresholds and tearing segments apart.<sup>41</sup> Segmentarity and segmentation both labour to “seal, plug, [and] block the lines of flight” (p. 223) that threaten the assemblage with absolute deterritorialization or coming apart. In between the most rigid / suffocating (segments) and the most fluid / chaotic (lines of flight), molecular segmentation is “a kind of compromise operating by relative deterritorializations *and* permitting re-territoralizations that cause blockages and reversions to the rigid line” (p. 205; added emphasis). The *plateau* is the singular assemblage achievement: where it has achieved sufficient consistency to create in sustainable ways. Because a plateau is never a

<sup>41</sup> The authors sometimes use ‘flow’ to refer to the molecular and reserve ‘line’ for the molar. Their characterization of molecular as always escaping the molar also connotes a line of flight, and in several instances the distinction of molecular | line of flight collapses. I take up molecular lines as ‘flow-like’ but gradual and non-rupturing.

final resting place or stable signifier, it is the middling, back-and-forth journey between chaos (line of flight) and cosmos (rigid segment) that is an assemblage's identifiability.

A few final points are in order. First, rigid segmentarity produces blockages and flow *conjugations*: "points of accumulation" (p. 220) that channel and therefore slow down decoded and/or deterritorialized flows. This is a process of territorialization. Here, we could look for how assemblage components contribute to rigid segmentarity (binary, spatial or temporal), or how flowing lines are gradually territorialized. Second, supple segmentation produces flow *connections* whereby "decoded [and/or] deterritorialized flows boost one another [and] accelerate their shared escape" (ibid.). Here, we could look for how components play material and expressive roles in de/coding processes. Finally, lines of flight are wildly unpredictable and pose the greatest threat to the assemblage. They are the "cutting edge of deterritorialization" (p. 221) and can bring about the most rigid and reactionary overcoding and re-territorialization.

In fact, the line of flight is the most dangerous in all respects, not only because it can become rigidified (and risk suffocation as *cosmos*) but because it can lapse into the cancerous proliferation of fascism: the *chaotic* meaninglessness that is only consumption, destruction and death without sufficient consistency to create and become (Bell, 2006).<sup>42</sup> This is why political change must be cautious, incremental, sustainable and ordinary according to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), who cringe at lines of flight: "[staying] stratified – organized, signified, subjected – is not the worst that can happen; the worst that can happen is if you throw the strata into demented or suicidal collapse which brings them back down on us heavier than ever" (p. 161). No 'radical' political value is given to the molecular flow or line of flight over the molar

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<sup>42</sup> Deleuze and Guattari's use of the term 'fascism' is somewhat counter-intuitive given that fascism generally denotes a society with excessive methods of controlling the populace and not a society in chaos. However, they insist that fascistic power spreads, consumes and dominates with no purpose other than spreading, consuming and dominating. It is, therefore, a form of meaningless because plateau-less and unsustainable proliferation.

segment. Rather, all three lines carry their own risks to becoming.<sup>43</sup>

In this chapter, I map intervention in relation to Deleuzo-Guattarian segmentarity, segmentation and lines of flight. In my fieldwork and practitioner conversations, I identified territorializing interventions where a flow *gradually* became rigidly segmented and overcoded through a ‘gentle suffocation,’ re-territorializing interventions where lines of flight were snuffed out, segmented and overcoded in a *swift* ‘smack-down,’ and deterritorializing interventions where lines became *sustainably* more and less supple in a process of wavering back and forth.

### **Why Sexuality and Race?**

My discussion of intervention is presented in two sections, where one is organized around sexuality and the other around race. Each section contains examples of territorializing, re-territorializing and deterritorializing interventions in order to illustrate the differences in how they ‘manage’ the intensity of SJTE’s thresholds (recalling that I initially described intervention as a collective movement of threshold management). I chose to structure the chapter around sexuality and race for four main reasons. The first reason relates back to my literature review. When I reviewed SJTE’s inspirations and interlocutors in Chapter Two, I highlighted the field’s emergence from multicultural education, which in turn emerged from the civil rights and ethnic studies movements. These primarily sought to address segregation and its aftermath, where systemic racism remained persistent and ingrained in American society. Today, race and racism

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<sup>43</sup> In this way Deleuze and Guattari do not automatically align their theory with Left struggles against ‘hegemonic’ or ‘totalitarian’ forms and forces of institutionalized domination. This makes my study all the more complex given that SJTE has largely inherited Left customs and conceptual architecture, which I argued in literature review in relation to Wiegman’s (2012) writing on identity knowledges. Slavoj Žižek (2012) has famously argued that Deleuze and Guattari’s corpus is inherently friendly to neo-liberalism, claiming that capital is the paradigmatic Deleuzo-Guattarian flow of desire and, therefore, that capitalism is a plateau. The plateau produces stable-enough or sustainable change, which is privileged in Deleuzo-Guattarian micropolitics but not elsewhere. From a neo-Marxist standpoint, capitalism is categorically bad and its throwing-off is categorically good. The paradigmatic difference seems to be a claim about the political status or utility of everyday life in the historical present, which may be doubly made life-giving *and* live-ending by capitalism (Berlant, 2011). Taken as broadly as possible, my dissertation seeks out forms of implicit expertise that come from living this double-bind while working (institutionally) toward a less-harming social world, and argues that this expertise is indeed politically significant.

(inclusive of issues pertaining to culture, ethnicity, language and/as increasingly, immigration status)<sup>44</sup> remain the political foci *and* conceptual touchstones of SJTE. I offered a few examples to this end from SJTE field leaders and lead commentators (Gorski & Goodman, 2011; Marshall, 2009; Nieto, 2004) who also drew attention – whether intentionally or no – to the integration of sexuality as a frequent site of field conflict. Marshall observes how concerns tend to arise over the risk that sexuality (and other concerns) may ‘dilute’ the potency of multicultural education (that is social reconstructionist – see Sleeter & Grant, 1987) by ‘distracting’ it from the ongoing pervasiveness of racism when the field’s original work is urgently unfinished. Sexuality- race conflict also became apparent to me in myriad ways as I conducted my fieldwork, and particularly at NAME. There, I was repeatedly seized my own overriding and gut-level reluctance to raise sexuality (or gender-normativity) in Q+A, others’ anecdotes of high-level organizational conflict over homophobia vouchsafed – to me – in hush-hush tones, and public polemics about a perceived exclusion of sexual minority people and issues over the years. That the latter were addressed to no one in particular – and taken up by no one – was something I observed with great interest. All this is to say that sexuality and race, both together and apart, are reliably intensive in SJTE.

Second, and although I selected my examples (or they selected me) on the basis of their intensity and not their semantic content, sexuality and/or race happened to somehow appear in each one. This was most often as a material or discursive (or material-discursive, marking what is semantic *and* affective about language) stimulus in relation to which the becoming of the

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<sup>44</sup> This is definitely an over-simplification, but a strategic one. Although these are deeply complex phenomena that infinitely manifest across all spheres of human life, when they are named as the basis for patterns of differential (negative) experiences or life chances, the reason given is usually the same: (systemic, structural) *racism*. Given that ‘anti-racism’ is an explicit commitment – or at least aspiration – of SJTE, and because I am trying keep my terms as open as possible, I use ‘race’ as an admittedly clumsy catch-all for one of the things that emerged as a continual locus of intensity during the course of my research.



SJTE-assemblage was collectively produced. It is important, however, to think about the content of things I am calling ‘sexuality’ or ‘race’ including whether I am pinning them down too much and so going against the grain of my theoretical and methodological framework. Were these ‘really’ sexuality and race? Can we ever know for sure? While the answer is no, I maintain the provisional and experimental usefulness of familiar language to follow them around *but* seeing what they can do and produce in the broadest way possible. Indeed, this is how I found and studied SJTE at education conferences.

My third and fourth reasons for choosing sexuality and race address these problems: both are doubtless familiar to the SJTE reader and provide a useful point of entry into what might be new theoretical territory; and, moreover, their *excessive* familiarity is precisely invoked and troubled in my conference narratives and conversation excerpts. The over-coded character of sexuality and race – including their corresponding bad things, homophobia and racism – are revealed in their emergence across the examples such that ‘what intervention can do or produce’ was often inextricable from ‘how sexuality / race / homophobia / racism can become’ and produce new ways (or not) of thinking and doing SJTE (and not-SJTE). Overall, however, I only use sexuality and race as illustrations of possible intervention *content*. Because I am primarily interested in the *form* of intervention and its role in how the SJTE-assemblage works, I ultimately do not hold myself able to say anything definitive about sexuality and race.

Whereas territorializing and re-territorializing interventions stabilize and homogenize SJTE, *detrterritorializing* interventions produce the new by degrees. In my sexuality and race detrterritorialization examples (an uneasy designation, for they cannot be said to be all or only or ‘about’ sexuality and race), new possibilities emerged from particular, local, actualized conditions and were not, *in practice*, restricted by a priori, coded, semantic and other language-

based conceptions of what SJTE is and means. It is the deterritorializing intervention (singular in form not content) that reveals a capacity for flexibility. This capacity contradicts SJTE's tendency to stabilize its identity and its outside through language use – this *is* racism, this *is* homophobia – and, I argue, expresses a deep wisdom about affect in relation to social difference and social justice. I explore this further when I discuss SJTE's affective craft in Chapter Seven.

### **A Note on Method**

In what follows, I draw on conference moments that I observed and excerpts from my recorded practitioner conversations. The *conference moments* in this chapter occurred in public at one of the four education conferences where I conducted fieldwork. In order to preserve the confidentiality of those involved, the reader should not assume that described events mirror what 'really happened' in a space. Although I stayed close to my fieldnotes when writing the narratives, my priority was not full or accurate representation, which is impossible anyway within a Deleuzian methodological frame. Instead, I adopted Kathleen Stewart's (2007) strategy of studying the affective through narrative staging. In *Ordinary affects*, each of Stewart's short chapters stages a scene or "tangent that performs the sensation that something is happening – something that needs attending to" (pp. 5-6). Using the semantic and affecting powers of language, Stewart creates a sensory experience for the reader. In writing up my own threshold moments, I also sought to affectively stage intervention and not simply to provide an accurate representation of what took place in a conference session.

The way in which I present and engage with my *practitioner conversations* throughout the chapter also bears some explanation. Recalling my methodology chapter and discussion of the Deleuzo-Guattarian (1987) BwO or Body without Organs, here I adopt Mazzei's (2013) concept of the VwO, or *Voice* without Organs. The VwO denotes how voice is relationally

produced in a research encounter; it is not the property or sign of intentionality proper to an emanating body-subject that speaks. Rather, my method insists that conversations express a *mixed or assembled agency* on the part of interlocutors: not the sovereign agency of separate subjects firmly in command of their utterances, taking stock of what has been said and carefully constructing their responses. Things happen too fast for the belatedness required by this very *personalized* subjectivity. Tracking the VwO thus involves tracking affect or *pre-personal* intensity in conversations, where the rise [+] and fall [-] of the affective barometre marks semantic and non-verbal shifts in content, speed, tone, cadence and volume, as well as (literal) silences and eruptions (e.g., of different kinds of laughter, mmm, hmm, etc.); these are all assemblage components exercising material, expressive and materially-expressive capacities. I use bold-faced annotations to provide the reader with a sense of these shifts.

### **Sexuality and De/Re/Territorialization**

This section contains four examples. Two feature a territorializing intervention, one a re-territorializing intervention and, the last, a deterritorializing intervention. This sequence is important because, as we have seen, territorialization and re-territorialization are cut from the same cloth such that speed is arguably the only major difference between them. I leave the deterritorialization examples for last because they expressed the capacity I am tracking and in which I locate an unarticulated contribution of the field.

#### **Sexuality and territorialization I.**

*The presenter, U, a PhD student, raises a flag. They<sup>45</sup> declare their gender, race, class and geographic origin at the outset of a poststructuralist feminist narrative of becoming the good-enough teacher and unbecoming the perfect teacher: of becoming the teacher who can say*

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<sup>45</sup> I use singular ‘they’ and its derivatives as standard gender-neutral pronouns throughout this dissertation in many cases where personal pronouns are required, in order to achieve de-personalization *and* anonymity by removing gender (unless it otherwise appears). For more information on singular they, visit my blog: [theyismypronoun.com](http://theyismypronoun.com).

*no. U tells of how they dutifully tried to raise test scores, stayed late, and judged teachers who left school at 4PM. Their delivery is all raised eyebrows, inclined head, too many inflections. The small audience resonates with satirical knowing chuckles, producing the 'silly teacher' who doesn't understand the neo-liberalization of the profession. We all know that game is rigged.*

*The next presenter, X is another PhD student and begins with an overhaul of the room setup. We are exhorted to get involved and jokingly chided by Y, a senior scholar – “you're teachers and teacher educators!” – when we don't. So, we move the chairs into a circle. On the table in the middle is a familiar board game that has been partially transformed into a game about education. We're going to play in teams. There are wide eyes, laughter, glances around the room. I look to others, registering the heightened anxiety. I yearn to lend support to X, who barely facilitates but also doesn't really get in on the awkward laughing, either.*

*A few rounds pass and the group relaxes into the new framing of the space and our time together in it. After all, it's just a modified version of a game we have all played before. But then someone finally draws a homemade card about education. This goes to U: what is culturally relevant assessment? The other teams are told to adjudicate U's answer. U takes a good stab at it and there is no ripple at her careful, critical response. The group talks together easily about the risks of essentializing cultural relevance, essentializing culture. We begin to move on.*

*But Y, the senior scholar, begins to speak. Y takes up U's answer with a seemingly banal segue that gradually accrues suspicion and an excess of attentiveness from those present. People stop shifting around, whispering, rummaging in bags or taking notes. The barometre falls, the air thickening as anticipation builds of where Y is going with this.*

*Y harkens back to U's positionality statement. “You didn't say you were straight. How can we talk about cultural relevance when sexuality is invisible? Invisibility makes life hell for queer young people in schools.” I survey the room, take the pulse. Others are pallid, catatonic or desperately interested in the carpet. U gazes emphatically at Y, nodding vigorously, inserting occasional apologia when she can. My head pivots from U to Y and back again as this unfolds. Who will save U? Who can? In this room of teacher educators, critical ones, no one does.*

*Y tells U of their own organically arising conversations about heterosexual privilege with their grandchildren: “frankly, that conversation wouldn't happen between you and your children, because you're heterosexual.” Then Y comes out. They broaden their address to the group: “you never know who is heterosexual and who isn't. Look around this room,” they intone. “You just*

*don't know."*

*And yet, here I am, flaming away over here, in blatant contradiction to what was just said. My eyebrows shoot to my hairline, my eyes pop, my lips purse and my legs cross even tighter at the knee: my visibility as queer is extreme, undeniable. You really do know, when you look at me, that this is not a heterosexual...someone. People I know and people I don't make eye contact with me in equal measure then look away, eyes wide. I threaten to explode in a fit of giggles, but hold myself together somehow. This has just become pleurably if painfully hilarious, to me anyway, on the inside. I am seized by visions of a friendship-to-come with U, who will be friendlier when we meet later on than anyone the world over. They cannot respond to Y; they must find another way back in. I will be their highway.*

*That evening, U sits next to me at dinner and our conversation is among the most compelling I can remember, enough to even make me forget the growing abdominal pain that would land me in a local hospital later that night.*

Here, U's omission of their heterosexuality in the session comes to resonate with school-based homophobia and queer youth suffering. This resonance makes several things come together into a highly affecting equivalence that is gradually rigidified. For example, there are no queer youth present and yet U's omission is something affecting them. 'When straight people don't articulate their straightness, it harms queers.' 'U damaged queers today' resonates across time and into the generalizable such that 'U is a person who harms queers.' U is produced as homophobic, and homophobia is produced as an omission of one's straightness. U's omission is also the becoming-absence of conversations about heterosexual privilege in families with opposite-sex parents and/as a becoming-invisible of queer youth in schools.

The senior scholar, Y, is a power centre organizing resonance among binary, spatial and temporal segments. There are binary segments of straight people | queer people ('which you can't know by looking at someone'), spatial segments of school ('where queer youth suffer invisibility, invisibly') | home ('where queer people talk to children about heterosexual privilege

and straight people do not’) and temporal segments of today | other presents. These segments further resonate with the segmentarity of the conference that restricts the time and space potentials of all the bodies into isolated goings-on of separate rooms, turn-taking, presentation, Q+A, discussant feedback and eighty-or-so minute slots that – often mercifully – come to an end.

Homophobia is the threshold. This is an intensive emergency for U because homophobia – with all that this carries into the present – is unthinkable, and what homophobia is here and now is what U has done. No matter what stories U can tell about themselves, their history or their intentions, U is *actually* homophobic in the present. It will not do to profess otherwise, after the fact; U must accept and affirm Y’s every charge because they come out. Coming out is becoming-authoritarian. U must wait until later to find a queer person (me, the only person present at the time of intervention who ‘looks like one’) and make amends.

My analysis is unconcerned with the ‘reality’ of whether U *is* homophobic or whether Y *is* over-stepping either their own authority or the sanctity of U’s domestic world (‘you don’t have these conversations with your children because you’re straight’ to which there can be no reply because none actualizes: no ‘yes I do’ which I learn later on is the truth of the past, unspeakable in the present moment because U’s omission produces them as irretrievably homophobic, here and now). Furthermore, I make no claims as to intentionality – i.e., ‘Y is a power centre’ *not* ‘Y exercises power’ – because territorialization and coding are of the assemblage and so beyond any one person’s control. I have deliberately avoided even styling this as ‘Y’s intervention’ because it is not: it is a singular event of territorialization that solidifies the assemblage in a slow and ponderous fashion. The homogenous and enabling exercise of other assemblage components – included but not limited to other attendees – is obscured, apart from Y’s becoming-queer (in coming out) body, semantic (queer, straight, heterosexual privilege) and non-verbal (tone, speed,

diction, gesture, facial expression) language, and affecting genres (the lesson, the speech, the big reveal). Home, school, queer youth, Y's grandchildren, U's children – all *virtual* – emerge into sensation to be caught up along with the *actual* components in the room in a slowly unfolding intervention producing U as homophobic – homophobia, the intensive threshold – and unable to do or say anything against the charge, damning as it is in critical and/or social justice company.

We have gridlock (Massumi, 2002): 'homophobia' stops thought because it is unthinkable. However, a molecular flow squeaks out from the rigid segmentarity of queer people | straight people, dialing down the power centre's resonance just enough to actualize a series of fleeting encounters: fulsome glances between me – the only visible queer body-subject – and other body-subjects of more or less legible sexual orientations with whom I blow off just enough steam to not burst out laughing and rupture Y's emergent authority. These minor escape hatches of the molecular were just enough to loosen the gridlock and keep things moving. The back-and-forth of territorialization preserved us from rupture, but rigidified homophobia beyond belief.

I will shift into the past tense now and consider what did not happen, but which threatened as potential: a counter-intervention where Y was produced as out of line. This might have been a *re*-territorialization of SJTE where such an open challenge to a presenter is highly unusual. A *re*-territorialization – Y being called out – did not, however, happen. This is not random or accidental; rather, *what does not actualize cannot actualize*. *Re*-territorialization was unactualizable. That an intervention is territorializing or *re*-territorializing tells us something about the threshold being neared or almost breached, as well as the assemblage. In this example, the production of U as homophobic and of omission-as-homophobia *stood*, far enough from the threshold and so SJTE-enough to avoid the stunning rebuke of being snuffed out.

## Sexuality and territorialization II.

Whereas the previous example came from a conference, the next is an excerpt from one of my practitioner conversations and features the annotation I previously described.

Lee: What about when things break down in the moment of your teaching? What does that feel like?

Q: [**smiley voice**] Oh gosh. [**no breath, no pause**] So I had an interaction last semester, it was one of the greatest teachable moments for me [**Lee chuckles**] as one I've had in a long time. [**shift || off course**] So, my background is I've done a ton of work around LGBTQ...stuff, you know, [**quick, singsong tone, bored 'list' delivery**] I directed safe schools initiatives, I was really, I was on the board of this alliance and that alliance, da da da. [**cuts it short**] I've done all this stuff. [+]

Lee: Mmm.

Q: And I think of myself [+], or like to think of myself [-], as a fantastic anti-homophobia [**Lee giggles**] [+], anti-transphobia educator.

Lee: [**giggles, then says loudly, emphatically:**] Me too! [++] [**laughs out loud**] [+]

Q: [**laughs too but less force, smiley voice**] [-] Yeah. Personally I've grappled with this. I was, I dated women for, you know, ten or something years... [++]

Lee: [**chuckle voice**] Right on. [-]

Q: ...and now I'm married to a man and so... [-]

Lee: [**rueful**] Yeah. [-]

Q: ...and so there's also that like, around like how our consciousness shifts when all of a sudden we have privilege and I'm not as involved in the queer community as I was for all those years... [-]

Lee: Sure, sure. That's a big transition. [+]

Q: But anyway, [**fast, silly**] I still think I'm fantastic! [-] And so...

Lee: I have to agree. [+] [**small giggle, Q laughs heartily, Lee hastily adds:**] With what little I know of you. [-] Carry on.

Q: [**smiley voice**] [**shift || back on course, Lee is non-reactive**] Um, so I was teaching this course on multicultural children's literature and we were talking about um stories about LGBT families and some of the ways that we can engage



in these conversations with kids and a question came up, as it often does in classes like this, around what do you do when a kid says 'my family says that gay people are terrible.' Like, 'my family says that gay people are wrong, da da da da.' And I gave my standard stock answer which is, 'you know, your family has a right to believe whatever they choose outside of school but in this classroom we respect everyone.' And one of my students looked at me and said 'if a student said 'my family thinks all Black people are bad' you would never let them get away with that.'

Lee: Whoa. Mmm.

Q: 'So why will you let them get away with that...in regards to LGBT people?'

Lee: Wow.

Q: And I was so taken aback. And so that would be an example for me of when teaching for social justice breaks down in practice. And it was a great opportunity to say – and I said to my students, 'you're right! I would never let that fly! And so what's better answer? Like I came up with an answer that I've used for the last x number of years and it's no longer valid or perhaps was never valid.' And so it was a wonderful moment with my students together about a) our limitations as – **are you able to hear me?**

Lee: Oh yes.

Q: I'm getting a – ok. Um, about a) sort of my own limitations as a teacher educator and model for them – what do you do when you make a mistake in front of students? And then, you know, so we talked about alternate answers that I could have. And so I guess the breakdown was in me as an instructor and not in the classroom. Because for students I think it was a transformative moment and several of them spoke about it in their final papers, about how helpful it was for them to see sort of an instructor who knows their stuff grappling through some of this and it helped them feel it was ok that they might have to do something like this in the classroom.

There is something excessive about the semantic content of Q's anecdote. My question about failure produces a success narrative: a genre-hugging story of a teachable moment for her<sup>46</sup> and her TCs. There is an abrupt shift from classroom preamble to performance of an institutional LGBTQ 'track record' which at first is a bored, singsong, abbreviated list, as if this is old news

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<sup>46</sup> I use female pronouns and not gender-neutral pronouns for Q because the content of the narrative already 'outs' Q as a woman with a past in which she dated women and a present involving marriage to a male partner.

or something already known about her (although we do not know each other). The list is cut short – as if to say that there is no need to say more – and culminates in an excessive (ebullient) first-person declaration: “I am a fantastic anti-homophobia educator”. Instead of letting this stand, however, I become excessive and playful in what *seems like* a flow conjugation of Q’s and my ebullience but *actually* territorializes at the threshold of who can make claims about ‘impostors’ versus ‘the real deal’ and who cannot. “Me too!” I say, becoming power centre. Intensity bubbles up in the absurdity of my saying such a thing given my own queerness. With this move – “me too!” – queer people (like me) are produced as de facto fantastic anti-homophobia educators. Straight people (Q?) cannot be and cannot make these claims on their own. It is not done.

Q is thereby compelled to say more and overcode her own sexuality; she leaps right over her LGBTQ institutional record and comes out: “I dated women for, you know, ten or something years.” The binary segments queer person | straight person are rigidified and resonate with other binary segments (authority | non-authority), spatial segments (sexual life | professional life, and temporal segments (dating women in the past | queer-enough to fight for power and position in the moment). I reply by downshifting in pitch, speed and silliness: a chuckle-y “right on” with which I, *queer person* | power centre, affirm her sexuality and empathize (a rueful “yeah”). We become *queer people* and her old news is my old news (“sure, sure, that’s a big transition”). Now produced as queer, which in this moment is becoming-authoritarian, she can get us back on track: “I still think I’m fantastic!” But something wavers: an over-determination in my affirmation – “I have to agree” – of something that she is here and now qualified as queer | an authority on anti-homophobia education – to say about herself.

And then a molecular leak inevitably escapes to loosen things up: I giggle and then Q, contagious, erupts into genuine laughter. I back up – “with what little I know of you” i.e., I am

not singularly qualified here, anymore – and she carries on, seamlessly back on course to narrate the story of her SJTE practice (not) falling apart. Now we are seamless where we got stuck before: where Q is called out by her students for something like homophobia.

The SJTE threshold being neared and stabilized in this example once again pertained to sexuality. However, sexuality *was* something else entirely here because it *did* very different things. This intervention produced the queer as not only the ‘fantastic anti-homophobia educator’ but arbiter of who is entitled to wear that signifier. This is the threshold: who can point out the social justice impostor and the bona fide or fantastically effective. Q needed to become-queer, become-bona fide because, in her narrative of failure-cum-success yielding a teachable moment, she is called out by a TC – a novice – for affirming homophobia. As queer, she could continue a story at risk of becoming-admission of her own homophobia. Once we were both queer and shared authority, Q was *delighted* to tell me the story (quick, breathless, smiling at the outset). Queer people can’t be homophobic, after all. She is safe.

Sexuality here (re)produced the unquestionable authority of the queer subject. Through a slow and stuttering figuring-out – territorialization – Q and I jostled for control and were finally able to work together, both queer | becoming-authoritarian. The singular authority of the marginal speaking subject in SJTE was gradually but rigidly stabilized.

### **Sexuality and re-territorialization.**

Like territorialization, re-territorialization also stabilizes assemblage thresholds and homogenizes the behaviour of components (the exercise of their capacities), but differs from territorialization in force and speed. Because it happens fast, my example is short.

*I am in a symposium where the panelists, chair and discussant are all African American, and the audience is almost entirely composed of African Americans, too. The audience and speakers are singularly animated and expressive in relation to each other, calling-and-*

*responding, mm-hmm-ing, nodding emphatically, oh-yes-ing, effectively under-lining and boldfacing things spoken by presenters. The third presenter, V, apologizes in advance for the sexual content of their presentation. V is giving a paper on culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) in teacher education. V's teacher candidates are learning to become culturally responsive in relation to gender and sexual diversity through a community-service practicum at a local AIDS centre that serves many queer and trans youth of colour. This kind of experience is something that V would like to see broadly incorporated into teacher education. V offers the centre's events calendar as a research artifact, cheerfully reeling off a list of workshops. "There's one on fetish play, oral sex, sensual massage, anal sex – that one is facilitated by a trans woman who is a sex worker, who has a lot of experience negotiating anal sex in high-risk circumstances." As V proceeds down the list, the room stiffens and falls silent. V pauses, then intones: "In this city there has been a 90% increase in HIV infection rates in the past five years." Like a switch has been flipped, bodies leap into motion again; the nods, mm-hmms and oh-yes-es strike up again but too much, too many and too loud, all of a sudden.*

It is useful to begin with this symposium's strangeness within the broader conference. Affectively, it is a world apart and decodes the 'conference' assemblage by loosening the resonance among binary and temporal segments presenter (talks) | audience (listens) and presentation (when presenter talks) | Q+A (when others talk). What a body can do, here, is highly particular and not analogous to what bodies can do in other sessions at other times. At the end, the discussant would highlight their own (literal) destabilization of 'conference' particularly through their use of African American dialect and public speaking conventions. They are choosing to do so in this *particular* session in order to be 'culturally responsive' (the theme).

Here we see how any a priori aesthetic sense of what a line of flight might 'look like' must yield to emergent, local conditions. Because of how 'conference' was already decoded, the line of flight in this example is not some excess of sound or movement, but the stiffening into stasis of the dynamic and reactive audience; this produces the explicit sexuality of V's research

context as wildly outside. When TCs learning cultural responsiveness toward vulnerable, multi-marginalized youth of colour momentarily becomes SJTE's outside – because they must know how to negotiate high-risk anal sex? – we come too close to a threshold.

No. An intervention: V kick-starts the audience's dynamism and reactivity – bringing the outside back inside – by evacuating sexuality of its prior playfulness and sociality (palpable in the enthusiastic and flowing enumeration of the workshop offerings). Queer sexuality now resonates with illness. Queer sex (and commodity anal sex, perhaps the queerest, the most intolerable and unspeakable) makes its way into teacher education as becoming-illness. There is an over-coded too-much rush of sound and movement as the audience-bodies spring into action: cultural responsiveness becomes saving the lives of vulnerable multi-marginalized youth of colour. As power centre, V's intervention produces resonance across spatial, temporal and binary segments. This re-territorialization produces the relevance of anal sex to teacher education. Against all odds, raw queer sex for sale becomes the way in which SJTE's devotion to marginalized young people is stabilized. *It stands.*

What may seem 'heavy-handed' here on the part of one *individual* – V – is actually a *collective* assemblage emergency. Re-territorialization is often experienced as magical and miraculous as if to say 'really? All of these people did that in unison, and that fast?' Yes they did. This was a thunderclap: a swift production of homogeneity where several dozen bodies quickly responded in unison to the plight of the (older) child: a threshold that can withstand almost anything and remain stable, even if that 'anything' is high-risk anal sex.

### **Sexuality and deterritorialization.**

In contrast to my re-territorialization example, my deterritorialization example is the longest because it stages a *gradual* back-and-forth movement between rigidity and suppleness

that produces the sustainable emergence of the new, deterritorializing SJTE.

*“When you teach the diversity course, you can say goodbye to good course evaluations. Do you agree?” The room unanimously intones a yes. This is K’s hypothesis, and what she anticipated prior to her first experience teaching the SJTE course in the department. K’s paper is about the experiences of faculty of colour teaching about whiteness to white students. K is an incredibly funny and engaging presenter, cracking jokes and peppering a demographic description of her students – who are all white – with silly-voiced impressions of the ones who “don’t want to be white anymore.” We all laugh with K, nodding heads to the familiarity and ridiculousness of this resistance.*

*K spends time revealing her own prior assumptions, including that bad evaluations are inevitable for people of colour like her teaching in SJTE. K adopted a pedagogy of de-centering her own role as the giver of knowledge: “let them talk, not me, and trust students that they will empower themselves and each other.” I ready myself for the coming let down, for the story of her betrayal when this pedagogy does not work, when her students are bad. But K breaks up the foreshadowing with a startling admission: “they were really nice, and they had real feelings. Sometimes they would yell or leave, because they couldn’t take it, and sometimes we would cry all together. But they were really nice.” It went well.*

*Classroom dynamic aside, some badness emerged when “a few students began to talk outside the class with a white woman professor.” This professor, luckily a friend of K’s, received complaints that course readings were biased. But K takes great pains to stress how she inherited an intact syllabus and didn’t choose the articles. Bristling at these unfair accusations, K concocted a PowerPoint slide with photographs of the authors (the standard slate), most of whom are white people. And the students were shocked: “they thought McIntosh was a Black guy! Now they saw she was a really smiley old white woman!” The room explodes in whoops and wails. Something about this characterization of Peggy McIntosh (2003), legendary creator of the ‘white privilege knapsack’ reading that often marks the beginning of forays into whiteness with white teacher candidates, is hilarious. K used her students’ shock to demonstrate white privilege in action: their surprise at the whiteness of the authors, and willingness to assign them greater credibility. The badness was made into good pedagogy, and everything is ok.*

*K comes to a second badness, related to the paper’s hypothesis about course evaluations, the validity of which was given by our unanimous yes. “I felt good about the course, and my*

*evaluations were fine,” she says, elaborating with some slides and commenting on how strange it is to share her course evaluations with an audience. But then K drops a little bomb. After a slough of glowing evaluative comments from students, we arrive at this: “just because we’re white doesn’t mean we’re rich enough for you to require that we photocopy all this stuff on our own dime.” K’s next move is to highlight the we/you othering dynamic at play in this one negative comment, and also correct the record publicly. The students didn’t have to pay! Furthermore, K was the only instructor, across many sections, who used her own copy credits – all of them! – for students to photocopy and share their self-made resource lists for the class. The injustice is palpable, the complaining white student irretrievably mistaken.*

*Aside from two bad moments, both of which can be narrated well – one a teachable moment, one a factual error – the class was a success both personally and professionally. K’s preconceptions of white students were changed, and K learned a great deal. In conclusion, she revisits her hypothesis: “does teaching about whiteness to white students as a person of colour mean saying goodbye to good course evaluations? No, it does not.” Bam.*

*The Q+A begins. The first questioner is interested in changes that K made to the syllabus after this experience, of which there are few because it went so well. The second questioner, an older white woman, asks what the privilege walk is. This is a ‘gold standard’ social justice activity that K mentioned having used in the class. Weariness descends on the room, in shoulder slumps, pen drops and exhalations, as if to say ‘really? You don’t know? What are you doing here?’ An older woman of colour mutters the answer beneath her breath while K explains, characterizing the privilege walk as a ‘fun game’ that students enjoyed.<sup>47</sup>*

*The third questioner, the preceding mutterer, tells of a diversity training on racism and white privilege in her department. Many white people walked out, and barely any white people returned for the second day. “I’m glad you had that experience, but I think it’s not the reality. Don’t kill the messenger – I congratulate you for a great class – but I have no doubt that for the*

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<sup>47</sup> The privilege walk is a canonical SJTE and broader social justice education activity. Participants are organized in a straight line on one side of the room and a series of ‘I’ statements are read that suggest a degree of privilege or oppression (e.g., ‘When I was growing up, we had to move frequently so my parents could find work.’) People to whom this applies are asked to make one step back, and everyone else takes one step forward. At the end of the simulation, there will be a range of positions taken up by participants that are held to visualize privilege and oppression, as well stimulate further discussion. The privilege walk is a highly intensive experience, particularly because in responding to single statements one at a time participants can sense a loss of control in their self-representation after all the statements have been read. It is a highly exposing activity and so emotionally risky for people at all ends of the spectrum. In other words, the characterization of the privilege walk as a ‘fun game’ was quite aberrant and caused copious ripples in the room.

majority those course evaluations do go out the window.” She makes direct hit on K’s hypothesis, using a larger, more nebulous data set that lingers in the room. K affirms the questioner, with no doubt that she is correct. She gives up.

The fourth questioner introduces herself as a racialized parent in an interracial relationship raising an adopted daughter of a different race from her and her partner. After narrating some of her family’s encounters with racism, she states that she’s not worried about course evaluations but about the emotional harm of being an SJTE practitioner. “How do you do this work when things are discussed that are personal? I have trouble with that.” The incredulous kernel of the question: how can you be so resolutely ok? K says she is indifferent and this is her strength. “Unless they physically threaten me or my family, I respect that they have their own beliefs.” K has a thick skin and an abiding tolerance for the right of others to hold views, whatever they are.

The fifth questioner, M, is an African American lecturer at another university in the same state as K. “We have the same students, and I want your evaluations!” M laughs, and the room laughs along on cue. “We do the same things, and I’m trying to figure it out. We’re both people of colour – I don’t know your story or your history, but I know African American history. Obviously your students would recognize that you have a language difference, which I don’t have. But I can’t control my physiology when I teach – you say it rolls off your back, but I just can’t do that. I have battle fatigue from doing this.” And then: “my neighbour hung a Confederate flag in his window as a message to me.”

K responds with stories of her own. We hear of her upbringing in a poor family, her education and immigration to the US several years ago. The room seems impressed by a near-decade of experience in the midst of American race politics; approving noises, nods and glances abound. K’s background now on record, she tells us what feels like, in the moment of narration, one of the worst white student resistance stories of all time. During K’s first TA-ship in her Master’s program, the professor – a person of colour – was giving a lecture on whiteness when a white student made a phone call. She spoke loudly to someone on the other end, over top of the professor’s lecture. We are aghast. I am shaking my head. Then, K says, another white student followed suit. “Even though I barely spoke English, I understood what was happening.” M described their battle fatigue; K responds with battle scars of her own.

Responding to M’s original question – why does this go so well for you and not for me? –



*K audits possible explanations for her good evaluations that are conceivably unrelated to K's background. Most of all, K shares her story with students. "I read my students' sad stories, too. I too understand and I show them I do. We make a strong rapport and we know each other in some ways. I am so rational but also so emotional. I cry with them and they see it. I share thirty minutes to an hour about myself in the beginning, and this is key." Turning to M, K makes a helpful suggestion: "this can be a good tool for you as well." The reply springs back, immediate. "I tried that," M retorts, before going farther: "and I shared that I was gay. From my course evaluations I learned that I had discredited myself as a professor by disclosing my sexuality." The room sighs and sags defeated. How disappointing. K nods in vigorous affirmation. "So you have both issues," she responds, "and I have one. That's why it's easier for me."*

*We have put our finger on the why: sexuality. If M was not gay, or not visibly so and did not come out, then M would have better course evaluations from these 'same students' who are white and live in the same state. Easy.*

*Pause.*

*And then K begins again. She begins to tell another story of her life. Yes, she is married, "but I was a tomboy, very masculine. Some of my lesbian friends even wanted to be my friend-friend, my homosexual friend. I don't know how you say..." She bursts into laughter along with M and the entire room, moving a step forward to grasp M's hands, triumphantly raising their joined fists in the air. "I think maybe I have more male hormones than my husband, and he has more female hormones than me. And so we feel isolated because our relationship is different. I knew I wanted to marry him when we met, and I was only 19." This is met with nods, mm-hmms and other kinds of please-keep-goings. And M doesn't follow up. It stands.*

*A sixth questioner, another older white woman, has no question, but another story of white student resistance. The details collapse into other details, but it is welcomed. Then the woman who previously called foul on K's hypothesis has something to say. She tells of a white colleague accorded authority by white students where she herself had been stridently resisted. Boos, sounds of derision all around. She inhales. "I have never said this out loud before. But I feel like my students have a sense of loss when they walk into the classroom and see me. 'Is she really a full professor, a professor, even?'" Silence. "My white colleague gets away with everything, doesn't have to work at it. On crying days I have to convince myself that I have a voice that needs to be heard." A soft chorus of affirming murmurs.*

*A final questioner tells of her program where white students are in the minority. There is a rare account of a good white student, who asks the students of colour not to hold back: "it just feeds white privilege." This, she says, is a student who is thinking. Like K, she has good news. And her message, as an African American SJTE practitioner, carries beyond course evaluations. "We must learn to empower ourselves," she says, "and let other peoples' issues be their issues."*

*This will not stand. M swings around in their seat and springs into action, immediately addressing the questioner and bypassing K, the addressee. "I understand that, but these course evaluations will be the thing keeping me from promotion. I'm not tenure-track. It is my issue." They emit a humourless, derisive, single laugh. "I don't want to be the person who kills another great idea," M adds, "but this is my issue." Their interlocutor withdraws immediately, nodding up a storm and cooing banalities: "it's so complicated. That's the hard part."*

*The end. I stand and look behind to see the last questioner busily nodding in affirmation of the terrible stories she is being told by another. A young blonde woman is speaking animatedly to M, who slowly moves her head from side to side. K strides over to the woman who shared her secret out loud for the first time. Much work is being done in the aftermath.*

What emerges in this extended moment is remarkable. Segments of many kinds clench and relax, line up and disperse, back and forth. They become so supple that it is hard to identify them as either binary, spatial or temporal: queer | straight, classroom | home, students | family, African American | person of colour, gender normative | gender non-normative, immigrant | non-immigrant, good | bad. There are many intensive spikes, but these are subtle with only varying degrees of unsuccessful (\*) and successful (\*\*) SJTE coding. In sequence, they are: someone doesn't know what a privilege walk is (\*only some quiet rumblings); the older professor challenges K's hypothesis (\*\*K gives up); the parent's incredulity at K's cheery 'okay-ness' in the face of SJTE's pain (\*K espouses a liberal respect for individual values); K says 'friend' not partner (\*K inexplicably clasps hands with M and both laugh hysterically); and M fiercely and swiftly claims their right to struggle (\*\*the questioner spouts banalities and backs down). This ebb and flow unfolds mainly through expressive verbalizations (sighs, murmurs, banalities) that

*code but do not over-code*. The assemblage is de/coded *enough* (supple segmentation) and deterritorialized *enough* (heterogeneity and destabilization) to produce a plateau.

The plateau lies in the middle of the de/coding sequence above, but I removed it in order to discuss it now in detail. K's findings threaten to shake the foundations of a cherished SJTE narrative: the necessary difficulty faced by practitioners of colour. K's advice is a threshold: that M get around student resistance by sharing more of themselves in class – after all, this works for K! The deterritorializing intervention is two-fold. First, M forcefully intervenes in a *seeming* re-territorialization: M comes out, producing K's advice as outside (a declaration of unexamined privilege, even) because whatever M might share – sexuality – is unshareable. K backs down momentarily, but the intervention's calibration is off because this doesn't last. In step two, K also comes out, but as a person with a sexuality that defies segmentarity: a flow that will not be cut up into binary segments straight | queer, privileged | oppressed, speaker | listener. 'Queer person' yields and a nebulous 'queerness' (Airton, 2013) emerges.

In the emergence of K's non-binary queerness, SJTE is becoming-other to itself in content (in that who can occupy the space of minoritarian *sexuality* becomes more supple) and form (the minoritarian body-subject as power centre is breached). Deterritorialization of the threshold: anyone and everyone might be queer (if that still means anything at all) and able to take up this authoritative speaking position. Here and now, we can no longer anticipate which bodies – virtual or actual, physically present or invoked into sensation – can do what, and not only with regard to sexuality but *all* the ways in which positionality can become. A possibility space is opened up and the molecular begins to seep out. First, a secret story of hopelessness, remarkable for how the *knowledge* that white students' racist reactions to a professor of colour are the very object of SJTE practice cannot stave off desolation; how can this work continue at

such a cost? Second, an unlikely story of good white students taking the anti-racist lead in the SJTE classroom. How can we create our courses and plan our lessons if we don't know where to focus our efforts? But plateau is always in-process (chaosmos) and never finally achieved, as we see when M clamps down one last time. What is required to keep things open for as long as possible is a practice of becoming attuned to the collective opening-up of these possibility spaces, divorced from dogma and precedent. However, the requisite *capacity* is here.

### **Race and De/Re/Territorialization**

One could argue that my examples in the preceding section were as much 'about' race as they were 'about' sexuality. This is obvious – semantically and otherwise – in K and M's encounter (where race + sexuality momentarily if shakily equaled more TC resistance than did race on its own) and V's presentation (where the session itself was somehow racialized from the get-go). We could argue that race's 'absence' in the two territorialization examples (U's heterosexuality omission and my power struggle with Q) is in fact its presence (see Mazzei, 2008, 2011 on how whiteness produces and is produced by silence). In introducing these analytical sections, I discussed how sexuality – usually conjuring 'sexual minority issues' e.g., homophobia – is often experienced as an interloper or distraction in SJTE, whereas race is its time-honoured, familiar and dominant concern. However, just as 'race' cannot be said to be absent in any of the foregoing examples (or possibly ever), 'sexuality' cannot be said to be necessarily absent in what follows. Like 'sexuality' above, I use 'race' here to provisionally (and exegetically) bring together a range of interventions. In what follows, race like sexuality is foil for stimulus.

#### **Race and territorialization.**

*Z asks who has read the novel on which their paper is based (a classic of African American literature). I viscerally, instantaneously lie, raising my hand along with everyone else in the room. Z discusses their interpretation of student responses to the experience of reading it*

together in class. Z frequently interrupts themselves with extemporaneous annotations, hunched over the text at the end of the table. Sometimes Z recites – fast and anxious – horrific excerpts from the novel, to give the audience a feel and perhaps a way into the experience of the students.

*Another paper elapses and the Q+A begins.*

*The second question is for Z, and they straighten up in their chair to listen. “You don't have the same background as the book. How do you handle that? How do you help students avoid slipping into a deficit view of Black culture?” The questioner, R, a person of colour, shares their experience of using a similar text, and their students’ (generalized) response: “Black culture sucks.” Z blanches, and responds. “I didn’t have that experience.” Z approaches it with students as a historical text bearing a counter-narrative to the dominant historical record. This is not a paper about Z’s pedagogy and, it seems, will not so become if they can help it.*

*R wants more, pushes: “what were white, Black or other race teacher candidates’ responses?” Z can’t say. “I had only one Black female student among eleven white ones.”*

*Pause.*

*A full five seconds passes in a suddenly motionless room. R ceases to readdress.*

*And then the other presenter, X, breaks the seal, with a friendly accusation to Z: “I didn’t know you were going to cite me!” The room falls down at this small remark in a landslide of laughter. Z rebounds, sits forward, smiling gleefully as Z and X engage in a silly back-and-forth, like siblings, about Z’s not telling X in advance. The laughter recedes; X responds conceptually to Z’s use of their work, and Z responds in turn. Easy.*

*The exchange fades out smoothly. Then another person of colour, L, raises their hand. L wants to revisit R’s question, and shares their own experience of screening a film about their own culture to a mostly white SJTE class. Those students had a terrible reading similar to that of R’s students: ‘this culture sucks.’ L will never again show this film.*

*Z responds in kind with a story from their teaching. Bad readings happen all the time, they say, and are not only a result of our resource choices. They can also be useful. Z relates a white student’s ‘bad reading’ of his practicum placement: “I don’t see racial inequity playing out in my school because everyone is white.” The room responds with knowing laughter about white students and the things they say. As Z relates, “I pointed right at him and shouted: ‘that’s it!’” The student, perhaps realizing he proved Z’s point, became red-faced. Z jokingly recounts their admittedly bumbling efforts to assuage the student’s embarrassment. Everybody is laughing*

*now. The session ends. A tide of applause dies down amidst a happy groundswell of chatter.*

Z's paper delivery perhaps ripples from the outset given what they document therein. Throughout the recitation, there are quick shifts in speed, tone and even bodily bearing as they move from analytic paragraphs to viscerally horrific passages taken verbatim from the novel. The territorializing intervention accrues slowly into the event of R's question: 'you are not Black,' (like the novel) 'so what do you do?' R becomes power centre; molar segments rigidify and resonate together: Black | what Black teacher educators can/do, not Black | what teacher educators can/do who are not Black. The content of an analytic paper on student responses to a novel is becoming, here and now, what happens in classrooms when this novel comes up: analysis | pedagogy. R shares a breakdown in their own class, producing a palpable equivalence of R's book | Z's book, R's students | Z's students, R's class | Z's class. A threshold emerges, intensifies: there must be some points of connection across our disparate classrooms and contexts. We must be able to talk about our pedagogy and its sameness, somehow. What must be talked about is Z's pedagogy, and/as R's. What must be spoken about and speakable is Z's whiteness; it must become (something about) Z's teaching. But Z will not go with the flow. Threshold.

On the brink, at the height of intensity, a further coding in the guise of a helpful hint: "what were white, Black, other race TC's responses?" Z can't say because there was one Black TC among white ones. One Black TC alone in a sea of whiteness and reading a traumatic novel about her – odds are – own history, subjected to the 'interpretations' of her white classmates. This one Black TC sensorially materializes in the room with us: a phantasm wrought from the collective intensity of the threshold. She congeals around audience experiences of being or having that one TC of colour, or being that one teacher or teacher educator of colour, or being a white person who knows something. Is she talking? Is she withdrawn? Is she all right?

We are at the peak of resonance where things become each other and bring someone to life as sensation. The SJTE-assemblage comes close to suffocation. Something has to give. What will we do with the rest of the session? It will be a disaster if no one can speak after this. Too much of a memory can be made of the event. *Something will have happened*. The stasis risks being narrated and re-told, with white SJTE practitioners becoming segmented off from using novels like this one. Things risk becoming unthinkable. Even physical space is intensively, rigidly segmented, where leaving the room is becoming-other: to not be caught up in the affectivity of the one TC of colour and become-impostor, perhaps. The risk – the virtual – has actual effects. Bodies cannot be still for too long. Something has to give.

Mercifully, a minor molecular experiment. X's teasing comment to Z – "I didn't know you were going to cite me!" – stages something we can feel together: a show of mock embarrassment at a colleague's adulation. It is not manifestly, essentially funny (nothing is) but it produces hilarity (material and expressive, bodies and words, movements and sounds) and is produced as hilarious. Bodies are supple again: snacks open, program pages flip, numb bums find new grooves, notes are taken, someone heads for the bathroom, someone else for the water jug at the back. *To leave now – or to move at all, really – is no longer a becoming-other, becoming-non-SJTE: unable to remain in this reckoning with race and racism in teacher education, with histories of white supremacy made sensate in conversation with others.*

The molecular suppleness – the eruption of laughter and slowly increasing momentum toward less restricted movement – frees up enough elasticity for another play of molar segmentation (produced in U's rejoinder). But this time Z *can* talk about their pedagogy, if playfully, wildly, staging their own breach of teacher-form and in control of their well-honed narrative: riding the wave of the room and seamlessly going with the flow. Territorialization: the

threshold is stabilized as everything comes down to pedagogy and familiar accounts of white student resistance, with which Z is appropriately (recognizably) engaged.

### **Race and re-territorialization I.**

*A paper is being given on the school experiences of Chicano and Latino young men, arguing that their voices ought to become pedagogy in social justice teacher education. One finding is that these young men desire more 'life lessons' from their teachers and not just curriculum. Teachers should therefore learn to provide these life lessons. For example, "one young man had recently read Chicken Soup for the Soul and he really liked it," says the Latino presenter. A burble of laughter wells up at the back; it rushes forward, growing in strength, and dies abruptly at the presenter's stonefacedness. "I haven't read that particular series of books but they were important to this young man." No more laughter, no questions for this presenter.*

In this example, there emerges a powerful resonance among binary (Chican@ + Latin@ | other) and spatial (school | teacher education) segments. The presenter becomes power centre, organizing this resonance in their capacity to act as the agent of conjugation or blockage: an entire room's worth of chuckles and grins abruptly fades away at a materially-expressive facial gesture: stone. The gesture is belatedly narrated in such a way as to remove the sting of the swift clamp-down and offer a diluted 'benefit-of-the-doubt' (" I haven't read those books but...") to the audience whose laughter about *Chicken Soup for the Soul* as remotely relevant to SJTE is becoming *laughter at a young man of colour's choice of book*.

Threshold: even the impostor worry – a 'SJTE' using human relations curricula like *Chicken Soup* is surely, we fervently hope, 'not-SJTE' – cannot penetrate the privilege accorded to (marginal) voice, even if the speaker is virtually not actually present. The re-territorializing intervention produces laughter as out-of-place; miraculously – for re-territorialization can feel like a miracle – *Chicken Soup for the Soul* is produced as SJTE-appropriate because it arises in the experience of a Chicano young man. There is no molecular trickle into the Q+A, where



perhaps the rigid segmentarity of *Chicken Soup* | SJTE could have been jostled and re-animated by a question (counter-intervention): ‘how are those books relevant to social justice teacher education?’ No, it died on contact. The threshold – against all odds – is stabilized.

### **Race and re-territorialization II.**

*Five SJTE practitioners have just concluded a presentation on ‘missed opportunities’ to intervene in racism in their teaching and collegial relationships. In response to a question, one of the white presenters tells a story about a Black teacher candidate – “let’s call her (pause, as they search in moment for an apt – Black – pseudonym) Roshonda” – placed in a high needs elementary school in a poor urban neighbourhood. “Roshonda had a serious deficit perspective on her students, and one little girl in particular who she said was an obstacle to the whole class’s learning because she had ‘no focus whatsoever’”. Upon learning that the girl’s mother has brain cancer, however, “Roshonda turned around on a dime, because her own little brother is sick with cancer.” After this revelation, we learn that Roshonda ceased expressing deficit perspectives overnight. The presenter is suddenly interrupted by a white colleague, who stands up alongside them and drowns them out: “But it shouldn’t take cancer!” The interrupter laughs, looks around at their co-presenters, smiling wildly. “They don’t all have brain cancer, unfortunately!” The room obliges with some chuckles, and the Q+A continues as before.*

All too quickly, the ‘change’ in teacher candidates that SJTE wants to bring about threatens to swiftly decode into meaninglessness and unrecognizability: empathy (bad enough in and of itself, perhaps) on the basis of childhood cancer *cannot stand as an SJTE outcome*.

Threshold: the most molar of segments that stabilize the SJTE-assemblage’s identity – social justice | not social justice, SJTE practice | outcome – are in danger of complete collapse in the midst of empathy-becoming-justice and cancer-becoming-difference.

This ‘success story’ of a changed TC is an emergency: a line of flight that must be wrestled into air quotes that are bodied forth materially (standing up) and expressively (wild laughter). As in the other re-territorializing examples I have shared, intervention here is

miraculous and *seems like* a line of flight but is actually – in what it produces, not just how it seems – a rigid segmentation: the white colleague leaps up and forcefully injects humour into the proceedings. The threshold stabilizes: cancer becomes funny, the absence of cancer becomes merely ‘unfortunate’ and the SJTE-ness of SJTE’s outcomes is securely re-territorialized.

### **Race and deterritorialization I.**

In contrast to the previous examples, this example of a gradual and sustainable plateau is made from a recurring thread throughout a practitioner conversation. The participant and I repeatedly discussed their students, who are overwhelmingly white, Republican and evangelical Christian. In keeping with the form of deterritorialization at the threshold, the following exchanges are marked by innumerable *subtle* rises and falls [+] [-] in intensity. For ease of reading, I have included only excerpts that exemplify the supple segmentation that produced a space of possibility: where the ‘badness’ of their white students could stand *and* waver, spark derision *and* acknowledgment of a way of life at once livable *and* problematic.

Lee: I feel like when I imagine um the white student who is so much the target of so much of the pedagogical writing...

T: Mm hmm.

Lee: ...and the thinking about what to do about this course and how to do it, when I think people imagine who that student is, ironically it would look like one of your students.

T: Oh absolutely. [+]

Lee: I mean, like I feel like you almost have the prototype for the student that everyone imagines... [giggle] [+]

T: [cuts in] I do. I have many of them. [giggles] [+]

Lee: [chuckling] Right! [+]

T: So...yes. [flat]

Lee: [pushes, citing/paraphrasing T’s earlier remark] Like ‘guns, god and...’ you know, I feel like – and it’s also, it’s interesting because...um, yeah. I don’t know. Like that seems to be ‘what do we do about those students’ and you have whole classes of them every year and...

T: I do. [**flat**]

Lee: [**wonderment**] ...you do it! [++]

T: **Yeah I mean, and we just do, we do what we can.** [-] And again I think that's where my background helps because I kind of get those students in a way. And I think the other thing though is not just that I get where they're coming from but I also...I don't think they can dismiss me as easily as they can somebody who had a background very different from theirs.

Lee: Right, right. [-]

T: I think, if I were African American...

Lee: [underneath] So you share this...

T: ...it would be easy for them to say 'well she's Black, that's why she thinks that.'

Lee: Oh wow. [++]

T: You know? Or if I were uh gay...

Lee: Right. [-]

T: ... 'well she's a lesbian, that's why she thinks that.'

Lee: Right. [-]

T: Or, I mean, they could just do - 'well she's from New York, so that's why she,' [**chuckling voice**] you know...

Lee: [**laughing**] Right! [++]

T: ...I would get very easily dismissed. **And I...**

Lee: [**knowing**] Right. [-]

T: **...think that that happens in a lot of diversity classes. Like 'well she's not one of us, and that's why she believes that.'** [-]

The play of intensity and the growing tide of small laughter events seems to fizzle out before reaching its culmination. I waver, tentatively pushing through, citing T's own prior characterization of their students' worldview as 'guns, God and government.' We *both* participate in the production of these teacher candidates' molar segmentarity, becoming a weak power centre that can only fleetingly organize the resonance among bad student | white (who

these students *are*) | Evangelical | conservative | ignorant and good student | person of colour (who they are *not*) | worldly | inclusive | progressive. At the moderate peak of intensity [++] I produce T's practice as an outside to SJTE: with so many bad (white, Evangelical, Republican) students, surely SJTE cannot happen. T goes with the flow – “we do what we can” – in a molecular squeaking-by. Before long, we come up against another molar segmentarity where T's students again become bad | white, bad | conservative: the ones who would question an African American instructor, or who would even chafe at the difference of New York City. T's students are momentarily produced as wildly outside. But a subtle and supple decoding – ‘this happens everywhere’ – sends them skimming back toward the middle, becoming just like everyone else's TCs, producing T's practice as possible, as SJTE. SJTE deterritorializes, becoming other to itself.

This next excerpt is remarkably similar in form:

Lee: Well I imagine with those students, the ideas like 'bring in the knapsack,' you know [**T tries/fails to interject**] [+] the white privilege knapsack...

T: Yeah.

Lee: ...like I imagine things like that are...

T: We do that.

Lee: [**surprise**] [++] You do that? [**T tries/fails to interject**] I was thinking, I was actually going to say like I wonder if the standard tools people deploy are just not appropriate for what you're trying to do with these kids.

T: **Well, again, I think some are and some aren't.** Um, but yeah we do bring in the knapsack for privilege. **Again, I mean – and I don't want to not give my students credit – I mean I'm talking about, you know, one third of the students who are gonna come in completely completely with that very very narrow worldview.**

Lee: Right. [-]

I work hard to produce the otherness of T's students, throwing the most cherished artifact of anti-racist education (McIntosh's white privilege knapsack) into the fray. Nothing. These students will not stand still and stabilized: there is no threshold.

The following excerpt is similar in that it also culminates in T's recuperation of the students, by degrees (pace is very important as a plateau can only emerge slowly) and using a considerable dose of humour at the students' expense:

T: And I think, you know, the hardest thing, the biggest complication, is the conservative evangelical Christian background cause I think so often, you know, of course I have my own theological beliefs, but they're so grounded in whatever it is their pastor said...

Lee: Right.

T: ...and we actually have students who – and I didn't realize this, I was talking to another professor – there are churches in our area that have classes for kids, for students before they go to college...

Lee: Oh wow! [+]

T: ...that are basically called something like 'how to go to college and not, not lose your, your values...'

Lee: Oh wow. [+]

T: ...or whatever.

Lee: Wow. [+]

T: And so it really is meant to be a boot camp to help them prevent the liberal mindset from infecting them...

Lee: [**whispers loudly**] Wow. [++]

T: ...when they come onto a college campus.

Lee: That's amazing. [+]

T: It really is, and that's a reality. [...] So, I mean we're talking about a very, very literal interpretation of certain choice pieces of the Bible [**laughs**] [++]

Lee: Right! [**laughs**] [++]

T: And uh I mean it is just so challenging. **So when you're working with a student like that, you know, to ask them to move forward and to change the way they're thinking is really asking them to completely rock everything about who they are and how they've built their lives. And that's a big thing to ask.** [-]

Lee: [**affirming**] Yes it is. [-]

T: Um, and so again, I mean how far...

Lee: [**cuts in**] And what do we offer them?

T: Exactly.

Here, T's students are once again recuperated from the SJTE outside (hopeless cases, lost causes) but through a decoding of (white, Christian, conservative) blameworthiness for being racist and homophobic. These are momentarily produced as scaffolding ordinary life; in other words, the idea that a racist and homophobic way of life is significant for its very sustainability *emerges and stands*. Finally standing down from my power-centrism, I go with the flow: "what do we offer them" that could possibly substitute for the live-giving comfort of their ordinary? Surely not the rupture of the change we require in our TCs... The prolonged intervention, the sustainable deterritorialization of the SJTE threshold: the most egregious ordinary life is something to be considered. T's work with their students becomes *possible* and SJTE even though whatever its 'outcomes' might be could wildly differ from what can happen elsewhere.

In our encounter, the local asserts its power over the transcendent, and sustainably so. The last excerpt in the thread (below) elapsed toward the very end of the conversation, and demonstrates this sustainability. Thus far, as we have seen, the supple segmentation of good students | (the very) bad(dest) students (we can possibly imagine, let alone hope to change) had been variably de/coding. But things began to rigidify when we entered some heavily segmented SJTE territory: a cultural immersion assignment where most students bring their moms along, which T encourages (otherwise they would lie and do it anyway, T says, because these TCs are even frightened of going into a Hispanic grocery store). I attempt to produce *the sameness and/as the undeniable badness* of T's and my own students:

Lee: Just for the sake of fun, or I suppose, or our own little story-sharing, when we do – I used to TA [stammer] I was at McGill for my Master's and I TA'd a SJTE class where we did a cultural immersion experience and first of all, the white kids in the class had so much trouble imagining a place where they would be uncomfortable!

T: Mm hmm. [**flat**][+]

Lee: Isn't that just a fascinating...discrepancy? \*[**push**]\*

T: It really is. [**still flat**][+]

Lee: So we had a whole other pedagogical angle around that which was 'ok, let's think about why you don't feel uncomfortable anywhere.'

T: Right. [+]

Lee: And like [**laughs**] for everyday, like, liberal white Canadians I mean, going to a quote-unquote 'ethnic' grocery store and buying stuff...

T: Mm hmm. [+]

Lee: ...there, and that's part of your routine, is like a badge of pride.

T: Right. [**laughs**] [-]

Lee: It's like almost weird. [**chuckles**] It's just like...

T: Yeah. [-]

Lee: ...a little bit exoticizing that that is part of your...

T: It is. [-]

Lee: ... 'how cool you are' identity. So I just think that this activity which probably is quite similar...

T: Mm hmm.

Lee: ...um [exhales] just, and the people in Canada who do this work are looking at the same body of scholarship as you are.

T: Yes, yes.

Lee: You know? Which is so, which is, if anything, one of the things I'm learning – well, many things – but one of the things I'm learning from my interview, this conversation with you is the...wrinkles of looking for the same outcome, for a similar kind of goal...

T: [quiet] Mm hmm.

Lee: ...when what we have, what we do must be so very different.

T: Yes, and I mean, it has to be. Well and, when you look at good teaching in general – cause I always go back, I was a classroom teacher – you know, the whole point is that we differentiate the instruction based on the students that

we're teaching.

Lee: Right.

T: And that no two classes will ever be the same, learn the same, need the same thing, and we as teachers hopefully will have the knowledge, the reflective abilities to be able to design a curriculum for a particular group of students...

Lee: [knowing] Right.

T: ...and to alter what we do. I think that that's really such an important piece is that, you know, I wouldn't teach this class the same way as if I was teaching in Boston or New York. It'd be very different because of my expectation of where the starting point would be, would be different.

Lee: [quiet] Right. Right.

T: **But in [specifies region of the state] [chuckles, L laughs] in the Bible Belt in the mid-west, you know...**

Lee: [wry, smiley] Yeah.

T: **...I have to change, I just have to think differently, so [trails off]**

Push as I might, I can only barely produce – let alone sustain – derision toward my own white students (who live in an incredibly multicultural Canadian city). They *will not become* stabilized, even as I forcefully stage white liberal Canada's penchant for the exoticizing consumption of the Other, but fail to produce my students as the also-bad other end of the spectrum from T's. T decodes with differentiated instruction – again the primacy of the local and contextual over the floating, categorically bad – before offering something in balance as their students and their geography (the Bible Belt of the mid-west) become bad one last time, but only partially and provisionally through the use of humour and even affection for a place.

This is a drawn-out deterritorializing intervention, whereby SJTE is produced as local and contextual without recourse to the stable clamping down of the impostor, the not-SJTE.

### **Race and deterritorialization II.**

*This is a packed room and every inch of floor space is taken up by sitters or standers.*



*From its title, this session promises to involve sharing stories of TC resistance. One of the facilitators opens by disclaiming that we are not going to be making fun of our students. Rather, this is a space to voice feelings of frustration at their resistance. They begin with a video of themselves reciting verbatim statements from their own students' in-class participation, met with laughter and other knowing sounds from the audience. One facilitator states that this session is not about answers but about working through the discomfort that these statements produce.*

*We are going to do a group activity. Four large pieces of paper are hung around the room and bear the words race, sexuality, socioeconomic status and language. Each one is divided in half by a long line. Using sticky notes, we will add students' resisting statements regarding any of these four issues on one half, and any of our responses that have been successful on the other. Afterwards we will convene around the paper of our choice to discuss.*

*The room bubbles over with busy noises, voices and activity as people furiously scribble their social justice one-liners and pass these to the roving facilitators for public display. Half of each post-it is covered, but not the response side. Before we separate, the facilitators note that they, too, are stepping out of their comfort zones to facilitate the four break-outs. The lone white facilitator, E, takes race. I gravitate there, too.*

*We are a large group, mostly people of colour. E starts by inviting us to indicate whether we have heard similar things from our students while they read out each resisting statement. Taking down the first little post-it, they scan and pause. "I just want to ask the group – if there is a racial slur, do you want me to read it out loud as it's written, or say the 'n-word'?" There is just one racial slur implied: the grandfather of them all. A few Black participants begin speaking at once, with one of them getting through: "we're all adults here. We can hear it." There is nodding, and so E reads: "I like Black people. I just don't like n\*\*\*\*s." A Black woman behind me doesn't hear properly, or maybe thinks she heard wrong. The white woman beside me chimes in, overtop of a soft-spoken Black woman who was trying to fill her in as well, and says the whole thing again: loudly, under the auspices of inclusion, with the collective permission of Black people to say this terrible thing to a Black person, in a social justice gathering.*

*A brief pause.*

*Suddenly nothing has happened. E reads another post-it. "Does racism exist anymore? Why are we talking about this?" We all laugh together at this old chestnut. After a few familiar statements, E reads out the only example I could muster: "why is there no Caucasian*

*Entertainment Television awards?” The group meets this criticism of the BET awards with puzzlement. “Well that’s unique!” says one. I want to tell them I’m Canadian, but don’t.*

*We lurch through another of E’s jaundiced n-word recitations, but better this time. A white woman beside me states matter-of-factly that bigots are not sentient. Then a classic: “I have a Black friend or boyfriend, etc. How can I be racist?” A woman of colour jumps in: “I’m starting to wonder what ‘friend’ means to these people,” she says with a snort. Mm hmm, we say. Someone else comes in with an observation about how personal these statements are, how they are not about facts. They cannot really be factually disputed. They are about feelings.*

*The recitations over, E asks us who we think said all of these things in class. I jump in, surprising myself: “white people!” As E continues, I free-write about my visceral leap into the fray; I’m a white person – I feel the familiar urge to name whiteness as a kind of progressive public service, because sometimes people of colour, even here, will not say bad things about white people categorically. E vocalizes exactly what I’m scribbling. As a white person doing SJTE, E can get away with things people of colour cannot. So E uses their privilege in this way, like I did. I want to talk. I don’t.*

*A white woman points out that the (very few) responses on the other half of the paper – the ‘successful rejoinders’ – all appeal to reason. “But that isn’t working for me,” she sighs. The n-word-repeating woman beside me offers a strategy outside of reason. “I tell them that I am personally offended, that it offends me when they say things like that. And because they like me, it affects them.” A Black woman follows up: “my students wouldn’t even say those things to me. I don’t even get to be offended.” Banking on their affinity just won’t work. “You’re right,” responds the white woman, with calm realization. “They feel entitled to say that to me.”*

*More bad stories. We continue to struggle with feelings. E asks if giving our students data to counteract their racist statements can help, but the group is skeptical. A young man of colour suggests that the duty of teachers is to bring about cognitive change in their students’ thinking: this is a matter for cognition, he says. On the heels of his comment, E offers one of their own strategies, an oldie but goodie, which is a strange mix of cognitive and affective: “we do cultural insider/outsider in my class – do you?” Much nodding. E’s evaluations, they claim, revealed the success of this approach. Students said it was key to their learning. This passes us by, when good evaluations have been objects of suspicion in most other sessions.*

*We are out of time in our small group. As I slowly make my way back to my seat amidst*

*the shuffling crowd of SJTE practitioners, I realize that I am not uncomfortable in the slightest. I am not worried about white people saying white people things; this is going to be ok. After the concluding statement, the applause is sustained, enthusiastic. As everyone begins to collect their belongings and leave, I am elated. I feel like I have fifty new friends. People like me.*

Threshold: in this session, where people are more or less strangers to each other, where (white) students' resistance is the promised topic, where Black people outnumber white people two to one, a white person reads the n-word out loud to the group and another white person says it directly to a Black person's face. Nothing happens. It happens again, but the space is open and the barometre falls more quickly the second time around. Permission given by a few Black participants is the becoming-okay, becoming-seamless of the n-word issued from a white body. The segmentation of the word – its material effect, its semantic content, its history of injury, reclamation and not-for-you-ness – is loosened up. This may have something to do with the loosening of representation and its one-to-one correspondence. E was not, after all, *saying* the n-word (which might still be a disaster) but *reading* someone else's written representation of something overcoded awful (that is why it was on that half of the paper to begin with) that someone else may or may not have said (an example of something, not a report).

The white-woman-repeater picks it up and passes it on. The resonance among binary segments of representation (spoken | written), race (Black | not-Black) and right to say a word (have it | lack it) is loosened *but not enough for things to fall apart*. This gentle molecularization produces the n-word's un-becoming as word: deterritorialized into sound and the movement of a (white) mouth forming the syllables one at a time.

Deterritorialization. With the n-word's becoming-seamless, unbecoming-n-word and all the other smaller decodings that bring this about, this small group on race becomes a place of becoming. When a white woman's statement of pedagogical authority fades at a Black woman's

challenge, this reminder of white privilege – “*my* students wouldn't even say that to me in the first place” – produces no ratcheting up of intensity, no I'm-not-racist or I'm-a-good-white-person performance of indignation to recover from a catastrophically public calling-out. The group can bear ambivalence about whether cognition or affect is the root of racism; elsewhere the value of empathy for marginal suffering versus that of cognitively reckoning with one's white privilege is a paradigmatic rupture. But not here, where SJTE is deterritorialized. Even E's recitation of good course evaluations can stand; their white students' positive feedback can stand as evidence of their becoming less-racist (I return to evaluations at length in the next chapter). The de-coding of a classic fire-branded signifier produced no rupture, no crisis and a whole host of small beginnings: new ways of thinking and doing SJTE together, here and now.

### **Conclusion: Intervention and Threshold as Mutually-Producing**

In offering and discussing my examples, I am not trying to make a claim regarding the political, radical, anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-homophobia or otherwise social in/justice-related implications of any action or reaction. I am in no way suggesting that a room full of highly educated SJTE practitioners *should* laugh at a marginalized young person's reading choices, that (hetero)sexuality *should not* be included in a positionality statement (or that such statements *should not* be made), that white people *should* say the n-word (or expect impunity when they do), or that the potentially racist or homophobic beliefs of white, evangelical, Christian and conservative TCs *should not* be a source of particular concern for SJTE practitioners. There is no normative dimension to my analysis in so far as the *content* of these interventions is concerned. Form is another story, however. We have no way of knowing, in advance, what any intervention can do or how any threshold can emerge in other places and at other times, including the ones in my examples. Throughout, I have been making the case for *not*

*knowing what these things are actually doing in practice, in the moment of their emergence,* regardless of whether we hold ourselves to be quite certain of where they fall on some sort of oppressive – anti-oppressive spectrum, before they even unfold. In the remainder of the conclusion and in Chapter Seven to follow, I begin to flesh out ‘not knowing’ as a practice with deeply political and ethical implications.

First, a methodological note: in discussing my examples – selected for the affective intensity attending their emergence in my fieldwork and conversations and *not* for their semantic content<sup>48</sup> – I proceeded from the assumption that language does *matter*. However, I use ‘matter’ in the sense of the material, or, how words and their accumulated, over-coded meanings are viscerally affecting (see MacLure, 2013). Attending to how language is *used* (or not) – and not just what it *means* – was one of my key tactics. I maintain that my intention was to prioritize affect (intensity) and de-prioritize – but not exclude – language (semantics), and while I believe that my ‘findings’ bear witness to the possibility of confronting a familiar object with strange new tools, there is no doubt that language remained a powerful site of significance. This is something that I will continue to methodologically explore in subsequent projects.

In my examples of territorializing, re-territorializing and deterritorializing interventions, the material and discursive entities I loosely grouped together under ‘sexuality’ and ‘race’ were foils for stimulus, or, the emergent difference in response to which the SJTE-assemblage becomes. As we saw, this also included the emergent difference of sexuality and race ‘themselves’ in that what they could do or produce was sometimes counter-intuitive and sometimes not clearly ‘about’ what we have come to think they are at all ‘about.’ Freed from any totalizing use of language, what ‘sexuality’ and ‘race’ can do, produce and become – and/as what

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<sup>48</sup> For what it is worth, organizing the chapter into a ‘sexuality section’ and a ‘race section’ was an eleventh-hour editing decision that I made fully twelve months after I had written a full draft of this chapter.

the stimulated SJTE-assemblage can do, produce and become – is truly astonishing, begging the question of what is *actually* taking place in some of the most cherished and viscerally felt SJTE stories of badness (and goodness) widely circulating in the field.

In staging and discussing each example, I endeavoured to make it clear that we can learn something about an assemblage from what happens at its thresholds. The *degree* to which a stimulus threatens the stability of the assemblage is apparent from what sort of intervention actualizes. Did something produce a ‘smack-down’ (re-territorialization) or a gentle suffocation (territorialization)? Or did SJTE become deterritorialized, tolerating what we might consider to be a priori breaches in form and/or content? Interestingly, my examples throw into sensate, intensive relief the degree to which *particular body-subjects* can become reliable SJTE thresholds, whether they are *actual* (present, affecting and affected in a space) or *virtual* (e.g., V’s queer and trans youth of colour, Z’s solitary Black teacher candidate, T’s quintessentially ‘bad’ white, Christian, conservative students, etc.).

In the three deterritorializing interventions, we saw SJTE become other to itself: exceed the field’s narratives of its difference from other kinds of teacher education. Given that language use has been and continues to be a primary means of making SJTE different (as I have argued throughout), it is significant that language use proved to be far more supple than I could have anticipated. In many respects, the loosening of language use meant the loosening of what a (particular) body could do, as above. This loosening of SJTE’s thresholds unsurprisingly opened up an array of unforeseen and unforeseeable possibilities for speech, movement and (literal) silence. What ‘should’ have stopped thought or produced rupture did not, instead making space for becomings ostensibly unrelated to the ‘content’ of the stimulus or intervention or threshold. That deterritorialization unfolds at all is a sign that SJTE’s actual, enacted thresholds are flexible

regardless of what the field might say about itself and how rigidly, or for how long and loudly it has been saying the same (clear, coherent) things. In a way, even my territorialization and re-territorialization examples expressed SJTE's flexibility, not because the new was produced, but because such a diverse array of thresholds emerged.

This diversity might confirm that SJTE's thresholds are themselves *produced* and not pre-existent at all. Circling back to the chapter's beginning, I argued that a goal of SJTE is to foster teachers who can intervene in wrong things the right way. I suggested that the SJTE intervention is situated in the middle of a prevention-reaction-recuperation temporal series. In the middle, the teacher's intervention produces the past as failure (preventative responsibility failed to pre-empt the bad thing) and the future as the inversion of the bad past (recuperative responsibility works to ensure that the bad thing won't recur). My sketch of this intervention contained a critique of how preparing TCs to 'do something' about oppression, injustice, etc. in their classrooms seems to necessitate a stopping, stabilizing and pinning-down of these bad things *and the subjects we take to be particularly harmed by their various manifestations* (e.g., racism and people of colour, homophobia and queer people, etc.). When one of these predictable and predicted 'bad events' occurs, the ideal teacher is supposed to spring into action. The risk of this rigidity is that teachers will not trust their gut and local contextual conditions that may be forcefully acting on them; an affective (but only barely cognitive) emergency may go unheeded just because it doesn't 'look like' what we have prepared them to expect.

Whereas this rigidity is dubious for its reliance on (over-coded) *content* to the exclusion of (emergent) form, the intervention that I have been tracking in this chapter is primarily *formal*. However, I want to complicate both the way SJTE habitually characterizes the teacher's intervention *and* the ways in which I staged intervention throughout as variably territorialization,

detritorialization or re-territorialization, arguing that *thresholds do not pre-exist intervention*. Rather, threshold and intervention co-occur. In order to look and feel for intervention as what actualizes in the present, we must reject a linear temporality whereby histories of prior coded meaning determine what can happen in the present. It cannot be the case that ‘this particular thing’ happens *and then* intervention reliably and systematically takes place.

In the reactive SJTE intervention and in the examples I have shared, however, I concede that there was a sense of something prior to intervention in linear time. In the ‘quintessential’ SJTE intervention, racism rears up *and then* the teacher does something, which results in culturally relevant/responsive engagement with students: evidence of SJTE success (but not of ‘social justice,’ which is the field’s recurring problem). The same sort of linear temporality can be traced in the presentation of my own threshold moments. In the sexuality examples, P omits (hetero)sexuality from their positioning statement *and then* is produced as homophobic, Q declares themselves a fantastic anti-homophobia educator *and then* is produced as queer; V utters high-risk anal sex *and then* the room shuts down; K declares their good course evaluations *and then* M reacts by coming out *and then* K ‘comes out’ too. In the race examples, Z refuses to narrate their SJTE practice *and then* is produced as outside of SJTE; *Chicken Soup* becomes SJTE-worthy *and then* the laughter erupts; empathy for cancer patients becomes SJTE-outcome *and then* cancer becomes funny; T’s (white, conservative, Evangelical, Republican) students are produced as categorically bad *and then* the category loosens up; E reads the n-word *and then* ‘nothing’ happens. How can this seemingly two-step, linear process be reconciled with my theoretical framework of emergent and not transcendental ontology? ‘And then’ could be an effect of writing – which in its conventional narrative form privileges linearity – but I believe there is more going on here than meets the eye.



In the chapter introduction, I characterized intervention as a threshold *management* strategy. However, I contend that intervention is actually a threshold *production* strategy. This alteration shifts ‘and then’ from a relation of *pre*-existence (the threshold was there all along to be found, like the ‘reactive’ teacher’s tripwire) to *co*-existence such that both ‘and’ and ‘then’ are intervention, not only ‘then.’ *Reactively* intervening is therefore not the only way to think about how things could be helped to change. Regardless of their *narrative* linearity, I argue that my examples stage intervention as *productive* not reactive. Intervention does not manage an *existing* threshold, but produces *emergent* thresholds. Intervention is not ‘tripped’ by nearness to a threshold and thresholds are not there to be breached with determinate time-space or other coordinates. Thresholds are not only intensive; intensity is productive of thresholds.

What this means is that SJTE has no essence or totality but is rather produced by the continual ebb and flow of becoming. It will always exceed the terminology used to fix it in place and draw its boundaries (produce its impostors). This means that the ordinary (Stewart, 2007), where affect touches down on us fleetingly yet heavily, is not only a site where our being caught up in the assemblage *becomes apparent*. Rather, ordinary life and the assemblage are *reciprocally affecting*. Ordinary life affects assemblage becoming at its larger, composite scale. This also means that *SJTE can be whatever its ordinary produces such that ordinary life can change the rules*. The question becomes not ‘what is *not* SJTE’ but how can SJTE become and remain open to its outside (which could be its own local and non-standard emergence)? How do we keep the door as open as possible, or keep the plateau as un/stable as it needs to be?

Finally, the intervention I discover at work in the everyday becoming of the SJTE-assemblage defies many commonsensical notions of what ‘intervention’ looks or feels like, and what a ‘good SJTE intervention’ looks or feels like. My examples suggest that a ‘good SJTE

intervention' might not look like the vanquishing of an oppression that we recognize based on its a priori character, but instead might be going with the flow, being swept along and otherwise allowing ordinary life to continue with its promise of sustainable-because-incremental change (plateau). Such a practice seeks to *produce* thresholds by channeling (speeding up) and conjugating (slowing down) affect: staying away from absolute rupture *and* repressive suffocation while still trying to do something (provisionally, incrementally, experimentally) about injustice.

This is intensity as a becoming-threshold instead of intensity as the sign of a threshold nearby, already existing to be found or tripped over. Perhaps we should not lament something that went 'un-intervened' upon – within reason<sup>49</sup> – but note that a plateau must have been somehow achieved, making everyday life possible and sustainable. When we ask 'what is produced' instead of 'what is' we must reckon with the actual being anything but accidental. What happens might be what people can do at the time, and do well-enough to keep on going. In the next chapter, I explore the degree to which practitioners may already be mobilizing such a recognition in their practice with TCs, however implicitly.

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<sup>49</sup> This kind of qualification is necessary given the real dangers of injustice, but also friendly to the sometimes indiscriminate invocation of the tragic queer youth whose life ends through some act of violence after vicious harassment and ostracism at school. Although this image's deployment is frequently criticized (see Airon, 2014; Talburt & Rasmussen, 2010), it is sometimes hard not to invoke this and other extremes of school-based suffering. The problem is that extremes frequently stand in for everything – and, moreover, anything – else. They stop thought altogether as the baddest badnesses of all, that can and must determine how we allocate time, resources and energy in relation to social difference.

## CHAPTER SEVEN – Plateau: Resistance and the Craft of SJTE

One of my goals in the previous chapter was to offer some everyday illustrations of the SJTE-assemblage as a dynamic system, feeling its way along between the two poles of stasis and chaos, experimenting and becoming in order to hold together. Throughout, I emphasized form over content, or, how there is no one action or utterance that can or will bring the house down, so to speak. As I suggested in the conclusion, this is because thresholds are not already there. Rather, interventions and assemblage thresholds are co-occurring and mutually produced/producing. Affect (intensity, registered corporeally) surges until a critical mass of bodies is caught up in one way or another, which affects what the assemblage can do and, therefore, what SJTE (always provisionally) *is*.

One of the things the SJTE-assemblage can do is continue producing a sense of belonging and, I would argue, legitimacy for disparate practitioners all over North America. In producing this sustaining sense, as I have shown, SJTE proves flexible enough to withstand things that *resemble* violations of the social justice norms we teach TCs to enact in their future classrooms and communities. Critically, however, the *resemblance* of these violations relies on the present being the same as the past; they resemble a priori ideas of what makes everything fall apart. While we can know that an assemblage responds to intensity, we cannot know in advance when or what or who will intensify or what will unfold. My key contention is that this *actual* flexibility of SJTE in the unfolding present – even though it may ruffle what SJTE says about itself – is an implicit contribution of the field to ‘social justice,’ or a less-harming life amidst difference.

In this chapter, I investigate how this capacity for flexibility is enacted as a kind of practice or SJTE *craft*. I draw on examples from my practitioner conversations where this affective craft emerged to produce ‘SJTE going well’ and ‘SJTE going badly’ (in relation to

classroom practice with TCs). Regardless of whether participants *explicitly or intentionally* apply a ‘chaosmos barometre’ while teaching, we collectively produced the in-process effectiveness of SJTE pedagogy – a sense that whatever needs to be happening is happening – *not* as achieving an outcome (e.g., social justice), but as enabling TCs to remain in each other’s midst even as things become intensive. In other words, I found that creating a *plateau* is already an implicit goal of SJTE practitioners.

Thinking with the assemblage requires a reconsideration of (usually white, heterosexual, middle class, Anglo, Christian, etc.) TC resistance in SJTE courses. Whereas resistance is a staple concern of the SJTE literature (e.g., Lowenstein, 2009; McFalls & Cobb-Roberts, 2001; Schick, 2000; St. Denis & Schick, 2003, etc.), my work in this chapter suggests that the *actual* (in the Deleuzian sense of the emerging present) as opposed to the *a priori* (stated) ‘goal’ of SJTE practitioners is *not* to banish or pre-empt resistance altogether. Although a whole class of willing, open-minded and entirely ‘won over’ TCs would seem to be an ideal scenario or even a goal of selective admissions for urban and other similar teacher education programs (see Haberman, 1991), resistance instead emerged as a *requirement* of doing this work. Resistance, in practice, is not always what we might think or always an entirely bad thing. Once again, the Deleuzo-Guattarian question remains: what does resistance *do*? In what follows, I illustrate how student resistance took shape in my practitioner conversations. I use resistance to explore the SJTE capacity to ‘go with the flow’ in the midst of rigidly coded expectations for right speech, right action and right response. I argue that this flexibility is already active and animating SJTE craft (or classroom practice), *whether explicitly or no*, and I claim both capacity and craft as a dual reservoir of practical, micro(political) wisdom that ought to be explicitly nurtured in TCs.

## A Note on Method

Throughout my dissertation I have referenced poststructuralist critiques of humanist qualitative inquiry, particularly of its reliance on representation as means and end of the research process. A privileging of representation is difficult if not impossible to circumvent altogether, especially when one's output is textual. However, the methods emerging from poststructuralist critique have been developed in order to try and move beyond the assumption that what a participant says directly corresponds to their experience, or that accessing this experience through language is the (only) goal of research. Rather, this is held to be impossible; instead, post-qualitative researchers look for other ways of analyzing what happens before, during and after (St. Pierre, 1997b) our research encounters.

The post-qualitative difference is perhaps less apparent here than in the previous chapter given my focus on what seem conspicuously like traditional interviews. Here I *do* connect participants' semantic accounts of their practice with the exercise of the assemblage capacity I am tracking. However, I maintain that my use of transcript dialogue does not equal simplistic representation. I am not claiming that participants or their TCs do what they say they do, for instance, or that this doing is my data. Rather, when re-reading my transcripts for this chapter, I looked for moments that opened up a scale of outcome other than 'narrowing the demographic divides' or making TCs *definitively, verifiably* more socially/culturally/linguistically aware or competent. As I discussed in Chapter Five, 'changing teachers' in this way has been a major goal of the field against which success and failure are held to be measurable. That more nebulous yardsticks are tolerable and in play – however implicitly – suggests the enacted flexibility in SJTE of 'justice-doing' and by extension, justice itself.

Although I previously worked with instances from across my practitioner conversations

and conference fieldwork, here I draw exclusively on the conversations. In another departure, I look at exchanges around particular topics that I semi-prepared in advance. Recalling my methodology chapter, in conversations I staged threshold moments where we would play with the boundaries between, for example, ‘good’ and ‘bad’ SJTE, or what SJTE *feels like* in practice when it is ‘going well or badly.’ I also asked questions about the outcomes participants envisioned and the degree to which these satisfied their sense of a job well done *or* coalesced with the broader outcomes put forward by field leaders. In the ensuing intensive exchanges of words (questions, exploratory statements, interjections, explanations), sounds (um, uh, sighs, coughs, chuckles, giggles, laughs, rises and falls in tone, etc.) and silences (including conventional silence – absence of sound – but also all of the above, perhaps; see Mazzei, 2008), we would feel our way toward an articulation of SJTE and its practice that could *stand*, or, that could momentarily qualify or count enough as SJTE such that we could rest and move on.

Creating the conditions for such an exchange was not easy. My goal was to make space for experimentation or imagination: for seeing how we could play together in thought rather than soliciting what Mazzei (2004) has called ‘nonresponses’ or answers to questions I had not posed. These amounted to very verbose ‘silences.’ For example, when asked what things feel like *in the moment* of going well or badly, participants would often respond with canonical examples from the SJTE literature (e.g., Sleeter and Grant on multicultural education that is social reconstructionist, or Gay or Ladson-Billings on the problem of isolated SJTE courses with no cross-program social justice infusion). These very rich nonresponses located ‘going well or badly’ somewhere other than the present feeling-out in conversation with me. Another common nonresponse involved well-worn stories of success with TCs featuring a classic narrative arc (i.e., stage-setting, conflict, resolution, denouement and moral/lesson), TC ‘aha!’ moments, accolades

(‘you changed my life!’ or ‘I didn’t think a white woman could teach me about race!’) and heartfelt in-class confessions of privilege (‘I have realized that I’m homophobic’).

Each variety of nonresponse – citation and recitation – demonstrates the SJTE’s general recourse to language for/as its effectiveness. I had to work hard to nudge practitioners away from citing field leaders and reciting well-honed SJTE stories. This increased the intensity, as I would interject, rephrase or redirect with a firmness that is otherwise rare in collegial conversation. There were often minor struggles for control. Although my required degree of effort varied among participants, that I often had to forcefully steer things away from citation and recitation is a finding in itself. Once the path was cleared, or once the required allegiances to the literature and/or the ideal-type teaching moment had been paid, many practitioners shared with me *what the SJTE craft feels like*, or what it feels like to work toward a dynamic plateau at once consistent-enough *and* in-motion enough to produce the new in whatever locally possible form. Recalling the back-and-forth quality of my deterritorialization examples in the previous chapter, the exchanges featured here happen to be the most stilted (stuttered, spoken-over, laughter-producing and perforated with um/uh/mmm/Right) moments from my conversations.

### **What is Resistance to/for SJTE?**

My argument in this chapter hinges on TC resistance as a central concern of SJTE. I will offer two examples attesting to its *commonsensical* prominence: a publication and a conference session. In the introduction to their 2012 edited book *Cultivating social justice teachers: How teacher educators have helped students overcome cognitive bottlenecks and learn critical social justice concepts*, SJTE veteran, one-time NAME president and consistent field commentator Paul C. Gorski and his co-editors (2012) assume a second-person tense in their address to the reader. The effect of this stylistic choice is to tell their reader – to tell *you* – about your own experience

of TC resistance to SJTE. The title and conceptual framework emphasize the cognitive in a conciliatory re-framing of resistance as learning-related and not always political. However, the ‘cognitive bottleneck’ is unfailingly, excessively affective. Here is their example:

Making matters all the more challenging, every semester some of your students resist outright any conversation suggesting that [for example] lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer people experience bias or oppression, at all, or that their experiences belong in a conversation about ‘diversity,’ ‘multiculturalism,’ or ‘social justice.’ Others argue on misinformed scientific or even religious grounds that heterosexuality *is* normal, so it only makes sense that anything other than heterosexuality would be deemed abnormal, if not deviant. And every week you fight the temptation to interpret these responses as hostile or judgmental. You have turned to colleagues in search of pedagogical strategies only to learn that the challenge you face is a common one; you turn to the research literature and find, in fact, that the challenge is well-documented there [refs. removed]. (pp. 1-2)

Although the last sentence clearly lends a universal quality to these experiences, the ‘you’ address does the heavy-lifting. In other words, overt TC resistance is so common that it can be said of people whom the editors have never met, in cities and towns they have never visited. It is *quintessential*, as is the desire to find ways of preventing its occurrence.

When I was at NAME doing my fieldwork, the only session I attended that was full to bursting with no floor space or standing room – apart from those headlined by Christine Sleeter - was titled “Shit My Students Say.” The title’s irreverence enacts a familiarity similar to Gorski’s second person address, as if to bring an informal friendship sensibility to the professional conference context. ‘We are buds,’ it seems to say, ‘because we face the same things day in and day out.’ Getting away with profanity was a sign of the presenters’ success in making that



connection, particularly in an organization with a significant degree of formalized ritual and generational hierarchy (see my site descriptions in the methodology chapter). The program description and session design suggested that this would be a place to acquire strategies for ‘shutting the shit down’ effectively and reliably. This was not, however, a simple assumption. I had the following exchange with one participant who was also there:

Lee: But I was wondering, given the title and the content of the session...

I: Mm hmm!

Lee: ...what, like...I’m interested in hearing whether you can offer an opinion for why it was so packed.

I: Oh that’s an interesting...question. So I would suspect it’s because we have a lot of workshops about the problem and not a lot of workshops about the solution.

Lee: Mmm.

I: And the way that that [unclear] I think was framed as being about the solution, or about the idea of how you respond to the shit your students say. I think that the workshop itself didn’t necessarily get there, and so I heard a couple of people afterwards saying ‘I wanted us to get to the response, I thought they were going to tell us how to respond.’

Lee: Ohh.

I: Which is a naïve assumption, that you’re gonna to go to any workshop and [silly voice] they’re going to say ‘this is how you respond.’ [unclear addition as Lee cuts in:]

Lee: [loud, enthusiastic] That would be so great! [laughs]

I: [laughing voice] Yeah, like that would be a wonderful handout. But...

Lee: Yeah. [laughs]

I: But that would be my guess...

Lee: Right.

I: ...is that there were a lot of faculty teaching these concepts for the very first time, were very new to these ideas, hearing the same kinds of stories and not quite knowing what to say.

Lee: [softly] Right.

Here, the assumption that one could receive something akin to an instruction manual (or handout) on how to handle (white, etc.) TC resistance is hilarious and an opportunity for us to demonstrate our SJTE (non-impostor) credentials: that we are not as naïve as people teaching an SJTE course for the first time. We are seasoned. However, the desire for ‘the answer’ is something we are both keenly aware of and able to remark upon with indulgence and even humour. The Handout on handling student resistance is a focal point of SJTE desire *and* derision. The session’s outlandish title might have been a way to somehow radicalize the naïve desire for ‘the answer’ precisely because it is so commonly derided.

These examples are brief but they manage to convey the commonality and familiarity of TC resistance. It has the power to unite strangers and break the rules, like not assuming the other’s experience (Gorski) or observing professional norms in a field anxious about its legitimacy (Shit). I would add that resistance is over-determined by its presumed familiarity and universality such that the resisting TC’s utterances – that with which resistance is equated – are almost canonical: ‘I treat everyone the same,’ ‘I didn’t own slaves,’ ‘I don’t understand how two people of the same sex could have well-adjusted kids,’ ‘they should just get a job,’ etc. In this way, resistance is held to be an obstacle thrown up by TCs in their privilege or ignorance. What *Cultivating social justice teachers* and “Shit My Students Say” offer are ways to stop it in its tracks or better yet pre-empt it altogether. It is a bad thing that gets in the way of good work.

But if we ask the familiar Deleuzian question of what resistance *does*, we can see that in its semantic (i.e., the word itself) and narrative (i.e., our stories of or about it) forms resistance is a kind of glue that keeps the field and its members together. It is a story that strangers can recite together (content) and thereby produce their belonging in the field (form). My goal here is to empty resistance of everything except its being the thing that gets in the way, or the engine of

things gone wrong or badly. What is the relationship of Resistance (i.e., the familiar badness) to practitioners' feeling-out accounts of when things go well or go badly in their SJTE classes?

As I hope to show, resistance is both sides of the chaosmos coin: cosmos and chaos, both of which are death in their purest form. I begin with the cosmos end of the continuum and resistance as stasis. I then move all the way to the opposing chaos end of the spectrum and resistance as unrestricted, flowing movement or meaningless proliferation. Finally, I take up the middle: the plateau of dynamic resistance that does not stand still or proliferate too freely. I argue that *dynamic resistance is the actual, implicit goal of SJTE classroom practice regardless of what the field says about itself and its outcomes*. Following these sections on three kinds of resistance in practice, I turn to (university) education's seemingly straightforward means of ascertaining whether things went well or badly: student course evaluations, which I show to be anything but straightforward. I conclude by contending that the SJTE craft is the only thing generalizable across the field because it is local and of form not content. Outcomes – because they are content-based and acontextual – are impossible signs of 'true SJTE-ness.'

### **“I'd Like to ‘Bill Ayers’<sup>50</sup> Their Ass to Death!” – Static Resistance**

The following three exchanges express a sense of what cosmic resistance – stasis or suffocation – looks and feels like for SJTE practitioners, enacted in our conversations. In each one, I have highlighted evocative moments around which the conversation seems to revolve.

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<sup>50</sup> William (Bill) Ayers is a recently retired Distinguished Professor of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Ayers has come to symbolize the radical left in educational studies, due in equal part to his scholarship, his anti-capitalism and anti-neo-liberalism activism in education, and his visibility in American public life related to his anti-Vietnam War activities with the Weather Underground (which became newly relevant during the first Obama presidential campaign given Obama's acquaintance with Ayers). Although retired, Ayers is actively involved in left Chicago civic politics and the social justice education movement. He gives numerous invited addresses every year and, by chance, inhabited this role at every single conference where I carried out my field work. The quotation in the section title comes from the third example below.

A: I think of other ways that it breaks down, I mean there's so many ways it can break down. [chuckles, Lee chuckles once] Uh, it also can break down I think, um...when...um...uh...for whatever reasons, uh, students themselves find themselves at **a level of discomfort that's so unsettling for them that they...they withdraw.**

Lee: They check out.

A: Right?

Lee: Right.

A: And...you know, if there's, you know, there's always some students for whom that may be going on and then sometimes I can tell, sometimes I know, sometimes I don't. If a critical, **if it starts to be a critical mass in the classroom then you know cause all of a sudden it's just, it's, things sort of grind to a halt in a variety of...ways.** [trails off]

Lee: Right.

A: [loudly again] So it's, I, there has to be room for some, you know, students are going to check in and check out. That's just...human. And um, sometimes I, it's interesting, sometimes also I'll get an email or a student will follow-up, right? Which means they've checked out but they've also noticed and want to follow up. So I've learned that sometimes when I think students have fully checked out, they haven't. [tells a Taoist story about how you can never know for sure what is good]

Lee: Right, right.

A: So...so...I think my, the challenge for me is when I, I think the times I feel when it doesn't go well is when...when I'm surest it doesn't go well is when there's, I feel **a kind of silence.** People have disconnected, and uh...you know, they're not participating, they're not sort of taking up the question. **There's this sort of pull back in some way and there's enough of it that nobody, people aren't willing to step out again** and to, to kind of...

Lee: Right.

A: [unclear, underneath] creative thinking in some way.

Here, A and I produce – in their narrative and my copious affirmation – SJTE common sense: that a lack of conversation is SJTE breaking down or going badly. This is ‘things grinding

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<sup>51</sup> For the sake of clarity, I have numbered the excerpts in each section. A different letter denotes each participant (in this case ‘A’) to indicate that they are not the same person. In this chapter, there are scant instances of speaker repetition in that, by and large, all of the excerpts come from different conversations. Further, any repetition of a letter from the previous chapter is incidental and does not indicate that the speakers are the same.

to a halt' and is attributable to student discomfort. There is something kind of quantitative here, almost like a physics principle. *Individual* students can check in and check out, and this is fine or even necessary to the learning process; checking in and out might even be something to encourage or make time for (e.g., take a break). However, a *critical mass* of uncomfortable students checking out at once tips the scales into cosmos, expressed as various forms of silence. At this point, students pull back and participation becomes impenetrable. Speaking up in class now carries a different set of risks and rewards, because starting up the conversation anew is a much bigger and more laborious proposition than jumping into a conversation already in motion. In cosmos, the instructor must use force to get things going, a force verging on the 'inauthentic' as if they are 'falsely' propelling students as opposed to having a 'real' effect on them that produces students' 'organic' participation.

## 2

B: [...] And sometimes I think...if – especially as we move along in the class when more and more students, kind of, the light bulbs are coming on and they're more willing to call out in each other you know biases or assumptions they hear – **that some students who have a lot of biases [dry chuckle] it can [Lee giggle] start to feel more [stammer] you know, less comfortable because 'when I say this somebody's going to, you know...'**

Lee: [at the same time, knowingly] Right. [quiet] Right.

B: **'...respond to it. Therefore I'm just not gonna say it.'** And, and that's difficult. Because part of me thinks 'you know what, we should learn to censor ourselves a little bit! Maybe that's [laughing] something that you shouldn't say!' [Lee laughs] But also at the same time you don't want them to feel like they're not being a valuable, a valued member of the community and if, again, if they aren't willing to talk then...they may not hear something that they need to hear. So [trails off]

This practitioner is insisting that the *absence* of resistance – coded as racist, homophobic, etc. utterances – is bad, or a sign of things *not* going well. This is difficult for us to hold and barely speakable – there is such a profusion and range of laughter – given how resistance in SJTE is habitually bad and must be immediately rebuffed and snuffed out (re-territorialization).

The difficulty of allowing ‘resistance is good because it is not silence/stasis’ to *stand* is semantically apparent and affectively palpable. Things become at first mildly and then very funny. Although ‘resistance is good’ does stand, it is excessive – we are, perhaps, at a threshold – and requires laughter and ironic humour at the students’ expense. When B laughs, I mirror, and together we produce ‘bad utterances’ as preferable to cosmos (various forms of suffocation).

### 3

C: [...] You know, we could just go on and do a complete hardcore rugged feminist interpretation of [novel] [Lee giggles]. And what happens? It immediately alienates everyone. [pause] You know?

Lee: [comes in at pause] What does that look like, when they’re alienated?

C: **They just get turned off!** [pause] They just get turned off. I, I mean I’ve tried it before with students in a microcosm, and you start talking about it and **all of a sudden they’re just like [flat affect] ‘ok, this is that radical’** – and they get that idea that this is just that radical idea, they hear the word feminism, they automatically stop what they’re thinking and **they automatically turn this, flip this switch** that they’re being um, that it’s almost dogmatism from the other side.

Lee: And what does it feel like to you when they flip the switch?

C: Um, this is the wrong word for it but it makes me sad. Because they’re limiting their understanding of the world based on preconceived notions about semantics. You know, they hear certain words and they think certain things, and you need to move beyond the obvious.

Lee: But in the, and in the moment of teaching, when that happens, what is happening, when they flip the switch?

C: [quickly] **I pull back!** I, I admittedly pull back, because I do not want –

Lee: [cuts in] What’s happening with them though, like, before you pull back? What are they doing that makes you pull back?

C: I, you know, honestly it probably comes down to body language again. You see that, um, **uncomfortable restlessness in a seat, where they start to cross their arms and kinda do the [mimes eye-rolling and boredom, exhales]. You know, tapping things, that ‘ok, well this’ll be over soon’ kind of thing.** So that’s why I believe in taking it in small steps, you know? Would I like to in a classroom go in there one day and just get all Bill Ayers on ‘em? [with relish, silly] Absolutely! [Lee

giggles] I'd like to Bill Ayers their ass to death! [Lee laughs out loud at length] But it's gonna...I, I think there's a difference between the big message and the small message. And a series of acceptable small messages is more effective than a hammer drop of a big message.<sup>52</sup>

Here, we see how an over-coded 'trigger' word – whatever its content – can provoke shutdown: cosmos (via re-territorialization). C's articulation of 'pulling back' is perhaps misleading. 'Pulling back' connotes 'doing less' in order to get things going again. Recalling the first example above, however, getting things going requires a degree of 'inauthentic' *force* on the part of the instructor. This is a pushing, not a pulling back; in other words, 'pulling back' is also effort and not the cessation of effort. It requires considerable effort to let things take their course as students explore forms of sideways or aleatory (Berlant, 2011) movement, expelling small amounts of discomfort and nervous energy through tapping, eye-rolling and arm-folding. Rather than this being altogether 'bad' because it connotes familiar forms of resistance, we might think about these small movements as enabling students to stave off total shutdown.

C's increasingly vaudevillian desire to 'Bill Ayers students' ass to death' – which I freely and fully laugh at – makes palpable the considerable gap between C's politics, which are radical like those Bill Ayers *symbolizes*, and the *actual* context for the exercise of C's SJTE craft. Correct (explicit, particular, bona fide) SJTE language simply poses too great a cosmotic risk, despite the fact that C's practice risks not looking or sounding SJTE-enough. And yet, things 'go badly' if this presumed-indispensable language comes into play. Against a priori odds, in our conversation a pedagogy using 'the wrong language' can *stand* as SJTE-enough.

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In all three examples of cosmotic resistance, we encounter students and instructors who

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<sup>52</sup> This exchange demonstrates some of the forcefulness that was required on my part in order to push participants into a less recitative and less interpretive framing of things gone well or badly. In response to my question about feeling, this practitioner's reply of 'it makes me sad' was on the order of emotion, whereas their next comment on body language and Bill Ayers gets closer to affect.

are ‘pulling back.’ When students pull back, this can be unhelpful even if ‘not pulling back’ in that moment might mean taking up class time in oppressive ways (e.g., by saying what they are thinking). TC pull-back stands as ‘worse’ than saying ‘the wrong thing.’ When instructors pull back, this can be helpful even if SJTE goes unsymbolized. Instructor pull-back is an effort to propel things back in the direction of chaos but only as far as the middle: plateau.

It is important to note that static, cosmotoc resistance (TC pull-back) could easily be thought of as passive. After all, in these examples an absence of speech was produced as bad and speaking is how the sovereign humanist subject often seeks to make its presence felt. Affectively, however, the binary segments silence | speech and passive | active are loosened up in the actualization of SJTE practice. Cosmotoc resistance is not only an absence of speech but the presence of different kinds of non-verbal sound and purposeless movement. ‘Being quiet’ is intensively productive; it is a forceful *absence* of speech (see Mazzei, 2004, 2008). One could be in the midst of cosmotoc resistance and stand in awe of the power of bodies in resonance and of what they can do without conferring and agreeing. They can produce shutdown *or* a collective movement produced from the aggregated sounds and gestures of individual body-subjects.

While it is tempting to ascribe an a priori identity (semantic or aesthetic) to static resistance based on the above examples or any number of others drawn from one’s own practice, we cannot identify, for the future, what cosmotoc resistance *is* such that its prevention can be foreseen. Once again, we do not know what a body can do. Pulling-back must be thought without content and instead as modulation by degrees of motion or rest. What pull-back looks or feels like and how or whether we become aware of its unfolding depends on particular local conditions. This is why I troubled the third practitioner’s use of ‘pulling back’ to describe what they might need to do in the aftermath of the f-bomb (in this case, feminism) being dropped like



a silence cloth. Their pulling back might be *pushing*: some sort of affective jumpstart or electric shock. Although a push away from cosmos may be required, however, cosmos is integral to the exercise of the SJTE craft because it holds in balance chaos.

### “The Non-Fred Phelps” – Flowing Resistance

In this section, I go to the other end of chaosmos in order to look at chaos, or flowing resistance. We might think of flowing resistance as an unbalance that requires *more* student pull-back or *less* instructor pull-back, to recall my characterizations above. Chaos is too much movement: a flow that is too strong or too fast. Critically, there is no ‘objective’ movement apart from the affective experience of movement, which I have come to characterize in my teaching as *seamlessness*. This flow-like sensation is formally different from something like *awkwardness*: a stuttering, chopped-up flow. Counter-intuitively, perhaps, an absence of awkwardness where things are flowing along unstopped does not transparently equal ‘things are going well.’ SJTE might *feel awkward* when it is going well. Seamlessness is not content (good things are happening) but form (things are happening quickly). In addition to being wary of stasis and cosmic resistance, then, my practitioner conversations also produced the vicissitudes of movement; ease or comfort or too much conversation can be SJTE going badly.

#### 1

D: I just think empathy’s a dangerous sort of dead end. Um...

Lee: It’s like [sarcastic] ‘once I find that you’re like me, so what?’

D: Well yeah but, but the whole ‘like’ it’s that, it makes me think of that ‘oh, well we’re all sort of human and’ – and ‘that’s fine, we are all human and we can find commonalities,’ and ‘**isn’t diversity great but we’re the different colours of the rainbow**’ and **I’m going into extremes now but seriously you know what I mean...**

Lee: [quiet, certain] Yeah.

D: **...that sort of discourse about diversity and that’s all well and good but if we, to me that’s what empathy feels like.**

I don't...

Lee: [cuts in] **And that's not social justice teacher ed.**

D: **Yeah it's not, it's um, it just...it's a different concept.** It's fine, you know some of the readings we do probably do build empathy and we hope that people find commonalities – a good example is in our course we had some, we had the chief diversity officer and the equal opportunity officer come in and do [Lee makes a skeptical facial expression, D remarks on it:] – yeah. [chuckle, then Lee chuckles] This is something that was done before me and I continued it for a while. They would come in and do this workshop on stereotypes.

Lee: [wonderment] Wow.

D: And the whole outcome, the whole goal was basically to build empathy, and to learn about how to respond to stereotypes, [higher pitched voice] which is, you know, a good skill. [Lee giggles] Um, but communication strategies, and I remember one of the responses was simply to say 'ouch!' and that was the name of the workshop! You can look it up – Ouch exclamation point. And so my students were shown this video, and people were spouting off sort of sexist and, you know, [smiley voice, Lee shaking with silent mirth] rehearsed homophobic, sexist, different types of um comments and then it would flash to someone else who would say [funny voice] 'ouch!' [Lee bursts out laughing] And my students were like 'this is great!' [enthusiastic, vaudeville delivery] **You know, they felt great after this! Like they were laughing, and they felt good, and you know later I thought 'they shouldn't [chuckle voice] feel good!** [Lee laughs] This shouldn't be easy, we need to problematize this approach!' And to me that's part of the whole empathy game, is it helps people sort of stop and say 'this is a worthwhile sort of goal for us to have' and somehow that's magical, [stammer] it's going to have this magical effect or this magical translation into a good teacher. 'Building empathy is the end-all to understanding diversity!' And I just, I just don't wanna go there. I want there to be sort of a critical interrogation of self, you know, 'how do I name myself? Who am I? What privileges do I have?' That's really hard for our students to grapple with. It's hard for me at times. And if they don't, if we don't start there, then I just, I don't think that leads directly to empathy. I think it leads directly to a lot of other stuff. So...I...

Lee: So you want a discomfort. You want a struggle.

D: Discomfort, struggle, dissonance, all of those. Yeah.

Here, D and I feel our way to a sustainable appraisal of empathy as a tool or outcome of SJTE. I put it to D as a statement ('And that's not...') and they cautiously accept: empathy is not enough to be the outcome of this work. By way of illustration – because the binary SJTE | 'not SJTE' is yet unstable – D tells a story of their institution's diversity officer bringing in to D's

SJTE course a popular commercial workshop model that aims to build empathy. We will, however, have none of it. From the mention of the diversity officer *existing* let alone coming in, we are off to the races together, producing empathy-based approaches as ridiculous and wildly outside of SJTE. We connect (as a flow) in greater heights of hilarity as the thresholds keeping emerging: stereotypes, diversity, ‘ouch!’ as a meaningful response to oppression.

Also produced as wildly outside is TCs having a wonderful time: laughing and freely participating in the process of building the archive of bad utterances. The seamlessness of students feeling good and becoming elated at this very easy solution – ouch! – seemingly authorized by their teacher education, by the university itself. ‘It is so much fun to combat oppression!’ This is the danger of empathy, thrown into sensate relief by runaway mirth. The ‘too much’ movement – the chaos – is students’ buoyant, demonstrable ebullience at confronting the big badnesses in small saccharine doses. It is as if they have at last gleaned the tools to do the good work from a class that is never practical enough for their liking. Recalling my Chapter Five discussion of the SJTE lived tension between practicality as a duty to TCs and practicality as a betrayal of political principles, we are veering dangerously close to resolving the tension.

What is tremendously interesting, to me, is that I disagree. In the reflective, narrative and belated moment of writing up this example, I am surprised by my own participation in producing empathy as useless in relation to social justice. Empathy is not just a transparent ‘sameness’ but can be a highly intensive experience of feeling one’s way into otherness; the latter use of empathy could be part of the pedagogy I begin to sketch out in the next, concluding chapter. Regardless, I was caught up with D in the production of empathy-as-impostor. We stabilized the SJTE-assemblage and codified the SJTE impostor such that empathy could not move or become or do otherwise. Empathy suffocated (could only be bad). However, a degree of cosmic

suffocation – actualized as the production of static resistance – would bring us back to SJTE.

‘Good SJTE’ is here produced as a much more awkward encounter with oppression (which is definitely *not* what D related in their anecdote).

## 2

E: [...] There are usually people within any group that by the time they get to this course – because the course comes about halfway through the program – by the time they get to this course I am pretty sure that [student X]’s gonna handle it. You know...

Lee: Right.

E: ...who...

Lee: Right.

E: ...in there are your social justice mover shaker type people...

Lee: Right.

E: ...and so all you have to do is kind of glance and generally they will handle it. Um...the only exception is if...**enough people in the group** – and it really doesn’t take that many – but like three or four are agreeing, about a really wonky view, um...

Lee: A critical mass. [one mirthless giggle]

E: Yeah. **It doesn’t really take very many loud people to make that happen, that I pretty much have to intervene, you know, at that point.**

Lee: Right. It’s like the, I suppose the...scale’s tipped too far such that one [student X] can’t...

E: There’s no going back. **Yeah, she, she’ll try but it’s gonna take several of us to group up together and bring it back.**

Lee: Bring it back to the... [pause]

E: Rational [starts laughing, Lee chuckles] point of view! [both chuckle] The non-Fred Phelps. [chuckles]

Lee: [smiley] Right, right. Oh goodness. [E giggles]

Recall that a ‘critical mass’ was also referenced by A, the SJTE practitioner in the first static resistance example above. There the scales tipped toward stasis in a mass shutdown that brought things to a stand still. Here, however, the scales tip in the opposite direction: toward the

chaotic, or too much movement. Whereas more familiar or ‘classically’ resistant TC behaviour is not *actually* – in the Deleuzian sense – something to be pre-empted altogether in SJTE, here E and I produce the possibility that there can be ‘too much.’ Classically resistant TC behaviour *can* throw things off balance as long as this is due to form and not only because it is semantically or aesthetically (in content) outside of SJTE.

Perhaps ‘too much’ here is (locally, particularly) too loud: there are too many people being too loud, too strident or too insistent. The ‘too much’ could also be expressed in the semantic content of students’ talk, or in gesture, body language or movement (or its lack). In E and my conversation, we can sense a snowball gathering mass as it rolls downhill such that it will take more than one body to slow it down. It will take more than the most SJTE-savvy student or even the instructor themselves wading into the fray. Whatever happens to modulate the ‘too much,’ it will not be because the instructor has called a break to meet with the ‘non-resisting’ students and plan something like a counter-offensive in the time remaining. No sequence of events must be decided upon by individual sovereign subjects with foresight and contingency planning. Cosmotic resistance – an inertia or a chopping-up of the chaotic flow – will rather unfold in the moment as the exercise of assemblage capacity and SJTE craft.

### 3

F: [...] the way I would generalize is when I get caught in trying to...when I feel like my, **when I get caught in some way trying to change or convince students of something...**

Lee: Right.

F: ...it’s broken down.

Lee: Oh ok.

F: I have to constantly be saying ‘I’m here, I’m offering you some frameworks, these are some ways to think about things and I’m gonna keep asking questions to keep inviting you into this. You have to figure out what you’re gonna do with it and how far you’re gonna take it. And what use you’re gonna make of it. And there’s some things I want you to understand whether you in the

end agree with them or not.' Um, but if **I get too attached to wanting something to happen or wanting, or getting a little bit caught and wanting them to think a certain way, right?**

Lee: Yeah.

F: Then it breaks down. Right?

Lee: Right.

F: Because it's no longer inquiry, um...

Lee: Ok.

F: ...in some way. It becomes...uh, yeah. Then I'm just trying to in a sense, I'm getting caught in my own more nuanced version of a kind of banking education. Right?

Lee: Interesting.

F: Yeah I'm trying, I'm realizing I'm caught in trying to...you know, which, it's not to say I don't have goals, I don't want them to learn certain concepts, you know, ways of thinking and understanding certain things. **But that's different than getting caught in realizing I'm trying to make something happen in that moment.**

Lee: Right.

Here, the 'too much' of chaotic resistance becomes the practitioner's own sense that they may push too hard or too long or too steadily (without remission). However this takes shape or what it looks like, it feels like too much force has somehow been expended. Here, E and I confound the student as *the* stimulus that produces a lurch or slide or other movement toward chaos or cosmos and away from the plateau. Here, it is the SJTE practitioner themselves whose excess tips the scales into chaotic or flowing resistance through an absence of dosage. Chaotic resistance becomes less the 'property' of a single student actor (or group) and more a state of affairs in a class or other SJTE teaching situation. E and I produce resistance as something ever farther away from its habitual form in the literature and toward the instructor's resistance to *sustainable* change and becoming: the laborious kind that can only happen at the plateau. The plateau, as we shall see in the next section, cannot be forced.

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When one thinks of chaos, it is tempting to imagine the term applying to scenes where SJTE is completely out of control, with students either leaving at will or falling all over themselves and each other to say increasingly offensive things that culminate in racial and other slurs being hurled across the room. To recall my theoretical framework, however, chaos for Deleuze is cancerous proliferation, or proliferation without meaning: more or too much for its own sake, building on itself to no end, unsustainably. Without this consistency or the balance given by corresponding degrees of cosmic, static resistance, even the proliferation of SJTE's *own* cherished concepts or urgent concerns in the talk or written work of TCs could be said to lack meaning or destroy the plateau. This is one reason why my examples here don't 'feel' chaotic in a more vernacular sense. In many cases, they feel like things are indeed going well due to an absence of awkwardness: D and E's students merrily participate, and F is forging ahead, empowered with social justice purpose. It is crucial, however, not to be taken in by seamlessness because it is not the plateau where actual change takes place. As flow and a free-fall, total chaotic resistance is a formal, affective 'impostor' in SJTE even as we cannot determine an 'SJTE impostor' on the basis of content, as I will argue in the conclusion to this chapter.

### **“You Ruined My Life!” – Dynamic Resistance**

Having explored the two poles of cosmos and chaos, I now take up the middle ground: the plateau, or what can happen if cosmic, static resistance is balanced by the intensity which, unchecked, leads all the way to chaotic, flowing resistance. When conventionally taken as metaphor, the plateau is a space of pause or respite where 'nothing is happening.' For example, the mountain-climber expends considerable effort to attain a lofty plateau. Coming back down also requires great effort, albeit of a different kind. Time spent on the plateau – for this is a literal plateau one can be 'on' – is free of effort. It is a time to recoup and not expend energy. In other

words, the plateau is not where the action is, although it is the goal. The goal is not active.

With chaosmos, the plateau *is* a goal of some kind but it is also the centre of the action, if we take ‘action’ to mean the possibility of change or the emergence of the new. Here, it is not the stimulus of ascending or descending rock faces that provokes physical, character or other development (as change). Rather, it is the consistency of the plateau itself that allows the new to slowly, laboriously congeal (differenciation) and emerge (differentiation). I argue that SJTE practitioners’ craft involves a *chaosmotic mindfulness* because their sense of things going well or badly expresses the sense that steep, rocky and singular (or one-time, Event-like) adversity and massive energy expenditure are not the way. The chaosmotic plateau is the productive middle where a subtle interplay of chaos and stasis produce what I term *dynamic resistance* and which emerges in the following examples: when things are going well on a scale nowhere near the familiar SJTE outcome of changing the world (through language use in teacher education).

## 1

Lee: ... like when it’s going really well for you, and so social justice teacher ed is going well, what does that look like and feel like?

G: Um, it looks like the students are engaged.

Lee: What does that look like?

G: It looks like they’re not silent or with a very flat and apathetic affect. Um, and that’s what I struggle against where I am. And **they’re actually willing to take risks and ask their questions and speak.** Um, and it looks like they’re **humbly wrestling with things that challenge them rather than kind of doing that refusal to know or willful ignorance or just rejection,** um, that, you know, it’s hard and you don’t even, **whether or not you agree or disagree is not really relevant.** Are you willing to grapple with some, a different pair of glasses? Will you put these on and see what you can see? You can take them off when we’re done. Rather than ‘I, you know, I disagree, I refuse, this is...’

Lee: Right.

G: Or that just total silence. ‘I’ll never take a risk, I won’t show myself.’ Um, because if they’re not, if they’re not speaking up in the one class they have that grapples with these issues they’re not going to speak up in the faculty lounge.

Lee: Mmm.



G: Right? I mean, I don't believe they will.

Lee: No, I'm, I doubt they will either.

G: So that's what it looks like, that's all. **It's not like we're all in agreement but the willingness to grapple and the engagement and the coming alive kind of.** Um, it also looks like 'you're ruining my life, you ruined my life.'

Lee: Right.

G: In a good way, right? Like...

Lee: Yeah.

G: ...you wanna see somebody going like [high-pitched, enthusiastic voice] 'you ruined my life! [Lee laughs and claps] I can, I see different now! I can't not see it!' And I'm always like 'yay!'

Lee: [laughs] My students are like 'I can't go on the bus anymore without looking around me,' you know?

G: Yeah, yeah.

Here, SJTE going well is a 'humble wrestling.' When a student is humbly wrestling they are speaking and asking questions as opposed to categorically rejecting or silently refusing to 'show themselves' in the classroom. Critically, the *outcome* of the humble wrestling is not the measure of going-well-ness. Neither is agreement with the instructor or the course content or one's SJTE-disposed fellow students. The prize is the process: wrestling, grappling, and the willingness to wear the glasses (not what happens after the glasses come off). Dynamic resistance in SJTE also grows the capacity to 'speak up in the faculty lounge' later on. Being able to wrestle or grapple with uncomfortable concepts – as opposed to mastering them outright – might mean that other kinds of discomfort could become more possible for TCs to wade into.

The final ecstatic production of SJTE going well – 'you ruined my life!' says the TC – doesn't *seem* like a plateau; it is excessive, hyperbolic and impossible to believe. G is hesitant; they need me on-board, producing with them 'good SJTE' as dampening the ease or seamlessness of students' lives, slowly but surely. The plateau is shaky; we are not there yet and this cannot quite yet 'be' SJTE in the moment. Forcibly (pitch, enthusiasm), D qualifies ('in a good way') and seeks my affirmation ('right?'), prompting my laughter at the prospect that

someone would be thankful for having their life ruined by SJTE. Life-ruining SJTE becomes good and SJTE is now a little more supple. *This* is something that I mirror and affirm: a plateau that can *stand* (provisionally) as an SJTE-enough ‘outcome.’

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Lee: [...] Like when things are going well, and please feel free to answer as a group or individually. Like, how does that feel? Or what does it look like or...

H: For me I think when things are going well, there's...like I don't know. There's movement, um, I feel like, movement in terms of um...ideas, right? So, so, **students are challenging, but not challenging in terms of um...they're not trying to like reify um, you know, oppressive - right? - discourses. They're challenging in terms of trying to extend even what it is that I'm trying to get across or their fellow students are trying to get across.** They might say 'well what about, you know, this and how would you, you know, situate this experience' or something like that. I mean for me that's probably a big indicator of when things are going well.

[some discussion of how this is contextually different at the two institutions where they co-teach]

H: [...] they're um...they're questioning, they're questioning norms, and they're questioning their own programs and like they're questioning other classes, **they're questioning my class,** you know. So they're really like, um...so yeah it's **not an acceptance.** It's not an acceptance of this idea or um, you know, or constructing something as oppressive, **it's just not like 'oh yes, you're right',** you know, it's like...

Lee: It's not compliance.

H: It's not compliance, no.

Lee: So the difference, so compliance would not be, so compliance...is compliance as bad as resistance?

H: As bad as resistance?

Lee: Or in terms of your experience of it.

H: I think [chuckles], I mean I think those [chuckles]...

Lee: Which one do you fear more?

H: Right. So those words are...

I: Well depending on your space.

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<sup>53</sup> This interview was conducted with two team-teaching SJTE practitioners, labeled as H and I in keeping with the sequential lettering I have used thus far in the chapter.

H: Depending on compliant with what, right? [chuckles]

Lee: In general, feel free to speak in general. My interest is your experience more so than, yeah...

H: In general I would say compliance is worse because, um, compliance to me is almost a **giving up**, right?

Lee + I: Mmm.

H: And **resistance is showing an engagement**, even if you're engaged enough to say 'no I don't agree with you and I'm going to bring in this data and this information to push back on you and I don't,' I love that, as opposed to just 'yes, you were right about this, and I have this **surface level understanding** of what you were trying to say but **that's what you want me to write** so I'm going to write this, and you can say this or whatever.' I think, so I would say...

Lee: A dynamic resistance is better than a non-dynamic compliance?

I: Yeah well...

H: Sure. [laughs]

I: ...or, it's better. It's better...

Lee: And I'm using 'better' tongue-in-cheek.

I: ...one movement, like...

H: Yeah. [laughs]

I: It's better because, of course when the resistance springs its head...

H: Mm hmm.

I: ...it can be ugly as hell and very painful and difficult as a critical educator.

Lee + H: Mm hmm.

This exchange is remarkable for the ways in which all three of us hash out the chaosmos spectrum. Here, things going badly is not outright politicized rejection and things going well is not 'yes, you are right' compliance. Dynamic resistance<sup>54</sup> is TCs exercising a collective capacity to push against everything *including SJTE practitioners ourselves*. In other words, *questioning*

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<sup>54</sup> It seems important to note that this exchange is the first time this terminology emerged to describe what I was becoming interested in. I did not plan to use it in advance and did not use it again in subsequent interviews once I had 'found' it, or once it had found me.

*and challenging SJTE itself is SJTE going well.* The significance of local context emerges (first in the omitted descriptions of their two institutions) in I's response that resistance or compliance as 'better' depends on where and when you are teaching. When I ask them to disconnect from their two sites and generalize, however, dynamic resistance is produced as the best thing that can happen, in a broad sense. The performance of conceptual (and therefore semantic) mastery becomes SJTE going badly: such inauthentic 'surface level understanding' is the absence of dynamic resistance. Despite the value here accruing to dynamic resistance, however, in the end there is hesitation and seemingly out-of-place laughter when I try to stabilize its goodness. I hedge – 'tongue-in-cheek' – and we all affirm the familiar, necessary badness of that which we have produced as good, together. After all, the good thing still bears the bad name.

### 3

Lee: [...] when [SJTE is] going well online, what does that feel like?

J: Um...I think there are patterns that I've noticed. Um when people are particularly struggling with a concept or an idea **they will disappear for a few days and then come back.** And I know that they've been having to wrestle with something. And generally that's really important that **they go silent for a little while and then come back.** The way I have the online program structured they can't disappear longer than that [J giggle, Lee chuckles]. Because each week has its own life. But um, but I think that's a pattern that I've seen. If people are just glibly floating along on top of the waves and just going 'yeah, yeah, this is great, oh I loved that article' whatever, whatever, I'm not convinced, you know that, that something's really going on deep inside. But, but if somebody, **if we have a particularly difficult interchange and then they disappear for a little bit and then come back** um that's when I know that there's some real change, or beginning of it...happening, if that relates to [trails off]

Lee: So you uh...

J: [cuts in quick] Kind of like with your own children. [chuckle]

Lee: [chuckles] Perhaps I will learn that someday.

J: [chuckling] Yeah, you will.

Lee: Um [chuckle] um, so I almost feel like for it to be going

well it isn't, it is not the floating along the surface...

J: Uh uh.

Lee: It's not the all signs pointing go, it's not... [stammer]  
I feel like you're almost feeling for an event.

J: [inhales] I am. [stammer] I'm a real Piagetian in that I believe there's a huge difference between assimilation and accommodation. And to really accommodate takes struggle, takes disequilibrium, **it takes um feeling uncomfortable with an idea before you can actually embrace it.** And I'm not saying that all teachers have bad dispositions on everything but all of us have an area...

Lee: Yeah.

J: ...that's difficult. All of us do. And you're just not even aware of it until something comes up and someone's very honest with you and says 'when you said that in that meeting, I felt...whatever.' And, you know. That's how you learn. So... [trails off]

Much of this practitioner's SJTE teaching happens in online courses, which lends even more weight to the question of context in thinking about SJTE gone well or badly. Remarkably, here when things are going well there is a period of silence or a temporary absence of participation on behalf of a particular student. This is not unlike the necessary checking in and out that A referred to in my first static resistance example. It is, however, more time- and space-bounded. Given the nature of the online interface, students can take themselves away for a period of time, or leave the 'room' whereas staying in the room amidst discomfort involves the exercise of the capacity I am tracking. 'SJTE going well' is *not* participants remaining and seemingly weathering the affective intensity of the online interface. This is, however, unstable: J hedges, staging their response as irrelevant or insufficient ('if that relates to...' then trailing off). Instead of stabilizing, I begin a rephrase ('So you uh...') but J erupts with an energetic and off-topic appeal to something we could presumably have in common: children. This time I am drawn in, but inconsistently: uttering an ambivalent 'perhaps I will...' and yet participating in the production of a sense of sameness or intimacy through mild laughter. Almost on an even keel

now, J invokes classic Piaget and finally stabilizes disengagement as good. SJTE going well is haltingly yet finally produced as TCs who must disengage; in fact, we wouldn't trust it to be 'going well' unless they took themselves away from the scene.

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These three examples of dynamic resistance are doubly chaotomic. First, the 'good SJTE' produced in each one is not cosmos *or* chaos: it is rather a grinding interplay of both characteristic of the plateau. Whereas my chaos and cosmos examples came about from questions of SJTE going badly, SJTE going well emerged as practitioners and TCs engaged in a process with no fully stabilized goodness or badness. Dynamic resistance is sometimes awkward, sometimes seamless; it might not 'look like' a well-run classroom or an orderly discussion. These practitioners implicitly recognize the plateau as the site of productive change despite the fact that what happens there could be characterized (in language) as insufficient or impostor.

My examples are also chaotomic because the production of dynamic resistance as 'good SJTE' in the midst of my practitioner conversations is a grinding back and forth: affectively *and* semantically negotiated, and only emerging through struggle. In the first example, G must work hard to bring me on board with 'you ruined my life' as 'good SJTE.' However, G must *destabilize* this strange 'SJTE outcome' that cannot quite stand; it is only with some degree of silliness that we can claim 'life ruining' as our SJTE craft, as true as this is may seem sometimes. In the second example, we all three produce 'SJTE going well' as TCs openly challenging SJTE itself, including its most cherished concepts and constructs. However, we struggle to let this stand and can only do so if we invoke the awfulness that can attend TC resistance (the familiar kind). In the third example, J must use the generic 'children' to affectively rope me into co-producing TC disengagement as 'SJTE going well.' It is unstable and yet it stands.

Like the deterritorializing intervention we saw in Chapter Six, and even in my conversations – let alone in the SJTE classroom – dynamic resistance is variably stable and unstable, which is how it produces sustainable and incremental change. It also emerges from particular, local conditions. This is one reason for its unruly emergence in my examples, in that these practitioners must work hard to extend the resonance of their own context to me: I must be caught up and affected for their localized practice – what they can do, where they are – to be produced as SJTE. It makes sense that dynamic resistance as the affective craft of SJTE would be hard to talk about; it is, after all, affective. Dynamic resistance will not stand still, its content generalizable. Rather, it must be hashed out, its content produced over and over again even as its form remains identifiable and sayable of the SJTE-assemblage as a (provisional) whole.

Having now fleshed out static, flowing and dynamic resistance, and given my contention that dynamic resistance is *the* means by which SJTE practitioners actually ascertain how things are going, in the next section I discuss a familiar institutional indicator of ‘whether things went well or badly’ in a university course: course evaluations completed by students, usually after a course is complete. Although course evaluations are positivist (or neo-positivist at best – see Lather, 2006) and therefore basically incompatible with my own theoretical and methodological approach to ‘data’ or even significance, they frequently came up in my practitioner conversations. Giving this strange profusion, I became interested in what course evaluations were *doing* in my encounters with participants. Course evaluations may tell us something, but they cannot tell us what *is* happening in the midst of practice. They provide an after-the-fact way for students to contribute their perspective, but – like the demographic divides and SJTE evidence proxies – are categorically unavailable to practitioners in the moment of teaching. However, ‘what course evaluations tell us’ might not be the most important thing about them.

## **Course Evaluations: Don't We Know if Things Went Well or Badly?<sup>55</sup>**

In this section, I use additional examples from my practitioner conversations to trouble any straightforward use of the course evaluation to say something about SJTE, including as an alternative to the capacity I have been tracking. Taking one's evaluations with a grain of salt is probably a widespread habit and in some cases even a mental health strategy. Teaching a course with a high probability of student discomfort carries risks and challenges that a more legibly relevant (recalling my previous discussion) or elective course (SJTE is often required) do not. This is particularly the case for SJTE practitioners who are people of colour, as Ladson-Billings (1996) observed many years ago and which has come to anchor SJTE's disciplinary common sense (see also Juárez, Smith, & Hayes, 2008). In short, there are many self-evident reasons why course evaluations in SJTE are not straightforward reflections of how things have gone. In my conversations, however, the way in which practitioners took up course evaluations – their own, others' and in general – is even less straightforward than is commonly understood.

In the above article, Ladson-Billings herself demonstrates the suspicion with which course evaluations were regarded by many of my participants. After reading an article on the racialized character of student participation, she began to second-guess her own successes:

In the past, I had not considered my students' silences to be acts of resistance or defiance (although I have witnessed silences used as powerful weapons of young children in inner city classrooms). Often, I interpreted them as the appropriate response to their lack of knowledge about particular subjects. My course gained in popularity over the years. Students from a variety of majors began enrolling in it. My course evaluations were always high. How could these silences mean resistance? [...] Student comments on

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<sup>55</sup> Although many university instructors have developed their own informal evaluation procedures in order to see how things are going at intervals throughout a course, in my discussion I confine myself to formal, final teaching evaluations because these are what came up in my conversations.



informal, narrative evaluations indicated that they enjoyed the course and felt they learned something. Was I missing something? (p. 80)

In recounting her own prior association of high numerical scores and positive narrative feedback with her SJTE practice having ‘gone well,’ Ladson-Billings worries that her good evaluations might actually indicate that something had gone badly *wrong*. What does it *do* for students to rate highly a course in which they have held back? What does it say about SJTE that it can be enjoyable, if students have not taken a key risk through active participation that could result in their experience becoming one of discomfort? In the first two examples below, I begin like Ladson-Billings to second-guess good or high course evaluations in SJTE.

### **Good evaluations *don't* mean good SJTE.**

[Lee relates an observation that, when conference presenters or questioners tell SJTE success stories, they are often 'cross-examined' by skeptical others and sometimes aggressively so. Lee then asks if the participant shares this observation.]

M: Yeah, I mean...I think that at a conference like [this one] or really anywhere you're dealing with social justice, there's a hesitancy to even say what you're doing is working because the first question is 'well how do you know?' You know...

Lee: Right.

M: ... 'what is the evidence on which you base that?' and obviously there will be some evidence, you know, hopefully you do have – but it's all anecdotal for the most part. 'Anecdotally speaking, you know, this comment was made, I noticed this in somebody's work, I saw this person a year later and this was the, you know, you know, these are conversations that I've had.' Um, but again that's all anecdotal. You know, that's a few students here or there. Um, **I don't think that, I don't think that your teacher evaluations can tell you whether or not you're doing your job well. I think in a class like I teach I should expect some bad ones. [chuckles]**

Lee: [chuckle voice] Right.

M: **Because obviously if you make students feel uncomfortable, they're not gonna want to give you a good evaluation.** Um, I learned very quickly not to take it too personally if I have one or two that feel like that. I do feel like it's a bad thing though if the majority of my class feels uncomfortable. Then I'm not doing my job well, because you have to feel ok in order to share the change and transform, and that kind of thing.

In responding to my provocation, M plays with the awkwardness of SJTE's outcome and evidence challenges when they emerge in the midst of a conference session. Asking for evidence is awkward because anecdotal evidence – which is not the same as Evidence – is all we have to the extent that it is an SJTE faux-pas to demand evidence of a colleague. M describes the intensity attending the demand in the moment of its eruption and afterwards. Here, the formal and standardized means by which students assess our courses is *not* evidence to be put forward as demonstrating 'SJTE success.' Rather, a mixture of good and bad course evaluations – *to a degree* (but not too much, recalling the 'critical mass' issue from previous sections) – is here felt to indicate that things have gone well, or, that enough students have been 'sufficiently uncomfortable' to *not* give a glowing evaluation of the course. This is chaotomic, in that the emergence of a plateau is intensely (if variably and so tolerably) uncomfortable. With humour, we stabilize the nonplussed student's course evaluation as an object of suspicion.

In the next example, N similarly expresses a chaotomic skepticism of good evaluations:

N: [...] my [P and T] committee was very frank with me in saying 'in spite of all this great stuff that makes up 95% of your folio the fact that you are a lecturer with a 90% teaching role and your evaluations are in the lower standard deviation, that's going to be part of the discussion at the central committee.' And so I was talking with my colleague about this and one of the things I said to her and I'm sure I've said it to more people than her is that – **it kind of goes back to your question about how do we decide if we've done this successfully. And I don't buy into the notion of simply giving students a checklist of how to teach those kids well.** Which is what they want, you know, when they come in and I ask 'what do you hope to get out of this class?' 80% of them say 'I wanna learn how to teach,' most of them say 'I wanna learn how to teach all students.' Or 'I wanna learn how to teach minority students well.' And **they're really hungry for the methods.**

Lee: Right.

N: And I could design that class. I mean I've got a textbook on my shelf that goes chapter by chapter. [mirthless chuckle, Lee chuckling along] African Americans, Latinos, you know...

Lee: Right.

N: ...I mean, so **I could literally say 'all right, chapter one,**

**let's learn all about who they are and what they need.'**

Lee: **Oh boy.**

N: **I think that would be a very well-received class.**

Lee: [wry voice] **You'd get great evaluations from that.**

N: **Exactly! Exactly.**

If N would only submit to 'relevance,' it seems, things would be easy and their scores would be higher. N and I work together to produce their SJTE 'bona fides' in the shadow of their lower scores; N's refusal to compromise their political integrity with a curriculum that we both agree (apparent in our collective irony) would be well-received by students and probably lead to higher evaluations becomes their SJTE-enough credentials. They will not descend to the level of how-to, tokenizing content on teaching particular minority groups that is transparently relevant to their TC evaluators. Even at the risk of eroding their job security, they will not comply with the tacit demands of students on the grounds that they will become an impostor. If the SJTE craft and its exercise of chaotomic mindfulness – expressive of the SJTE-assemblage's capacity for flexibility – gives SJTE its identifiability in the classroom, 'on the ground,' then a seamless because transparently (semantically) relevant course may have no play of cosmos and chaos. There would be no plateau, no dynamic resistance, no SJTE. In a quest for good course evaluations, then, it is conceivable that SJTE may deterritorialize into nothing.

**Good evaluations *do* mean good SJTE.**

When the possibility of good course evaluations in/as SJTE opened up in my conversations, things were predictably excessive. These next examples explore the sense that good evaluations *can* correspond with SJTE having gone well or with SJTE, at all. In the first, O is responding to the same provocation that sparked my exchange with M: that 'SJTE success' stories are met with a sometimes aggressive skepticism. Do they agree?

O: [right away] I don't. Um, I don't agree. And I didn't observe that at [the conference where we met] nor has that been something I've experienced in my interaction in the world. I –

Lee: [cuts in] You don't agree with that perception?

O: Yeah with your perception. Um, and I wonder if you noticed that because there was such a preponderance of folks who were new to this work, um at [the conference]? **I think that those of us that have been doing this work know that sometimes we get conflictual responses...**

Lee: [sighing] Yeah.

O: **...and those of us that have been doing this work have developed some techniques to, um, have more success in some of the interactions.** Of course we'll always have an evaluation who says '[they do] this too much' or '[they do] that too much' or what have you. But um, without, I hate to risk not sounding humble, [Lee chuckles] but this is something that when you do it for several years you develop a toolkit that enables you to become more effective in your interaction and in your work. And I know that I look for stories of success from other faculty members, I know that I have a network of colleagues with whom, we can talk about some of the challenges and the successes, but **I wouldn't expect somebody to say 'I'm teaching social justice teacher ed and it's really hard and I get terrible evaluations all the time.'** I'd be pretty surprised if somebody said that and I would think [smiley voice] **'I probably wouldn't necessarily hire you to do this work.'** Um...

[...] [Lee says that many practitioners who they observed sharing a frustration with lower evaluations were people of colour.]

O: [jumps in] Well as you say that I wonder then how **my white privilege affects my experience with the ways in which I am evaluated by students and also my attitudes about, um, others' evaluations.** And so, are some of the reasons that I encounter not much resistance because I'm white teaching a largely, overwhelmingly white student body? Whereas if I were a person of colour teaching either students of colour or a white student body I would encounter more resistance. [Refers me to a colleague's research and presentations on this topic.]

Here, O moves to quickly produce resonance among being a seasoned SJTE hand, becoming more 'effective' in one's teaching, and receiving good course evaluations. However, 'a few bad evaluations' are not held to reflect how SJTE went; they are, rather, inevitable. In other words, 'good SJTE' exceeds students for whom the course did not meet self-identified needs. In all of this, O and I affectively cooperate (sighs, chuckles, changes in tone). But a threshold emerges: O would not hire someone with too many bad evaluations because they do matter, even in SJTE. I

re-territorialize: people of colour disproportionately receive bad evaluations in our field. Momentarily produced as racist, O seamlessly and immediately performs a mea culpa, uncoupling 'good SJTE' and 'good evaluations.' O's high scores become O's whiteness and not the quality of their own SJTE practice. Course evaluations become simultaneously sound *and* fraudulent or even racist, a conflict which *stands*. Evaluations do not come up again.

The next two examples feature SJTE practitioners exclusively discussing their own excellent evaluations and not thinking out loud about evaluations in general. P begins by setting the local stage for a 'big reveal' of their own enviable scores:

P: [...] There is a belief on this campus outside of teacher education that **if your student evaluations are too high, you're not doing a good job.**

Lee: Ohh!

P: That you are trying to placate the crowd, you are making it too easy, you are giving so many chances that people are just, **they're getting a good grade so they're happy. That they're not being challenged.**

Lee: Right.

P: Um, so yeah. I do see that that could be it. Because it is a difficult thing and when you look at someone in the eye and you tell them, or suggest – not tell them – you suggest to them that what they believe might be wrong, **you do run that risk of alienating... – and using an economic term – your clientele.** You know, you run the risk of alienating that clientele, which I do think is a dangerous thing. However...um...I think if you look at it and you do it from the point of view, like I said, of taking baby steps, I think that **you can get to that point where people do come out of it feeling like they are educated about it and they haven't been forced to believe anything. Um, cause I will say, like my classes, my students don't get the highest grades out of anyone in my department. They don't.** I fight with people, I swear, [Lee giggle], I argue with people, I will tell people right to their face that they are wrong. And like, our teaching evaluation scores here, it goes from one to five. **I've had classes where it's a five before.**

Lee: [quiet astonishment] Wow!

P: **And I think my overall average since I've been here is like a 4.78 or something.**

Lee: Wow.

P: And students don't get good grades. And they don't always like me, and a lot of 'em think [smiley] that I am crass [Lee breathy chuckle] and unorganized and um...but never judgmental. [Discusses the importance of being seen as non-judgmental.] So um I do think that...if...if students like you too much I could see people that are hard-core social justice educators thinking that you're not doing a good job at it. Because **you're not challenging enough to make them uncomfortable and risking um...your P and T stuff**, really, you know, your promotion and tenure stuff related to teaching based on it. And I don't think that's true.

P begins by conjuring the suspicion of good course evaluations on their own campus. However, their own *perfect* scores stand (are produced) as SJTE-worthy. P labours to substantiate the difficulty, discomfort and conflict characteristic of their own classroom in way that produces the possibility of this exception; they have my support such that *their* course evaluations become a reliable way to know about SJTE success or failure despite being perfect. The 'difference' enabling this exceptionalism is an absence of indoctrination: if you don't push politically or 'judge' students for their views, your evaluations need not be compromised. Our exchange affirms that the struggle attending 'good SJTE' (at the plateau of dynamic resistance) can indeed be reflected in blue ribbon evaluations *as long as you somehow pull back*. P's explosion of verbosity is in some ways as compelling for its content as its quantity: in our conversation, P must put as much distance between their own practice and a calm, seamless, altogether happy and harmonious classroom as they possibly can. Such a classroom is *resolutely* an SJTE impostor even though good course evaluations can squeak by.

Next, Q also goes to great lengths to stage the SJTE-ness of their high scores:

Q: [...] the student evaluations which we do each semester, um, for this course are **very very high**.

Lee: [chirpy] Oh great!

Q: 98% of students over the years I've taught it...um respond to the question 'should all students take a multicultural education course' have responded in the affirmative.

Lee: [chirpy] That's remarkable.

Q: It is! And so um I, I get students later, sometimes in their graduate career, who have not had the course with me um who comment about...the way the course is being taught when someone else teaches it **and I'm led to believe at least from those, that anecdotal um...data that [pause] what's happening in our class is very much different.**

Lee: Mmm.

Q: Not – I don't wanna say better or worse – but it's certainly very much different in the ways that students perceive social justice issues. [Discusses the characteristics of their students' final assignments as a sign of their SJTE success.] but many of them will call me or write to me. I just got a card from a student that I had three years ago...

Lee: Hmm!

Q: ...who's now in a Master's program and – again this sometimes sounds so arrogant and I really don't mean it to [Lee laughs], I really see the [unclear], but **we routinely get...I routinely get cards or [stammer] notes from students, emails from students saying 'the course changed my life.'**

Lee: Oh wow.

Q: 'I am, I am now going to do something I never thought I was going to do.' In this case this is a woman who was going to be a pharmacist who changed her career path and is now going to be a counselor...

Lee: Wow.

Q: ...who wants to be a school counselor in an urban setting.

Lee: [delighted] That's fantastic!

Q: Yeah. And she says 'that never would've happened had I not taken your course.' Now again it's, [small stammer] **I wanna be clear this is not about me, this is about the way we've set the course up.**

Lee: Mmm, mmm.

Q: So it is... [small stammer] because, **I think, we teach from the theoretical perspective that we teach from, I think students find some efficacy in the course.**

Despite my consistent affirmation, remarkable here is the degree to which S *must* – because they do – contextualize their scores with the kind of anecdotal evidence so common in SJTE *but* frequently criticized in landmark reviews on the state of the field (see Cochran-Smith et al., 2004; Grant & Secada, 1990; Grant, 1994; Hollins & Guzman, 2005). This excessive

qualification is the instability of their very high scores and positive student comments in relation to SJTE having gone well. S's delivery of reported career and life changes among students is halting, hesitant. They sometimes stammer despite my full and sometimes excessive cooperation, which includes laughing and swift (re-territorializing?) dismissal of their apology for seeming arrogant. This is an intensive, fraught concern: that their excellent course evaluations and stellar anecdotal evidence *not* become their perfection or completion, or *that they not become SJTE in the flesh. SJTE must remain a chaosmotic work in progress or else become impostor*. The reason why things go well for this practitioner is not even because of their own practice: it is because of the quintessentially SJTE framework that underpins the course. Once again, course evaluations in SJTE are produced as able to say something *and* nothing at all about whether SJTE has gone well or badly.

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In all three examples, good course evaluations *cannot* stand on their own, or, if they seem to they are easily and quickly made excessive to the extent of becoming destabilized. Recalling Chapter Five where I outlined some of the intractable lived conflicts at the heart of SJTE, the good course evaluation is irreconcilable in a field where the bad course evaluation is credible. Good evaluations are reliable *and* they are not; they are indicative of the quality of someone's SJTE teaching *and* they are not. They can stand on their own because they are evidentiary *and* they cannot stand on their own because they are unstable and thus require further anecdotal or other support. High scores are desirable reflections of one's SJTE excellence *and* one's whiteness. In the examples where good evaluations were *not* good SJTE, however, *a degree of negative student feedback was good SJTE because discomfort emerged*. Across all of the examples and all of the conflicted relationships between 'good SJTE' and 'good evaluations' that



*stood*, produced and producing in the midst of a conversation, it becomes clear that SJTE practitioners *cannot* try to please their students with ease, practical relevance or other seamless conceits without losing their sense of what SJTE *is* or what is SJTE about their practice.

Overall, in my examples a discrepancy emerged between the (affective, chaomotic) means with which SJTE practitioners gauge how things are going and the (standardized, numerical) means with which ‘good teaching’ is frequently assessed in universities. Course evaluations do not determine whether SJTE *has* gone well or badly, or at least not in any straightforward way that supports their claims to positivistic validity. It remains the case that they cannot remotely get at whether SJTE *is* going well or badly in the unfolding present. The problem remains, however, that course evaluations are given considerable weight by university bureaucracies even though they are markedly precarious in SJTE. Their use in the evaluation of SJTE practitioners’ teaching may not only be effectively racist (Juárez & Hayes, 2010; Juárez et al., 2008) – inappropriate on the order of *content* – but also paradigmatically inappropriate on the order of *form*. One of my goals throughout this dissertation is to identify why SJTE’s unnamed strengths and contributions are so unnamed; although I do not wish to criticize SJTE, I fear that the field’s deeply historicized and thoroughly understandable insecurity may prevent field leaders and others from proclaiming SJTE’s difference from business as usual in academia. We must instantiate our own scale of good and bad, success and failure. There is something different about SJTE, and it is positive, productive, and immeasurable when context is removed. This is the SJTE craft, or the affective assessment and production of dynamic resistance.

### **Conclusion: Craft Not Outcome**

In the absence of ‘social justice’ and also course evaluations as outcomes that SJTE practitioners can use to gauge how things are going, resistance emerged as an implicit means of

assessing the goodness or badness of one's SJTE practice. This involves displacing the statistical logic espoused by many SJTE scholars and in evidence on both sides of the standardization debate as we saw in Chapter Five. In its place, practitioners exercise an affective craft that rewrites the familiar story of TC resistance. Resistance is so much more than the badness to be kept at bay; rather, it can be productive and dynamic.

As we have seen, dynamic resistance can be students openly challenging SJTE practitioners and concepts, disappearing from conversations or only grudgingly agreeing to try new ideas on for size. Although dynamic resistance postpones student 'buy-in' to concepts like privilege, white supremacy, same-sex rights and settler colonialism, among others, this postponement is integral. Without it, practitioners' capacity for moment-to-moment assessment of their practice – and, I argue below, their students – is greatly hampered. Pre-empting dynamic struggle at the plateau also removes the possibility of sustainable change: that which can actualize and stabilize, becoming the new. As such, degrees of resistance form an affective barometre with which SJTE practitioners develop an implicit sense of whether things are going well or badly. This barometre supplants the outcomes logic proclaimed in the field-defining literature with a more sensory appraisal of what will have been a 'good' class or even a 'good' semester. And what will have been good is a plateau of dynamic resistance.

As a highly processual 'outcome,' it is important to note that the dynamic resistance emerging in my practitioner conversations cannot be assessed like other kinds of outcomes requiring tests, grades, teacher or pupil test scores and their statistical analysis. This is because the plateau is irreducibly context-dependent. A focus on the local does not, however, mean that nothing can be extrapolated about SJTE practice or about the field itself. Part of the problem of field consolidation, however, is that breadth or scale conveys a field's seriousness and

professionalism; these are perennial concerns of SJTE in the current hostile climate, as I have argued in many places. Saying things about one's vast field as a whole means excluding things that cannot be demonstrated when context is removed. In as much as this is a critique of the standardization movement in education, I am not saying anything new. Critics proclaim that high-stakes test scores and large scale data sets do not tell us anything or enough about teaching and learning, particularly in the case of historically underserved students. Such appeals to the non-quantitative complexity of teaching and learning invoke context: what is lost when extrapolation happens. While I agree wholeheartedly, I want to suggest that thinking with affect theory, assemblage theory and Deleuzian micropolitics – which honour the wisdom of incremental and therefore ordinary-life-sustaining change – allows for *both* field-level extrapolation *and* contextual specificity: both/and not either/or.

Although we must never let go of the local – because the dynamic wrestling, grappling and labouring of dynamic resistance will emerge differently everywhere – I argue that there *is* a way to think about SJTE as an aggregated field of practitioners who exercise a particular craft. The work of SJTE, at bottom, is to push TCs to change how they encounter and work with different others, particularly if those others are from historically marginalized groups. This work is itself marginal in teacher education, regardless of the space or time accorded to SJTE in a particular program. This is because, whether infused or isolated, SJTE can seem like it has little to do with everyday teacher practice. This is often where traditional notions of resistance are anchored: in the idea that, if this stuff doesn't have anything to do with teaching kids to read, write and do math, why should we (TCs) have to submit ourselves to this uncomfortable process? If something necessarily uncomfortable is experienced as irrelevant to whatever degree, then a capacity to gauge and balance discomfort against relevance is key. What (bodily,

affective) discomfort feels like or how it manifests in one's course could be quite different from the experiences of other practitioners or those written up by field leaders.

Therefore, in my view there are two things that can be extrapolated about SJTE . I discussed the first in the previous chapter – the field's capacity to remain surprisingly intact when its thresholds are produced – and the second is SJTE practitioners' coinciding ability to craft the conditions for dynamic resistance, however implicitly or unintentionally. In contrast to these aspects of SJTE that *can* be extrapolated across the field, I argue that *we cannot extrapolate 'SJTE outcomes'* because these depend on the locally emergent conditions in which SJTE takes place. Each instantiation produces its own thresholds and ways of un/becoming, and is characterized by particular degrees of rigidity and suppleness. Fostering the conditions for a stable-enough and therefore sustainable becoming – for dynamic resistance in the midst of a *particular* class-assemblage of student and instructor bodies – is a well-honed craft of SJTE practitioners and should be claimed as such. For teachers committed to making the world less harmful and more welcoming of difference – both what is presently held to be different and the difference-to-come – this affective capacity and corresponding craft are as politically and ethically significant as any sort of conceptual, semantic or even historical mastery. We should bring this expertise out of the ether of tacit contributions and directly into our work with teacher candidates. In the conclusion which follows, I offer some preliminary suggestions as to how.

## CONCLUSION

*Today I am writing my conclusion at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). Despite my best efforts to change my internal soundtrack, on the ride over my rhythmic pedal strokes are a handheld organ auspiciously grinding out Sarah Brightman and Andrea Bocelli in 'Time to Say Goodbye.' I arrive, dismount, lock up, acquire a steeped tea from Tim Horton's and ceremoniously – because this is my last day of dissertating, after all – descend to the OISE library basement and what I like to call 'the tomb' where there are only three tables and a conveniently whooshing air duct. I am surrounded on all sides by a thousand hard copy journals in their strange institutional bindings of tangerine, teal, maroon and army everything from desert storm to arctic avalanche. Fatefully, on my usual table sits the evergreen dissertation of someone I know: an OISE graduate who also wrote on SJTE and haunts the same conference sessions I do. Dissertations are stored three floors up and yet here we are.*

*I flip through the pages, noticing that we have the same page count and overlapping reference lists. I know that our trajectories into this work could not have been more divergent. We differ on almost every axis of identity and social location, and I have not been a K-12 teacher or administrator (an admission that feels more like coming out than coming out), whereas they have been both for many years. But we have each been seized by and drawn into this particular kind of teacher education: this 'second-hand' practice whereby we prepare people (teacher candidates) to do something with other people (K-12 students) ostensibly 'about' a thing variably indexed by the terms diversity, equity or social justice. Along with the hundred other scholars whose work I have cited throughout, we have somehow come into an everyday practice of wrenching concrete-enough objects from these diffuse phenomena so that we can think about what we want people to actually do with other people who we will never know. Who are we who*

*bring our sense of things gone terribly wrong in education and elsewhere not to a 'first-hand' engagement in schools – where we might 'directly' act on or act out our commitment to multicultural or social justice education – but to a practice removed from where we think it matters most? What is our craft, honed at a distance? What do we do best?*

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What is social justice teacher education? Although I began this dissertation with a complex array of research questions, in the end this one so deceptively simple may well be able to stand in for them all. In the preceding chapters, I set out to investigate the field of SJTE from a theoretical and methodological perspective that would allow its previously unthought contributions to emerge. With the help of assemblage theory, affect theory and post-qualitative methodology I tried to trouble language as much as possible, turning to enacted form over semantic content and away from things like definition, terminology and typology as the surest truth of what SJTE is, does or ought to be. In the previous chapter I arrived at an account of the *craft* of SJTE which, I argued, can be generalized across its innumerable manifestations and yet is irreducible to the language through which the field largely sets itself apart from business as usual in teacher education. This craft is *affective*; it employs the assemblage capacity I have been tracking across all three analytical chapters, and to which I have referred in two ways: as the capacity for flexibility when thresholds are neared or breached, and the capacity to welcome difference-to-come, which we can only scarcely imagine in the present.

In this brief concluding chapter, I re-tell the story of how I arrived at these interrelated concepts of SJTE capacity and craft. Unlike what has come before, this re-telling is largely devoid of specialized theoretical language. I have chosen to go this route in order to lay an accessible interdisciplinary foundation for what follows: some implications of my findings for

the design and delivery of teacher education in relation to social difference and social justice, first regarding SJTE classroom practice and then regarding the classroom practice we envision on the part of the teachers we prepare. How does the SJTE craft I have identified challenge conventional thinking about preparing teachers to be change agents?

### **Recap: How We Got Here**

My research problem was the impossibility SJTE faces in setting itself apart from other aspects of teacher education. Setting itself apart is necessary because SJTE's existence is predicated on its doing something that others fail to do: prepare teachers to successfully teach *all* children, where 'all' indicates that only some – the privileged – are being well-served by public education. Whereas teacher educators in the major content areas (e.g., language and literacy or math and science) have a body of evidence-based research substantiating their field's effectiveness, SJTE practitioners do not. This is because 'social justice' will not stand still and behave itself; it cannot be the kind of outcome against which 'effectiveness' is judged in the current neo-liberal accountability culture. Given how it is hounded by field leaders and external critics alike for its inability to produce conclusive evidence that it improves the learning outcomes of historically marginalized K-12 students, I was interested in how SJTE continues to exist and even thrive.

I chose to situate my study within two related conversations, the first among SJTE's inspirations and interlocutors: multicultural education (ME), culturally responsive/relevant pedagogy (CRP) and Critical Race Theory (CRT). My survey of SJTE's historical emergence from and alongside ME, CRP and CRT revealed the field's deep-rooted anxiety about the misappropriation of language (i.e., terms and concepts) proper to these (primarily) anti-racist projects. This anxiety is entirely understandable when situated in the history of ME, which saw

its liberatory potential and political edge consistently blunted by its incorporation into educational institutions. On the same theme, CRP emerged as an effort to foreground the rich and complex ways of knowing and living found in historically marginalized communities; CRP poses a challenge to institutional hegemonic curricula that omit, over-simplify or condescend to anything ‘multicultural’ or unaffiliated with whiteness. CRT began as a challenge to the self-styled inclusiveness of neo-liberal institutions, showing through counter-storytelling that laws and policies allegedly benefitting Black people and other people of colour effectively benefit the white status quo. Across these fields that share a history with SJTE, I argued that language – particularly accuracy, precision, explicitness and specificity – understandably emerged as a tool in the struggle for social justice *and* a means to ensure that one was indeed on the right side.

As we saw, however, SJTE has a lot of trouble with language use, particularly in connecting what we say about ourselves – we are the ones who do things differently, who do social justice work – to some kind of outcome: social justice. Although the problems of institutionalization have always haunted SJTE, it remains part of a highly institutionalized field – teacher education – which is located in the university and responsible to numerous internal and external stakeholders. To this end, the second conversation within which I situated my dissertation was among scholars who make extensive use of affect theory to study, among other things, how language complicates social justice projects in the university. Taken together, Hemmings (2011), Wiegman (2012) and Ahmed (2012) highlight the problems of assuming that ‘social justice’ is *actually* what ‘we who do social justice, diversity, equity, etc. work’ are doing through our everyday actions because we say or write that we are. Language use is here unseated as the means of proving one’s actual social justice credentials. In fact, ‘diversity work’ may produce the image or sense of one’s work as benefitting the oppressed – from inside the



institution – rather than produce social structural change. Closing the gap between what we do and what we wish to change is itself a full-time job, and the more we can solidify our particular way of doing things as *the only way to do justice* the more we can obscure the sense that we are doing nothing or not much; the gap must become less apparent to us and our detractors in order for the work to carry on. And carry on it must. Like other SJTE practitioners, I know somehow that what I do is important and impactful regardless of whether evidentiary empiricism can detect my work. Hemmings, Wiegman and Ahmed similarly suggest that institutional diversity workers (including, I would add, SJTE practitioners) possess a specialized wisdom born of our everyday ability to navigate institutions intent on appropriating or otherwise disarming social justice movements when they pose too great a threat to the norm. Thus, I turned to poststructuralism for a theoretical and methodological framework that could access this wisdom – *which exists and is exercised outside of language* – in the case of SJTE.

I carried out my first analytical work in relation to what I call SJTE’s ‘field-defining’ literature: a selection of 58 texts spanning forty years and written by field leaders or others with the intention of shoring up the field’s identity. Reading across this body of texts, I assembled a collective account of why SJTE exists (to close demographic divides in education...) and its related goals (...by changing society and changing teachers). I also identified field leader calls for clarity and coherence in message, research methodology and program design as essential to SJTE’s survival in the face of the contemporary evidence crisis. In addition to considering what the field *says* about itself, I also sought to read beyond the rhetorical and engage with how the field leadership seeks to compel – affect – the SJTE reader. I paid close attention to things like expressive language, repetition, generalization and citation (or lack thereof). Arguing that the leadership seeks to *produce* and not merely *represent* the field as united, clear and coherent, I

identified a series of irresolvable tensions – paradoxes, excesses and irrationalisms – threatening to undo the tidy rhetorical production of SJTE. These include diversity as promise *and* threat, (American) nationalism *and* anti-imperialism, and practicality (of SJTE content) as a duty to TCs *and* a betrayal of SJTE’s political commitments. Pivotaly, however, *there is no undoing*. I therefore suggest that SJTE practitioners must have a capacity to move about and do their work in the middle of an intractable conflict without being immobilized or otherwise defeated. This capacity to sustainably hold two irreconcilable positions is evidenced in the field-defining literature, regardless of what the field may say about itself, its clarity and its coherence.

Next, I turned my attention from the literature to what happens when SJTE practitioners gather together. I carried out fieldwork at four education conferences with a ‘critical mass’ of SJTE sessions, organizations and related events. I also recruited 20 SJTE practitioners for Skype conversations after the conferences had ended. Using my theoretical and methodological framework, I looked and felt for ‘what happens’ in excess of language use at conferences and in conversations. This involved paying attention to rises and falls in affective intensity that often produce noticeable shifts or unlikely continuities in collective or individual behaviour and verbal but not semantic patterns (e.g., pitch, tone, speed, timing, etc.). I found that intensity tended to coincide with proximity to SJTE *thresholds*, or ways of doing or speaking that run counter to SJTE’s *expressed* (in language) and so pre-existing political and conceptual commitments. Using examples grouped together under the provisional rubrics of ‘sexuality’ and ‘race,’ I illustrated three kinds of ‘intervention’ or collective response to these thresholding moments. The first intervention – territorialization – was a gradual and gentle stabilization of the pre-existing boundary between SJTE-like and non-SJTE-like sayings or doings. The second intervention – re-territorialization – was a swift and heavy re-establishing of the boundary. Finally, the third

intervention – deterritorialization – allowed for a gradual and gentle de-stabilization of the boundary; this produced new ways of thinking with and using SJTE concepts in response to what was immediately taking place. Overall, I argued that intervention is collective because it occurs and proceeds without being ‘counter-intervened-upon’ by anyone; that it is *not* can sometimes seem fantastical. This is because intervention can involve the rupture of normatively overburdened codes of behaviour pertaining to things like turn-taking, interrupting, laughing, scolding, entering or leaving a space.

I drew three conclusions from my analysis of these collective SJTE interventions at the threshold. First, I highlighted the middle ground – the deterritorializing intervention – as an *actual* or enacted instance of the capacity I discovered in the field-defining literature: to hold both sides of an intractable conflict simultaneously and continue to do, think or move about in the absence of a clear way forward. Second, I suggested that the capacity to *collectively* bend these thresholds demonstrates the flexibility of SJTE. This flexibility defies even the most authoritative, consolidated definitions of social justice work in teacher education. In this way, we can think about the thresholds between SJTE and not-SJTE (its outside or impostors) as *produced* in everyday life when practitioners encounter and engage with each other across difference. Thresholds need not delimit the possibilities for what social justice and social difference can do or become. Lastly, then, I argued that SJTE demonstrates an implicit recognition of everyday ordinary life (the micro) as a site of change. This runs contrary to the overriding emphasis on structural change (the macro, e.g., narrowing the demographic divides) in the field-defining literature. Furthermore, we can argue that SJTE is set apart from teacher education writ large by something inaccessible to (macro, longitudinal) evidence processes.

In the third analytical chapter, I began to think of the capacity I found in SJTE’s literature

and everyday life in relation to the *craft* of SJTE, or, how this capacity might be expressed in classroom practice. Here, I exclusively focused on my Skype conversations with practitioners wherein I worked to invoke and trouble SJTE's repeated, written-down conventions by exploring how we know – *in the moment of enactment and prior to language (narration or reflection)* – whether SJTE is going well or badly, or is 'really' SJTE, at all. Although I make no claims on having directly studied classroom practice, I did study what can stand as 'good SJTE' in conversations among SJTE practitioners, myself included.

To set up the chapter, I argued that privileged (i.e., white, Anglo, straight, male, gender-normative, middle-class, etc.) TCs' resistance to SJTE's concepts and commitments is a whole-field pre-occupation; furthermore, I tried to show how *pre-empting* this resistance is a stated aim of SJTE's practice-based literature to the extent that its *absence* is often held as a sign of things gone well. What I found instead in my practitioner conversations is that SJTE practitioners make extensive use of resistance as an affective, intensive barometre to assess or appraise the 'goodness' and 'SJTE-ness' of their teaching, even in defiance of 'good' course evaluations. I argued that managing and *producing* 'dynamic resistance' – in the middle of a resistance continuum from suffocating to chaotic – is the craft generalizable to SJTE practitioners. This craft is thoroughly affective, both preceding and exceeding language as the sign of SJTE-in-progress (i.e., that our lesson plans, resources, curricula or class discussions feature proper terms and concepts) or SJTE-gone-well (i.e., that TCs now use these proper terms and concepts correctly in discussion, reflective and other written assignments). Circling back to my research problem, I take the position that SJTE cannot be said to have generalizable outcomes. This is because 'outcomes' are removed from immediate, local contexts of practice.

I conclude here by suggesting that the particular, localized exercise of SJTE's affective

craft – or ‘the thing we do best’ to recall the anecdote atop this chapter – and the capacity it expresses are the only things that can be generalized to SJTE as a whole. Abandoning outcomes does not, however, equal the loss of SJTE’s political or ethical heft. The capacity for a sustainable practice even when one’s most cherished rules, concepts or categories are disrupted – no matter how pervasively they have come to symbolize the pursuit of social justice – can be a more powerful political tool than their mastery. Difference precisely threatens disruption, and SJTE expresses a well-honed capacity to viscerally survive and welcome the most disruptive, the most different difference: that which strips us of our pre-conceived ideas of others and what they do. Perhaps this is contained in Gloria Ladson-Billings’ (1999) famous question posed to SJTE: “How do we deconstruct the language of difference to allow students to move out of categories and into their full humanity (p. 242)?” Based on what I have learned about social justice teacher education in the course of my dissertation research, I would respond that SJTE’s craft is an everyday, implicit and living engagement with this question, which, pivotally, ought never to be answered. In what follows, I suggest some ways in which we might think about making the exercise of this craft our *explicit* contribution to teacher education and social justice. In this way, we can bring our pedagogy out from under the linguistic supremacy of evidentiary rationalism, which will always find SJTE lacking in something measurable.

### **Implications for SJTE Practice**

How might SJTE practitioners exercise our craft with teacher candidates? What about our everyday classroom practice might change if we were to ‘own’ dynamic resistance as a goal and chaosmotic mindfulness as a means of assessment? Regardless of what it looks or feels like in a particular local context, the craft of SJTE involves much more than creating a space for dialogue, using culturally responsive curricula, invoking contemporary inequity issues, developing TCs’

critical thinking skills or inviting guest speakers who can compliment our own socially-located perspective. The craft of SJTE involves studying and becoming attuned to the affective barometre of one's own classroom and finding ways in the moment to increase or decrease intensity in order to keep things on a sustainable, even keel. Pre-empting or putting to rest familiar forms of student resistance is not necessarily the best or most desirable thing to do. As I have argued, flowing chaotic resistance might have to be provoked, produced or allowed to actualize and run its course until the forces of suffocating, cosmic resistance are in balance once again. The same is true in reverse.

From my practitioner conversations I have extracted some examples: tactics for getting to or sustaining the SJTE 'sweet spot' or plateau where difference (of self and other) can sustainably emerge and be encountered with minimal risk of shutdown or rupture. These can initiate a slide toward either end of the chaosmos spectrum and therefore toward the middle: dynamic resistance. Given how the SJTE craft was implicitly enacted in conference sessions and my conversations, these tactics were not explicitly articulated as such by me or by participants. Whether first uttered by me or not, they each stood, thinkable and sayable, as the common property of the field. Although they may not work every time in every context, we might consider experimenting with their form and content. For example, a swift intervention in one instance might be an utterance, and its swiftness or timing might transfer to other local contexts if not its verbal character or semantic content. It is also important to remember that chaotic and cosmic resistance can seem counterintuitive. Chaos is not 'chaotic' in a vernacular sense but meaningless proliferation, or increasing degrees of movement away from the sustainable plateau.

These tactics mobilize irony, deception and inauthenticity. They also recognize that SJTE is a field steeped in language – particularly in relation to the horrible things with which we go to

war – and yet deeply if implicitly wise about affect. As I have shown, affect is always already working on and through us, challenging and enabling us to let go our cherished safeguards so that they and ourselves can become other as our (material and discursive) surroundings and students inevitably change. The tactics below offer a way in to teaching from this recognition.

*To move toward chaos (via flowing resistance) try...*

...to avoid pushing or leading in a particular direction. Rather, ask a yes/no question or introduce a reliable stimulus (in form or content), sit back and let students carry the conversation for as long as possible amongst themselves.

Harness this energy in a redirection toward the place you got stuck – be it material (a configuration or orientation, maybe) or discursive (a term or a concept) and use the movement to ‘grease the wheels’ and propel you through. It might not have been the (semantic) content itself that got you into trouble.

...behaving and speaking as if students are already ‘on board’ with the concepts and commitments underpinning the course, or with the focus of the lesson or unit with which you and your students are presently engaged. Affect is contagious, and you can generate and catch students up in your own momentum.

...using a plant. Engage the services of someone who can pass as a TC enrolled in your program and at the level of your class (perhaps a student who you have enjoyed working with before, or a graduate student from another university). Their charge is to perform an approximate degree of (familiar) Resistance that your students have been able to confront or rebut in the past. Allow your students to

engage the plant as long as necessary to build the required momentum. It would be a good idea to develop a subtle signal that you could use to ask the plant to desist.

*To move toward cosmos (via static resistance) try...*

...using the classroom, the school or education writ large as an ‘easy out.’ One might say, ‘I understand that X is challenging or that you don’t agree, etc. It isn’t necessary that you agree in order to recognize that you have an ethical (or other) responsibility in this area as a teacher. What is that responsibility? How do we bring X into our classrooms?’ This may have the effect of harnessing TCs’ habitual desire for relevance *and* budding sense of professionalism, prompting the kind of conversation that makes them want to take copious notes in lieu of playing verbal ping pong.

...redirecting the conversation to scholarly sources. Use humour in reminding students that ‘this is a university course not a call-in radio show’ (where people share their opinions) or use another local example. Invoke their own sense of belonging and becoming knowledge workers: scholars in a scholarly profession. Further remind them of the considerable research on the topic with which they are (too) freely engaging (in some way). Hopefully you can refer them to a course reading. Failing that, use any available in-room technology to run a quick Google search for ‘hard data’ or a Google Scholar search, together consulting the abstract of the most widely-cited source in the results list. You might also prepare in advance (like a fire extinguisher) a list of Google/Google Scholar searches that can serve in this regard.



...using a plant. This is similar to the prior use of a plant, except this plant would *respond* to ongoing TC Resistance in a manner consistent with your course concepts and goals, and which furthers the conversation you are hoping to have without overplaying your own hand and so remaining a facilitator.

In offering these tactics, I do not intend to claim that they are altogether new or not already in play (they did largely emerge from my practitioner conversations). Rather, my contribution is to name and claim them in relation to SJTE craft, despite the ways in which they may trouble or even undermine familiar norms of authenticity. I will return here momentarily.

### **Implications for the Teachers We Prepare**

In addition to arguing that the SJTE craft should be *explicitly* exercised in the teacher education classroom, I also contend that it can and should be cultivated by teacher candidates. This will require some pedagogical shifts. Before I describe these shifts, however, I will illustrate the SJTE craft in action with a final example. In recognition of how knowledge is alive (contagious and affecting) and no piece of research or writing is produced in isolation from others, I borrow a research story from Anika Stafford's (2013, pp. 1–3) recent dissertation. Stafford used an ethnographic methodology to explore the production of hetero- and gender-normativity in kindergarten. In this excerpt, the narrator enacts something like the affective craft that, I contend, SJTE practitioners should seek to foster on the part of teacher candidates.

\*

*“Watch out for her,” I was told, “she is really needy and dependent. She’d rather just cling to her support worker than integrate with her peers – don’t let her get away with it.” It was among my first few weeks as a Student Support Worker with Vancouver Schools. The child in question was a student with a fragile bone condition whom I was to watch closely during recess*

*and lunch as part of my disability support role.*

*Although I remained skeptical of this description, I was not expecting the verbose, theatrical, and quirky seven-year-old whom I subsequently met. Over the course of my placement, I began to notice this student turn down offers to join games with their peers. After prompting, they joined a game only to come back over to me and sigh, “Anika, they’re playing fairies!” When I observed that they don’t like to play fairies, they exclaimed, “No! I want to be a boy!” Not being sure where this was coming from, I replied that there are boys who love playing fairies and girls who hate playing fairies, but that it was also okay to want to be a boy.*

*Their delight upon hearing this was palpable. They then appeared to seek opportunities to have this exchange again – saying they wanted to be a boy and then looking at me expectantly. The student’s expression of their gender non-conformity then grew in both frequency and theatricality: this included a spectacular execution of a “my mom bribed me to wear a dress on picture day” stomp through the halls, as well as a riveting performance of “The Secret Boy Name Dance” (performed by the student and their best friend when I asked if there was a boy name that they would prefer to be called and was informed that there was but it was a secret – with a dance that followed).*

*After a few weeks, the student had clearly decided that I was a co-conspirator in their resistance to the pressure to conform to ‘girl’ associated social play. One day they came up to me, rubbing their hands together as if plotting, and announced, “so, they’re playing boys chase girls.” “Uh oh,” was my thoroughly genuine response, “what should we do about that?” They raised one finger in their usual way of making proclamations. “I think,” they pronounced, “I will tell them that anyone can play any part.”*

*I watched from a distance as they asserted that they were “on the chasing team.” I watched as some of the boys started to come to the opinion that that being chased seemed to be a good deal and called out, “now I’m on the chase-me team.” The student came back beaming as I congratulated them. “Did you notice,” I pointed out, “not only did you find a way to make the game fit for you, you doing that made it okay for other people to play the game the way they wanted to? You changed the game!” “I know!” they called out, hands thrown in the air – dramatic emphasis. After that day, the student no longer stuck to my side, and instead accepted invitations from peers to join social games.*

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The narrator's skepticism of the description they are given – that the student is clingy and anti-social – de-centers language in favour of emergence, or privileges how the student will appear as opposed to what is said about them. However, the difference between familiar conceptions of the 'teacher's social justice intervention' (from Chapter Six) and the SJTE craft I have described is thrown into relief by the initial interaction we read about between narrator and student. Here, the narrator both challenges the student's gender binary association of fairies with girl-play (intervening in familiarly coded homophobia and transphobia) *and* maintains that 'it's okay to be a boy' (demonstrating an openness to this child's reality). This is, however, just a first step. Throughout the beginning of their relationship, the narrator affectively (e.g., getting caught up by and mirroring the student's concern) and semantically (e.g., asking open-ended questions) maintains an open space for the student to emerge and exceed pre-conceived notions, including those that the student might expect on the part of their new Disability Support Worker. The student repeatedly and understandably probes for the boundaries of the space created: is it consistent? Will it collapse? Can it be trusted? In other words, the narrator and the student *together produce, over and over*, the possibility that it is okay for anyone to be a boy; this cannot just be said, even emphatically. Once the openness proves to be stable, wonderful things happen at this plateau, where the student can experiment with many aspects of sociality including gender, authority and ritualized play. Lastly, the narrator betrays no trace of doubt – whether affectively or semantically – as to the significance of these seemingly small events in this child's life.

What kind of SJTE pedagogy could foster such a capacity for openness to emergent difference? When working with beginning teachers, how can we avoid *domesticating* difference, a surely unintended consequence of needing objects that they can engage with in advance of

entering schools?<sup>56</sup> How might we prepare teachers with the *formal* skills to welcome and support the flourishing of difference and not only with a grasp of social difference as *content* (e.g., the needs of XYZ students, what anti/homophobia looks like or how poverty affects learning)? While I have been dissertating, I have also been teaching in the initial teacher education program at York University. My theoretical commitments to affect and assemblage theory have developed alongside my teaching philosophy and pedagogical style to the extent that they are virtually inextricable. They also cannot be separated from my lived experiences of anti-oppression education and anti-oppressive community spaces. I have learned first-hand how the capacity to do less harm to and with others, or to create spaces in which people can remain and be well, is in no way guaranteed by one's intellectual command of homophobia and heterosexism or liberal multiculturalism and settler colonialism, for example. The quality of our interpersonal encounters with different others cannot be held insignificant or less relevant than our grasp of over-arching social structures (see also Stewart, 2007). These two scales of social life are mutually constitutive and of equal importance. However, the way in which 'social-justice-ness' is demonstrated tends to be through language use (by now a familiar refrain); left behind is what one's body does and what one does with one's body, or, what *actually* occurs.

In my rendering – which is admittedly Deleuzian (Bell, 2006; Deleuze, 1994) – difference demands the visceral ability to do something like 'go with the flow' of a particular context or encounter as it unfolds, without stopping or seeking to control it and without recourse to claims about our intent in so doing. This can look like pausing when we sense the welling-up of intensity as someone or something emerges to shatter our expectations (which are most often

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<sup>56</sup> This is a problem that I have discussed at length elsewhere (Airton, 2014) with particular regard to homophobia. I argued that how we pin down 'the badness' in our teachable examples risks determining the design and delivery of 'anti-homophobia teacher education' even more so than our students' or our own experiences of sexuality and gender, homophobia and transphobia.

unconscious and inarticulate, apparent only as affective thresholds). This pausing is immediate; it happens on the surface of the body prior to the possibility of narration or reflection on *why* one feels this way or *what* is precisely being undone. It happens prior to the privilege confessional and its paradox: that the reasons why we might expect particular things of the other do not actually matter in the moment when the expectation is acted out. Even our most changed intentions do not matter. Intentionality is of language; it is too late to the party, where affect has already erupted onto the scene. Helping teacher candidates learn to ‘get out ahead’ of themselves and deprioritize their very good intentions is helping them to develop the capacity and the craft.

Regardless of whether I am teaching an SJTE (foundations) course or bringing an SJTE sensibility to a content area, I work hard to de-emphasize cognition, language and conceptual mastery in favour of affect, or, how encounters with knowledge *feel* and not only what they contain. I focus on creating an experience for TCs in which they can learn themselves learning, or encounter themselves encountering difference and uncertainty. When faced with the unfamiliar, whether a piece of knowledge, a new person or an immersive practicum, do they entrench their own perspective or pause and open up to the experience of dissonance and its sensation of risk? In order to facilitate the latter, I seek to *foster* dissonance, making extensive use of humour so they can become comfortable enough for thought and engagement when familiar norms of the classroom are breached. My goal is to bridge habits of mind – reflection, thought, deliberation and assessment – and immediate habits of body like hunches, fight or flight impulses, formless anxieties, and waves of awkwardness or seamlessness.

To this end, I have two practical emphases in my teaching, with which I try to scaffold TCs’ affective capacity in relation to the new and different. First, I work with them to de-center language and its received meanings as the only ways of knowing themselves and the world. In

other words, we move away from what we say about ourselves and our commitment to ‘social justice,’ or even being a good teacher as what matters (in the material sense of harm). Through conversations, assignments and individual mentoring, we map the affective thresholds of their own implicit (felt) concepts: what iterations or images of e.g., childhood, education, justice, family, community, the norm and the exception do they struggle with or tolerate? How do they, personally, tend to register either of these extremes in ways that can become apparent to others, for example, through laughter, shrugs, facial expressions, nods of the head or none of the above? When do they tend to become caught up in what is unfolding around them? Second, we trouble common sense and implicit understandings of event, scale and significance, asking what kind of happening ‘counts as’ good or bad, help or harm, useful or useless, justice or injustice. On what basis do we make these determinations, and how do they affect our ability to learn about and encounter difference? What do we think matters (or not) such that we are prepared to change or alter our own practice (or not)? Using an emergent curriculum of examples (drawing on our classroom dynamic, rapport and history), a variety of texts (written, aesthetic, multimedia), and a series of experiential inquiry exercises, we consider how these determinations of form can be as normalizing and hostile to difference as any determination of content.

Overall, this limited vision of an SJTE that aims to cultivate teachers’ affective craft (as enacted in the story above) carries many implications for how we might assess TCs over the course of their program. Displacing language and turning to affect is particularly troublesome for things like reflexivity and disposition, for example. If we do not presume the congruence of doing and saying, how do we arrive at an assessment of ‘authentic’ reflection or ‘truly’ teacherly disposition from the things that TCs say or write down? Here the field might already walk in the realm of hunches or gut feelings to a far greater extent than we may be prepared to admit.

Although this point exceeds *social justice* teacher education and extends to teacher education as a whole, I would argue that SJTE practitioners can uniquely, productively reckon with its challenges by virtue of our particular craft and its implicit affective wisdom. Furthermore, assessment could extend to things like how TCs engage in difficult or uncomfortable conversations, or how they weather surprise. This certainly requires more thinking – and I intend to carry this line of inquiry into my future projects – but I want to stress here that language use does not have to guide assessment in teacher education, and that SJTE practitioners are already working well at the limits of language in this regard.

### **Last Word: Toward a Social Justice Teacher Education of Depth *and* Surface**

The foregoing implications of my dissertation rattle SJTE’s common sense on two fronts: first, that everything we do must be transparently relevant to ‘social justice’ as currently *symbolized*; and second, that teacher intentionality (and/as critical consciousness) and self-knowledge (and/as reflexivity) are the vehicles of social change. At bottom, both claim the inherent value of *authenticity*, or the ‘realness’ of one’s connection (in the first instance) and commitment (in the second) to ‘the struggle’ outside. Authenticity has always been a core SJTE value, visible in its roots and contemporary discourses. Authenticity underscores the impostor conversation which, I have argued, is an impossible conversation because it takes place on an empiricist plane where the field’s generalizable and affective contribution – capacity and craft – is paradigmatically invisible. Moreover, and recalling Wiegman’s (2012) gap between practice and justice-doing, authenticity pre-supposes a seamless congruence between what we intend – which is cognitive and reflexive – and the effects of our actions: the actual and material.

I have maintained throughout that language and its corollary, representation, are latecomers at the scene where difference may have already been shut down and snuffed out. So

too, then, are intentionality, will, identity, narrative and history (here used to mean a stabilized narrative of the past). I will provisionally group these together under the rubric of *depth* because they presume the significance of what happens away from the immediacy of an encounter with difference and only in the aftermath of its emergence. SJTE does depth well and depth is incredibly important, but it is not all that matters. And so, I will provisionally refer to what is affective, implicit, pre-personal and non-sovereign as *surface*.

Surface is a terrain rarely broached in SJTE. This is an ethical problem because harm on the basis of social difference does not begin and end with depth, and depth does not prepare us for difference-to-come. We who seek to change teachers (recalling my analysis of the SJTE literature in Chapter Five) must reckon with the vulnerability of depth to what erupts at the surface of social life. In other words, our efforts to coax TCs into a new consciously ethical and political relationship with, for example, privilege and oppression may bank too much on the power of consciousness in the moment of impact because the unfolding present can evacuate depth's significance. Although painful, we must ask: does this change even *matter*? After all, there is only ever an unstable connection between what I hold myself to be doing (and the language with which I narrate this holding) and what happens. We might therefore begin to think about the unintended consequences of pedagogies aiming to 'empower teachers to be agents of social change' if what is required is a sense of one's efficacy as only ever contingent. 'Social justice' teachers might need to be watchers-and-waiters at least as much as they need to be movers-and-shakers. If we want teachers to be able to pause, go with the flow and facilitate the emergence of the (contextually) not-yet-known, as demonstrated in Stafford's (2013) story, the conception of agency at the heart of SJTE must change to incorporate surface.

Although 'surface rhetoric' is often derided in the literature (e.g., we need TCs to deeply



reflect on their experiences not hand in superficial journaling assignments, etc.), in places we can see equal attention to surface and depth. This is particularly visible in the complicated conversation around whiteness, white privilege and preparing white TCs to implement culturally responsive pedagogies (e.g., Aveling, 2006; Galman, Pica-Smith, & Rosenberger, 2010; Juárez et al., 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1996; Lowenstein, 2009; Pennington, 2007; Raible & Irizarry, 2007; Sleeter, 2008). That the good intentions of a white person don't matter (see Castagno, 2014) in terms of how whiteness and racism are produced in a particular context (Mazzei, 2004, 2008) does get at the insufficiency of depth for how things go. However, what comes before the 'intentions don't matter' lesson is usually a resolutely depth-driven pedagogy through which (white) TCs are asked to reckon with their privilege (the quintessential vehicle for this reckoning is the "white privilege knapsack" - see McIntosh, 2003). One implication of my call for a *surface ethics for social justice teacher education*, then, is that this kind of pedagogical sequence be reversed: 'intentions don't matter and here is why' (i.e., using a surface pedagogy, perhaps on the order of what I described in the preceding sections) *then* 'here is some (deeply) significant socio-cultural and socio-historical background, except its significance must be held locally emergent wherever you practice.' Because it is formal, preparing TCs for *emergent significance*, for example, might be primary to discussing the content of what we hold to be significant.

For a field with a history of evidence, legitimacy and impostor anxiety – which, as I have been arguing throughout, stems from the paradigmatically inappropriate 'measurement' of teaching and teacher education outcomes – it will not be easy to de-prioritize depth and its reliance on language use to signal the difference of what we do. What is urgently required, however, is a social justice teacher education that does both surface and depth equally well. Overall, my dissertation is a plea for a novel engagement, on the part of teacher educators,

teachers and teacher candidates, with ordinary life (including in the teacher education classroom): that it need not become predictably exceptional – loud, fast, eventful, violent, etc. or otherwise seeming to merit ‘the teacher’s intervention’ – before becoming significant. Surface is always with us and is not only a tabula rasa for depth. And in many ways, SJTE is already a surface ethical craft. What remains is to claim this craft and so proclaim, anew, our difference and relevance in teacher education for a social world that is always in flux.

## **ADDENDUM – What is Canadian SJTE?**

I did not set out to study an American field. SJTE is a staple of Canadian teacher education, where it can be found in forms – course outlines, mission statements, reading lists, program mandates, etc. – remarkably similar to those south of the border. Although I had intended to do transnational research, I followed SJTE to where it gathers together and plays out. SJTE’s field-defining literature is largely authored by American scholars and its conferences take place in the United States. The Americanness of the SJTE that emerged in the course of my study is clear from its intended beneficiaries (e.g., particularly American racial, ethnic and cultural groups such as African Americans, Chican@s and Latin@s) and remedial focus on American demographic divides. SJTE’s Americanness is declared by its habitual nemeses, such as the standardization movement in the US that criticizes SJTE’s ‘bias’ or the US-based National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) when it removes accreditation criteria pertaining to social justice. And yet, the title of my dissertation does not announce the Americanness of my object. I continue to believe that the Social Justice Teacher Education I have studied here extends into Canadian teacher education practice despite SJTE’s roots in predominantly American racialized struggle. Although it is impossible to conclusively determine whether or not this is the case, in this brief addendum I offer some observations on the similarities and differences – in broad strokes – of the Canadian and American contexts for social difference and social justice in teacher education. In so doing, I substantiate why I continue to situate my study as transnational and not solely American.

A predictable reaction to any collapse of Canadian and American distinctiveness would invoke Canada’s seeming superiority in the areas directly addressed by SJTE: diversity, equity and social justice in and stemming from education. At the outset, the legal landscape for sexual

minority rights is an easy site of differentiation. Many American SJTE practitioners seeking to incorporate gender and sexuality issues face a range of legislative hurdles, whereas their Canadian colleagues are protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms' prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. In American progressive circles, much is made of Canada's nationwide legalization of same-sex marriage many years before its piecemeal and white-knuckle implementation in the United States. Canada may have a strong Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but this has not led to seamless agreement on the form or extent of its application. The 'liberal paradise' of Canada is far more complicated than it may appear south of the border. For reasons that I will elaborate, the landscape for social justice issues in Canada would seem to be far less 'cut and dry' than in the US. This carries interesting implications for the preparation of teachers to be 'change agents.'

In Canada, Education is a provincial mandate and as such cannot be roped into nationalistic success and failure narratives (or only with great difficulty). There is no federal Secretary of Education in Canada, and education cannot become a political tool of the federal government; in short, there is no national education strategy.<sup>57</sup> Each province conducts its own affairs and develops its own K-12 and higher education policy. Another glaring distinction between Canada and the US pertains to money. American schools are characterized by rampant resource disparities because they are funded by local property tax revenues (Kozol, 1992). A poor neighbourhood will necessarily have an under-resourced school. By contrast, in Canada provincial or territorial governments control and distribute funds. This is not to say, however,

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<sup>57</sup> The difficulties of trying to account for 'the state of social justice and/or multicultural education' – let alone teacher education – in Canada are symbolized by Joshee (2010). Writing in Banks' (2010b) *Routledge international companion to multicultural education*, Joshee approaches this task by analyzing Canadian educational *policy* discourses and offering scant examples from Toronto and Ontario, the city and province in which her university is located. Quite tellingly, the only other international framing chapter to focus on general policy and policy discourse as opposed to specific education structures or practices is the chapter on the European Union where, like Canadian provinces, member states are autonomous with regard to education.

that Canadian public schools are unaffected by class differences and income disparities, just differently so. In early-1990s Vancouver, my mostly white west side public elementary school was the first to have a full 30-piece computer lab. This was acquired through a fundraising campaign directed by the affluent parents' association. My parents instead wrote cheques to Macdonald Elementary – fifteen minutes away in the city's diverse and poverty-stricken downtown east side – to help the school purchase a handful of computers. In contrast to *local* initiatives like these, the institutionalization of perpetual under-funding in many American school districts has created a climate of *nation-wide* initiatives. These include things like federal School Improvement Grants (see Castagno, 2014 on how these grants can micropolitically play out in schools) for 'low-performing' schools, and federal investment in non-traditional teacher certification programs (e.g., Teach for America) seeking to partner with low-income school districts and close 'achievement gaps.' On the grounds of funding and 'national emergency,' then, Canadian education sits at arm's length from a centralized concept of Canada.

While there are urban teacher education programs in Canada and in the United States, the Canadian urban landscape is significantly different and not necessarily a predictable site of poverty. Student achievement, while racialized, is not racialized in the same ways. There are historical and cultural differences between the US and Canada that bear on how teachers are prepared to teach students from historically marginalized groups. Over the past twenty years, however, a growing body of historians and cultural critics has highlighted shared features of Canadian and American history, including slavery (Clarke, 2005; A. Cooper, 2011), the consistent exploitation of racialized migrant labour (Anderson, 1991; Ng, 1992; Stasiulis & Bakan, 1997) and the genocide of indigenous peoples (Neu & Therrien, 2003). Each of these is kept alive in Canadian public life today by *inter alia* the Indian Act system (Coulthard, 2007;

Kendall, 2001; Lawrence, 2009), the cumulative effects of racist immigration policies both past and present (Ng, 1992; Razack, 2002), and systemic racism and racialized poverty (Bannerji, 2000; Hage, 2000; Thobani, 2007; Ward, 2002). Although slavery and its legacy are a central component of the American public consciousness, for example, Canadian anti-racist educators – even in higher education – must often begin with a series of ‘big reveals.’ Many Canadians who graduate from high school do so without, for example, having learned about Japanese-Canadian internment during World War Two (see Tupper, 2002) or slavery in Canada, except with regard to the Underground Railroad used by American slaves to escape.<sup>58</sup>

Such selective representation of Canadian versus American history is greatly supportive of Canada’s public and self-image as essentially multicultural, liberal and embracing of diversity. Even when Canada goes to war, it seems, Canadian history textbooks construct its moral duty to do so as a beneficent and exceptionally peaceable force for good in the world (Montgomery, 2006; see also LaSpina, 2003; Montgomery, 2005). And while the infamous English-only schools legislation adopted by the state of Arizona could never be enacted in Canada, Canadian official language policy ensures that two *European* languages – English and French – continue to dominate public life and education despite a growing statistical prevalence of non-European languages spoken by Canadian citizens. And yet only anglophone and francophone Canadians are afforded the right to public funding of their children’s heritage language education.

Canada’s multicultural and tolerant self-image – as a mosaic, not an American-style melting pot – is a motif within its public education system as well as a point of nationalist pride. Whereas at least the *fact* of, for example, the transatlantic slave trade is undeniable in America – if not its contemporary implications – educating Canadian teacher candidates about the need for

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<sup>58</sup> This is an anecdotal claim based on a very broad ‘sample’ of young Canadians, both peers and my own students, gathered over a decade of experience as an anti-racist peer educator and now a social justice teacher educator. The statement “I had no idea this happened in Canada” is a familiar refrain in both contexts.

social justice-related coursework in their programs can sometimes feel like half the battle, hence the afore-mentioned ‘big reveals.’ To this end, when researching my Master’s thesis (Airton, 2009) I analyzed over 500 course outlines comprising the teacher education curriculum at McGill from 2001–2008. The 28 social justice, diversity or equity courses I found were dominated by *descriptive* or *interpretive* content on injustice in Canada: that it occurred, what it entailed, that it continues today. This is different from what might be called ‘social justice practice’ or the ‘what now’ following from TCs’ understanding of historicized contemporary forms of oppression. Acceptance of a less idealized and more unstable Canadian story or ‘reality’ may be a major goal of Canadian SJTE, whereas at least slavery and segregation are inescapable and reverberating chapters in the American story. However, the challenges of any Canadian-American comparison are illustrated by the relatively sparse representation of Native Americans in media or urban public life in the United States, relative to the (often symbolic) profusion of First Nations peoples, images and issues in urban Canada.

Despite the fact that one can gesture toward differences such as these, for better or for worse, it is impossible to draw a line between Canada and the United States, whether pertaining to the landscape for SJTE or no. The unstoppable drift of American media, language, politics, consumerism and ways of life, a continual lamentation of Canadian nationalists and cultural producers, makes for only an unstable separation between these two mass cultures. In my earshot, innumerable people have referred to Black Canadians as ‘African Americans,’ for example, even while knowing they speak of Canadians. Slippages like these gesture at once to the systemic invisibility of Black Canadian history but also more broadly to the blurring of race across the national divide, at least in peoples’ everyday understandings.

Drift and slippage are a reality for Canadian SJTE practitioners, who often lament the

lack of Canadian-specific resources for use in our courses (notable exceptions being Carr & Lund, 2007; Egbo, 2009). I have heard from several scholars that Canadian-specific and SJTE-related textbook manuscripts are routinely rejected for publication on the basis of market size. Very often it is to American writings of race, justice, equity, class, etc. that Canadian teacher educators turn to for lack of accessible and appropriate resources from Canada. Our teacher candidates, too, study and apply frameworks developed by Banks, Sleeter and Grant on the basis of American data and American demographic divides. The line between American and Canadian sociocultural climates is at least somewhat blurred in the actual curriculum and pedagogy of SJTE, making the field unintentionally transnational in a one-way, south-north direction.

In sum, Canada is not an unambiguously liberal paradise relative to the United States. Rather, the (broad, homogenized and insufficiently-sketched) similarities and differences I have glossed over in this addendum are a call for further study and collaboration. Given the preponderance of American scholarship in this area, one of my long term goals is to bring together Canadian scholars in elaborating a flexible, interdisciplinary concept of social justice teacher education in the Canadian context(s). Canada's de-centralized educational governance and its particular ongoing histories of settler colonialism and systemic, institutionalized racism touch down on bodies and ordinary lives in ways diverse yet palpably different from comparable forces in the United States. What kind of teacher education pedagogy and curriculum can help *Canadian* teachers encounter social difference and foster classroom environments where difference is a theory and practice of remaining open to the unforeseeable? What is 'Canadian SJTE' and how could we ever know – in the moment – if we have enacted its specificity?



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## APPENDIX A – Field-Defining Texts Included in Chapter Five

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