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AGENTIAL SCHOOLING: POSTHUMANISM, YPAR, AND SPOOKY ENTANGLEMENTS

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**AGENTIAL SCHOOLING: POSTHUMANISM, YPAR, AND SPOOKY
ENTANGLEMENTS**

A Dissertation Presented

By

THOMAS ALBRIGHT

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
Of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

MAY 2021

College of Education

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ENTANGLEMENTS

A Dissertation
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by

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First, I want to thank the youth of Vantage High for embracing me, freedom dreaming with me, and pushing me to sit with the unpredictability of learning.

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ABSTRACT

AGENTIAL SCHOOLING: POSTHUMANISM, YPAR, AND SPOOKY

ENTANGLEMENTS

MAY 2021

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This yearlong ethnographic project, building upon three years of work within an Ethnic Studies program, examined schooling through a posthumanist lens to better understand the intra-actions between humans, nonhumans, and discourses in a public high school along with an afterschool youth participatory action research program in Western Massachusetts. Intra-action here refers to the way that the bodies are co-constitutive. A posthuman framing of schooling, what I label agential schooling, demonstrates how schooling is protean, and shifts as we seek to understand and challenge it. To shed light on this issue of examining agential schooling, and YPAR as a possible intervention the following research questions are addressed: (1) How does schooling operate as a nonhuman agent in a public high school, Vantage High, with a majority Latinx student population? (2) What are the core components and apparatuses of schooling and how do they operate at Vantage High? (3) What are the possibilities and challenges of using YPAR, for example, to

intervene and disrupt schooling? I used participant observations, interviews, cognitive maps, diffraction, and thinking with theory to better understand the intra-actions between humans, nonhumans, and discourses. This analysis is framed through Barad's (2007) agential realism. Diffraction allows for the material to be read through rather than against each other, and thinking with theory encourages the 'plugging in,' where data and theory are interwoven in the phenomenon. This framing of schooling allows for a more robust analysis of the agents operating in and on the individuals within the space along with the institution of schooling. Beyond humans and discourses, matter is mattering. This posthumanist project critically repositions schooling as a nonhuman agent, widening our understanding of oppression and the possibilities for more socially just education.

Keywords: Agential schooling, YPAR, posthumanism, schools and schooling

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CHAPTER 1:

AGENTIAL SCHOOLING – “SCHOOL IS WHERE DREAMS COME TO DIE”

It was an early fall day at the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year and I was listening to students joke and play before their school day started. We were sitting in their 9th grade Ethnic Studies classroom. I was next to a group of four students recapping the activities of the previous school day. Then Samantha, a Latinx student, just stopped the conversation and said, “Shit, school is where dreams come to die.” The students did not miss a beat and laughed away the joke. However, I paused in the moment, thinking how Samantha’s statement is often true for many students, particularly students of color. Long after this conversation I continued to ponder the question, why is it that schools are often places of domination where dreams come to die?

The four students above were sitting in a class they love, or at least that is what they told me. In their Ethnic Studies classroom students openly examined racism, sexism, homophobia and used Freirian (1970) praxis to not only discuss oppression, but also take action to challenge and interrupt various forms of domination. However, even in this liberatory space ‘schooling’ operated. Schooling is a term illustrating how schools are spaces used for social regulation and reproduction while also reinforcing problematic forms of racial, gendered, and classed domination (Anyon, 1981; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Patel, 2016; Vaught, 2017). So I was stuck on this student’s statement, “school is where dreams come to die.” Even with all of the progressive and radical interventions (e.g., Ethnic Studies,

multicultural studies, Black Studies, democratic educational endeavors, youth participatory action research, etc.) schooling is still a driving force in many schools around the nation.

Today, students face a myriad of challenges that attempt to strip their humanity. These include zero-tolerance policies, schools depriving elementary students of recess to bolster academic time, the neoliberal emphasis on success as doing well on standardized tests, white-washed curriculum, oppressive teaching practices, underfunded schools, and the school-to-prison pipeline. Video after video shows adults violently assaulting Black and Brown children; the adults are often teachers, administrators, and school enforcement officers. Institutional attacks on Ethnic Studies. And, as Angela Davis (2003) reminds us, “when schools...place a greater value on discipline and security than on knowledge and intellectual development, they [youth] are attending prep schools for prison” (p. 38).

Along with these policies and practices, “teacher retention is at an all-time low” (Love, 2019, p. 29). Schools and schooling cause many educators to feel a sense of moral injury; that is, “the trauma of perpetuating significant moral wrong against others despite one’s wholehearted desire and responsibility to do otherwise” (Levinson, 2015, p. 207). Furthermore, it is not just schools, but “society commits a moral...harm when we place agents, like educators, in morally untenable positions... in which enacting justice is impossible” (Levinson, 2015, p. 220). Samantha’s assertion that schools are places where dreams come to die is a sobering reminder of how dehumanizing schools can be.

To push back against these dehumanizing facets of schooling and address moral injury, scholars must (1) have a more nuanced and intricate accounting of schooling including a look at human and nonhuman entanglements, and (2) provide adults and youth platforms to build upon in creating just educational spaces. A more multifaceted portrayal of schooling will allow for the creation of sophisticated interventions. This project takes up the call of generating a more complex and intricate account of schooling by engaging with Posthumanism (Barad, 2007), a decentering of the human, and a push towards the complex turn in education (Strom & Viesca, 2020). By engaging with the complex turn, I am shifting away from dualism and linearity and reposition educational phenomena as entanglements of multiplicities, situatedness (e.g., politics, power, material flows, etc.), becomings, and the more-than-human world.

Prior to looking at the current U.S. schooling context, I begin with the problem statement as to why we need this research. Moving from the problem statement I outline a short history of schooling and how modes of domination have appeared throughout the history of U.S. education. Then, I discuss the apparatuses bolstering and supporting the maintenance of schooling. After discussing the apparatuses, I transition to what I see needing expanded attention, a re-imagining or reconceptualizing of schooling as a nonhuman agent. To examine schooling as a nonhuman agent, I illuminate the questions driving this research and offer a brief outline of the project's research design, rationale, and significance.

Problem Statement

Schooling has been envisioned as effects or outcomes of economic structures via Marxist analysis, racial domination via critical race theory, and complicated entanglements between individuals, discourses, and institutions via poststructuralism. While they have been helpful to our understanding, such scholarship has not treated schooling as a nonhuman agent or as being. That is, much of the focus has been on actions of individuals rather than the entanglement and co-constitution of the various actors operating in schools. Beyond the presence of humans, there are nonhuman and discursive actors that need to be accounted for within schooling spaces.

I use a posthumanist perspective in order to illuminate the role of nonhuman actors, accounting for the agency and the co-constitutive role of entangled human, nonhuman, and discursive agents in a way that other theoretical approaches would not. While poststructuralist accountings of the 'real' (e.g., Judith Butler, Michel Foucault, etc.) have been helpful they limit our ability to see how power is intra-acting, moving in and through the more than human. The posthumanist approach, rather than looking at interpellations and discursive formations, emphasizes how nonhuman agents are bodies, assemblages, and becomings that within themselves are porous entities and are entangled with all the social conditions producing the conditions for specific phenomenon to emerge. Interpellation is entangled with the myriad of agencies already being shaped by the material world. While this is a small nuance of how we conceive of the agent, it brings about a different understanding of power.

To more thoroughly illustrate this point I provide the example discussing the emergence of the 'child'. Within a poststructuralist notion of the child, the child comes to being as interpellated via the human (e.g., the doctor, nurse, parent, etc.). Interpellation discursively defines the body in terms of performativity. Within a posthuman framing, the child is made of a myriad of bodies, it has porous boundaries, is entangled with itself and with other agencies. The history is prior to the body. The nine months in utero, the development as a fetus, the trauma affecting and effecting the mother, the various ecologies and trauma's one is experiencing or has experienced, and the experiences of the mother's mother (e.g., social toxins, traumas, etc.) are agents playing a role within this entanglement. All the social conditions that were shaping the fetus were operating as agents. This nuance of how we conceive of the body produces quite different understandings of power.

By acknowledging the role of the different agents, and their co-constitution, we will gain a more nuanced understanding of how schooling operates. I am attempting to develop a less dualistic notion of schooling, taking account of the various lines of flight that occurred, and account for how power was moving in and through the various agents. These lines of flight illustrate the im/possibility of schooling. The slash in the previous sentence is not about either impossibility or possibility, nor both, but rather a cutting together and apart of possibility and impossibility (Barad, 2014). The posthumanist approach illuminates how the entanglements influence the various agents within the space. For example, if we look at students as self-contained entities we lose sight of how the students and their actions are co-constituted via their entanglements with discourses and other

nonhuman agents. A posthumanist framing takes into account the various actors, which otherwise go unacknowledged. If we do not account for these various actors, we will not gain a more nuanced view of why schools continue to be places where dreams go to die.

The Effects of Schooling

As Jonathan Kozol (1991) reminds us, savage inequalities ripple throughout the history of American education. What follows is a brief look at racial, economic, and gender domination within schooling. This discussion of domination within schools is expanded in the next chapter. Prior to discussing these modes of domination, I want to recognize that they are not wholly separate but rather this oppression operates intersectionally (Crenshaw, 1989; Crenshaw, 1991; Hill-Collins, 1990). This brief outline discusses the effects of domination, but does not consider the ever-present modes of resistance, as that was not the focus.

Race

The United States is a capitalist nation founded on racial domination, where Black individuals were used as chattel slavery in service of white economic growth (Jordan, 1968; Litwack, 1961; Melish, 1998; Painter, 2010). The effects of this domination reverberate through the history of the schooling of Black Americans (see Anderson, 1998). For Black children, schooling has been a site of suffering (Dumas, 2014). Similarly, when it comes to the education of Native Americans, whites attempted cultural genocide as they tried to strip Native peoples of their cultural identities (Adams, 1995; Rury, 2016). Like Native American education, the

education of Mexican Americans and Latinx children followed a line of cultural deprivation attempting deculturalization and Americanization (Donato, 2007; Sánchez, 1993; Spring, 1997). Today, we see the attack on Ethnic Studies reinforcing fears of non-Eurocentric curriculum (Cabrera, Meza, Romero, & Rodríguez, 2013).

Economic

Beyond race, exploitative capitalism influences schools. Jean Anyon (1981) poignantly noted the connection between social class and school knowledge. Working class students are not taught their history but often positioned as deficits; middle-class students are taught to consume, reproducing capitalist ideologies of production and consumption, and professional / elite schools teach their students the history of the elite (Anyon, 1981; Bertrand, 2019). Anyon's work illustrated that one's social position heavily influenced their school experience. Bowles and Gintis (1976) most clearly articulated the idea that schooling is a tool for economic reproduction in service of capitalism; they asserted, "that major aspects of educational organization replicate the relationships of dominance and subordinancy in the economic sphere" (p. 125).

Gender

Other key aspects of regulation are forms of gender and sexual oppression in schools. Youth are constantly "bullied, harassed, and victimized in schools as a result of their perceived sexual identity or gender expression" (Abreu, Black, Mosley, & Fedewa, 2016). Students of color are not only harassed but punished disproportionately. For example, Black girls in every state in America "are more than twice as likely to be suspended from school as White girls" (Love, 2019, p. 5).

Schools reinscribe gender and sexual oppression. There are other forms of oppression and markers of difference that are important to consider when thinking about schooling, but are outside of the scope of this project (e.g., ableism, the deculturalization of immigrant youth beyond Latinx students, etc.)

Schooling Apparatuses

What is evident from this brief outline of the effects of schooling is that schools are a function of the state and reinforce problematic power dynamics along lines of race, class, gender, etc. Policy, curriculum, hierarchical relations, adultism, prescriptive entanglements, discipline, and punishment all operate as apparatuses of schooling. In using apparatus here I am referencing an agent that works in service and support of another agent. For example, educational policies have often worked in service of perpetuating social regulation.

Educational policy has been used as an outlet for people to channel their fears and hopes (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). From the common schools in the late 1700s up to today, policy has shaped and been shaped by personal and political agendas (Kaestle, 1983; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Policies are not created in a bubble; the socio-political context, religious agendas, economic interests, and larger aims of the state influence various policies and their implementation. In America, it would be hard to think of educational policy without thinking about the links of capitalism and racism (Dumas, 2016; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Policies are not totalizing, but they do impact schooling, schools, teachers, and students in a variety of ways.

Another example of an apparatus is curriculum, which is often based upon social class (Anyon, 1981). However, curriculum in the public realm, as Rosiek and Kinslow (2016) noted, is often referred to as “mandated curriculum – the curricular content that is mandated by the state, a school board, or some other official governing body” (p. 14). There are variations of curriculum based upon notions of what is intended to be taught, what is actually taught, the learning (both intended and unintended) that occurred, and the hidden curriculum (the implicit lessons the teaching, content, and symbols produce) (Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016). One of schooling’s most effective modes of domination, the hidden curriculum, obscures domination and normalizes oppression. Working class students are often given schoolwork focusing on facts, basic skills, and one’s ability to regurgitate information, while middle-class schools and classrooms emphasize “conceptual” work (Anyon, 1981). Lastly, we see that affluent spaces stress discovery and creativity (Anyon, 1981). This hidden curriculum produces and recycles social oppression. The hidden curriculum is built on hierarchical relations.

Within classroom spaces, problematic hierarchical relations and interactions emerge. There are hierarchical relationships between administrators, teachers, and students. Youth are often seen as “either dangerous or vulnerable” (Kirshner, 2015, p. 3). Similarly, children are seen as the property of the state, “citizens-in-the-making or citizens-in-waiting” (Vaught, 2017, p. 113). Thus, within this framework, students are positioned as passive recipients of knowledge rather than active participants in educational activities. These hierarchical relationships are built off of adultism, with assumptions that those who are older have more knowledge, skills,

and abilities (DeJong & Love, 2015). Younger individuals should abide by and passively accept the information given to them. Such ideologies reinforce the hierarchical relations in schools and the deficit lens of students as vulnerable beings needing to be shaped.

Schooling operates through prescriptive interactions. This can be seen in classrooms via semi-fixed, daily, intended outcomes. For example, when visiting traditional classrooms there will be a warm-up activity (e.g. do-nows). After the warm-up, there will be some variant of “students will be able to analyze, recognize, synthesize, etc.” The class finishes with an exit ticket, where students demonstrate “mastery” over the content and learning objective. This form of schooling is prescriptive; it allows little space for unpredictability, because unpredictability ruptures social regulation and reproduction. On the other hand, learning is about individual transformation, as one comes to a deeper understanding and new framing of an issue or phenomena that they engage with (Patel, 2016).

Students are rewarded or punished based upon mastery within these prescriptive entanglements. How well can a student perform at being silent while a teacher talks? How well can a student follow the structure of academic writing? How well does a student do at performing specific mathematical steps? The way one is punished or rewarded then becomes internalized; the self becomes the regulator for the state rather than the teacher or administrator (Foucault, 1995). The success of discipline’s power resides in (1) hierarchical observations, (2) normalizing judgments, which are combined in (3) examinations (Foucault, 1995). These three techniques of discipline justify and normalize power dynamics.

It is apparent that schools often operate as dehumanizing and oppressive spaces (Irizzary & Brown, 2014). Racial oppression, economic exploitation, and gender subjugation operate within schools via policy, curriculum, hierarchical relations, adultism, prescriptive entanglements, and varied forms of discipline and punishment. However, within this discussion and framing I am left wanting more. I am left wanting a description of how schooling operates as a nonhuman agent. How does schooling shift, change, and re-orient itself as we intervene and challenge oppression? I conceptualize schooling as a nonhuman agent, as being protean. With schooling being protean it is versatile, it changes as it is challenged. I coin the term agential schooling to illustrate this phenomenon of schooling as a nonhuman agent, and agential schooling serves as the central focus explored throughout this project.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

This study explores schooling in one school via a posthumanist, agential realist (Barad, 2007) analysis positioning schooling as an agent. Through this analysis and repositioning of schooling as a nonhuman agent, a more complex and dynamic understanding of schooling emerges. This new interpretation of schooling opens doors for innovative interventions to challenge schooling and create more just educational spaces. After this repositioning of schooling as a nonhuman agent I explore how agential schooling functions within a public high school with a majority Latinx student population. This project brings together three years of research. However, the bulk of this study focuses on the third year where I was immersed in an 11th grade Ethnic Studies classroom and an out-of-school youth participatory

action research (YPAR) endeavor. The YPAR site offered a space outside of school to better understand how agential schooling operates. Beyond exploring agential schooling, I also examined the possibilities and limitations of youth participatory action research (YPAR) to interrupt schooling. YPAR stands in opposition to schooling, as it is a process that includes (1) a collective examination of a problem, (2) trust that those most affected have skills and knowledge to address the problem, and (3) a desire to take action addressing the problem (McIntyre, 2000). To shed light on this issue of examining schooling as a nonhuman agent and the possibilities of YPAR to intervene in schooling, the following research questions are addressed:

1. How does schooling operate as a nonhuman agent in a public high school with a majority Latinx student population?
2. What are the core components and apparatuses of schooling and how do they operate in Vantage High?
3. What are the possibilities and challenges of using youth participatory action research (YPAR), for example, to intervene and disrupt schooling?

These questions help demonstrate how agential schooling, buttressed by the apparatuses mentioned above, operates via intra-actions between human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies. Intra-action, pulled from the work of Karen Barad (2007), refers to how actors are co-constitutive and entangled rather than self-contained entities. The intra-actions help illustrate how schooling is not the effect or outcome of human actions, but rather has agency and shifts as we seek to intervene and challenge it. By accounting for the nonhuman agency of schooling, this research

project widens our understanding of the agents operating in schools (human, nonhuman, and discursive).

Current State of Affairs: Situating the Project

This project was ruptured and produced various lines of flight because of the current socio-historical situation (e.g., heightened awareness of racism, COVID-19, and the economic crisis). However, the current moment is not a static or linear trajectory of time but an assemblage of various times, spaces, and events. With that being said, we are experiencing a moment of tremendous precariousness and instability. We are amidst a health pandemic paralleling the 1918 Spanish Flu, an economic crisis reminiscent of the Great Depression, and heightened awareness of white supremacist violence.

Within this current moment, we have seen a rise in civil unrest here in Vantage (pseudonym) to all around the globe as people are protesting police brutality, white supremacy, anti-Blackness, and the killing of Black people (e.g., George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and a Black transman – Tony McDade, among countless other Black Americans). President Trump refused to listen to the voices of the people and heightened the situation. Rather, he responded by stating he is the “president of law and order” and threatened the American people with the potential deployment of the U.S. military on its own citizens. As Christina Sharpe (2016) reminds us “the weather is the totality of our environments; the weather is the total climate; and that climate is antiblack” (p. 104). Still, in 2020, Black and Brown people are having to fight to be seen as human, still having to assert that Black Lives

Matter. In many ways, Black and Brown folks are still seen as matter rather than mattering as human (see Hartman, 2008). I am writing on the heels of leaving an anti-police brutality protest where Andrea, one of the students in my afterschool YPAR project, spoke to a crowd of over 1,000 people asserting the need to re-image our world and fight white supremacy.

The economic insecurity, health stressors, and “weather” of anti-Blackness have heavily impacted everyone’s lives, but even more so people of color as they are bearing the brunt of these pandemics. These viruses (capitalism, COVID-19, white supremacy) created ruptures in the research. Processes and methods went out the window. With everyone being overextended I refused to pursue certain avenues in the research to value the lived experiences of those involved. I did not follow certain lines of inquiry, attempt interviews with overburdened staff and students, nor emphasized work products over people. These refusals were agential cuts, and they produced certain boundaries within the project. The agential cuts will more thoroughly be discussed in future chapters. Events were cancelled, interviews not conducted, and messy ruptures and closures within the project.

Research Design: Agential Schooling

At certain moments, schooling emerges as an individual psychological situation, an economically producing phenomenon, and a discursive event. More importantly, the difficult question arises of how to best go about studying this phenomenon of schooling. I used Baradian (2007) agential realism, re-imagining

schooling, agential schooling, as a posthuman agent. Agential schooling is protean, shifting as it is challenged. Agential realism as Barad (2007) asserted, is:

an epistemological-ontological-ethical framework that provides an understanding of the role of human and nonhuman, material and discursive, and natural and cultural factors in scientific and other social-material practices. (p. 26)

Rosiek and Kinslow (2016) further noted agential realism accounts for the agency of the objects of our analysis, doing so by not positioning the object as a passive thing needing to be represented (representationalism), nor as an object that is socially determined by human views (social construction). This agential realist approach takes into account that schooling, as a nonhuman agent, has agency and shifts as we come to understand it. This conception of agential schooling will be further elaborated in the next chapter.

I use a case study of one high school, Vantage High, to study agential schooling via agential realism. This school in western Massachusetts has 1,500 students, and roughly 80% of the student population is Latinx (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2018). The state's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education put the school under state receivership due to poor academic performance (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2015). Within the school, my first research site was an 11th grade Ethnic Studies class that included one teacher and 15 students. A secondary research site, a youth participatory action research afterschool program, included six 9th and 10th grade students from Vantage High.

In this project, I conducted a yearlong ethnographic examination of schooling as a nonhuman agent, which built upon two years of previous work. Using

ethnography I pulled from Hong's (2011) layered ethnography where I was attentive to (1) my relationships with the human and nonhuman agents, and how those relationships shifted over time, while also (2) paying attention to what happened in the space. Critical ethnography reminded me to be observant of how power and domination operated (Madison, 2011). I participated in a yearlong YPAR project as a co-researcher with the youth who led the endeavor.

As mentioned, this project builds upon two years of work. During those two years I supported Ethnic Studies teachers and conducted YPAR in the school and in an afterschool program. Some data points emerged from the previous two years' work, but the majority of data came from the 2019-2020 school year. This project was two-fold: (1) looking at schooling as a nonhuman agent via agential realism, and (2) thinking through how YPAR might be used as a tool to intervene and interrupt agential schooling. I used participant observations (e.g., fieldnotes, jottings, memos, etc.), interviews, cognitive mapping, student and teacher writings, and other school artifacts as forms data.

I pulled from Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) *Thinking with Theory* plugging different events, texts, narratives, etc. into each other coming to new understandings of the entanglements. Methodologically, I pull from Jackson and Mazzei (2012) for two reasons (1) to "plug in" different phenomena, and (2) to move away from a traditional coding of the material, transitioning to thinking with and through the material via notions of "thinking with theory". I employed diffraction as a tool for analyzing the data. There are two conceptions of diffraction that I pulled from. First, the classical physics perspective, where diffraction is the

result of waves overlapping, interfering, and merging (see Haraway, 1992 & 1997). This perspective positions the observer as outside of the phenomenon, looking for the interference patterns. Second, quantum diffraction similarly looks at patterns of interference, but positions the researcher as part of the entangled phenomenon (Barad, 2007). Diffraction will be further expanded in chapter three.

Researcher Positionality

My positionality was important not because I am a distant objective observer, but rather because I was part of the phenomenon; I was entangled with the human and nonhuman actors. I am a white hetero cis-gendered 'Man' and each of these components of my identity was important both to how I operated and was perceived. As a researcher and doctoral student I was viewed as having some expertise, which was reinforced by white hegemony. Academically I trained in African American Studies, social justice education, and critical theories, all heavily influencing how I view schools and schooling. I often find schools to be hostile, dehumanizing spaces. These factors played a role in how I operated and was perceived. However, I also recognize that I am always becoming and entangled with other human, nonhuman, and discursive agents. I read different theories, my experiences, other individual's experiences, and data through one another to think deeply about what entanglements I was a part of while also examining what differences emerged. These readings of material through one another operated as moments of pause where I took note of the various manifestations of differences. My positionality is more fully discussed in chapter three.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

The rationale for this project emanated from my desire to have a deeper understanding of schooling, and to re-imagine it through a posthumanist lens paying close attention to schooling's nonhuman agency. By looking at schooling as a nonhuman agent we may come up with new and innovative ways to intervene and create more socially just spaces. This work pushes for educational scholars to engage with posthumanist scholarship and think about the role of nonhuman agents within educational spaces, specifically schools. We need to look more closely at the role of matter.

This scholarship makes three key interventions in the field of education. First, by re-imagining schooling as a nonhuman agent, this project illustrates that schooling is no longer some passive effect of processes, but rather is an agent, which is protean, and shifts as we come to challenge it. Second, this project elucidates the role of YPAR within schools and how it may interrupt and challenge schooling. Third, this project adds to the ever-growing field of posthumanist interventions within education. In summary, this project took a new approach to examine the agency of schooling and the potential for creating more socially just experiences.

Chapter Breakdowns

The following chapters layout the argument illustrating agential schooling and possibilities for creating educational experiences less steeped in domination, ones looking to new horizons. Each chapter demonstrates the agential cuts I made, a part of the process of making and unmaking. These findings did not emerge, but

rather were an entanglement of my interpretive apparatuses, humans, nonhumans, and discursive agents. There are many different cuts and angles that could be made and unmade to re-read the material anew. Chapter two provides one entry point into exploring the literature on schooling and youth participatory action research, which helps to situate the argument for agential schooling. Chapter three articulates the methodology used to illuminate agential schooling, the apparatuses supporting it, and the complicated entanglements that emerged in the classroom and school context. Beyond the methodology, chapter three presents material on the research site, participants, my political conceptualizing of 'Man' and human, followed with the research design and data analysis. Chapter four opens with a discussion of the school as agent demonstrating how the physical makeup of the school emphasizes and plays a productive role in surveillance, erasure, and centering Whiteness. Throughout the project, Whiteness spelled with a capital W is referencing a system of racial domination and economic exploitation (further elaborated upon later in the chapter) while any lowercase spelling of whiteness is an indication of the socially constructed racial category. The chapter then transitions to push against oversimplifications and dualistic notions of schooling by discussing the Ethnic Studies freedom dreaming that emerged in classroom B7.

Chapter five provides an analysis of the key apparatuses that support agential schooling. Within this chapter, I demonstrate how adultism, hierarchical relationships, policy, curriculum, prescriptive entanglements, and discipline/surveillance/punishment operated in both B7 and the larger school. Chapter six builds upon chapter five by focusing on specific agential cuts and

particular entanglements that illustrate how apparatuses (e.g., curriculum) were entangled with human, nonhuman, and discursive agents reproducing the very thing that the teacher and students were trying to disrupt. I made agential cuts, which could be made differently producing different findings. This work focused on how clipboards, teacher write-ups, resignation letters, and policies are agents playing a productive role within the school. After discussing these spooky entanglements of human, nonhuman, and discursive agents, I move to a diffractive analysis where I read the entanglements through one another looking at what differences and matter comes to matter.

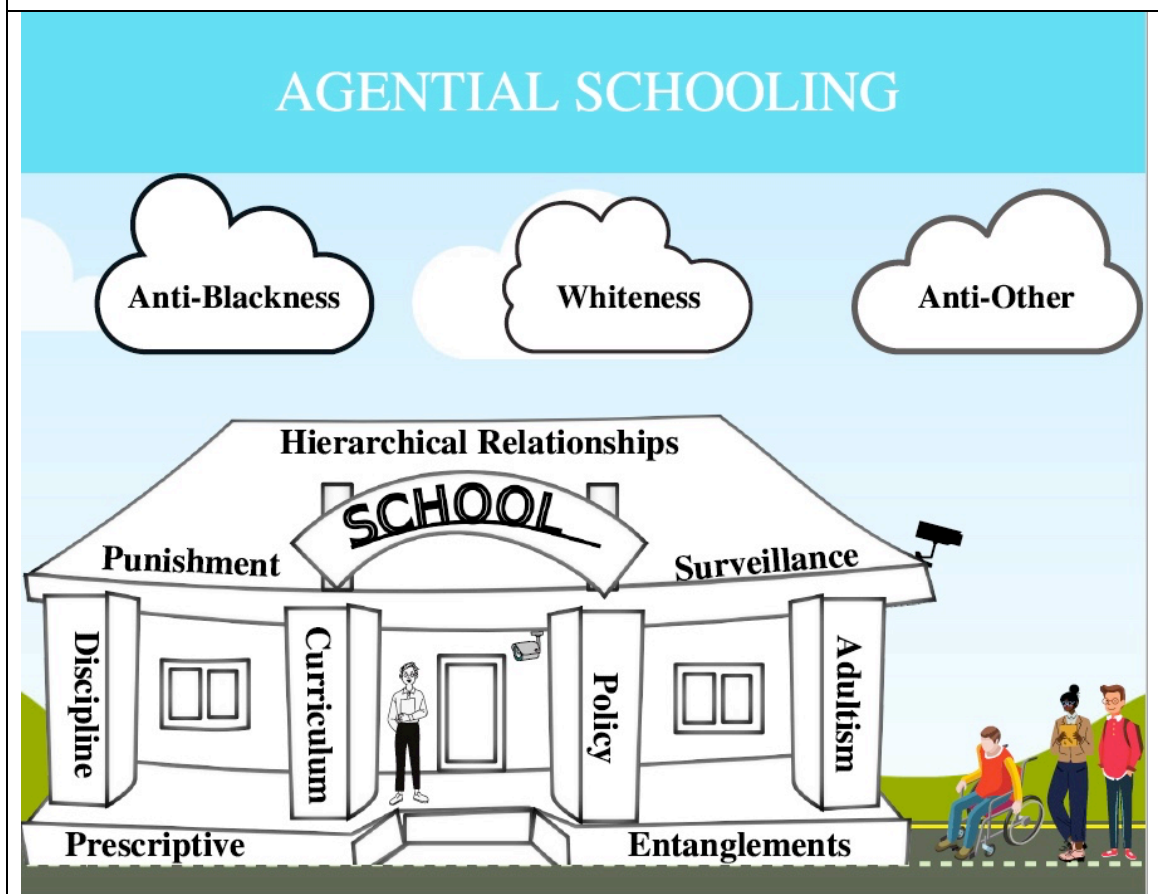
Chapter seven explores how schooling emerged in an afterschool youth participatory action research (YPAR) project. This site was chosen because YPAR is often known to be a space that epistemologically runs counter to schooling. However, even in such liberatory spaces schooling operates. Chapter seven outlines various emergent schooling and learning lines of flight demonstrating a less dualistic vision of educational endeavors. This chapter also articulates that YPAR is not seen as the tool to disrupt schooling, but rather in this specific instance provided an opportunity to push against schooling. Chapter eight provides speculative concluding lines of flight focusing on dream killers, places of possibility, and becomings...

Toward Agential Schooling

The posthumanist analysis of agential schooling accounts for the entanglement of human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies. By analyzing the

apparatuses (e.g., policy, curriculum, hierarchical relations, adultism, prescriptive entanglements, discipline, and punishment) buttressing agential schooling and their entanglement with humans, discourses, and nonhuman agents we can create innovative interventions to push against issues of moral injury and dehumanizing schools. Figure 1 provides a graphic illustration of the apparatuses of agential schooling along with the climate/weather of Vantage, Whiteness that was saturated with anti-Blackness and anti-Otherness. This conversation of climate and weather will be more full discussed in future chapters. Agential schooling widens our view of schooling, as it is no longer viewed as an effect but rather operates with agency.

Figure 1: *Agential Schooling Apparatuses*



CHAPTER 2:

SCHOOLING, YPAR, AND POSTHUMANISM

As Samantha, a 9th grade Ethnic Studies student noted in the introduction, “school is where dreams come to die.” While this is a pessimistic view, for Samantha and many students of color in urban schools, schools are often oppressive spaces. Samantha equates school with schooling. Schooling is a form of social regulation and reproduction, which reinforces problematic racial, gendered, and classed domination (Anyon, 1981; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Patel, 2016; Vaught, 2017). However, schools are not solely sites of domination; they can and should be spaces of liberation and resistance. As history shows us, wherever there is oppression there is resistance (see Biondi, 2012; Blanton, 2014; Glen, 1988; hooks, 1994; Love, 2019; Morris, 1984; Moses & Cobb, 2001; Muñoz, 1989; Ture & Hamilton, 1967; Warren & Mapp, 2011). With a drive towards creating more just education spaces, we must carefully examine which forms of resistance are best suited to challenge agential schooling. Youth participatory action research (YPAR) operates as one form of resistance to schooling. However, with agential schooling being an agent, schooling can also appear within YPAR endeavors.

This literature review places schooling in conversation with YPAR. In the first section of the chapter I discuss agential schooling and nonhuman agency. I begin by outlining the historical effects of schooling based on racial, gendered, and economic domination. I then reposition schooling as a nonhuman agent via a posthumanist framing. After discussing the nonhuman agency of agential schooling I examine the

apparatuses that support it. The second portion of the chapter outlines YPAR and what it offers the field of education. I discuss YPAR's defining features, entry points, the individual and institutional benefits, and the tensions between schools and YPAR.

Schooling – A Brief History of the Effects

Schooling is a form of domination that takes on racial, economic, and gendered dynamics to bolster white middle-class hegemony. These are not the only forms of domination present within schooling, but they are driving forces in our current society and schools. What follows is a historical outline of the effects of schooling's domination based on issues of race, gender, and class. This expands upon the discussion presented in the introduction to provide more nuanced historical and theoretical details.

Race

The United States is a settler colonial nation, but this is rarely acknowledged in schools; schools often provide narratives of the U.S. as a linear progression towards a more just society (Patel, 2019). Schooling's erasure of the violence of settler colonialism and reframing the narrative as progression illustrates how schools often center Eurocentric ways of knowing and being that dehumanize, delegitimize, and erase Black, Indigenous, and Latinx people.

Chattel slavery, a foundational component of the United States, heavily influenced both the country's economic structure and the way that race was conceived and enacted (Jordan, 1968; Litwack, 1961; Melish, 1998; Painter, 2010).

Mills (1999) asserts there is a racial contract “between those categorized as white over the nonwhites, who are thus the objects rather than the subject of the agreement” (p. 12). Simply stated, whites are privileged and nonwhites exploited for their lands, bodies, resources, and denied access to opportunities (Mills, 1999). Leonardo (2013) expands the racial contract by coining the educational racial contract illustrating racial oppression in schools where:

Minority children lie outside of this learning paradigm because all the dehumanizing machinations of schools have failed to bring them in line. They have not shed their subperson status, thus better to define them as substudents. (p. 608)

Schools are “spaces of Whiteness...all of which function to terrorize students of color” (Love, 2019, p. 13). Students of color are often dehumanized, overly policed, and depicted as deviant because schools are influenced by the system of Whiteness.

A core component of race in the United States is Whiteness, a system of domination that centers white supremacy. Whiteness is based on economic exploitation and racial domination thus, “Whiteness...is a socially informed ontological and epistemological orientation” (Gusa, 2010, p. 468). Whiteness is “a set of power relations” (Mills, 1999, p. 127). Historically, whiteness and blackness are placed within a binary where whiteness represents free and Black as slave (Painter, 2010). Within this binary, Black is fashioned as a problem; for example, Dumas (2016) discussed anti-Blackness educational policy agendas where “Black is...nonhuman; inherently uneducable, or at very least, unworthy of education” (p. 16). Simply put, whiteness represents good and Blackness as bad.

The system of Whiteness positions whites as dominant and they set the terms of how nonwhites must operate (Gusa, 2010). As McLaren (1998) noted, “for

many economically disadvantaged students, success in school means a type of forced cultural suicide, and in the case of minority youth, racial suicide” (p. 205). These forms of domination run rampant in society and heavily influence how schools function. Students of color must assimilate and adapt to the dominant, white middle-class ways of being (Cabrera, 2019).

The effects of this domination can be seen through the history of schooling for nonwhites. For example, when it came to Native American education in the 19th century, educators deliberately crusaded “to fundamentally alter an Indigenous way of life” (Rury, 2016, p. 107). In one of the earliest colonial endeavors at ‘educating’ Native people, John Eliot, Harvard College President, used schools as an attempt to organize religious transformation (Tanis, 1970). Whites taught Native Americans: English, carpentry, masonry, Calvinist theology, Massachusetts’s laws, and a select few were sent to learn Latin and Greek (Tanis, 1970). Eliot aimed to socially transform Indigenous peoples’ lives, an act of erasure.

When it came to white people’s priorities in educating Native Americans, they stressed “providing rudimentary education, individualizing Indians, Christianizing them, and citizenship training” (Adams, 1995, p. 21). This education was meant to “transform Indian children into mirrors and messengers of Anglo-American civilization” (Gram, 2016, p. 256). Three of the major priorities emphasized a shifting of Indigenous ways of being. Whites focused on changing intellectual frameworks, moving from Indigenous belief systems to “civilized branches of knowledge” (e.g., arithmetic, science, history, and the arts), but also Indigenous people would never be able to fully master these knowledges as they

could never fully become white (Adams, 1995). This process dehumanized Indigenous people in two ways. First, Indigenous ways of knowing were trivialized and explained away as an irrational savage past. Second, this process indicated that because Native peoples were “Native” they could not fully acquire the ability to master “civilized branches of knowledge” (Adams, 1995, p. 21). This framing reinforced a social hierarchy where Native people could not rise above “Native”.

Beyond rudimentary education, whites emphasized individualization, which attempted a disruption of traditional tribal life focused on community (Brayboy & Lomawaima, 2018). This disruption of a communal way of living aimed to destabilize Indigenous ways of being while also trying to bring Indigenous people into the individualized capitalist society. Community centered ways of being are antithetical to capitalism’s possessive individualism. Like individualism, Christianizing Native peoples brought them into the fold of the orthodox and dogmatic Christian structure of the nation. Indigenous belief systems around interconnectivity with nonhuman beings stood in opposition to exploitative capitalist ideas of individual possessions, consumerism, and exploitation. Citizenship training also aimed to strip Native peoples of their traditional identities replacing it with a form of blind patriotism. In discussing the hope for transforming Indigenous peoples, Adams (1995) asserted that whites wanted “all vestiges of his former self eradicated” (p. 24). The question then arises, how did whites go about doing this work?

There were three institutions for training Native Americans: reservation day schools, reservation boarding schools, and off-site reservation boarding schools

(Adams, 1995). Beyond the school site, public performances like ‘Decoration Day Parades’ played a role in the attempt at transforming Native youth (Gram, 2016). These schooling approaches attempted to strip Native youth of their Indigenous ways of knowing and being. The federal government not only enrolled students in schools, but also abducted students in attempts at forced assimilation (Piccard, 2013). The Carlisle school, the most famous off-site reservation school, stressed individualization and stripping youth of their native ways; the school administrators cut the students’ hair, changed their clothes, renamed them (e.g. European sounding names not tied to Indigenous belief systems), and used regimented time rather than natural time (Adams, 1995). The mentality of whites educating Indigenous people can be summarized by Carlisle School founder Richard Pratt’s statement, “kill the Indian in him and save the man” (Rury, 2016, p. 110). Although the statement could be modified to read, “Kill the Indian, create a submissive servant.” The process of “forced assimilation persisted until the passage of the 1953 Indian Termination Act” (Piccard, 2013, p. 151). However, in 2017, Native boys were still punished by public schools for their Native ways of being and knowing, Jabez Oates was sent home from a Texas school due to his long hair (Brayboy & Lomawaima, 2018). However, these processes failed to force Indigenous youth to fully adopt American culture (Rury, 2016). Succinctly stated, Native students experienced schooling that “enacted cultural and linguistic genocide” (Love, 2019, p. 135). Furthermore, the United States government never officially apologized in meaningful ways for the brutality of the Indian boarding schools (Piccard, 2013). Assimilation is still a driving force in schooling and the education of Native youth (Brayboy & Lomawaima, 2018).

Like the education of Native Americans, the teaching of African Americans was not done with neutral intentions; as Milner (2015) reminds us, there is no neutrality in education. In discussing the history of whites educating African Americans, whites “primarily offered education for degradation” (Rury, 2016, p. 107), or what Woodson (1933) called the “enslavement of his mind” (p. 87). For example, white educators and philanthropists stressed manual labor as a representative of African American educational excellence (Anderson, 1998). Woodson (1933) asserted the American education system attempted to train “the Negro to be white” while simultaneously illustrating that as impossible (p. 15). Furthermore, the majority of Black children would not have access to public high schools until well after World War II (Anderson, 1998). Even after Black children gained access to education it was often inequitable; integration was meant to be a great equalizer, but in reality, forced Black students to acculturate to white schools (Cecelski, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 2004). The history, names, and traditions of those Black schools were lost when they closed (Cecelski, 1994). Integration often acted as a form of erasure. For students of color to succeed in schools, they habitually had to adopt a white worldview, which McLaren (1998) equates with a form of “racial suicide” (p. 205).

Individual, structural, and systemic forms of racism heavily impact the experiences of Black and Brown youth (Milner, 2015). This can be traced back to early forms of educational domination. Anderson’s (1998) seminal examination of the education of Blacks in the South illustrates how whites attempted to exclude and marginalize African Americans seeking educational opportunities. The Hampton

model, which emerged in the 1820s, illustrated this domination stressing manual labor as the “criterion for educational excellence” for African Americans (Anderson, 1988, p. 49).

With overt racism being named, labeled, and challenged via attempts at desegregation, schooling shifted. Desegregation further marginalized and destabilized Black communities rather than supporting their advancement (Ladson-Billings, 2004). During desegregation, the Black schools closed and Black teachers lost their jobs; history was lost with these closures, along with the destabilization of Black communities (e.g., school names, mascots, and mottos) (Cecelski, 1994). Ladson-Billings (2004) illustrated five problems or costs of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision: (1) job loss, (2) “reinscription of Black inferiority”, (3) rise of all-white academies, (4) a missed opportunity to create working-class interracial coalitions, and (5) a “focus on race over quality education” (p. 9). Whites either attempted to repress Black educational endeavors or tried to shape it in ways that served Whiteness, contradicting the wishes of Black communities (Anderson, 1988).

Since the mid-1980s, Black students’ enrollment increased in majority minority schools (Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016, p. 5). Around 75% of students in the 1990s attended segregated schools and “segregated minority schools have more low-income children, lower scores on standardized tests, less-qualified teachers, and fewer advanced courses” (Rury, 2016, p. 214). Racial domination has been a continued component of schooling.

Whites used schooling to marginalize and oppress Latinx populations (e.g., Hispano, Mexicano, Mexican American, etc.), similarly as they did Native American

and African Americans. The major tool used against Latinx students, Americanization, attempted to strip students of their culture and replace it with a form of blind nationalism (Sánchez, 1993). Americanization used (1) flag ceremonies, (2) a focus on U.S. national heroes in schools, (3) patriotic celebrations, and (4) a whitewashed curriculum to deculturalize Latinx students (Spring, 1997, p. 5). Americanization discouraged minority group cultures while inculcating white middle-class ways of knowing and being (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998). Schooling emphasized cultural deprivation.

This process of deculturalization focused on: (1) isolating and segregating students, (2) forced language change, (3) curriculum reflecting dominant White narratives, (4) denial of cultural and religious expressions, and (5) white teachers as instructors rather than teachers of color (Spring, 1997). Americanization also pushed for Mexican American and Latinx communities to move away from their cultural identities and take up a subservient place within America's social hierarchy (Sánchez, 1993).

Like African Americans, Mexican American students have historically been segregated either by entire schools or specific classrooms within schools (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998). Schools subtract resources from students by dismissing youth culture (e.g., their ways of knowing and being) along with using assimilationist policies "designed to divest Mexican students of their culture and language" (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 20). Latinx students are given inferior resources and are dehumanized. This dehumanization leads to lower school completion rates. As San Miguel and Valencia (1998) acknowledged, white to Latino completion rates

had a 27 point gap in 1975 (white completion rate of 65% versus a Latino completion rate of 38%) and then a 30 point gap in 1995 (white completion at 83% and Latino at 53%). Not only were students of color graduating at drastically lower rates, but that gap widened over a 20-year period.

This work illustrates that individual, institutional, and systemic racism heavily influences the educational outcomes of students. The various forms of racism not only hinder the development of students, but they create an ideological structure which educators may use to understand students, families, and communities (Leonardo, 2013). Racism, working in combination with schooling, further services the needs of the system of Whiteness by exploiting and marginalizing Black and Brown bodies.

Gender and Sexuality

Similar to race, gender and sexuality are used to reinforce a white hetero-patriarchal social order. For example, sexism, either hostile (e.g., negative beliefs, attitudes, and actions towards those who violate patriarchal notions of gender) or paternalistic (e.g., men needing to protect women), operates to stabilize gender norms and male dominance (Leaper & Spears, 2014). Within schools, sexism manifests via the intra-actions between adults and students, student-to-student, popular media influences, or via familial engagements that affect the academic attitudes of students (Leaper & Spears, 2014). Teachers can hold hostile views of students and African American girls are often stereotyped as “aggressive, loud, rude, sexual...violent, and crime prone” (Lopez & Nuño, 2016, p. 30). Girls of color labeled as “at-risk” often are “viewed by educators and schools as misfits, dangerous or

unwanted bodies” (Hines-Datiri, 2017, p. 33). These stereotypes lead to detrimental learning outcomes for students of color. African American and Latinx youth are more likely than their white counterparts to be identified as having a learning disability (Stearns & Glennie, 2006). The interconnectedness and intra-action of racism, sexism, and historical representations of women of color produce problematic relations of domination.

Sexism, via peer-to-peer actions, often manifests either as sexual harassment (e.g., unwanted sexual comments, unwanted touching, sexual intimidation) or teasing “gender-atypical classmates” (Leaper & Spears, 2014, p. 194). The American Association of University Women (2011), in a national survey of 7-11th graders, found that 56% of girls and 40% of boys encountered sexual harassment. This form of domination reinforces a patriarchal society. This harassment objectifies and dehumanizes students making schools feel unsafe.

Schools further marginalize and dominate students who identify as LGBT+. In discussing students coming out, Wyss (2004) acknowledged that students “lose friends...and most face constant harassment from their peers, ranging from being called ‘faggot’ or ‘dyke’ to beating, rape and, occasionally, murder” (p. 710). Not only do these actions make schools feel unsafe, but they also cause tremendous emotional trauma. Within Wyss’s (2004) case study, 23 of 24 LGBT+ individuals noted that they experienced forms of violent harassment. Many LGBT+ students find schools hostile, which result in these students having, “lower GPAs, fewer plans to pursue postsecondary education, higher rates of depression, and lower self-esteem” (Abreu, Black, Mosley, & Fedewa, 2016, p. 325). This oppression not only manifests

in peer comments and actions, but also by the actions and/or inaction of teachers and administrators (Kosciw, Greytak, Palmer, & Boesen, 2014). In a survey of 7,898 students from grades 6 to 12, including participants from all 50 states, Kosciw, Greytak, Palmer, and Boesen (2014) found that 51% of students heard homophobic comments from teachers and school staff. From the students who reported their targeted attacks, 62% said that the school did nothing to remedy the situation (Kosciw, Greytak, Palmer, & Boesen, 2014). Students do not only have to endure peer harassment, but they also have to deal with bigoted school staff and/or the staff being silent and not taking action to remedy the violence.

Biased school practices, policies, and policing oppress girls of color (Hines-Datiri, 2017). For example, girls of color are suspended at higher rates (Hines-Datiri, 2017), over identified in special education (Wun, 2016), and less likely to be in STEM (Koch, Lundh, & Harris, 2015). Girls of color are frequently punished for “subjectivity defined behaviors” (Murphy, Acosta, & Kennedy-Lewis, 2013); Black girls are often viewed as disruptive or defiant (Morris, 2016). Nationally, African American girls are nearly 4 times (11%) as likely to be suspended compared to white girls (3%), and one factor in this data is that many white teachers are disconnected to the lived experiences and culture of their students of color (Murphy, Acosta, & Kennedy-Lewis, 2013). Unfortunately, as Love (2019) asserted, “suspension is a birthright of being young and Black” (p. 5). Similarly, when encountering the juvenile justice system black girls are 31% more likely to receive probation than white girls (Lopez & Nuño, 2016, p. 25). These coercive factors all influence girls of color in dropping out and being pushed out, resulting in “higher

unemployment rates, earning less income...and having adverse health outcomes” (Hines-Datiri, 2017, p. 28). Gender bias reinforces white hetero-patriarchal ways of being.

Economic

As noted in the introduction, social class is often equated with school knowledge. Schools communicate to students that only a very few will be at the top, and the rest will play subservient roles (Vaught, 2017). The work of Bowles and Gintis (1976) illustrated one of the most comprehensive analyses of schooling in relation to capitalist economic life; they frame educational institutions as spaces that “perpetuate the social relationships of economic life...by facilitating a smooth integration of youth into the labor force” (p. 11). This integration varies based upon one’s social location (class, gender, race, etc.).

The politics of education, as Bowles and Gintis (1976) position it, is based on a need for social control in a “rapidly changing economic order” (p. 27). This politic is about fitting individuals into the needs of the economy. The success factors of twentieth century Industrial capitalism, “efficiency, productivity, standardization, interchangeability...discipline, attention, scheduling, conformity, hierarchical administration, the separation of knowing and doing... were discovered and crafted in the workplace and then transported to society...institutionalized in schools, hospitals...” (Zuboff, 2019, p. 411). Bowles and Gintis (1976) further assert that bias based upon race, gender, and class “do not produce, but rather reflect” society (p. 85). I disagree, in that I position this as mutually co-constitutive; yes, schools reflect social privilege and hierarchy, but they also produce this hierarchy. Meritocratic

views, where one succeeds based upon their skills and cognitive abilities, buttress and legitimize this process (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Mirra & Morrell, 2011). To reproduce these mindsets, the education system has to teach youth to be subordinate. An aspect of this framing is a ‘correspondence principle’, a replication of the hierarchy of labor (e.g., the hierarchical relationships between administrators, teachers, and students) (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). For example, just as workers often lack control over their labor, and feel a sense of alienation due to this, so too do students lack control over the curriculum and content in school. Schools abstract the “contradictions between accumulation and reproduction,” and thus they play a large role in normalizing, preserving, and furthering capitalist control (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 240).

Looking at the specific relationship between schools and class, Anyon (1981) illustrated how schools taught very different processes and content based upon the social class of students. Working class students are often denied access to college preparatory curriculum (Bertrand, 2019). Working class schools stressed rote memorization or simple follow through completion tasks emphasizing procedural processes (e.g., copy notes off the board or answer textbook questions) (Anyon, 1981).

Middle class schools were more flexible, and emphasized conceptual forms of knowledge that the working class schools lacked (Anyon, 1981). However, this process still relied upon the banking methods where students were ‘given’ knowledge (Freire, 1970). Middle class schools reinforce capitalist notions of commodification, as the production of knowledge holds a market value rather than

“personal use or for social transformation” (Anyon, 1981, p. 34). Schooling for access to social positioning, not learning.

Affluent and elite schools underscored discovery, creativity, reasoning, and problem solving (Anyon, 1981). These schools stressed individualism. The curriculum and classroom discussions never took a critical look at social class, wealth, or power (Anyon, 1981). From working class schools emphasizing rote memorization to executive schools focus on reasoning and problem solving, Anyon (1981) illustrated that schools reproduce social hierarchy and fit the needs of the state’s economic structure. Vaught (2017) reminds us that schools function to serve the state.

As McLaren (1998) succinctly stated, “the consequences of schooling are increasingly dependent on the social class of the child” (p. 9). For example, schools with large working-class and student of color populations are often overcrowded and have more unqualified teachers compared to their affluent white counterparts (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2004). Many schools operate in complex ways that differ from Anyon’s (1981) class-based schools, as individual schools can house students from a variety of social class backgrounds. Tracking is used to isolate and separate students within these mixed schools (Modica, 2015). Within racially diverse schools, Black students are often crowded out of college prep classes (Lucas & Berends, 2007). Individual students are tracked (i.e., divided into categories) so that the student body can be separated into the various types of classes (Burris, 2014; Oakes, 2005). This tracking can be impacted by parental power, as parents with influence often push their children into high-

level courses (LeTendre, Hofer, & Shimizu, 2003). Tracking creates an “illusion of meritocratic competition while in reality functioning as a ranking system” (McLaren, 1998, p. 9). This tracking, often based upon gender, race, and social class, reinforces the pre-existing social hierarchy and can cause social and emotional harm (Modica, 2015).

Tracking has four key features (Oakes, 2005). First, students are separated in quite public processes. Second, after the students are differentiated, they are labeled, and these labels and characterizations affect the ways that teachers view the students (Oakes, 2005). Third, students then are individualized within these groupings and “defined by others” (Oakes, 2005, p. 3). Fourth, because of the sorting of students and the way they are perceived due to these classifications, students “are treated by and experience schools very differently” (Oakes, 2005, p. 3). Tracking reinforces the social and economic hierarchy of schools.

Adults track students (i.e. sort them) based upon a variety of factors (social class, race, gender, etc.), which reinforces the social class school knowledge cycle (Oakes, 2005; McLaren, 1998). This process of tracking reinforces notions of those from lower classes as destined for lower status, and neoliberal educational agendas reinforce the notion that any failure should be internalized as their own deficit (Mirra & Morrell, 2011). Neoliberalism emphasizes competitive markets and uses “testing and test scores as a management technique” (Henderson & Hursh, 2014, p. 169). Neoliberal “technoscientific authority” and “data driven instruction” undermine local communities and their abilities to “shape and govern the education of their children” (Henderson & Hursh, 2014, p. 177). The neoliberal market driven

approach is lucrative for for-profit companies; for example, Pearson, Educational Testing Service, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, and McGraw-Hill “make \$2 billion a year in revenue while spending \$20 million a year lobbying for more mandated student assessment” (Love, 2019, p. 10).

Race, class, and gender play a large role in who has access to resources, privileges, voice (or who is silenced), positions of power, visibility, and who is deemed as trustworthy or not (Orelus, 2012). As this section demonstrates, schools and schooling have (re)produced, reinforced, and expanded racial, gender, and economic oppression. However, much of the literature discussed denies the agency of schooling as a nonhuman agent and limits the scope of possible inquiry. What follows is an outline of posthumanism, which allows for the examination of the agency of schooling.

Posthumanism

Prior to examining schooling through a posthumanist lens, I define the need for posthumanism and what it offers. Much of the Western thought, dating back to Descartes, emphasizes a mind-body dualism while centering “the humanist ideal of ‘Man’ as the allegedly universal measure of all things” (Braidotti, 2018, p. 2). This mind-body split is tied to the specific Western tradition. Indigenous ways of knowing and being do not follow this episteme. Indigenous peoples and scholars for centuries have emphasized relationality and challenged anthropocentrism (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Hunt, 2014; Smith 1999; Sundberg, 2014; Watts, 2013). Humanists center ‘Man’ as the measure for all comparison and aim to create “responsible,

rational citizens according to a model that structures ancient Greek...philosophy” (Snaza, 2015, p. 19). Both the centering of the human and construction of the mind-body dualism limits potential avenues of investigation (e.g., only human as actors) and reinforces binaries (e.g., human /nonhuman, nature/culture, mind/body).

Furthermore, due to this humanist ideal and at least since the Enlightenment, there has been the creation of a binary distinguishing human from non-human in Western thought (Braidotti, 2019). Posthumanism refers to the deconstruction and decentering of the human (Ferrando, 2019; Taylor, 2016). As Barad (2007) noted, “Posthumanism...understands humans as part of nature and practices of knowing as natural processes of engagement with and as part of the world” (pp. 331-332). This approach “does not define a new human condition, but offers a spectrum through which we can capture the complexity of ongoing subjectformation” (Braidotti, 2018, p. 6). Posthumanism expands upon an early generation of scholars critically investigating anthropocentrism. This expansion builds upon “feminist, gender, and queer studies, and postcolonial studies” which worked “to emancipate themselves from the dialectics of anthropomorphic oppositional hierarchical relations” (Braidotti, 2017, p. 86). Posthuman scholarship questions conceptions of the separation of the researcher/subject, representationalism, and that language and data are transparent depictions of the ‘real’ (Davies, 2018).

Simply stated, posthumanism acknowledges that the human is “a cultural, historical production” (Snaza & Weaver, 2015, pp. 1-2). Posthumanists position notions of the human as dynamic rather than static (Ferrando, 2020). The deconstruction of the human as self-contained acknowledges the entanglements of

humans with other human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies, recognizing that the human is not a self-contained entity (Barad, 2007). Decentering the human widens the research lens and allows the researcher to see the interconnectivity and co-constituting force of the entanglement of bodies (human, nonhuman, and discursive). Similarly, posthumanism decenters the notion of the human authorial voice. The human is a part of the world in its becoming. As Bennett (2016) asserts, posthumanism “aspires to engage the ‘other’ aspects of reality that get missed or marginalized by the human-centered model” (p. 59). The human centered approach disregards the agency of nonhuman actors. Within a posthumanist framing one can account for thing-power, “the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle” (Bennett, 2010, p. 6). Thing-power illustrates that humans are not the only actors within a phenomenon. Thing-power and posthumanism are tools for rethinking units of reference. No longer is the human the central point of reference (Braidotti, 2013). There is a recognition of the more-than-human world.

Beyond thing-power, posthumanism makes an intervention in how we perceive reality. As Rosiek (2019) notes, “the implication is that reality is protean; it moves in response to the way we seek to know it. We in turn respond and accommodate that movement” (p. 80). Reality is ongoing and dynamic with entangled bodies co-constituting each other (Barad, 2007). For example, Rosiek (2019) analyzes racism via posthumanism and notes it is a “protean ontological phenomenon with an agency of its own,” further illustrating how institutional racism demonstrates this, “it is flexible and evolves in response to our collective

efforts to resist it” (p. 74). Posthumanism allows for us to account for the protean nature and agency of nonhuman bodies. Just as Rosiek (2019) explores the nonhuman agency of racism, I am using posthumanism to analyze the nonhuman agency of schooling, agential schooling. In summary, posthumanism allows for the examination (1) of the entanglement and co-constitution of human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies, (2) nonhuman agency (e.g., thing-power), and (3) widens our research lens by decentering the human.

Apparatuses of Agential Schooling: Hidden Curriculum to Adultism

Agential schooling, a nonhuman agent that is protean, shifts when challenged; it functions as a form of domination supported by policies, curriculum, hierarchical relationships, adultism, prescriptive entanglements, discipline, rewards, and punishment. This conception of schooling, agential schooling, shifts from previous scholarship, as it acknowledges the protean nature of schooling and recognizes its nonhuman agency.

Policy and educational reform are influenced both by fear and hope, and these fears and hopes are influenced by religion, culture, wealth, etc. (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Policies are meant to shape the future, and in doing so they propose certain avenues for progress and circumscribe others (see Kaestle, 1983; Rury, 2016; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). For example, during the common school era there was an emphasis on moral education (e.g., character, discipline, virtue, good habits, etc.), precision, standardization, and routine as there was a belief that this education could not only maintain society but also support the rapid growth in urban areas (Kaestle, 1983). Policy was connected to religious and moral beliefs along with

capitalist agendas. This was also seen during the progressive era as policy was used to attempt to adapt to the rapidly changing urban environments (Rury, 2016). There were pedagogical progressive reform policies as progressives were pushing for more engaged learning and youth actively investigating problems (Rury, 2016). However, there were also administrative progressives that emphasized bureaucratic reform and were focusing on directing social evolution (Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

Policy is meant to trickle down and guide social progress, however, it is never a straightforward process, and policies are often tweaked, changed, and adapted at local levels (Gamson, 2003). From the 1980s, and educational reports like *A Nation at Risk*, there has been a continual emphasis on neoliberal educational agendas (Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Strom, 2015). These policies are linked to capitalism and they emphasize “individualism, privatization, and competition” (Strom, 2015). From *No Child Left Behind* to *Race to the Top*, there is an emphasis on individual achievement and standardization (Patel, 2016). Similarly, anti-Blackness is rampant throughout policies as Black is always seen as deficient, lesser than, and often uneducatable (Dumas, 2016). Love (2019) reminds us that even progressive reform offers little more than survival tactics rather than transformation. Policies frame, shape, shift, and discursively orient what is and is not possible within the educational landscape. Policy often informs curriculum.

As has been noted, curriculum is often tied to social class. Working class youth are taught basic skills and facts, rather than more conceptual forms of discovery and creativity that wealthy students experience in their schooling (Anyon,

1981). Working class students copy notes and answer worksheets, reinforcing hierarchical relationships and adultism, as youth simply follow basic tasks requiring limited skills (Anyon, 1981). When entering the field and looking at the various curriculums in schools I must be attentive to: what is actually taught in classrooms, the learning that occurs in unexpected ways within the school, and the hidden curriculum. The enacted curriculum, what is taught in the classroom, has been explored via fidelity perspectives (how close the implementation of the intervention matches the intended plan), mutual adaptation (how the intervention is adapted when it is implemented), and curricular enactment (how students and teachers create educational experiences) (Snyder, Bolin, & Zumwalt, 1992). While examining the curriculum, I will focus on the curricular enactment. When thinking about the hidden curriculum I must be attentive to the “tacit teaching...of norms, values, and dispositions” (Apple, 2004, p. 13). For example, Rosiek and Kinslow (2016) demonstrate how the resegregation of public schools operates as a curriculum both on the minds and bodies of youth. Within the hidden curriculum:

Many unspoken assumptions underlie the activities of schooling, such as what knowledge is valuable, whose knowledge is valuable, the need for conformity, punctuality, and deference to authority. Implicit messages about gender, race, and class identity, as well as conceptions of our individual and collective futures. (Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016, p. 14)

All of these forms of curriculum influence the learning within and outside of the school building.

Another key component of schooling is the relationships between adults and youth. Often youth are seen as objects to be ruled, rather than participants in the process (Vaught, 2017). As Freire (1970) asserted, the relationship “involves a

narrating subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the students)” (p. 71).

This framework, the banking method, positions youth as vessels to be filled, rather than active participants in their own education (Freire, 1970). Freire (1970) actively sought to challenge banking education. The following table illustrates components of the banking method and problematic hierarchical relationships within schools.

Table 1: <i>Problematic Hierarchical Relationships</i>	
<u>The Teacher....</u>	<u>The Student...</u>
Teaches	Is taught
Has knowledge	Needs knowledge
Talks	Listens
Disciplines	Is disciplined
Chooses activities, curriculum, Class material, etc.,	Has the illusion of meaningful choice

These relationships normalize oppression and indoctrinate youth into hierarchical systems. Within schooling, adultism and prescriptive entanglements illustrate hierarchical relationships and forms of corrosive domination, as adults are seen as “credible authorities” while youth are viewed as passive and should follow the lead of adults (Bettencourt, 2018). Adultism is pervasive in schools, and adults see hierarchical relationships “as normal, natural, and inevitable” (DeJong & Love, 2015, p. 492). Furthermore, adultism generates entanglements where “youth are oppressed and their experiences dismissed” (Bettencourt, 2018, p. 1)

Adultism has three elements: interpersonal (shared negative attitudes of youth), institutional (practices, policies, or laws normalizing marginalizing and oppressing youth), and internalized (youth internalizing beliefs and feelings of inability) (Kennedy, 2018). Adultist and hierarchical relationships lead to

problematic prescriptive entanglements. Within prescriptive entanglements, youth are provided the illusion of meaningful choice. For example, when a teacher provides students with options for an assignment, the assignment is contained within a limited amount of possibilities. The students did not generate the parameters, they adapt to the given boundaries. Prescriptive entanglements represent material generated by adults but then navigated by youth, without their meaningful input on the content or process. These prescriptive entanglements can be content, process, or assignment. Prescriptive entanglement and bounded parameters reinforce social norms and socially reproductive processes, while learning, on the other hand, emphasizes unpredictability (Patel, 2016). Schooling is guided or dominated, while learning is about the unknown. In many instances, learning is a fugitive practice (Patel, 2019).

Discipline and punishment are apparatuses that reinforce social regulation and reproduction. As Foucault (1995) asserted, “discipline ‘makes’ individuals...[it] regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise” (p. 170). When it comes to disciplinary power, (1) hierarchical observations, (2) normalizing judgments, and the (3) examination are tools that make domination appear natural and normal (Foucault, 1995).

Schools are spaces of constant observation, be it surveilling students or teachers. As Gore (1995) illustrated, surveillance is the “supervising, closely observing, watching, threatening to watch or expecting to be watched” (p. 169). Surveillance operates from the top down and the bottom up, where adults observe and surveil other adults and youth, and youth observe and surveil other youth and

adults (Foucault, 1995). Initially, the teacher monitors and regulates, “student behavior/bodies, maintaining classroom order, through singling out particular individuals” (Gore, 1995, p. 169). Through his discussion of the panopticon, Foucault (1995) illustrated how surveillance becomes internalized and those surveilled start to internally surveil themselves. At a certain point, there is no need for the teacher to manage the behavior of the classroom, as the students start to internalize oppressive surveillance.

Normalizing judgments are “essentially corrective;” they sort, rank, punish, and reward students based on hierarchical distributions (Foucault 1995, p. 179). The corrective emphasis of normalizing judgments “impose homogeneity; but individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps” (Foucault, 1995, p. 184). These judgments, positioned as objective statements, act coercively to get youth to operate within the bounded system. This process of normalization sets a standard, which defines the normal (Gore, 1995). Lastly, the examination combines hierarchical observation and normalizing judgments as “it extracted from the pupil, a knowledge destined and reserved for the teacher” (Foucault, 1995, p. 187). The exam is positioned as an objective measurement of one’s ability. Combining hierarchical observations, normalizing judgments, and the exam produces what Foucault (1995) labeled the means of corrective training. These processes allow for classification (e.g., differentiating bodies and classifying them), which then permits the distribution (e.g., sorting, arranging, isolating, separating, and ranking) and regulation of bodies (e.g., controlling, sanctioning, rewarding, restricting, punishing, etc.) (Gore, 1995).

When looking at the underlying purposes of schooling there is a focus on social regulation, domination, social reproduction, adultism, compliance, and control. Within schooling, youth are to take up a role of 'studenting' where they are to be passive, comply, and work within bounded structures. These structures deny the possibilities for open inquiry and learning. Open inquiry and learning emphasize agency and unpredictability, which stand in opposition to the bounded and controlling nature of schooling (Patel, 2016). Youth participatory action research (YPAR) stands in opposition to schooling as it destabilizes the traditional hierarchy of student – teacher relationships and emphasizes student agency.

YPAR – Prescriptive Interactions to Open Inquiry

Schooling uses prescriptive interactions while youth participatory action research (YPAR) embodies open inquiry. At its core, YPAR asks, what is the purpose of research? This is a simple, but not so easy question to answer. As Appadurai (2006) questioned: who has the right to conduct research? Similarly, who benefits from research? Where and how should inquiry be conducted? What should be the end goals? YPAR scholars wrestle with these questions in hopes to create more ethical research and socially just educational endeavors. As Mirra, Garcia, and Morrell (2016) asserted, "YPAR...demands – that we reconsider the why, how, and who of educational practice and research" (p. 3).

YPAR work heavily focuses on justice and equity. At a foundational level, YPAR challenges traditional notions of who can participate in knowledge production (Bautista, Bertrand, Morrell, Scorza, & Matthews, 2013). Upending traditional

notions of knowledge construction, YPAR offers youth platforms to express their views in creative ways (Mirra, Garcia, & Morrell, 2016). By incorporating youth in the research from start to finish, YPAR contests adultism, allowing for more equitable participation (DeJong & Love, 2015). Along with integrating youth into the research project, YPAR is socio-historically rooted within specific localities and listens to community members serving the larger needs of the community (Chou et al., 2015). YPAR engages with and builds upon community cultural wealth. This cultural wealth includes (1) aspirational, (2) navigational, (3) social, (4) linguistic, (5) familial, and (6) resistance capital (Yosso, 2005). Like community cultural wealth, YPAR relies upon Indigenous knowledge bases and provides youth the skills necessary to maneuver oppressive systems while holding onto hope and resisting systems of oppression (Yosso, 2005).

YPAR as (Onto)Epistemology:

Moving from Prescriptive Schooling to Open Inquiry

YPAR is youth centered, participatory, action oriented, and research based. Some scholars view YPAR as an epistemological stance rather than a practice or research method (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). Framing YPAR as an epistemology shifts it from an add-on intervention to being viewed as an approach to knowledge generation. YPAR as an epistemology emphasizes a way of thinking about the position of youth within knowledge and knowledge production. This stance situates youth as active rather than just passive recipients and runs counter to deficit mindsets inherent in schooling's emphasis that "youth are either dangerous or

vulnerable” (Kirshner, 2015, p. 3). Furthermore, this framing asserts not only that youth are knowledge producers but also that their views and knowledge are vital.

Moving beyond YPAR as an epistemology, I view it as a part of an onto-epistemology and re-situate it in relation to posthumanism. YPAR is a humanist endeavor centering the experiences and knowledge of humans. Posthumanism, as Barad (2007) acknowledged, recognizes “that nonhumans play an important role in natural cultural practices” (p. 32). Decentering the human, posthumanist interventions emphasize the role of matter. Also labeled New Materialism, this approach explores “how we are constituted by both the material and the discursive without privileging one over the other” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 116). Individuals and their experiences have been the major emphasis in YPAR. In moving from humanism to posthumanism, Taylor (2016) asserts, “this involves replacing the idea that the human is a separate category from ‘everything else’ with an ethic of mutual relations” (p. 8). Using a posthumanist framing, we must look at how those individuals are entangled with matter and discursive phenomena, seeking to widen our understanding of those entanglements; there is a decentering of the human. At first glance, one might view posthumanism and YPAR as contradictory, but rather posthumanism expands the scope of analysis by taking into account the human, nonhuman, and discursive entanglements.

In onto-epistemology, Barad (2007) asserted, “knowing is a material practice of engagement as part of the world in its differential becoming” – a key component of understanding and knowledge generation is in our being (p. 89). For example, Barad (2007) noted, “we don’t obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we

know because we are of the world” (p. 185). More succinctly stated, “Onto-epistemology – is the study of knowing in being” (Barad, 2007, p. 185). From this standpoint, knowing and being are mutually supportive (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). Our modes of knowing establish our modes of being, and our modes of being establish our modes of knowing; they constantly intra-act. For example, if an individual holds an adultist epistemology and believes youth are fragile needing protection from the world, they will act in ways that replicate this view by limiting the ability for youth to assert their agency. How this person came to understand the world influences how they act in the world. These actions informed by the individual’s worldview reinforce that adultist view. Their actions reinforce their belief, and their beliefs influence their actions. YPAR and schooling have contradictory ways of knowing and being, competing onto-epistemologies.

In intra-action, there are no “distinct agencies that precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action” (Barad, 2007, p. 33). Jackson and Mazzei (2012) stated that within intra-activity, “discourse and matter are understood to be mutually constituted in the production of knowledge” (p. 115). Discourses, matter, and humans intra-act, mutually co-constituting the other. In engaging such ideas, Jocson (2016) demonstrates an example of intra-actions in the process of youth producing knowledge along with the enlivened matter of the classroom where the material and discursive collide to mutually constitute what is happening. Discussing teacher training, Lenz Taguchi (2010) introduced intra-active pedagogy as a tool for taking the material environment into consideration.

The following example illustrates the intra-action of human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies. A teacher implementing a YPAR project in a school uses a handout as a potential aid or guide to help the students jot down their ideas, questions, or findings. The students see the guide as “work,” as many of the handouts they are given in “school” are things to be completed. Thus, the students do not engage with the YPAR project trying to investigate their interests; rather, they do the work to complete the assignment. Here, the students’ beliefs about school impact their modes of being, and those beliefs are influenced by their actions in school. During this intra-activity, the discourses of school, the physical environment (i.e., classrooms, desks, etc.), the handout, the “teacher,” and “students” co-constitute how those individuals operate. This example illustrates that even when schooling is disrupted, it re-orientates itself to maintain a form of domination. While YPAR stands in opposition to schooling, this example demonstrates the agency of schooling.

There are often conflicting onto-epistemologies between classrooms and YPAR. Within YPAR, it is not just that we have an epistemological orientation but also that we have a specific way of being. Our modes of being in YPAR influence our beliefs and modes of knowing. Our knowing and being are not separate but constantly intra-acting. A YPAR practitioner does not only believe that youth are vital to making change, but they also act in ways that elevate and support youth. Taking up a posthumanist perspective these practitioners must also recognize that a part of their being and knowing emerges from their intra-action “with other bodies, both human and nonhuman” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 111). These practitioners

need to acknowledge that discursive and material objects play a role constituting the individual, and vice versa. In other words, as YPAR practitioners, we need to see that matter, matters.

Humanizing research, a core component of YPAR methods, focuses on creating space where “individuals and communities can work collaboratively toward more fully realizing their human potential” (Irizarry & Brown, 2014, p. 65). This humanizing component is often absent in schooling. In the first article to discuss PAR with youth, McIntyre (2000) stressed three guiding principles: (1) collective examination of a problem, (2) trust and belief in Indigenous knowledges as foundational to understanding the problem, and (3) a desire to take action both at the individual and/or collective level to address the problem. YPAR takes a pivot from traditional modes of research and schooling as it shifts how and where we view knowledge residing (Fine, 2008).

YPAR challenges notions of objectivity democratizing “the right to research” (Stoudt, Fox, & Fine, 2012, p. 180). Youth are both knowledge holders and builders (Ayala, 2009). As Scott, Pyne, and Means (2015) asserted, “YPAR is multivocal. By valuing the perspective of all stakeholders, it recognizes...the strength of counterstories that challenge accepted perspectives of the world and give voice to hidden or silenced knowledges” (pp. 139-140). YPAR aims for the emergence of subjugated knowledges by valuing the voices of those most impacted by injustices (Mirra, Garcia, & Morrell, 2016; Scorza, Bertrand, Bautista, Morrell, & Matthews, 2017).

YPAR pulls from critical theory as “researchers attend to how power in social, political, cultural, and economic contexts informs the ways people act in everyday situations” (MyIntyre, 2008, p. 3). YPAR, then is, both a “pedagogy of resistance” and a means of transformation (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). Disrupting hierarchy, it acts as a “counter-hegemonic research” (Ayala, 2009, p. 67). These points indicate key differences between schooling and YPAR. First, schooling emphasizes social regulation and assimilation while YPAR sheds light on the corrosive process of social regulation. Second, schools intend to reproduce structures and hegemony while YPAR aims to challenge systems and operates as a counter-hegemonic space.

In brief, the YPAR acronym summarizes its parts. YPAR is (Y) youth centered, (P) participatory in nature, (A) action oriented and (R) research based. As an intellectual space, YPAR aims to democratize the production of knowledge in attempts to make change with community rather than for communities. It is a “form of resistance, a decolonizing and democratic tool, and a radically inclusive approach to research” (Scorza et al., 2017, p. 144). YPAR, a radical place of possibility, combines research with action, trusts Indigenous knowledges, destabilizes hierarchies, and centers collective action. These ways of knowing and being within YPAR run counter to schooling’s hegemonic ways of being and knowing. The following table illustrates the defining features, processes, and purposes of YPAR and agential schooling.

Table 2: <i>Defining Features, Processes, and Purposes of Agential Schooling and YPAR</i>		
	Schooling	YPAR
Defining Features:	Hierarchical relationships; adultism; domination; prescriptive entanglements	Youth centered; participatory in nature; action oriented; research based
Processes:	Teaching; Studenting Discipline (how bodies are disciplined and trained) punishment (how individuals are punished for failing to meet standards)	Inquiry; learning
Purposes:	Social regulation; domination; social reproduction; adultism; control; compliance Studenting is about producing answers (bounded answers-there is a correct choice; questions with predetermined answers - Not open inquiry), compliance, and obedience Uphold ageism and adultism	Liberative inquiry; social change; seeking to understand oppression

YPAR Entry Points

How is it that practitioners and youth come to engage with projects that lead to ventures in YPAR? Caraballo, Lozenski, Lyiscott, and Morrell (2017) believed there to be four entry points for YPAR (1) academic learning literacies, (2) cultural and critical epistemologies, (3) youth development and leadership, and finally (4) youth organizing and civic engagement (pp. 318-322). The third entry point uses the

phrase youth development, but in using that language I am not referring to the field of youth development via a psychological framing but referencing how youth grow and acquire skills more broadly. These scholars also acknowledge that the entry points are not all encompassing and often intersect and overlap. The following section illustrates the benefits that materialize from projects within these entry points.

Benefits of YPAR: From the Institution to the Individual

YPAR has the potential to benefit all who are engaged with the work, even the nonhuman bodies (i.e., institutions, schools, etc.). Kornbluh, Ozer, Allen, and Kirshner (2015) indicated YPAR provides the benefits of: (1) enhanced critical thinking and academic achievement, (2) sociopolitical development, (3) social networks and social capital, and (4) enhancing youth voice in decision-making processes. These benefits illuminate the individual, collective and institutional possibilities for change. Connecting YPAR and service-learning, Schensul and Berg (2004) found enhanced (1) social, civic, educational, and cognitive social intra-group competencies, along with (2) critical thinking, critical analysis, problem solving skills and public communication skills.

Looking at the Ethnic Studies and Mexican American Studies programming in the Tucson, Arizona schools, Cabrera, Meza, Romero, and Rodríguez (2013) demonstrated how the programming connected the curriculum to the lived experiences of the students. This work revealed how culturally relevant educational experiences can assist in motivating youth, as the youth actively challenged those

who sought to deconstruct the Ethnic Studies program (Cabrera, Meza, Romero, and Rodríguez, 2013). Similarly, the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP), a YPAR initiative in the Tucson, Arizona Ethnic Studies program, demonstrated how engaging with one's funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) can act as a link between schools and individuals' lived realities (Cammarota & Romero, 2009). Further exploring the impact of SJEP, Cammarota (2016) verified that beyond developing a sense of critical consciousness via praxis, these students also "outperformed non-SJEP students on standardized tests" (p. 238). These works reveal that there is often a transformation of self in attempts to change the community.

Along with developing a critical consciousness YPAR aids participants in acquiring new skills. Irizarry (2009) demonstrated how YPAR helps youth learn both "academic and interpersonal skills" (p. 194). Within the Council of Youth Research, youth developed academic skills by conducting both qualitative (participant observations) and quantitative (statistical analysis of schools in their district) research (Bautista, Bertrand, Morrell, Scorza, & Matthews, 2013). The youth also asserted that the skills they learned in the YPAR project were lacking in their school's curriculum. Patel (2012) found that through critical internship projects, the immigrant youth she worked with found opportunities to engage critically with their community in ways their traditional schooling did not allow for.

Tension Between Schools and YPAR

YPAR can act as a bridge between school/curriculum and lived experiences of the students (Camarota & Romero, 2009). What can be seen throughout this work are issues of power, and YPAR requires decentering the power of the “trained researcher” while also calling into question the larger power dynamics of society (Corces-Zimmerman, Utt, & Cabrera, 2017, p. 4).

However, there are tensions within YPAR projects. Kohfeldt, Chhun, Grace, and Langhout (2011) acknowledged three issues in their project “(1) assumptions about youth, (2) structural challenges, and (3) conflicting theories of change” (p. 34). Similarly, Kornbluh, Ozer, Allen and Kirshner (2015) found: (1) embedded hierarchies, (2) resistance to politically-sensitive topics, (3) time and resources, and (4) structure and capacity building as impediments to their YPAR project. The hierarchical nature of school, teachers not being trained on sensitive topics, and larger structural issues within schools negatively impact YPAR in schools.

At the core of these tensions are the ways that YPAR is founded on critiquing the structural inequities of hierarchies in traditional educational systems (Rubin, Ayala, & Zaal, 2017). What is clear from these tensions is that they are multi-layered and complex – ranging from the individual to the interpersonal to the systemic. These issues demonstrate the complex intra-actions between humans (students, teachers, administrators, etc.), nonhumans (school structure, physical school space, etc.), and discourses (race, professionalism, “acceptable” curriculum, surveillance, schooling, and adultism).

Schooling, Posthumanism, and YPAR

As I have demonstrated, YPAR has the potential to benefit all who participate in the projects as the endeavors are based on horizontal and equitable research relationships. Mirra, Garcia, and Morrell (2016) assert, “the most revolutionary aspect of YPAR is the realization of the full humanity of young people” (p. 5). Youth gain new academic and interpersonal skills, critical social networks, sociopolitical development, and a plethora of other skills when they engage in YPAR. Along with acquiring new skills, YPAR also helps youth act as critical, democratic, and active participants having a voice in their own educative experiences. Even with all of the emancipatory possibilities emerging from YPAR endeavors, agential schooling reinvents itself and often appears in such projects. An out-of-school YPAR endeavor offers a site to explore how agential schooling reorients itself in spaces that are typically envisioned as anti-schooling.

Furthermore, there is also a need for examining the role YPAR can play in intervening in agential schooling. This posthumanist approach of looking at schooling as a nonhuman agent took into account the agency of schooling. No longer is schooling the effect of domination, but rather it has agency and shifts as it is challenged. My work fills this void of understanding schooling as a nonhuman agent by addressing the following research questions:

1. How does schooling operate as a nonhuman agent in a public high school with a majority Latinx student population?
2. What are the core components and apparatuses of schooling and how do they operate in Vantage High?

3. What are the possibilities and challenges of using youth participatory action research (YPAR), for example, to intervene and disrupt schooling?

Posthumanism and agential realism offer a critical lens to explore agential schooling (Barad, 2003; Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 2013; Howlett, 2018; Jackson and Mazzei, 2012; Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Rosiek, 2019). Within humanist framings, we are not fully examining what is occurring. By moving beyond humanist endeavors, into posthumanism, we see how nonhuman bodies matter. Posthumanism requires that we explore how these bodies (human, nonhuman, and discursive) intra-act and their significance in engaging youth-based studies (see Jocson, 2016). In a posthumanist inquiry that uses intra-action, “it is not primarily a means of discovering the nature of objects but is a process of entanglement in which two agents are mutually co-constituted” (Rosiek, 2019, p. 79). For example, *how does the physical location (classroom, school, desk arrangements, individual desks, pens, papers, notes, PowerPoint presentations, assignments, etc.) intra-act with the people (students, teachers, adults, administrators, etc.), and discourses (race, class, gender, on school, on student identities, valued knowledge, etc.)? How do these intra-actions influence each other? What entities emerge from those intra-actions?* These questions framed through an agential realist (Barad, 2007) account widen the analytical lens by exploring what agents intra-act and the possibilities or hindrances of those entanglements.

Conclusion

YPAR requires a trust in Indigenous knowledges teamed with collective inquiry to take action transforming the world. In short, YPAR offers a platform for pushing against what is, in hopes of what might be. However, schooling is not static, agential schooling, a nonhuman agent that is protean, shifts as we come to challenge it. Curriculum, hierarchical relationships, adultism, prescriptive entanglements, discipline, rewards, and punishment all operate as apparatuses of agential schooling. A posthumanist accounting of schooling will bring clarity to what matter is mattering.

CHAPTER 3:

AN AGENTIAL REALIST ACCOUNT OF AGENTIAL SCHOOLING

This study, a yearlong ethnographic case study, builds upon two years of previous work at Vantage High.¹ It specifically explored schooling as a nonhuman agent in order to shed light on schooling's agency. This approach imagines schooling in more dynamic and less dualistic ways. Posthumanism via Barad's (2007) agential realism offers a theoretical lens to better understand the nonhuman agency of schooling and possible avenues for intervention. This study illuminates a more lively understanding of the phenomenon of agential schooling by accounting for schooling's nonhuman agency.

To examine schooling as a nonhuman agent I employed agential realism (Barad, 2007), ethnography (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Hong, 2011; Madison, 2011), and notions of thinking with theory (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) to address the following research questions as noted in the introduction: (1) How does schooling operate as a nonhuman agent in a public high school with a majority Latinx student population? (2) What are the core components and apparatuses of schooling and how do they operate in Vantage High? and (3) What are the possibilities and challenges of using youth participatory action research (YPAR), for example, to intervene and disrupt schooling?

In this section, I offer a rationale for engaging in an ethnographic case study. After the rationale, I discuss the context of the study, including the research site and

¹ Pseudonyms are used for the name of the school and participants to protect

participants. I also offer methodological details for conducting the study, including the research design, methods for data collection, and data analysis. I then provide a discussion of the limitations of the project.

Rationale for Ethnographic Case Study

This research resides in a liminal space. I combined traditional qualitative research, ethnography, and post-qualitative approaches like Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) thinking with theory. Beyond being informed by ethnography and thinking with theory, I pull heavily from Barad's (2007) agential realism, which does not believe in sole representationalism nor pure social constructivism. Rather, agential realism looks at the intra-action between humans, nonhumans, and discourses (Barad, 2007). This project was well suited for an ethnographic case study as this methodology focuses on extremely detailed description and analysis of what is happening within a specific context (Creswell, 2013; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). However, I pull from Barad's (2007) agential realism acknowledging that what happened in the space was neither something that I as an objective observer represent, nor was it wholly socially constructed. Rather, agential realism allows for a new perspective to emerge, taking into account the entanglement of me, the researcher, the other humans, nonhuman agents, and discourses. Together, this assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) made up the phenomenon. I was not separate, but rather a part of the phenomenon I investigated. For example, I chose what things to focus on, but I also recognize that there are many other potential avenues of research that could have emerged. I made specific cuts, and there are many other forces and agents at play that are not accounted for. The combination of

these methods illuminates the agency of nonhuman actors, like schooling, within a school context.

Research Site

The research site, Vantage High, was a western Massachusetts high school with roughly 1,500 students, and over 80% of the student population was Latinx (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2018). Four years prior to this study the state's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education put the school under state receivership due to poor academic performance (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2015). The school resides in a city with roughly 40,000 people and a large majority of residents identify as Latinx (U.S. Census, 2018).² The racial division was stark, and caused tensions both within the school and in the larger community. The city experienced economic hardship due to a lack of viable jobs and failing industry. Starting in the 1970s, the city lost many economic opportunities, as did many other New England mill towns. The combination of racial division and economic hardships cause a plethora of strains both on students and the schools.

Within this site, I explored the intra-actions between human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies to see how agential schooling, and the apparatuses that support its functioning, operated within one location. This research pulls from three years of ethnographic engagement, but with a primary emphasis on the 2019-2020 school year. I chose this site because it is a school, and a school in the sense that it works in service of the state (Vaught, 2017). Not only is it an apparatus of the state, but it is

² For confidentiality and anonymity purposes I have left out specific citation information that would identify the city.

heavily surveilled due to the label of “a failing school.” The administrators, teachers, and students in the school have to work within certain confines put upon them by the state (e.g., curriculum, grading structures, class time, testing, etc.). Similarly, this school serves a predominantly nonwhite student body, which is significant in relation to how schooling has worked to dominate and dehumanize nonwhite students.

During the 2019-2020 school year I participated in and studied an 11th grade Ethnic Studies classroom. Prior to entering the class, I had worked with the teacher facilitating the 11th grade class for two years. Similarly, many of the students in this Ethnic Studies classroom had participated with me in a previous study with another Ethnic Studies teacher who was conducting YPAR in her 9th grade classroom during the 2017-2018 school year. Within this school, I examined (1) how agential schooling manifested and functioned, (2) how the apparatuses of agential schooling operated, and (3) how humans, nonhumans, and discourses intra-acted within the space.

A secondary research site, a youth participatory action research (YPAR) afterschool program, included 9th and 10th grade students from Vantage High. This second site was significant because in theory it operated as a learning space, epistemologically positioned in opposition to schooling. Youth took up the position of co-researchers and co-teachers with the adult in the space. However, this was theory; in reality the YPAR space was infused with and at times buttressed agential schooling. Within this secondary site, I aimed to analyze how youth operated in a space that has learning and open inquiry as a foundational piece rather than

schooling and hierarchical prescriptive entanglements. However, as schooling is an agent and shifts as it is challenged, schooling operated within the afterschool program. In the YPAR space I aimed to explore (1) how students navigated YPAR in relation to agential schooling, (2) how, if and where, agential schooling emerged in the YPAR project, and (2) how YPAR could serve as a tool to destabilize agential schooling.

The Human / Human Participants

The two sites allowed for the examination of schooling both in a traditional school setting and in an out-of-school critical YPAR space. By participating in these two sites I gained a nuanced understanding of agential schooling. To better comprehend the human experience I worked with and followed one Ethnic Studies teacher, the 15 students in her Ethnic Studies class, along with the six students in the YPAR afterschool program. Within the YPAR space, five of the students were 10th graders and one was a 9th grader. The 10th grade students participated in the previous year's YPAR project, and the 9th grade student was invited by the other youth to join the endeavor.

Every student, except for one, identified as Latinx. The one student who did not identify as Latinx, identified as white. Another student was differently abled and was in a wheelchair. For confidentiality issues the students who identified as white and as in a wheelchair will not be personally identified as white or differently abled within the findings chapters. Beyond the humans, there were nonhuman and discursive agents participating in the space. For example, both the classroom and school building operated as agents within this study. I will elaborate upon the

classroom and school as agents within the findings chapters. As New Materialist and posthumanism scholarship demonstrate, nonhuman agents animate and have agency not determined by human actors (e.g., thing-power) (Bennett, 2010).

Posthumanism recognizes that humans are not self-contained entities but rather an amalgamation of intra-acting intra-actions, which include human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies (Barad, 2007). As Braidotti (2019) reminds us, “the human needs to be assessed as materially embedded and embodied, differential, and relation” (p. 11). The self is “a multiplicity of superposition of beings, becomings, here and there’s, now and then’s” (Barad, 2014, p. 176). The boundaries are blurred and bodies are relational and entangled (Braidotti, 2013; Fox & Aldred, 2015; St. Pierre, Jackson, & Mazzei, 2016).

However, while posthumanism recognizes that the human is becoming, in-process, and not self-contained, there needs to be a more thorough description of how ‘Man’ (via Western European humanism) came to be, historically produced. This historical production of ‘Man’ and the modes of being that accompany this production influence our ways of knowing and being (Snaza, 2019a). These productions of ‘Man’ “generate and police these borders between the human and non” (Snaza, 2019a, p. 34). Similarly, these socio-historical produced ontological and epistemological framings of ‘Man’ are situated within larger environments. Sharpe (2016) reminds us that these environments, weather, and climate are anti-Black.

‘Man,’ as Wynter (2003) indicated, is entangled with the “coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom” and that this notion of ‘Man’ cannot be unsettled “without a redescription of the human outside the terms of our present descriptive

statement of the human” (p. 268). Rather than framing ‘Man’ as a biological creature, Wynter’s work, building upon Fanon, demonstrates how ‘Man’ becomes human “in relation to a set of discourses governing what it means to be human at a particular moment in a particular place” (Snaza, 2019b, p. 130). This notion of man, the naturalization of ‘Man,’ “refers to the West positioning itself as one mode of human as naturally rational and good and negates the ability to distinguish the human from other natural things” (Rose, 2019, p. 29). The West’s conception of ‘Man’ did not allow for alternative notions of being human, but rather these framings would “lack the West’s ontologically absolute self-description” (Wynter, 2003, p. 282). Within the construction Blackness and ‘Man’ there was a linking to a “Chain of Being,” a “missing link...between rational humans and irrational animals” (Wynter, 2003, p. 301). Building upon notions of ‘Man’ and race, Weheliye (2014) indicated that “racialized assemblages...as a set of sociopolitical processes that discipline humanity into full humans, not-quite-humans, and nonhumans” (p. 4). Race is not biological nor just cultural, but rather a “conglomerate of sociopolitical relations that discipline humanity...blackness designates a changing system of unequal power structures that apportion and delimit which human can lay claim to full human status” (Weheliye, 2014, p. 3). ‘Man’ is a sociopolitical assemblage constructed via entanglements of nature, culture, science, etc. (Jocson & Dixon-Román, 2020; Snaza, 2019b; Weheliye, 2014; Wynter, 2003).

While posthumanism takes account of the human as intra-acting intra-actions, assemblages of various bodies, and becoming, this embodied and embedded being is entangled with historical construction of ‘Man’ that as Wynter (2003)

demonstrated is deeply immersed and connected to Whiteness and coloniality. Even though posthumanism may take into account the various bodies, the very notion of ‘Man’ is steeped in a racialized project.

Table 3:			
<i>Key Participants in the Project</i>			
<u>Participant</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Gender Expression</u>	<u>Participating Space</u>
Jessica	Student	F	Afterschool YPAR 2018-2020
Mia	Student	F	Afterschool YPAR 2018-2020
Lisa	Student	F	Afterschool YPAR 2018-2020
Andrea	Student	F	Afterschool YPAR 2018-2020
Gabriela	Student	F	Afterschool YPAR 2019-2020
Dereck	Student	M	Afterschool YPAR 2019-2020
Joseph	Student	M	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Sofia	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Isabella	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Ben	Student	M	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Stacey	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Luis	Student	M	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Victoria	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Kelly	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020

Juliana	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Daniela	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Maria	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Samantha	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Adrian	Student	M	ES Classroom 2019-2020
Gabriel	Student	M	ES Classroom 2019-2020
Shawn	Student	M	ES Classroom 2019-2020
Thomas	Researcher/ Participant	M	All sites 2017-2020
Danielle	Director of Ethnic Studies /Teacher	F	ES Teacher 2019-2020
Nonhuman Agents	Participants	-	School; Classrooms; Community

Researcher Positionality

Pulling from quantum diffraction, which will be discussed later in the chapter, my positionality was significant because I was not some distant objective observer, but rather I was and am entangled and part of the phenomenon. I am a white hetero cis-gendered 'Man' who comes from a working class family and am a first-generation college student. As a researcher and doctoral student I am viewed as having some expertise, which is reinforced by white hegemony. Academically I trained in African American Studies, critical education, and theory (e.g., critical theory, social justices theories, and posthumanism); this academic background

heavily influences how I view schools and schooling. Pulling from post qualitative studies I recognize that I am always becoming, becoming-researcher. My identity was constantly shifting and becoming as I was entangled with the various agents I encountered; they were acting upon me. I am not a static or self-contained entity, but always in process. My intra-actions with the human, nonhuman, and discursive agents affect(ed) my thoughts and actions. I often find schools to be hostile spaces, and this impacts my being in those places. Each aspect of my shifting identity is important both in how I maneuvered and was perceived in the school.

Context, Demographics, and Participants

When it came to better understanding agential schooling I needed to gather information in three areas: (1) the context (school environment and culture), (2) participant demographics (personal history, education, gender, race, and any other factor that influenced their way of being), and (3) participant perceptions (their views of school, their experiences, and more generally their ways of knowing). By securing information in these three areas I developed a more nuanced account of the intra-actions between the nonhuman agents, people, and discourses.

Research Design

As previously mentioned, this work relied upon ethnography (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Hong, 2011; Madison, 2011), thinking with theory (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012), and agential realism (Barad, 2007). This research takes into account both human and nonhuman agency. I do not see one world with a variety of

interpretations of that world, but rather I take an “approach [that] acknowledges that there are multiple worlds” (Zembylas, 2017, p. 1401). Rather than walking into a classroom and seeing one space, I view it as a multi-verse where there are multiple worlds intra-acting (e.g., different students with different experiences – gendered, raced, classed, etc., nonhuman agents, and the larger socio-historical discourses). Those intra-acting worlds produce new worlds specific to that contextual location. Within this view, there is an assumption of no fixed world, but rather always becoming (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Similarly, students and teachers are always becoming, always in the middle, never at a starting point or at an ending. I used ethnography to better comprehend the experiences of the participants.

Ethnography

Schools are complex spaces that can encourage social transformation and/or social regulation. All too often, these spaces function as sites of social domination. This domination does not only manifest in coercive and punitive ways, but it also “emerges out of infiltration...not killing. Intensifying, multiplying, and extending its realms of application” (Lather, 2013, p. 640). To better understand how this domination played out in my research context I used a method similar to Hong’s (2011) layered ethnography as I took into account both (1) how things unfolded in the field, and (2) my relationship with the subjects (human, nonhuman, and discursive) and how those relationships changed over the longevity of the project.

Fieldnotes, jottings, and researcher memos helped in tracking the intra-actions. I aimed to study “people as they go about their everyday lives” (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 1). In this work I did not look for some capital ‘T’ truth, but

rather to come to a deeper understanding of what the individuals believed was true of their experiences. To do this, I needed to “present the world from the ways of being of the people studied” (Tunstall, 2008, p. 218). I also had to put the participants’ ways of being in conversation with larger socio-historical and discursive phenomenon. Ethnography allowed me to track what I saw, heard, felt, thought, touched, etc. Beyond human agents, I needed to track the agency and actions of nonhuman actors. To account for the nonhuman agency of place, I pulled aspects from Tuck and McKenzie’s (2015) focus on place, which “takes up methodological approaches that are informed by the embeddedness of social life in and with places” (p. 2). Infusing an awareness of place in the ethnographic design emphasized “understanding place as both influencing social practices as well as being performed and (re)shaped through practices and movements of individuals and collectives” (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 19). Beyond the human actors, critical place inquiry stresses the role of place within inquiry.

However, I also recognized that I was not some passive researcher that objectively observed and represented the most accurate depiction of what happened. Rather, I was entangled in this meaning making. This notion of entanglement will be further complicated via agential realism. One complicated way in which I, the researcher, was entangled with research subjects was during interviews; together, “interviewer and interviewee are in partnership and dialogue as they construct memory, meaning, and experience together” (Madison, 2011, p. 28). Ethnography allowed for me to see, be, and intra-act with the phenomenon, agential schooling, while also exploring schooling’s core components and

apparatuses. I arrived at this method because it provided the best avenue for exploring the phenomenon firsthand. I also recognize that there are limitations to ethnographic work, as what I saw was influenced by what I knew, or more accurately stated, what I believed I knew.

Thinking with Theory and Assemblage

In a move to push qualitative inquiry, Jackson and Mazzei (2012) introduced a method of ‘plugging in’, where scholars are thinking with theory as they are thinking with their data. Thinking with theory connects three fields: (1) the “field of reality (data, theory, method),” (2) the “field of representation (producing different knowledge, resisting stable meaning),” and (3) the “field of subjectivity (becoming-researcher)” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 2). This emphasizes an instability of stable meaning, a re-imagining of what can be understood as data, and an orientation towards becoming.

Plugging in is a “constant, continuous process of making and unmaking” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 1). Pulling from Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) concept of the assemblage, Mazzei and Jackson (2012) assert that it “is a process of making and unmaking the thing, a process of arranging, organizing, fitting together” (p. 747). Beyond people, places, and things, an assemblage can be “qualities, affects, speeds, and densities” (Wise, 2015, p. 84). Dixon-Román (2017) further asserted that an assemblage is “a sticky constellation of a multiplicity of forces producing an event, situation, or composite grouping or body” (p. 36). These assemblages are always in process, moving together and moving apart. To illustrate a concrete example of an assemblage, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) use the notion of a book:

A book has neither object nor subject; it is made of variously formed matters, very different dates and speeds. To attribute the book to a subject is to overlook this working of matters, and the exteriority of their relations. (p. 3)

In using assemblage, Jackson and Mazzei (2012) recognize that ‘things’ are not self-contained, but rather constellations of multiplicities. These multiplicities require nuanced analysis.

Plugging in is an act of making, unmaking, organizing, arranging, and fitting together, and when plugging different theories and texts into each other “they constitute one another and in doing so create something new” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 4). The actual process of ‘plugging in’ is a threefold process: (1) breaking the “theory/practice binary” by putting the two to work through one another illustrating their co-constitution, (2) “being deliberate and transparent in what analytical questions are made possible by a specific theoretical concept and how the questions that are used to think with emerged in the middle of plugging in,” and (3) “working the same data chunks repeatedly to deform (them), to make (them) groan and protest” creating new knowledge (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 5). For this study, the second point is significant, demonstrating how the usage of specific theories open up opportunities for particular analytical questions. Plugging in acknowledges how data and theory can be read through one another, creating something new. By breaking the theory/practice binary, ‘plugging in’ allows for the researcher to take account of theory and data co-constitution, along with opening new avenues of examining agential schooling. The agential cuts must be taken into account (I elaborate on this point in next section). We as researchers are a part of the phenomenon we come to study, and agential realism takes this process into account.

Agential Realism

While ethnography and “thinking with theory” were core components of this research, the project was framed through agential realism. As Barad (2007) asserts, “agential realism is an epistemological, ontological, and ethical framework... This framework provides posthumanist performative accounts of technoscientific and other naturalcultural practices” (p. 32). Posthumanism “involves replacing the idea that the human is a separate category from ‘everything else’ with an ethic of mutual relations” (Taylor, 2016, p. 8). This framing recognizes that nonhuman actors have agency and play a role in “naturalcultural practices” (Barad, 2007, p. 32). I arrived at posthumanism, but more specifically, Baradian agential realism because I noticed the intra-actions between human, nonhuman and discursive bodies but did not have the language to articulate the phenomenon. Agential realism moves away from representationalism and centers a performative way of knowing (Barad, 2007). This framing requires an acknowledgement that we are not just “acting on the world, but the world is acting on us – not just physically, but in our thoughts and our very constitution as subjects” (Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016, p. xxxiii). Hence, agential realism emphasizes entanglements. Diffraction is a key component of agential realism, and my methodology, but I place diffraction under data analysis because it demanded a new way of thinking and being with material and data.

One key component of entanglements and performativity is Barad’s (2007) concept of intra-action where, “distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through their intra-action,” and “agencies are only distinct in relation to their mutual entanglement” (p. 33). Jackson and Mazzei (2016) elaborate upon this,

noting how intra-action refers to the ways that “discourses and matter are understood to be mutually constituted in the production of knowing” (p. 115). Intra-actions occur between people, discourses, and nonhuman agents. Using this framework, “knowing, thinking, measuring, theorizing, and observing are material practices of intra-acting” (Barad, 2007, p. 90). Rosiek and Kinslow (2016) acknowledge that intra-actions are made by “ontological ‘cuts’ that define the boundaries between one agent and another agent, but that could be made otherwise” (p. xxv). Our actions, thoughts, observations, etc. all produce agential cuts, which make and unmake ways of being and knowing. Researchers must keep track of the modes of inquiry they use and how each entanglement opens certain avenues while jettisoning from others.

In regards to agential cuts, the two research sites, the in-school Ethnic Studies classroom and afterschool YPAR site are both cuts. This research could have been conducted in different spaces, with different students, and a different teacher. For example, having previously worked with the students, both in the in-school and afterschool setting, this cut provided certain affordances in relation to building community that I might not have been afforded if I were to join a community which I did not have a prior foundational relationship. Prior to the 2019-2020 school year, I had worked with many of these students and built relationships supporting their academic work and talking about their lives outside of the school. These relationships, these cuts, played a productive role in some of the various lines of flight.

Similarly, this project could have gone a different way if the afterschool program was not held on the school grounds. As has been noted, nonhuman agents and discursive bodies intra-act with humans. Thus, the school operated on the minds and bodies of students even though school hours were over. What might the afterschool project have looked like if it operated in a different place than the school? Having the afterschool YPAR endeavor at the school afforded me the chance to look at how students conducted YPAR within the same space as their daily school activities. I chose to make this cut and hold the YPAR project at the school because many students and afterschool programs do not have the opportunity or finances to utilize a space off-site, unless they are connected to another organization.

Being at the school, there are many components of schooling that could influence the afterschool program (e.g., surveillance, an orientation towards hierarchical relations, adultism, etc.). This affords the opportunity to examine how those components of schooling drift into the afterschool program and how students respond to schooling within a YPAR program. However, this does not allow for the potential examination of what YPAR might look like in a space that is not connected to schooling. What might the investigation of schooling and YPAR look like in a site not connected to schooling? These cuts influence the research trajectory.

Agential realism emphasizes the intra-actions of humans, nonhumans, and discourses. Agency, within agential realism, represents an intra-action, “it is the enactment of iterative changes to particular practice” (Barad, 2007, p. 235). This conception of agency runs counter to traditional notions emphasizing agency as something one has (Barad, 2007). To further elaborate upon agential realism I

discuss Barad's (2007) conceptions of: measuring apparatuses, phenomena, phenomenon, measurement, discourse, knowing, matter, and onto-epistemology. These terms play key roles in agential realism and my methodology.

Measuring apparatuses are not objective, but rather (1) "specific material-discursive practices," (2) "are boundary-making...and part of, the phenomena produced," (3) configure and reconfigure the world, (4) are phenomena, (5) are open-ended with no inherent boundary, and (6) "reconfigure spatiality and temporality" (Barad, 2007, p. 146). These apparatuses mark what matters and does not matter; they are cuts that produce boundaries (Barad, 2007). Apparatuses are not objective tools to help with measurement, but rather, a part of the phenomena under study. This distinguishes agential realism from most other approaches, as nothing is outside of the study. Researcher and apparatus are all a part of the phenomenon under analysis.

Phenomena are the entangled "intra-acting agencies" while the phenomenon is the "inseparability of the object and the measuring agencies" (Barad, 2007, p. 139). Phenomena intra-act with other various entities including the measuring agent(s) to make up the phenomenon, an ongoing dynamic process. Measurement within this process is an "intra-active marking of one part of the phenomenon by another" (Barad, 2007, p. 338). Objectivity within measurement is not about the human observer, but rather "a matter of accountability to marks on bodies" (p. Barad, 2007, p. 340). Different cuts mark bodies in different ways producing boundaries, properties, and meanings.

Discourse also plays a role within these intra-actions, going beyond the spoken word, “it is that which constrains and enables what can be said” (Barad, 2007, p. 146). These cuts reconfigure the world producing “boundaries, properties, and meanings” (Barad, 2007, p. 148). Like discourse, knowing is an intra-action; “the knower cannot be assumed to be a self-contained rational human subject” (Barad, 2007, p. 379). Discourse, knowing, and the knower are not self-contained, but rather are assemblages of intra-actions (or intra-acting intra-actions). Similarly, matter is not fixed, but “refers to phenomena in their ongoing materialization” (Barad, 2007, p. 151). As these terms illustrate, agential realist accounts push against notions of ‘things/subjects/objects’ being fixed, self-contained, or stable. Agential realism emphasizes performativity, where “materiality is an active factor in materialization,” it is not given nor decided by human action (Barad, 2007, p. 183).

Agential realism stresses onto-epistemology, “the study of practices of knowing in being” (Barad, 2007, p. 185). Knowing and being cannot be isolated from one another but rather are co-constitutive (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). Our knowing and being cannot be separated but rather are mutually implicated and as Barad (2007) asserted, “we don’t obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are of the world” (p 185). Onto-epistemology emphasizes how the separating of ontology and epistemology is counterproductive because they inform one another. Within this study, the role of onto-epistemology was significant in understanding how schooling operated, and thus, potentially challenged. Our knowing in being as researchers and participants influenced our thoughts and actions.

Agential realism treats inquiry “not as the clarification of an epistemic representation but instead as the establishment of provisional onto-ethical relations between different agents” (Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016, p. xxv). Rather than representationalism or social constructivism, agential realism emphasizes performativity that decenters the human and recognized the intra-action of human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies. These entanglements must be accounted for, and those cuts are just one of a plethora of possibilities.

In short, ethnography allowed for me to be immersed in the project and to intimately study agential schooling in a specific context, exploring the nonhuman agency and apparatuses supporting schooling in great detail. ‘Plugging in’ demonstrated how theory and data could be read through one another, creating something new from their entanglements. To account for the nuance within entanglements, agential realism allowed me to explore the intra-actions within the phenomenon while also acknowledging that I was not a distant objective observer but a part of the phenomenon. Agential realism also emphasized the accounting of cuts, as they are just some of a plethora of possibilities.

Data Collection Methods

I spent the 2019-2020 school year in Vantage High collecting data in an afterschool YPAR project along with observing students and teachers in the school during the traditional school day. Participant observations (fieldnotes, jottings, and researcher memos), interviews, cognitive mapping, and other school artifacts aided me in analyzing the complex intra-actions happening in the environment along with

my relationship to the agents, human and nonhuman, in the space. These ethnographic methods allowed for me to study individuals in their everyday surroundings and lives (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). To conduct this work I explored how teachers, students, and nonhuman material intra-acted within the school reproducing and challenging agential schooling. These data points helped illuminate the core components and apparatuses of schooling.

Participant observations occurred both during my in-class visitations during the regular school day along with my participation in the afterschool YPAR project. As Glesne (2006) acknowledged, participant observations allow for the researcher to see how participants' words and actions convergence and divergence. The fieldnotes allowed me to document what happened from my point of view within a specific intra-action prior to plugging in different assemblages of theory and data. The jottings helped me keep track of specific utterances and issues that emerged within the classroom and afterschool spaces. After leaving the research site, I elaborated upon the fieldnotes by creating memos that provided more detailed accounts of the day's activities.

Beyond observations, I also collected artifacts from the classroom that demonstrated what students produce. These artifacts included daily work and other various classroom assignments. I also used cognitive mapping and aimed to utilize photovoice sessions with both the in-school and afterschool youth to better understand the complex intra-actions in the school. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic I was not able to conduct the photovoice sessions.

Photovoice goes “beyond a narrow focus on discourse into the realm of perception, experience, and spatial and embodied ways of knowing” (Gubrium & Harper, 2013, p. 73). This tool would have allowed for participants to express themselves in ways that went beyond written or oral presentation. Photovoice encourages youth to make meaning through photography (Del Vecchio, Toomey, & Tuck, 2017). Similarly, photovoice “as both a pedagogical and data collection method can serve as complementary sources for transporting lives and concerns of students to the center” (De los Ríos, 2017, p. 23).

Cognitive mapping moves beyond notions of traditional discourse. Ruglis (2011) utilized X-Ray Maps to “extract data...that which cannot be seen or that for which there may be no precedent for having words for” (p. 630). Individuals were given 20-30 minutes to draw a map relating to a specific question. For example, Ruglis (2011) asked youth to “draw an x-ray of what a normal day in your school looks and feels like in your body” (p. 630). After drawing the maps, the youth both in the classroom and in the afterschool programming explained their maps to me. Cognitive mapping “privileges images and visualized narratives over the written word” (Krueger-Henney, 2019, p. 438). However, within a posthumanist framing of cognitive mapping there was an acknowledgement that multiple bodies (human, nonhuman, and discursive) matter and that these bodies were not self-contained but rather a collection of intra-acting bodies.

I conducted two one-on-one interviews with the teacher and students to better understand their experiences and how those events affected their ways of knowing and being. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted close to one

hour. The institutional review board approved the semi-structured research questions (e.g., describe your greatest/worst day in school; tell me about your relationship with your teacher; how does your classroom environment affect you?, etc.). I recorded and transcribed the interviews. The interviews explored individual's experiences with schooling, their lived experience in and out of school, along with their knowing and being within the YPAR endeavor. The semi-structured interviews centered Freirean (1970) dialogue, a generative act that centers horizontal relationships and communication; it cannot serve as a form of domination (Freire, 1970). However, I also recognized that power was always present in these interviews. To push back against domination, I also built humanizing relationships that centered dignity and care (Paris, 2011; Paris & Winn, 2014). Rather than simply being extractive, I worked with and at times followed the lead of the participants. For example, the semi-structured nature of the interview questions allowed for the participants to guide aspects of the interview rather than following a rigid structure.

Data Analysis

In taking up a posthumanist framing, I did not see the voices of participants as simply “emanating from an essentialist subject” (Mazzei, 2013, p. 732). These voices were an intra-action between humans, nonhumans, and discourses; the voice was and is an assemblage (Mazzei, 2012). This assemblage includes “relations among objects, spaces, affects, bodies, discourses, texts and theory, in dynamically shifting arrangements” (Mayes, 2019, p. 1193). The interview was but one agent,

one aspect within the larger research assemblage. This posthumanist framing “refuses to let the participants speak for themselves” (Mazzei & Jackson, 2012, p. 747). The voice had to be acknowledged as, and emanating from multiple intra-actions.

While this work used ethnography, the centering of Barad’s (2007) agential realism and Jackson and Mazzei’s (2012) thinking with theory demanded that I move beyond a typical coding process to one that took account of my positioning within the phenomenon under study. As mentioned, I was not an objective observer but rather a part of the phenomenon, where each of my actions affected the study. To analyze the data, I used a diffractive methodology and analysis. Traditional coding methods look for sameness (e.g., triangulation), while diffraction looks at difference, heterogeneity (Barad, 2007; Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017; Mazzei, 2014).

Diffraction

Diffraction stresses “reading insights through rather than against each other to make evident the always-already entanglement of specific ideas” (Barad, 2017, p. 64). However, to do this work a researcher must be attentive to different disciplines and the approaches those disciplines utilize (Barad, 2007). Diffraction is transdisciplinary, putting various disciplines into conversation creating new ways of knowing and being (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017; Dixon-Román, 2017). Lenz Taguchi (2012) also acknowledges that diffraction emphasizes exclusions and how those “exclusions matter” (p. 271). Each agential cut opens possibilities, and in doing so excludes others. There is attentiveness to what is excluded (Taylor, 2016). Intra-

acting with the data I was attentive to my agential cuts, as to what possibilities emerged, and which I excluded.

As noted, difference is important, but not just any difference, rather it is about what differences matter and in which way they matter when there are intra-actions; “diffraction is a matter of differential entanglements...reconfiguring connections” (Barad, 2007, p. 381). This is furthered by Dixon-Román (2017) asserting that diffraction “focuses on the nature or effect of relational and connected differences” (p. 69). The intra-actions and differential entanglements create something new. Each cut creates new knowledge, moving beyond the boundaries of each discipline or theory. By reading through the other, the differences that emerge create new boundaries. Diffraction allowed for me to think deeply about what boundaries were in place, challenged, and what new ones emerged from the various intra-actions.

Diffraction analysis appears in two forms: classical and quantum diffraction. In the classical sense, diffraction focuses on interference, “diffracting rays compose interference patterns, not reflecting images” (Haraway, 1992, p. 299). The overlapping, interfering, and combining of waves after they pass through an opening of a barrier illustrate this concept. For example, when a pebble is dropped in a pond, the water creates waves and ripples, and when those waves meet and bend through an opening, say between two rocks, they create patterns of interference. This process looks at the “production of difference patterns” (Haraway, 1997, p. 34). Under this framework, diffraction, “maps where the effects of difference appear” (Haraway, 1992, p. 300). Reflexivity and reflection “displace the same elsewhere”

while diffraction examines difference (Haraway, 1997, p. 16). This emphasis on patterns of difference moves beyond reflection and reflexivity, where as Barad (2017) asserted, “classical physics figures diffraction in terms of comparison between this and that” (p. 65). Using a classical diffractive analytical lens still leaves the observer as outside of the phenomenon. One can stand outside of the object of study and observe the diffractive patterns.

Quantum diffraction moves beyond this frame and emphasizes “notions of superposition and entanglement, where difference is a matter of difference within” (Barad, 2017, p. 65). Superposition is the combining and overlapping of the waves, the “combination of disturbances” (Barad, 2007, p. 76). The researcher is part of the phenomenon within a quantum diffractive approach. As Lenz Taguchi (2012) asserted, “I want to read with the data, understanding it as a constitutive force, working with and upon me” (p. 274). Lenz Taguchi further illustrates that researchers are not objective observers watching from some remote perch, but rather are intricately interwoven with the other agents within the phenomenon. Researchers move from objective disengaged observers to mattering and embedded participants (Kaiser & Thiele, 2014). Diffraction takes into account the entanglement of the apparatus, the researcher, and phenomena (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017).

Within quantum diffraction, this entanglement is best illustrated through the which-way or two-slit experiment. During this physics experiment a photon was shot through an apparatus to better understand how it operated. The photon, to the surprise of scholars, operated in ontologically indeterminate ways. The photon

would either operate as a wave or particle. As Barad noted, “there is direct empirical evidence that matter – not just light – manifests wave behavior under the right experimental circumstances” (p. 83). Without a measuring device the photon would leave a diffractive pattern, but then when a measuring device was introduced the photon would operate as a particle (Barad, 2007). The introduction of a measuring device effected the very ontology of the photon; hence, the introduction of ontological indeterminacy. Using this in social science research, “practices of knowing are specific material engagements that participate in (re)configuring the world” (Barad, 2007, p. 91). The agential cuts we make effect the bodies we are entangled with. As Rosiek and Fitch (2019) noted, “diffraction as a metaphor for a practice of analysis that pays attention to the co-constituting relationship between inquiry and possibility, measurement and materiality.”

Those using a quantum diffractive approach take account of the intra-action between the various agents: human, nonhuman, and discursive (Lenz Taguchi & Palmer, 2013). The classical approach pays attention to difference and can be done with a belief in a distant observer, while quantum diffraction is attuned to the ways that a researcher is a part of the phenomenon, not separate or outside. As Barad (2007) indicated, there is “no exterior position...only intra-acting from within and as part of the world in its becoming” (p. 396). Diffraction has profound implications for (re)imaging the world as Sehgal (2014) revealed:

it not only forces us to reconsider what an entity ‘in its essence’ is, but brings the entire distribution of subject and object, knower and known, words and things, words and world under reconsideration. (p. 189)

Quantum diffraction forces us to take account of our agential cuts, markings on bodies, and intra-actions with other agents. Within this study, I had to take account of the cuts made and which avenues were opened and closed because of those cuts. Similarly, I recognize that these cuts are not separate of my own interpretive apparatus. By taking account of the intra-actions, markings, and agential cuts I gained a more nuanced and textured analysis of how schooling operated both in the Ethnic Studies classroom and the afterschool program.

Lines of Flight From the Study and Research Directions

This research provides insights into both new ways of viewing and analyzing schooling, primarily via agential realism and posthumanism, and the role that YPAR can play intervening in agential schooling. I also must account for cuts made within the project. First, this study was based on one school, one classroom, and one group of students within one afterschool program. Second, using an agential realist approach, each agential cut that I made opened some avenues for analysis while at the same time diverging from others. Different agential cuts will open different ways of viewing schooling. Third, there were a variety of intra-actions that were outside of the scope of this project, but heavily influenced how agential schooling manifests. Future research should expand the analysis of the intra-actions within schools and other institutions. Similarly, more research should explore the intra-actions between humans, nonhumans, and discourses in schooling contexts. While it is outside of the scope of this study, other scholars may further advance perspectives specifically in examining the agency of particular curriculum and curricular theories

and how those influence schooling. They may also consider the physical make-up of schools and classrooms to examine how the space intra-acts with human actors, and what is produced from those entanglements.

Conclusion

This chapter illuminated how I took a posthumanist agential realist approach to analyzing agential schooling, within one school, Vantage High. The methods demonstrated how I answered the following research questions: (1) how does schooling operate as a nonhuman agent in a public high school with a majority Latinx student population? (2) What are the core components and apparatuses of schooling and how do they operate in Vantage High? and (3) What are the possibilities and challenges of using youth participatory action research (YPAR), for example, to intervene and disrupt schooling? Approaching this project as an ethnographic case study (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) while thinking with theory and ‘plugging in’ data (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) via an agential realist (Barad, 2007) framing allowed me to both take agential cuts, while also holding myself accountable for those cuts.

Ethnography enabled me to see agential schooling operating in one context, Vantage High. ‘Plugging in’ and agential realism took into account the agency of nonhuman actors while also demonstrating the co-constitutive force of the various agents. Diffraction, both as a methodology and analytical tool, allowed me to examine the data collected from the 2019-2020 school year by not reading the data against, but rather *through* each other (Barad, 2017). More succinctly put, when

visiting the school, I mapped the intra-action between humans, nonhumans, and discourses and then put those various maps into conversation looking at the ripples and diffractive patterns that emerged from those intra-actions. This diffractive analysis provided me a better understanding of agential schooling and the apparatuses that support its functioning.

In sum, my study offers a more nuanced understanding of the intra-actions of humans, nonhumans, and discursive agents entangled within schools and schooling. I conducted this study using a posthumanist framing. In accounting for various agents which often go unacknowledged in research, I endeavored to provide complexity and texture in further illuminating why it is that schools, as Samantha stated, “are places where dreams go to die.”

CHAPTER 4:

VANTAGE HIGH: SCHOOL AGENT AND CLASSROOM FREEDOM DREAMING

Schools can be places where dreams go to die. Yet, they do not hold complete hegemony, nor are they totalizing systems. While schools can be places of complex and powerful modes of domination, there can also be beautiful spaces of resistance within them. Even with the pervasive forces of capitalism, sexism, ableism, and racism there is space to resist these forms of oppression. Within these places (e.g., schools) and spaces (e.g., the co-constructed learning environments), there are a multiplicity of forces – human, nonhuman, and discursive – that are constantly intra-acting, making and unmaking, producing lines of flight.

Vantage High is not simply a place that students go to school, but it is an agent. In this chapter I demonstrate how Vantage High, as a place, is an active agent buttressing systems of racial domination and erasure. Vantage High is a public high school with a majority Latinx student population. Beyond looking at Vantage High as an agent, I explore Danielle's classroom space and how it often operated as a refuge for students to re-imagine future possibilities.

In this chapter I will be focusing on (1) the relationship between the physical make-up of the school, how the school operates as an agent, and larger issues of domination, and (2) how schooling does not hold totally hegemony, as demonstrated by the work done in Danielle's classroom. I present key findings obtained from three years of work with Vantage High's Ethnic Studies program to demonstrate the role of the school as an agent and the resistance to oppression in

Danielle's classroom. This chapter's main focus of analysis is the third year where I was immersed in an 11th grade Ethnic Studies classroom. The findings represent an analysis of participant observations, interviews, and other intra-actions with human, nonhuman, and discursive agents. First, to analyze Vantage High as a place-agent I diffractively read the entrance, the school's wall of fame, and a student generated installation through theory and through one another. Second, I detail the resistance that happened within Danielle's Ethnic Studies classroom, and how that space often operated as a haven from the wider modes of oppression in the school.

Vantage High as Agent: Surveillance, Whiteness, and Erasure

I provide an analysis of Vantage High as a place-agent before discussing Danielle's 11th grade Ethnic Studies classroom. Agential realism reminds us that the matter of the school matters in the co-constitution of the bodies (Barad, 2007). As Basso (1996) acknowledged, "places...are as much a part of us as we are a part of them" (p. xiv). As Tuck and McKenzie (2015) remind us (1) place is not static but dynamic, (2) is shaped by social practices and influences social practices, (3) our different lived realities govern how we experience, practice, and understand place, (4) and within the U.S. context this is deeply entwined with issues of settler colonialism. My work does not fully engaged with Tuck and McKenzie's process, but rather is influenced by their framing.

Vantage High is deeply entangled with colonization as the school resides on communal land stolen and colonized from Indigenous people – The Agawams, Nipmuck, and Pocumtuc. Currently, the student population is heavily Puerto Rican,

some coming from Puerto Rico and others born in the area Vantage High serves. Not only does the school sit on stolen land and many of the students come from a colonized island, but also the school and practices of the school operate as a system of colonization and oppression.

Just as the human agents play a role in defining and creating the space, the place actively influences the human actors. Vantage High, the place, beyond human intra-actions is “where processes between other living beings or other-than-human persons occur” (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, p. 144). But beyond the human, nonhuman, and discursive intra-actions in the place, Vantage High also intra-acts with those entanglements.

It is not just that racism, sexism, classism, or ableism occurs in school, but also the physical schools plays an active role in producing, sustaining, or challenging forms of oppression. McGregor’s (2018) research on menstruation and schooling indicates how schools are full of lively matter (hallways, floors, students, bathroom stalls, menstruation production, bathroom stalls, etc.) which are entangled and co-construct the school. Utilizing posthumanist scholarship and intra-actions between humans, bathrooms, blood, and clothing McGregor (2018) demonstrates how material structures of the school are grounded “on the patriarchal idea of male body as normal” (p. 3). The school played an active role in sustaining patriarchal norms.

To discuss the significance of Vantage High as a place-agent I examine three key components within the school: the school entrance, Vantage High’s wall of fame, and a student generated installation labeled Hidden Figures. Each of these components of Vantage High plays a significant role within the school. The entrance

is where an individual first physically intra-acts with the school and either gains access or is denied entry. Second, the wall of fame is a representation of the individuals and individual achievements that the school values and labels as significant. Third, the student generated Hidden Figures installation demonstrates student views of what they believe should be valued within the school. Together, they play a vital and active role in the school.

Vantage School Entry

I first entered Vantage High on a brisk October morning in 2017. I jotted the following observation upon entering the school for the first time.

I stood outside waiting to be let in through the cold, hard, sturdy purple door. In the upper right hand corner above the door is a camera with glaring red eyes of surveillance...bzzzz...The door clicks, I pulled, it opened. The buzzing sound reminded me of a visit I once had when a close family friend was in a state mental health hospital. I walked through another set of doors then enter the main hallway. The office was to the right. I entered the office noticing five seats to the left, a wide space of nearly eight feet, and then a dividing barrier separating the office staff from visitors. A welcome sign, a student tardy sign-in log, and a visitor sign-in sheet were on the countertop. (Fieldnote, 10-16-17)

Upon entering the school for the first time I was struck by the surveillance of the camera, being buzzed into the building, and the way they physical space created a hierarchical separation of staff and visitor. Each of these were significant to me because their intra-action with my lived experiences and interpretive apparatuses. I was drawn to the camera, overt surveillance, and the separation of bodies in the office because of my engagement with poststructuralism and critical race theory. The buzzing sound intra-acted with a memory of a previous traumatic life experience, which then evoked an emotional response. My heart started to race and my hands felt clammy. My intra-action with the door buzzing demonstrates how

each individual can have a unique intra-action that brings together two seemingly disconnected events or experiences to produce an effect.

Upon entering the school two years later at the start of the 2019-2020 school year I jotted down the following observation.

In the entryway to the school building, after walking through the two doors, there was a new addition of surveillance for this school year. A school administrator sat at a desk in the middle of the hallway. This faculty member caught people, youth and adults, who walked past the office by asking them to stop and come sign-in. Rather than making my way to this individual I took an immediate right turn and entered the office. (Fieldnote, 9-23-19)

Building upon the surveillance of the camera outside the front entrance there was the addition of a human at the school's entry. After winter break during the 2019-2020 year I noted the following addition to the school's entry.

I noticed a new entry construction as I entered the building after their weeklong winter break. Now, as soon as you walk through the cold metal doors there was a corridor blocking one's entry to the wider school. This new corridor forces those walking into the school to directly enter the office before walking out another door into the school. The wall of windowed panels is eerily similar to a TSA checkpoint corridor in an airport. The corridor is 4 panels long by 2 panels wide. Each panel is 7 to 8 feet tall and 3 feet wide. The bottom half of the panel is steel and the upper half is reinforced glass. As I walked through the metal doors, having to be buzzed in, under the ever-watchful eye of the surveillance camera and then through the checkpoint into the office I felt a heavy sense of institutional surveillance. I felt the presence of the 'state' as I often do when I walk through the TSA checkpoints in airports. This was not a comforting feeling of safety, but rather a feeling of heightened surveillance. (Fieldnote, 2-24-20)

Each of these different intra-actions of entering the school demonstrates the significance of surveillance and how the state is present, even when not visible.

These intra-actions made me take pause. How does this entry (the cameras, office setup, and corridor) intra-act and impact those coming to school? How does the camera, buzzing entry sound, and corridor of panels intra-act with some of our most

vulnerable communities? How do undocumented and formerly incarcerated youth and community members feel upon entering this space? Many of the students in Danielle's class stated the new corridor entry made them feel as if they were entering a jail. In referencing the entrance, Samantha asserted that she understood why the new added construction was done (e.g., safety, protection in the post-Columbine era, etc.), "but still, I don't know. I feel like they don't trust whoever's walking into the building." So on the one hand there is a view that the entrance might be an added component of keeping people safe and then on the other it makes the students feel as if they are entering a jail and are not trusted.

Vantage High Wall of Fame

Like the entrance, Vantage High's wall of fame plays a role in the making of the school. The wall of fame resides on the first hallway to the left off the school's main entrance. Upon the wall of fame are 'significant' (scare quotes intended) Vantage High students who have since gone on to make noteworthy social contributions according to the school administration. The wall of fame runs the entire 85 feet of the left wall of the hallway. There are 48 individual pictures on the wall. In the center of the wall is the phrase "Vantage High School Wall of Fame" where each letter is 12 inches tall and the phrase takes up 18 feet of the wall. Of the 48 individuals pictured on the wall, 43 are men, one of which is an African American, and then there are five women.

The wall, and the faces on it, haunt the school community. As Barad (2010) reminds us, "every concept is haunted by its mutually constituted excluded other" (p. 253). The wall and the faces illustrate issues of visibility and invisibility, the

matter of particular bodies, and how the material of the school operated in agential ways. Gordon (2008) notes, “haunting describes how that which appears to be not there is often a seething presence, acting on and often meddling with taken-for-granted realities” (p. 8). The individuals and their portraits play a role in Vantage High, demonstrating how Vantage High is a white patriarchal space and place. The school is haunted by Whiteness. Nearly every face on the wall of fame is white and male. The school has not held a white majority student population since 2002, where the white student population was near 47%, but now is under 16%. However, with the school’s transitioning student population the teaching staff has overwhelmingly stayed white, and the school, not just the faculty, has continuously reproduced Whiteness.

However, it not just the wall of fame that haunts the school. As Danielle asserted “I’ve been trying to name this since my first day working in the building...something does not feel right in there. It feels heavy, it feels dark...There is something about the physical space.” She went on to note:

Maybe it's the bricks. Maybe it's the lighting. Maybe it's the cameras that they keep putting in...more and more cameras. The awareness that you're being watched everywhere that you go? Which is definitely more now than three, four years ago when I started working there. The cameras have multiplied. But there's definitely that heaviness and that presence and awareness that you're being watched. I just feel like the energy of the place is toxic because no healing has ever been done around the injustices that the school district and Vantage High School in particular has inflicted on the Puerto Rican community there. So when you walk in there, it's almost like you feel like the ghosts of all of the harm, all of the wrongs that have been done to young people when they're there.

Vantage High is marked as white, and the students feel this just as they feel the gazing eyes of those on the wall of fame looking down upon them as they enter

and exit the school. As Danielle noted, there is a history of toxicity and racial injustice within Vantage High, which has been perpetuated by Whiteness. In reference to Whiteness, I am noting a system of oppression that centers white supremacy and is based upon economic exploitation and racial domination. Further, as Gusa (2010) asserts, “Whiteness...is a socially informed ontological and epistemological orientation” (p. 468). Beyond this orientation, Whiteness as a system is “a set of power relations” (Mills, 1999, p. 127). Within this set of power relations, whiteness operates as a form of property that whites can mobilize (Harris, 1993).

Whiteness is not to be simply seen as privilege bestowed upon whites individuals (McIntosh, 1988) but also something white people invest in for power, wealth, and prestige (Lipsitz, 2006). Whiteness also operates at the institutional level, and institutions having a white institutional presence blend “a white worldview, white supremacy, and white privilege” (Gusa, 2010, p. 471). Vantage High is saturated with Whiteness from the policies down to the curriculum and instruction. This issue of racial oppression in the school will be elaborated upon later in the findings and the next chapter. The wall of fame is a daily reminder of the racial hierarchy in the school.

Hidden Figures Installation

The school’s restorative justice program, during the 2017-2018 school year, undertook a youth participatory action research project in their afterschool programming to respond to the wall of fame and racism at the school. This project culminated in the Hidden Figures installation. The installation plays an important

counternarrative to the wall of fame, and significantly resides on the floor above the wall of fame. Pulling from critical race theory, counternarratives and storytelling (1) center the lived experiences of those most marginalized, (2) refuse to blame the oppressed for their oppression, (3) and offer the opportunity for intra- and intergroup solidarity (Delgado, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 1998). The Hidden Figures installation positioned 25 local community members on the wall. The student-created plaque next to the installation stated that they believed the wall of fame did not acknowledge the many contributions of the diverse population of the community.

Each narrative of a community member documents the individual's contribution and continued support to the local community. The narratives, written in both English and Spanish, were an intentional demonstration that Spanish should be embraced in the school. These hidden figures speak to the diversity of the Vantage community including a variety of white, Black, and Latinx individuals. The student group's plaque, next to the installation, stated they produced the Hidden Figures wall to "create a space in the school that celebrates the city's diversity, and also the rich history of social activism in the city." While this installation is a credit to the activism of the youth in the school, it also speaks to the dehumanizing components of schooling where students have to advocate just to have representation and acknowledgement of the contributions of people of color in the school.

A Diffractive Entanglement

What follows is a diffractive reading of these three spaces within the school. In each of these instances, there are multiple intra-acting and entangled bodies that produce the phenomena. The addition of my analytical lens and the theories I engage with demonstrate the phenomenon, as I am not separate but a part of the productive entanglement (Barad, 2007). Each agential cut I took made and unmade possibilities. Each of the abovementioned narratives is not a definitive representation, but an accumulation of agential cuts. These cuts are significant as what is excluded “plays a constitutive role in the production of phenomena – exclusions matter both to bodies that come to matter and those excluded from mattering” (Barad, 2007, p. 57). Each agential cut is boundary making. Similarly, my positionality as a white hetero-normative cis-gendered male trained in African American Studies, critical theory, and social justice education matters in the production of knowledge.

Diffraction offers a way to attend to entanglements by reading material through one another (Barad, 2007). Rather than looking to triangulate the data, I am looking for difference and how those differences matter. Similarly, by placing different intra-actions in conversation, those entanglements produce something new.

As noted, cuts and exclusions matter as they produce a certain intervention that could be made a different way via different inclusions and exclusions. For example, upon entering the school for the first time I could have emphasized how the doors were heavy and difficult to open for those differently abled or how the

curb ramp is some distance from the entrance further demonstrating how able-bodied is marked as the norm of the space. This resonates with McGregor (2018), as she indicated the male body is normalized via the intra-acting material in schools.

The materiality of the school's architecture, my emotional responses, the photographs on the wall, the narratives, and the installations are all performative agents perpetuating and pushing back against modes of domination. To read these agents through one another I also engage with critical race theory, poststructuralism, and notions of ability. Reading these agents through one another provides an analysis of the school as place-agent. Critical race theory reminds us that racism is embedded in Western societies and that much of the work of schools is steeped in perpetuating white supremacy (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Leonardo, 2013; Tatum, 2007).

Reading critical race theory through Whiteness studies through the wall of fame and student Hidden Figures installation demonstrate how the school is saturated in Whiteness. The pictures on the wall of fame are predominantly white indicating what the school values, while on the other hand, the Hidden Figures installation shows how the students had to fight to put up their more diverse representation of those impacting the larger community. Not only does this illuminate the racialization of the school as a white space, but also demonstrates how schooling further dehumanizes and others students of color.

Similarly, the architecture of the building *others* those not labeled as able-bodied. For example, the ramp entrance to the school is quite far from the main door, the door to the school's entrance is a heavy metal that is difficult to open, and

there is only one elevator for the four floors of the school. The elevator is positioned in the back corner of the school far from most central components of school life. Within the classrooms there are no desks for those in wheelchairs. Together, these aspects of the materiality of the school center able-bodied individuals and further other those marked as outside of the norm.

Furthermore, my entering the school activated a diffractive movement conjuring theorizing around race, ability, architecture, and surveillance. As Foucault (1995) noted, in the history of architecture there has been a strong connection between state institutions (e.g., schools, prisons, mental institutions, etc.). As Gabriel succinctly stated, “school has some jail tendencies, they need to change that.” These sites are places where the state uses its power to discipline bodies. My emotional response to the heavy purple metal door and the loud buzzing sound created an intra-action engaging a past experience of entering a state hospital and that of the school. Similarly, putting the architecture of the entrance – the buzzing, the camera, and the paneled corridor entry – into conversation with Foucault’s (1980) notions of power and surveillance illustrate how the sound, camera, and paneled corridor are not simply there for safety but are a part of the state’s economy of power. The camera and corridor illustrate that one is under the ever-watchful eyes of the state. These components of surveillance demonstrate how power can be productive, producing certain ways of being (Foucault, 1995). Thus, prior to entering the school, the state’s power is already operating on the minds and bodies of individuals coercing and pushing people to operate in specific disciplined ways.

Reading the wall of fame, the Hidden Figures installation, my experience entering the school, and theory through one another, this diffractive reading illustrates how the physical school operates to reinforce Whiteness and a submissive able-bodied individual as the norm for the student body. Racism, patriarchy, and ableism do not just exist in the school, but the school, an agent, plays an active role in producing and sustaining these forms of oppression.

Classroom B7: Freedom Dreaming in Ethnic Studies

Not only did the school operate as an agent, but so too did Danielle's classroom, B7, and the nonhuman actors that resided in the room. When walking into B7 the physical make-up of the room looked like many other classrooms. After entering B7, and immediately turning left, there was a tabletop shelf where students' binders were positioned along with an array of handouts and student documents. The wall perpendicular to the tabletop housing the student binders, the back wall, was adorned with a tapestry of student work (collages, photovoice images, posters, etc.) along with a student designed word wall. The students used both artistic drawings and pictures representing words like critical pedagogy, colonization, institutional racism, and intersectionality. Directly across from the entrance from the classroom was a wall of windows that glared out into an asphalt driveway and then to a city owned baseball field. To the right of the entrance was a wall that houses the smart board and a set of white boards with the daily lesson scribbled across it.

There were twenty desks in B7. These desks were often set in five evenly spaced pods of four. Within the pod setup, the four desks would be facing each other – two side by side and two across from them. These five pods were positioned around the classroom so that there was room left in the center of the classroom for a cart that housed a projector. The projector often projected work onto the wall above the tabletop shelves where students' binders resided. Most days, the classroom resembled the pod setup, but then at times there were days where the desks were used to create a large 20-desk circle. There were also a plethora of human, nonhuman, and discursive actors that participated in various intra-actions in the classroom. These other actors will be further discussed through the findings in this and the following chapters.

At moments, B7 and the intra-actions within the room operated very differently than the larger school. There are co-constituted spaces within the school, like B7, that offer opportunities for humanizing intra-actions by focusing on people over products and room to freedom dream. Freedom dreaming allows us “the space to imagine and [create] a vision of what it means fully to realize our humanity” (Kelley, 2002, p. 198). At times, Danielle's classroom operated as a space to freedom dream as the work focused on dreaming a new world that was more just and less exploitative.

There were 15 students in Danielle's 11th grade Ethnic Studies classroom. Each individual was/is a complex assemblage of intra-acting intra-actions as the students are not self-contained entities. These students are always becoming, never

static (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Beyond B7, I worked with 12 of the 15 students doing YPAR in their freshman Ethnic classroom during the 2017-2018 school year.

Table 4:			
<i>Key Human Participants in B7</i>			
<u>Participant</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Gender Expression</u>	<u>Participating Space</u>
Joseph	Student	M	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Sofia	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Isabella	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Ben	Student	M	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Stacey	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Luis	Student	M	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Victoria	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Kelly	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Juliana	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Daniela	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Maria	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Samantha	Student	F	ES Classroom 2017-2018 ES Classroom 2019-2020
Adrian	Student	M	ES Classroom 2019-2020

Gabriel	Student	M	ES Classroom 2019-2020
Shawn	Student	M	ES Classroom 2019-2020
Thomas	Researcher/ Participant	M	All sites 2017-2020
Danielle	Director of Ethnic Studies /Teacher	F	ES Teacher 2019-2020

The human participants and their various intra-actions will be more thoroughly discussed throughout the findings, but just briefly here I will discuss some of the student dispositions throughout the school year. Within the classroom, like many other classrooms, there were cliques. Stacey and Luis were the most active participants, and were often outspoken about their enthusiasm for Ethnic Studies and its revolutionary potential, both within the school and larger community. Less outspoken, but still quite vocal and openly invested in Ethnic Studies were Gabriel, Joseph, Victoria, Kelly, and Juliana. Sofia, Isabella, and Ben were often quiet in class, but invested in Ethnic Studies. However, they did not talk about the class's revolutionary potential like that of the first two groups.

Samantha invested in Ethnic Studies, but was heavily impacted by the oppressive apparatuses within the school. She often spoke pessimistically about the role of Ethnic Studies being able to make change within the school and larger community. Samantha noted how the school, and most of the staff, have historically been racist and dehumanizing to the students. She did not believe that one class or program will change how the school, teachers, or world operate. Samantha often hung out with Maria. Maria stated that she was not invested in Ethnic Studies and

did not see the class as being much different than other classes in the school. Maria's framing of Ethnic Studies often influenced Samantha. This was evident because when Maria was not present, Samantha was more active in class discussions.

Three students had uniquely individualized experiences outside of the cliques. First, Shawn was a student who struggled with the content and reading, and because of his struggles within the class he often sat quietly and his participation was limited within the larger class. He would openly participate in his small pod, but this was mostly because of the support and encouragement of Stacey and Luis. Second, Daniela was often absent from class as she was wrestling with personal issues and her own identity, which she would briefly mention in class discussions. Last, Adrian was a late arrival to the class. He did not enter the class until March 2020. With Adrian coming into a class that had a strong sense of community he often found it difficult to build robust connections within a group that already had a tight communal relationship. Adrian often looked at his phone or listened to music as a tool to cope with his anxiety within the class, which is something I later found out in a dialogue with Danielle who had a close relationship with Adrian. However, even with his anxieties of entering the space and building connection, he would engage when prompted by other students, mostly Stacey and Luis.

Together, these students and their intra-actions with human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies produced an array of intra-actions, moments of flight. Most often, agential schooling functioned to (re)produce various hierarchical modes of domination, which will be discussed in the following chapter. However, there were

moments where students engaged with the space to freedom dream. What follows is an analysis of the various lines of flight and moments of freedom dreaming.

B7 Freedom Dreams

Freedom dreaming, for Kelley (2002), is inspired by the work and theorizing of the Black radical imagination of Black Marxists, socialists, communists, feminists, and surrealists to name a few. These radicals dreamed of justice, salvation, freedom, rights to self-determination, reparations, sexual liberation, and emphasized that to do this work there needed to be improvisation, invention, imagination, and a “revolution of the mind...unleashing of the mind’s most creative capacities” (Kelley, 2002, p. 191). Freedom dreaming is steeped in social justice and the search for and making of a more equitable world.

The students read sections of Bettina Love’s *We Want to do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*, and took time deconstructing notions of freedom dreaming and how they could mobilize the concept in their class, school, and larger community. For Samantha, freedom dreaming was about “being the change in the world that you want to see. It’s just basically that if you see something wrong, we want to change it.” Daniela stated that in freedom dreaming “you can let your thoughts become...You are allowed to have a voice when in regular traditional classes you didn’t have that voice.” As Gabriel asserted, “we speak upon real things like real people.” What follows is a discussion of how the students mobilized freedom dreaming and how they put those dreams in conversation with Yosso’s (2005) community cultural wealth, those forms of capital

derived from communities of color used to support, navigate, and resist various forms of domination.

The students and Danielle centered authentic relationships. As Samantha stated, “She [Danielle] really knew a lot about us in her class. It is the way she interacts with students. She is very interested in her students.” Gabriel acknowledged, “she is real with us. She understands that there are times that we don’t want to be there. So, I feel like she was just one of us, teaching us...she understands the youth.” To develop a sense of community, re-orient their aspirations, and focus their work, students started each class with a student chant/motto. Each day, a new student would create the order for collectively saying the chant. Some days they would have the whole class say the chant, others they would have each pod take a line or two. However, every time, the class would collectively say the first, second, and last line.

In this class...

We create safe space for discussing and learning from and with each other

We seek to understand each other’s opinions and ideas

We value each other’s experiences and respect one another

We push each other to our potential beyond this classroom

We find a sense of belonging in each other

We work together to build a strong Vantage community.

This classroom motto was not just words, but rather a living document embodying the ethos of the class, it was a part of the class. There are a few key words and phrases student’s continuously emphasized. First, they emphasized creating a safe

space where they could openly communicate with each other, pushing each other, but also valuing that all had a valid and significant contribution to be made to the class. Similarly, they stressed that by working together they could build a wider sense of belonging and a vibrantly strong Vantage community. What is also key here is that the students were not only talking about their classroom, but the school, and the wider community that the school served and resided within. These conversations and the energy in Danielle's classroom were very different from the centrality of Whiteness and surveillance illustrated in the hallways and larger school community.

Within the classroom, four key intra-actions illustrate the aspirations of creating a safe space, seeking to understand others, and valuing others' experiences to build a sense of belonging. First, as mentioned, Shawn often struggled within the class, both in his ability to read and understand the content. During multiple sessions I noticed how Stacey and Luis not only continuously encouraged Shawn to participate, but would praise his contributions helping him develop comfort both in engaging with the content and public speaking. For example, during one session, the class worked in their pods to discuss a video on Black Lives Matter. I sat with Stacey, Luis, and Shawn during this session. Shawn sat quietly waiting for Luis and Stacey to jump in, but rather than doing so they asked him to state what he was thinking. At first, Shawn was reserved and stated that he did not have much to say about the video, but both Stacey and Luis continuously pushed Shawn to talk about what he saw. Shawn then opened up and talked about how he saw many issues of racism in

school and how that connected to the larger mission of the Black Lives Matter movement.

At the end of the group discussion, Danielle brought the pods together for a larger class conversation. Danielle asked if anyone had anything to say, and Luis and Stacey nudged Shawn to speak for their group and to the larger class, emphasizing that what he said was important. Shawn took a moment, but then spoke, and after he made his comments about seeing the connections between the racism at Vantage High and the Black Lives Matter movement the class cheered him on for his contribution. Danielle stated, “we need to hear you more often Shawn, that was brilliant!” A few students clapped and others made utterances of support to hype up his comment. Shawn looked away to draw as little attention to himself as he could, but he smiled and chuckled for a few minutes. While the larger class celebration was unique to this moment, the support that Shawn received from Luis and Stacey occurred throughout the year.

While Shawn was more quiet and reserved in seeking support, Joseph, during one session was more vocal about needing help. When reading an article on Black Lives Matter within his pod Joseph admitted that he was not a strong reader and asked for his pod-mates – Sofia, Isabella, and Gabriel – to support him and read the article out loud. This was unique as Joseph leaned into a moment of discomfort and was vulnerable about his struggles rather than brushing it aside or trying to laugh and act out to draw attention away from his reading skills. Rather than responding with laughter or poking at Joseph’s insecurity, his pod-mates heeded his call for support. Sofia started to read the article to the group and the pod worked together

to analyze the reading. Similarly, sometimes students who struggled with English would ask other students questions in Spanish to help clarify moments of confusion. Being bilingual was viewed as an asset where students could support each other in a variety of ways.

During one class session in mid February, Danielle opened class by asking the students, “what was your favorite food as a child?” Students spoke about various dishes from pizza to baked potatoes to Puerto Rican dishes. One student, Daniela, spoke about a dish that was very unique to her ethnic identity, which was unfamiliar to the other students. Rather than othering Daniela’s specific food preference, the students asked questions about how it was made, why it was important to her, and if she could possibly bring it to the class. While on the surface, this may read as inquisitive students asking questions about food they do not know, it can also be read as the students helping Daniela feel more comfortable about her identity. Daniela often spoke about struggling with identity issues as she was trying to better understand her mixed racial background. In this class discussion of food, Daniela was openly affirmed by her classmate, which helped to affirm her identity. Joseph asked a variety of questions not only about the food, but how the food was connected to her identity. Joseph finalized the conversation by stating, “Yo, that sounds good. You should bring that in so we can try it.” Daniela blushed, and then excitedly stated, “Absolutely, I bet you would love it.”

The youth in B7 conducted a YPAR-informed photovoice project to build community and push for larger social change. Danielle and the students had a conversation about how an artist created a postcard for the local Vantage

community, but that postcard neglected to acknowledge the presence of the Puerto Rican citizens. Together, Danielle and the students created a photovoice project to capture images that represented the diversity of the Vantage community. The student pictures included community spaces, student work, and community artist murals. After taking the pictures and having a class discussion of the various images, a few of the pictures were selected and put on the postcards.

These postcards were meant to be counternarratives to the ones that erased the Puerto Rican presence in Vantage. Not only did the students generate the pictures, but one of the students who worked at a local printing press took the images to work and created the postcards. The students then sent postcards to local community members, school officials, and local politicians. These postcards were created both as a way to craft a more inclusive view of Vantage, while also pushing not only the school but the larger community to think critically about connection and belonging in Vantage.

The photovoice project demonstrates the complicated intra-acting human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies. The youth intra-acted with the land of the local community and attempted to capture a visual representation of what they saw via their photographs, but then those photographs were placed on postcards which intra-acted with people they were sent to. The project, the postcards, and the intra-acting bodies demonstrate how the human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies were constantly territorializing, deterritorializing, and making lines of flight.

These intra-actions, along with others, demonstrated a critical engagement with both community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and freedom dreaming (Kelley,

2002; Love, 2019). The students' work with the photovoice project illustrated an engagement with aspirational, navigational, and resistance capital (Yosso, 2005). Students continued to hold onto hope in the face oppression, maneuvered through the school and local political bureaucracy, and utilized their skills to push back against inequality. The students attempted to embrace their class motto by holding space, seeking to understand difference, and valuing others' experiences to build a sense of belonging. Not only were the students doing this work in the classroom, but they labored "together to build a strong Vantage community." The postcard photovoice project was not just about their immediate experience in school, but rather a re-imagining, freedom dreaming about Vantage.

One of the postcards was a collage of the students' freedom dreams. The card had a clenched fist centered on the postcard. There was a heart in the middle of that fist. Around the clenched fist were all of the students' freedom dreams. Below is a table of those freedom dreams.

Table 5:
<i>Student Freedom Dreams</i>
"My hope is to spread positivity in the world and in my community"
"I hope for endless possibilities for young folx in Vantage"
"My hope is for all of the students in this class to overcome any obstacle to become their best selves."
"My hope for education in Vantage is that students who become teachers will come back and teach in Vantage, so that they can bring their cultural and community knowledge to help future students."
"My hope for education in Vantage is teachers of color"
"My hope is that my future children aren't taught to be blind to important issues"

“My hope is for Ethnic Studies to be welcomed in the public school system.”

“My hope for my community is for everyone to be equal, no matter who you are or where you are from.”

“My hope for education in Vantage is to help people to see what we see in an Ethnic Studies class.”

“My hope is a Vantage that is revitalized using innovation and centering community cultural wealth – in order to provide jobs, housing, and education while sustaining and growing culture.”

“My hope for my family is trust and healing...”

“My hope is that families in Vantage learn along with their children, so they can also name what’s going on in our communities.”

“I hope for a Vantage where we help each other when we are in need.”

“My hope is for students to feel free to speak up and not be judged in their classes.”

“My hope for education is that there is movement and we don’t have to be stuck in desks.”

“My hope for Ethnic Studies in Vantage is that it expands to more than just a class we take in school. I hope it can become a way of life we can apply to everything.”

The students pulled from Love’s (2019) freedom dreaming where dreams are grounded in critiquing inequity but “are not whimsical, unattainable daydreams, they are critical and imaginative dreams of collective resistance” (p. 101). These student freedom dreams are about possibility, community, trust, healing, social change, and new ways of being in the world. B-7, the co-constructed classroom space for the 11th grade Ethnic Studies class, often operated as space to freedom dream while the wider school emphasized Whiteness and other modes of domination.

Conclusion

Vantage operated as a place-agent emphasizing surveillance, Whiteness, and erasure. As this chapter demonstrated, it was not just that there were intra-actions and entanglements occurring within Vantage, but also that Vantage played a role in a variety of entanglements. It was not just that racism, patriarchy, and ableism existed in the school, but also the school played an active role in (re)producing and sustaining oppression. However, even in such a toxic environment, there were spaces that offered room to freedom dream.

Danielle's classroom offered vibrant lines of flight where students were working together, holding space for one another, building community by seeking to better understand their differences as assets, and creating a community of care and belonging. However, even in such an intentional Ethnic Studies classroom that centered love, community cultural wealth, and freedom dreaming, agential schooling was often a driving force. I am continuously haunted by Samantha's statement, "school is where dreams come to die." The following chapter illustrates how even in this rich social justice oriented context, agential schooling was a driving force.

CHAPTER 5:

AGENTIAL SCHOOLING: FUNCTIONS AND APPARATUSES IN VANTAGE AND B7

The preceding chapter illustrated how B7 was a space where students' freedom dreamed and engaged with critical Ethnic Studies. Students in B7 created opportunities for personal and communal transformation. However, even in an Ethnic Studies class like B7, schooling was pervasive. In this chapter, I will be focusing on core apparatuses of agential schooling to illustrate how nonhuman agents and discourses play an active role in schooling experiences. This work demonstrates how agential schooling is an agent, rather than simply an effect or outcome. I emphasize the core apparatuses of schooling, how they functioned, and buttressed the agency of schooling in Vantage and B7. The intra-actions were constantly making and unmaking, opening and limiting possibilities.

As aforementioned, schooling has been studied as effects or outcomes of economic structures, racial domination, and complicated entanglements between individuals, discourses, and institutions. This scholarship has pushed our understandings of education but yet such work has not treated schooling as a nonhuman agent. In schooling processes there are not just human agents, but also nonhuman and discursive actors entangled within these phenomena. By envisioning schooling as an agent, and taking note of the entanglements of human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies there is a widening of the theoretical, methodological, and analytical lenses to account for those agents that often go unacknowledged. This chapter outlines how schooling operates as a nonhuman agent in a public high

school with a majority Latinx student population and details the core components and apparatuses of schooling and how they functioned within B7.

To demonstrate the agency of schooling I present key findings obtained from three years of work with the Ethnic Studies program at Vantage High. The main focus of the analysis in this chapter is the third year where I was immersed in Danielle's 11th grade Ethnic Studies classroom. The findings represent an analysis of participant observations, interviews, school policies, school community forums, and other intra-actions with human, nonhuman, and discursive agents.

Introduction of major findings

In what follows, I unpack how schooling operates as a nonhuman agent and outline the core components and apparatuses of schooling and how they operated in B7. Adultism, hierarchical relationships, policy, curriculum, prescriptive entanglements, discipline/surveillance, and punishment re-enforce problematic power relations and domination. Each of these apparatuses plays a role in supporting the onto-epistemic dominating force of agential schooling. Below is an outline of each apparatus and how they functioned in Vantage and B7.

Killer of Dreams: When Schooling Impedes Learning

The following sections outline the core apparatuses of schooling and how they functioned in B7. As previously mentioned, adultism, hierarchical relationships, policy, curriculum, prescriptive entanglements, discipline/surveillance, and punishment act as apparatuses and buttress the agency of schooling. Each of these

apparatuses played a role in re-producing problematic power dynamics and dehumanizing intra-actions.

Adultism

Adultism is a general epistemological orientation that positions adults as being more credible and knowledgeable than youth (Bettencourt, 2018). This orientation normalizes the need for hierarchy and often dismisses the views and experiences of youth (DeJong & Love, 2015). Adultism can manifest in internalization (youth believing their experiences are less valid or that they are less knowledgeable than adults), interpersonal interactions (shared negative beliefs about youth), and institutional settings (policies and practices that normalize the marginalization and oppression of youth) (Kennedy, 2018).

Within B7, this notion of adultism appeared in specific internalized, interpersonal, and institutional examples. Students often positioned Danielle as the center of knowledge. Similarly, Danielle would also position herself as the center within the classroom space. This was not always an intentional move by Danielle, but was the product of the various lines of flight and intra-actions within the space. The institutional setting frequently dismissed the voices and experiences of youth. Policies were implemented without student input, students voices were frequently dismissed, and the school had an overall disposition of youth as either being fragile or dangerous. The adultist policies will be discussed in the policy section.

Internalized adultism emerged as students often referred to Danielle as the knower. This internalization was also influenced by the school's reinforcement of hierarchical relations. While B7 was meant to be a space of equitable

communication, this was not always true. For example, Danielle had often pushed for conversation to resemble Freirian (1970) dialogue, but students had internalized the processes of raising their hands and centering Danielle even when Danielle discouraged it and told the students it was not necessary. As Samantha indicated, “we’ve been raising our hands for going on 12 years.” While this may appear as a small intra-active moment, it represents a component of the larger onto-epistemology of oppressive schooling. Throughout the year, students would consistently revert back to raising their hands to speak which disrupted the flow of conversations and learning. Students internalized notions of Danielle being the knower. The following statement was similar to many other moments where students felt uneasy in their knowing. During a session where students wrote postcards to local politicians, Andrea, a highly studious student, asked Danielle “would you mind reading this and tell me if this makes sense.” Andrea was quite capable of creating the postcard, but schooling had pushed her and other students to question their capabilities and lean upon adults.

One day after I left Danielle’s classroom and was about to exit the school I observed the following intra-action between a male student and adult male teacher. This moment demonstrated larger issues of interpersonal adultism. The student was in the hallway during class time. As the student came down the hall the adult in the hallway blurted out that the student needed to turn around and go back to class. The student attempted to speak, but the adult refused to listen and spoke over the student stating, “Do you have a hall pass? No. Ok. Go back to class.” The student attempted to speak again, and the adult stated, “Go back to class.” In this instance

the student shrugged his shoulder and immediately turned around heading down the hallway. During this intra-action the youth could have been skipping class, or just as likely, he may have needed to use the restroom, visit the office, or go to another classroom. However, the reason for being out of class was unclear, as the adult did not allow the youth to speak. The adult dismissed the student's voice and experience in this instance. This example speaks to larger issues of adultism and problematic hierarchical relations in the school. Adultism, as a discursive and epistemological agent, operated on the minds of bodies of both students and school employees. This apparatus supports agential schooling by buttressing ideas of adult intellectual authority over those categorized as student.

Hierarchical Relationships

As previously mentioned, Danielle was often the center of the classroom, both literally and metaphorically. Danielle often stood in the middle of the physical space and would speak as students were sitting in their desks listening. At other moments, Danielle would stand and write on the whiteboard demonstrating what could/should be seen on the students' note catchers. Or, intra-acting with and utilizing technology, Danielle would project a note catcher onto the board via an elmo, a document projector. For example, one day Danielle used the elmo to project a note catcher discussing Black Lives Matter and police brutality. Danielle asked the questions imbedded in the note catcher in a call and response manner where students responded with answers about issues of racism, protest strategies, and other modes of resistance. During the call and response, Danielle wrote the students' statements on the note catcher for the students to see and model.

Each of these instances centered Danielle and affirmed her as the knower. This was not always done intentionally to create a hierarchy of active versus passive, but it did present those lines of flight from time to time. The arrangement of desks, the individual desks, the elmo, handouts, and other nonhuman agents played a role in active versus passive lines of flight. Issues of hierarchical teaching and studenting emerged throughout the year. Table 6 demonstrates some of those notions of teaching and studenting that resemble banking education (Freire, 1970).

Table 6: <i>Problematic Hierarchical Relationships</i>	
<u>The Teacher....</u>	<u>The Student...</u>
Teaches	Is taught
Has knowledge	Needs knowledge
Talks	Listens
Disciplines	Is disciplined
Chooses activities, curriculum, Class material, etc.,	Has the illusion of meaningful choice

Danielle would often lead class calling on students to share their work, answers, or thoughts. The class activities would range from teacher-centered instruction, circle process (all being involved as equals sitting in a circle working together on various issues), students working in groups, to students leading the space as Danielle left the classroom. Students were seated and Danielle stood or circulated during most class activities. Some students may have felt affirmed while others felt surveilled. When students spoke, Danielle would affirm them as knowers, which could produce various lines of flight as students felt affirmed and heard, or they might feel they needed this recognition as they viewed Danielle as the authority on knowing.

Danielle had a variety of teacher moves that reinforced the hierarchy in the space. Again, she did not always intentionally make these moves to position herself as the authority, but the moves did reinforce the hierarchy. For example, during one circle process, Danielle hushed two students who were speaking at the same time as the individual holding the talking piece. This action was done to respect the speaker and circle process, but it also affirmed Danielle as the authority. During class activities that focused on individual work, Danielle would often use statements like, “please work quietly and independently.” Danielle also used positive narration, a teaching move taught in many teacher education programs, narrating student actions to get students back on task. Classes were 50 minutes. Danielle frequently put timed parameters around activities and would state “you have X more minutes on that,” or similar statements affirming the parameters of their activities. Each of these moves affirmed the hierarchical relationship between teacher and student.

Another illustration of hierarchical schooling was that of using the bathroom. This issue of needing to ask an adult to regulate one’s body is not unique to Danielle’s classroom. When students needed to use the restroom they always raised their hands and asked Danielle’s permission. Danielle almost always permitted the students to leave; however, that was not always the case. These intra-actions reinforced problematic hierarchies positioning Danielle as not only the knower but also the individual with power. The students knew this, and it was reflected in their being in the space.

One day, in an effort to disrupt the hierarchy of the classroom, Danielle left the class and told the students to lead the space and produce a PowerPoint needed

for a weekend presentation. Danielle told the students that I was sitting in the class and hanging out, but that I had no authority. I was just to be seen as another member of the community. However, five minutes after Danielle left, Shawn looked my way and asked, “hey mister, can I use the restroom.” I responded to Shawn stating that I was not the authority and that the choice was up to him. He could do as he pleased. Shawn sat there for a minute, looking at me in a way where it appeared as if I violated the power dynamics of the schooling space. He wanted my affirmation even after I made my statement, as he stated, “so can I go?” Shawn ended up going to the restroom a few minutes later, but he looked for my affirmation as he left the space. Ironically, as Shawn left the classroom, Luis jokingly stated, “where do you think you are going?” Even without the presence of the teacher there was a reproduction of hierarchy both with Shawn looking to me, and Luis making the statement. As Barad’s (2007) agential realism reminds us, we as researchers are always entangled with and part of the phenomenon under study. Both my age (older/adult) and position in the school (academic/perceived expert) played an active role in the intra-actions with the students.

Like the statement made by Luis, there were moments that students had the opportunity to facilitate learning experiences. The students consistently reproduced hierarchical models similar to the banking method. For example, Juliana brought a video, Joaquin Phoenix’s Oscar speech, to the attention of Danielle and Danielle provided class time for Juliana to facilitate a discussion of the video. Juliana started with a statement of why talking about mental health was important, but then proceeded to lecture the class for three minutes before opening the space for other

students to speak. The students raised their hands and Juliana called on them continuing the conversation. Similar to Juliana's discussion, the day where Danielle left the classroom the students reproduced hierarchical teacher-student intra-actions when producing a PowerPoint that was needed for a Black Lives Matter public dialogue. This intra-action will be more fully elaborated upon in the next chapter on spooky entanglements. During each of these moments the students relied on the very hierarchies they frequently critiqued as oppressive. These hierarchies were a part of their ways of knowing and being.

When it came to student views of teacher-student intra-actions, the students felt that most of their schooling experiences were like those of banking education. As Daniela asserted, "in every class I have been in since first grade...It's always been 'I'm the teacher, you're the student'." She went on to note that these situations made it hard to build relationships, "Teachers don't trust us. It makes me feel bitter...It puts a negative spin on school." Samantha built upon this stating that teachers did not take the time to get to know her. When it came to traditional schooling Samantha asserted, "It's just the way teachers teach...They just want you to understand the work, but they don't really care to explain it in a way that you will understand it, or that makes it interesting...Sometimes it feels like a lecture hall." Samantha went on to note how in most classes there is no connection between what "we are learning and what is happening in our lives." Samantha even went so far to state, "I'd never had a teacher that actually cared about me getting my work done and pushing me, telling me that I can do it." Gabriel also felt this way; he stated he had very few teachers that took time to get to know him.

The hierarchical relationships in Vantage can be dehumanizing. Samantha asserted, “we are kids dealing with stuff at home as normal human beings. They [teachers] don’t really understand that. They just want us to come to school and get the work done. They don’t really get to know us as people.” Samantha went on to discuss how the relationship between teachers and students often led to dehumanizing effects, as students were not seen as fully human. Schoolwork came first. Beyond the teaching, Samantha noted issues of teachers being racist, “I’ve dealt with a lot of racism in the school. I’ve had teachers tell my friends they cannot speak Spanish in their classes. My honors teacher told me that it was obvious to her that the white students in her class were going to do better than a Hispanic.” Gabriel built upon this stating that he quit going to a class because the teacher was racist, “she just favored the white kids. She was always getting us dark skinned kids in trouble, sending us out. This shit was bizarre.” Gabriel took this beyond the individual teacher noting that classes are tracked. He stated “we [students of color] will have an honors class and they [white students] will too. In my years here at Vantage I really only had one or two white girls in my classes.” This was not unique to Samantha or Gabriel as other students spoke about teachers talking derogatorily about Latinx students.

Reading Gabriel and Samantha’s experiences through Wynter (2003), Weheliye (2014), and Dumas (2016) it is not just that there are racists individuals and teachers, but that nonwhite students, Black and Brown youth, are onto-epistemically positioned as inherently a problem, or less worthy than white students. Nonwhite students are barred from the Western conception of ‘Man’ (e.g.,

Western European humanism); they are less than in the “Chain of Being” (Weheliye, 2014; Wynter, 2003, p. 301). The Western episteme of ‘Man’ does not allow space for nonwhite beings to be seen as ‘Man,’ they must reside outside of the current conception of human. This process is a coloniality of being (Rose, 2019; Wynter, 2003). Positioning people of color as less than influences teaching and teacher mindsets. This “neocolonial mind snatching,” as Rose (2019) asserted, “violently discipline[es] the bodies and minds of Black children in this nation’s classrooms, the white population group, as a whole, performs as though they are to be at the apex of the social order” (p. 33). This process tries to snatch the very personhood and humanity of students of color, and does so in a colonizing way that places the blame for any failure or wrong doing on nonwhite individuals. Students of color are positioned as subhuman, as always lesser than. It is not just the physical hierarchical relationships, but the onto-epistemic violent hierarchicalization of the very being of students of color. Hierarchical relationships both within student-teacher relations and the structuring/ordering of bodies based upon racialization strengthen agential schooling by further supporting and naturalizing a division between adult/youth, teacher/student, white and non-white.

Policy

School policy is also tied to onto-epistemic violence (Dumas, 2016). Policies play a role both in supporting and limiting student opportunities and agency. These policies play a role in pushing an agenda of who is and is not welcomed and valued in the space. Vantage is in a unique situation as it is under state receivership, and has been since 2015. The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary

Education voted to designate Vantage as a chronically underperforming district. As the district's turnaround plan stated, "this designation provided an opportunity to transform the district from one of the lowest performing in the state to an extraordinary district with sustained high performance." However, the district has not seen this sustained high performance.

A major component of this transformation was an emphasis on five priority areas: (1) high quality instruction for all, (2) personalized pathways, (3) family and community engagement, (4) thriving and effective workforce, and (5) supporting empowered schools. One of these priority areas that impacted Danielle's classrooms and the students' trajectories was that of the personalized pathways. I also want to note that this agential cut could have been made different and by emphasizing a different component/policy of the turnaround plan it would have produced different findings. The personalized pathways were meant to provide students with various choices and options for future trajectories. The high school was reorganized around academies. There was a (1) freshman academy, (2) newcomer program, (3) community of global studies academy, (4) medical life sciences academy, (5) performing and media arts academy, (6) technology, engineering and design academy and, (7) career and technical education programming.

While these academies appear to offer a variety of options, they also limit student choice. The academies and possible avenues make and unmake, open and limit student possibilities. The academy model, as Daniela noted, "it's confusing. It can be really confusing." Danielle asserted, "each year gets more and more specific. And the more and more specific it gets, it limits the freedom of them [students] to

choose classes that are offered in the school.” For example, Ethnic Studies is housed within the community global studies academy, but is not offered to all students in all academies. Ethnic Studies is offered to all students in 9th grade and most students in 10th, but as the students move into their academies their choices narrow. As Danielle stated, 9th grade is where the largest amount of students take Ethnic Studies and it is the only differentiated choice students get coming into high school. Ethnic Studies courses are not offered in the (1) medical life sciences academy, (2) performing and media arts academy, (3) technology, engineering, and design academy, or (4) the newcomer program. While Ethnic Studies courses are offered to those students in career and technical education, the offerings are limited with no options for 11th and 12th grade students. Currently, there is only one 11th grade course, Danielle’s class in B7. The 11th grade students have the opportunity to take dual enrollment classes at a local community college in the Latinx Studies program and a state university’s Ethnic and Gender Studies program.

This structure impacts student opportunities for taking Ethnic Studies. During the 2019-2020 school year around 250 students, approximately 75% of 9th graders took Ethnic Studies. Then in 10th grade those numbers dwindle. 140 students took 10th grade Ethnic Studies during the 2019-2020 school year. The 11th grade class, Danielle’s class, had only 15 students. As Danielle stated:

“So now going into your eleventh grade year you have all of these choices of taking...and good choices in some cases! You can take dual enrollment classes; you could be a part of the State University’s Promise program. You could get credits at the community college. And all of that creates constraints on the student’s schedule.”

Danielle went on to talk about how the Ethnic Studies program loses “those die hard committed students” to the college opportunities. This loss is painful to the program, but as Danielle asserted, “I would never want to encourage a student to pass up on an opportunity to earn college credits. I am going to push them in that direction...It is heartbreaking to lose them.” While the restructuring opened certain possibilities it also constrained student choice.

Beyond the turnaround plan and restructuring of the classes, there are two policies that are important to discuss. There was a Du-rag policy issue during the 2018-2019 school year and a stop and search proposed policy during 2019-2020. I will thoroughly discuss the du-rag policy here and leave a more comprehensive description of the stop and search policy for the next chapter. However, just briefly, the stop and search policy was a policy that the principal wanted to implement in hopes to ‘keep students safe’ by randomly searching students for drugs or weapons.

The 2018-2019 school year started with the arrival of a new principal, which created change within the school. One of those changes was an emphasis on the du-rag policy. This policy emphasized that students could not wear du-rags, headscarves, or hats in the school building. There was immediate push back against the administration’s policy. As Danielle stated, “I had been at Vantage for two years prior to the new principal and I never heard any teacher or administrator talking about the word du-rag until the new principal got here.” Students started to get suspended for wearing du-rags. Most of the school’s attention was on headscarves and du-rags. The policy, students, teachers, administrators, Du-rags, headscarves, and larger discourses of race were entangled. The matter (human and nonhuman)

became vibrant, and agency was distributed amongst the actors (Jackson & Mazzei, 2016). As Jackson and Mazzei (2016) assert, “when things demand attention, when things provoke affect, when they make things happen – they become more than simply stuff” (p. 99). The du-rags evoked, incited, and conjured varied beliefs and actions; they had agency.

Teachers and students met this policy with resistance. As Danielle indicated, “the policy unnecessarily sucked a lot of energy out of young people and educators in the building...It created a hostile work environment for anyone who spoke out against it.” Initially, the administration did not listen to the students’ claims of the policy being discriminatory.

One Ethnic Studies teacher defied the principal and stated she would not police the bodies of her students. This teacher had students conduct youth participatory action research projects to finish their year in her 9th grade Ethnic Studies course. Some of her students focused their projects on the du-rag policy, and enough pressure was put upon the administration where they rescinded the policy. However, it took quite a bit of political mobilization to have the administration listen to the students. The adultist framing of the policy was that adults (mostly white) knew what was best for these students (mostly students of color). Another problematic layer was that most of the administrators did not understand how the students of color utilized du-rags or headscarves. The policy was structured through a white racial frame. The adults neglected to listen to the voices of the youth, until they put political pressure (e.g., letter campaigns, public statements, etc.) on the school. The teacher who supported her students was a first year teacher, and one of

the few teachers of color in the school, and her contract was terminated at the end of the year. This was devastating for students as they protested outside of the school and circulated a petition to have the teacher rehired. The student demands were met with silence.

Together, these policies produce various lines of flight. The academy model opened some options while also narrowing student choice. This is partially illustrated via the data point that in the 2019-2020 school year over 250 students took the 9th grade Ethnic Studies course, but then there was only one 11th grade course with 15 students. The du-rag policy demonstrated a point of racial tension within the school. Many youth felt that the school administration, and a white principal, did not understand how the du-rags and head wraps were used as protective measure for their hair. The students felt the policy was racially charged, and primarily targeted youth of color. Many student of color also felt that the 2019-2020 potential stop and search policy was racially charged. These policies limited student possibilities in relation to Ethnic Studies and also further entrenched Whiteness within Vantage. The policies played a role in influencing people's ways of knowing and being, thus, furthering anti-Blackness while also limiting student voice and agency. Policies, as agents buttressing agential schooling, aided agential schooling's emphasis on social regulation and control.

Curriculum

When engaging with the curriculum I attended to what was taught in class, the learning that occurred in unexpected ways, and the hidden curriculum. The hidden curriculum references those unspoken norms, values, and assumptions that

are normalized by the curriculum (Apple, 2004; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016). As Pratt (2019) asserts, the hidden curriculum operates as a form of erasure. Beyond the hidden curriculum, I explored the enacted curriculum, how the students and Danielle created educational experiences (Snyder, Bolin, & Zumwalt, 1992).

Within B7, the curriculum was full of handouts, videos, student generated projects (e.g., YPAR informed photovoice postcard project), journaling, and arts-based initiatives. Danielle was very intentional in both developing and adapting curriculum that centered the voices of marginalized communities. The curricular enactment within the class was usually structured in a way where there was a warm-up (circle process, free write, conversations generated by student interest), the daily activity (e.g., workstations, student-generated projects, close readings of texts, screening of films, etc.), and a close out (student share-out of learning, student praise for other students, and/or content related share-outs). A major component of the curricular enactment processes (e.g., workstations, close-reads, etc.) was the emphasis on students always writing. Throughout the entirety of my time in Danielle's class, and the three years at Vantage, there was always a stressing of having students write. While having students develop writing skills is vitally important, it also felt that at times there was just an emphasis on students writing to write, even when the writing did not necessarily expand the student learning.

As noted, this project was impacted by COVID-19, which produced various ruptures and lines of flight. The processes shifted with school going virtual March 16th until June 19th. Danielle offered class via zoom, but student turnout was low due to a variety of issues (effects of COVID-19, family commitments, etc.). With the

transition from in person to virtual classrooms the curriculum shifted. Rather than emphasizing reading written texts there was a shift of emphasizing multimodal material (e.g., murals, films, documentaries, etc.). Danielle also took a humanizing approach. Rather than compounding the stresses brought on by the current crisis (economic, COVID-19, and police brutality) Danielle created activities that were flexible and stressed taking an asset-based perspective that explored the positive work being done in the local community.

Danielle created handouts that served as the primary curricular document. These handouts were housed in individualized binders that Danielle gave to each student at the beginning of the year. As a participant, I too was given a binder that I brought to every class. The anchor question was at the top of each handout and guided the students' engagement for each lesson. These handouts were sometimes for single day lessons or multi-day projects. After the guiding question there was either an agenda for the lesson or a breakdown of the work. There were tables and graphic organizers filled with questions, images, and graphics that students engaged with. To more fully discuss the handouts, I provide a detailed accounting of two handouts Danielle used. These handouts represent the types of structure Danielle used throughout her class. The student intra-actions with these handouts usually demonstrated schooling moments reinforced by hierarchical relationships and prescriptive entanglements. However, the lines of flight that emerged with each intra-action varied. Like the policies and du-rags, the handouts had agency and often worked in service of schooling.

During one session where students were engaging with a handout, one similar to handout one (the document discussed below), the students intra-acted in ways that produced very different lines of light. For example, Gabriel, Joseph, Sofia and Isabella spent most of their time playing around and not really engaging with the handout's tasks. Mari, Ben, and Samantha went right to doing the work and putting answers on the sheet. Samantha did not engage with her peers, she put earphones in and went right to working on the handout, even though the handout required student collaboration. Maria, Ben, and Samantha's engagement with the handout resembled that of a schooling activity. They were given a handout, and the handout was a task that needed to be completed. Within most school processes the handout represents an assignment to be finished, handed in, and graded. Maria, Ben, and Samantha engaged with the activity in this manner. They went right to answering the questions on the document. Stacey, Shawn, and Luis worked together engaging with the handout's tasks in a collaborative manner learning with and from one another. The varied intra-actions with the handouts produced quite different lines of flight.

The first handout represented a two-day activity where students were engaging with material on Black Lives Matter anchored with the question: how can we take our knowledge beyond the four walls of the classroom to work towards social change in our community? The handout was a one-page document that had four stations on it. The four stations were: (1) The founding women of Black Lives Matter, (2) Black Lives Matter, What We Believe children's coloring book, (3) Black Lives Matter website, ways of resistance, and (4) Black Lives Matter Week of Action

in Schools, writing a script. Each of these sections of the handout represented a timed, 12 minute and 30 second, workstation.

The youth engaged with three to four questions at each station. The questions were tiered. Students initially recorded a data point (fact, statement of the presenter, etc.) and then the questions focused on applying, analyzing, and creating. The initial questions emphasized factual recall and represented banking education. Students initially had to write what they saw, but then those tiered questions allowed for more agency. At one station the students watched a short clip on activists and then had to generate one question for the activist. The students also wrote about how the activist's work might apply to the Vantage community. At another station, the youth created a slide for a larger PowerPoint project to be presented at a Black Lives Matter event the following weekend.

Each of these stations, like most every schooling intra-action, was a complex intra-action between human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies. For example, at one station where student were conducting google searches of things relevant to the topic, Samantha conducted a google search on "The Hate You Give" to find an image of the movie. However, when she conducted the search on her school computer the image did not appear, it was as if "The Hate You Give" never existed. Samantha came over and asked if I would conduct the same search on my computer. Samantha then sat her screen next to me mine and we discussed how the two screens showed no similar images. Whatever search parameters were put in place, the algorithms, they played an active role in Samantha's learning process. The algorithms impeded

Samantha's search. The human who created the search parameters, the search algorithm, and Samantha's search illustrate a schooling intra-action of erasure.

The first handout represents an engagement with culturally and community relevant content steeped in racial and social justice. First, the students engaged with content to better understand Black Lives Matter and then they applied that work to their lives and the Vantage community. However, the curriculum was quite prescriptive and did not allow for a tremendous amount of student agency. This notion of prescriptive entanglements will be discussed in another findings section.

The second handout was a graphic organizer that was used in combination with a video on Black Lives Matter. The front of the sheet was a graphic organizer that asked the students to record (1) any events that made them feel positive emotions, (2) anything that made them angry, (3) examples of activism and organizing, (4) examples of solidarity, and (5) any new ideas or questions raised by the film. On the backside of the handout was space to free write in response to the documentary they saw. The front of the handout represents a more prescriptive curricular component as the students had a guide as to how and what they should write while the back of the page allowed for the students to freely express their thoughts.

The curricular representation of handout one illustrates the intra-action between humans, nonhumans, and discourses. The students engaged with timed stations, the physical desks they rotated between, the websites, internet, the wider discourses surrounding Black Lives Matter, multi media presentations (TedTalks, short video clips, etc.), PowerPoint slides that youth created, the pens or pencils

they used, and the handout that they followed and wrote on. There were many agents operating at each moment within the class and each intra-action produced various lines of flight. This curricular activity also created space for youth to move and be active, although in prescriptive ways.

Handout two was an intra-active agent composed of the physical handout, the film, a projector projecting the film, desks, the blank space to free write, and the graphic organizers that asked specific questions. Like handout one, this curricular component produced various lines of flight. The film was quite intense as it dealt with sensitive material (e.g., police brutality, racism, etc.) and it intra-acted with the students in various ways. This curricular moment was also a space where students were sitting in their desks being less physically active. A large portion of the students were heavily emotionally impacted by the film so much so that one student had to leave the class and four students stayed after to more fully debrief what they had just seen. The film galvanized some students while others felt despair. Luis and Stacey felt moved to think about how they could take action in their community and how they could be active during the Black Lives Matter week of action. Both Luis and Stacey stayed after class discussing future potential actions. However, this curricular moment produced a different line of flight for other students, most visibly for Daniela and Kelly who felt emotionally overwhelmed by the material. Kelly had to stay after class to talk to me about her emotions while Daniela had to visit the emotional support room in the school.

Beyond the handouts, there were student-driven and arts-based curriculum. There was the YPAR informed photovoice postcard project that was detailed in the

previous chapter. The postcard project brought together photovoice, student freedom dreams, and action. The youth were creating moment of rupture, challenging deficit framings by putting their asset-based pictures in conversation with the deficit discourses of Vantage. The students not only conducted this work in the classroom, but they took their work and message to the larger community. This curricular moment pushed back against notions of schoolwork needing to only be housed within the school. Similarly, by sending the postcards to the local school administrators, politicians, and community members the youth were working outside the four walls of their classroom and school.

Like the photovoice postcard project, the youth created bricolages (a piece of work constructed created via mixed media) using multimedia literacy skills. The bricolages answered the anchor questions: what tools and resources does Black Lives Matter use to advocate for social change? What successes have been achieved by Black Lives Matter?

These arts-based projects (the photovoice project and the bricolage) included intra-actions between humans (students, adults, community members), nonhuman (computers, the Internet, papers, desks, whiteboards, photographs, phones, cameras, etc.), and discursive bodies (community – asset versus deficit based frameworks, schooling, activism, race, Black Lives Matter, etc.), which produced mixed lines of flight. Some students deeply invested in these projects. For example, Luis and Stacey saw these projects as moment to assert their agency, have others listen to their voices, and feel as if they are agents of change in their

community. Other students, like Maria and Samantha, saw these just as schooling activities.

The curriculum and curricular enactments were actively challenging the hidden curriculum and white-washed curriculum by centering the voices and experiences of marginalized communities. The content pushed back against traditional curriculum (e.g., the curriculum saturated in Whiteness), but at the same time the curricular enactment reinforced hierarchical relations, notions of studenting/teaching, and created prescriptive entanglements. With agential schooling emphasizing social control, regulation, and operating as a domination force, curriculum plays an active role in buttressing agential schooling by limiting choice and opportunity. The curricular components of any lesson offer potential lines of flight and opportunities, while also limiting others. Too often curriculum leads students to very specific and intended schooling outcomes rather than learning opportunities.

Prescriptive Entanglements

When referencing prescriptive entanglements, I am specifically discussing entanglements that are bounded and constrained. These prescriptive entanglements often provide youth the illusion of meaningful choice. For example, if a teacher offers three options for a project, yes, the students have more freedom, but that freedom is constrained and has to function within the predetermined parameters. All too often within schools, teachers generate the material without meaningful input from the students. As Gabriel noted, “teachers want everything to be in a structured plan. Like do this, do this, do that. Like, listen to us students.” As has been

noted, schooling focuses on socially reproductive processes, but learning emphasizes unpredictability (Patel, 2016). Prescriptive entanglements create specific modes of acquiring knowledge, and while those modes may be ruptured, they do create intentional parameters for educational experiences.

As mentioned in the section on curriculum, handouts were a major component of Danielle's classroom. These handouts were quite prescriptive having particular questions and tasks. The tasks were focused on very specific learning outcomes, and the class, tasks, and workstations were often timed.

I return to handout one to more thoroughly discuss the prescriptive entanglements occurring in Danielle's class. At the top of the handout was the lesson's guiding question, "how can we take our knowledge beyond the 4 walls of the classroom to work towards social change in our community?" To go about answering this question the students engaged with four workstations. Each station was timed at 12 minutes and 30 seconds because of the constraints of class time. At the first station the students engaged with a video about the founding women of Black Lives Matter. The station's work emphasized (1) sharing one idea about each speaker and (2) recording anything that resonated with the student or new learning about Black Lives Matter. At station two, one student from the group would read the small children's book to the rest of the group and then the students would individually engage with one of the activities in the book. Station three emphasized an engagement with the Black Lives Matter website. The students were directed to read the "Herstory" and "What We Believe." After reading the narratives on the website the students were tasked to choose one idea from the "what we believe" list

and explain why they agreed with the idea. Danielle also provided an example sentence stem for the students. The students then read the section “Global Actions” and had to list four organizing strategies used by the movement. The last component of workstation three was to watch two short activist’s videos and record one takeaway or question that came up while watching the video. At station four, the groups created a slide that they were to present and teach at an upcoming Black Lives Matter event.

First, the workstations were timed creating an initial prescriptive entanglement. Students knew they have to move through the activities in a specific manner to finish the task, move to the next one, and finish them all within the given time. Second, the stations each had very targeted and particular activities that led to specific educative outcomes. Third, each station built upon the next so that by the time the students created their PowerPoint slide the students had been guided to a specific understanding of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Returning back to handout two, the graphic organizer offered student the opportunity to record (1) any events that made them feel positive emotions, (2) those that made them angry, (3) examples of activism and organizing, (4) examples of solidarity, and (5) any new ideas or questions raised by the film. However, while the graphic organizer provided students an organized space to engage with the video, it also only provided for specific ways of engaging with the video. Through my time in Danielle’s classroom I noticed that when students were given prescriptive ways of engaging with material they often stuck to those modes of operating. Scaffolding material can produce varied lines of flight as it may help support student

learning, but it may also lead to prescriptive entanglements where students are led down a particular path that limits potential avenues of engaging with the material. Each agential cut taken by the creators of the curriculum opens certain lines of flight while limiting others.

There were other classroom intra-actions that created prescriptive entanglements. For example, during one class session Danielle used the elmo to project the handout she was writing on. Danielle wrote on her handout and the students copied what she was writing. Then Danielle would ask the students questions from the handout and as the students answered Danielle would write modified versions of their answers on the projected handout. Here we see an intra-action between hierarchical relations and prescriptive entanglements that produced a schooling moment.

Beyond the handouts, the time in the classroom created a prescriptive entanglement and limited opportunity. As Patel (2016) reminds us, learning is unpredictable. However, with classes starting and ending at specific times learning opportunities were sometimes cut short. For example, during one class session on the postcard photovoice project the students were having an engaging conversation looking at the politics and ethics of presenting a student-generated picture. The image had a large amount of trash in it. Some students felt that they should not put the picture on a postcard because people might see the picture and create a stereotypical representation of Vantage without knowing the full narrative of the community. Garbiel stated that he wanted to use the picture because it “represented the beauty in the shit.” The students continued engaging with this rich conversation

but then the bell rung, and Danielle stated, “This is a great conversation we should continue this. See you tomorrow.” This conversation was never brought up again. Here, the school’s structuring of the class time hindered the students’ ability to further their conversation. The prescriptive and limited class time impeded student learning. This moment reiterates Patel’s (2016) point about how learning is unpredictable, and runs counter to schooling processes.

Multiple times throughout the year Danielle had to stop class prematurely, ending rich conversations because of the bell ringing. Parameters of class time get in the way of the unpredictability of learning. Also, with Ethnic Studies taking on emotionally heavy material there were times where students were not able to fully process their feelings within the given class time. As noted earlier, there was a moment where students had watched a documentary that evoked some strong emotions and because the class ended directly after the screening the students did not have the time to fully process as a community. As Daniela stated, “people dying at the hands of police officers is heavy and can be hard thing for people to talk about.” In further discussing Ethnic Studies, Daniela stated “it is heavy material...we don’t really have enough time to talk about it [Ethnic Studies content].” All of the students stated that the documentary was important and that it was good to watch, but the limited time in the classroom space hindered their ability to process as a community. Prescriptive entanglements reinforce agential schooling’s regulatory regime – its continual emphasis on control. The prescriptive entanglements help to set and maintain the parameters for ontological and epistemological orientations within schooling.

Discipline / Surveillance / Punishment

In Foucault's (1995) classic text *Discipline and Punish* he articulates how hierarchical observations, normalizing judgments, and the exam are used as the means of corrective training. The corrective training then in turn produces disciplined bodies. Within this process there are issues of "comparing, differentiating, homogenizing, and excluding." (Foucault, 1995, p. 183). These tools then come to normalize bodies.

Surveillance materialized in many ways within Vantage. There were cameras, school staff in hallways surveilling student bodies, a police car at the entrance, Danielle circulating during class, administrators coming into class observing Danielle's teaching, and the students surveilling themselves and their peers. On most days when I arrived at the school there was a black and white police car near the entrance of the school further demonstrating the presence of the state. As mentioned in chapter three, the cameras at the entrance heavily impacted my mind and body when entering the space. Many of the students would talk about how the cameras made them feel surveilled and a few even noted that they felt like the school administrators used the cameras to look at the youth like they were prisoners.

As noted in the section on hierarchical relationships, the intra-action between the teacher and youth demonstrated how adults were in the corners of the hallways during class time to surveil students outside of class. When it comes to adults' surveilling youth in the hallways, Daniela asserted, "I see it all too often. I see lots of students being stopped in the hallways, getting told that they are doing

something wrong or getting asked about what they are doing...It is just a lot of policing when it comes to administration and students.” Building upon this, Samantha stated that when she was in the hallways she often saw administrators stopping students of color and asking for passes but not white students.

Surveillance materialized in multiple ways in Danielle’s classroom (e.g., positive narration or Danielle circulating during work time). Danielle positively narrated student behaviors during one class when she believed the students were not on task. After positively narrating for a few minutes, Danielle went back to engaging with the material of the day. At other moments, Danielle would call students to attention by using their name and say “come back to me.” Danielle often circulated throughout class, speaking with specific students about where they were on the task and if they needed any support during group work or workstation time. When finishing up work, Danielle would tell the students how excited she was about the daily task and that she was eager to read their binders and grade the week’s work. At times, she would bring student comments from work in the binders into the class discussions. This action tied the student writing, thoughts, and words together validating their knowledge. However, it also demonstrated that Danielle was reading and surveilling their writing. Each of these moments of surveillance produced diverse lines of flight.

Sometimes when students were working in groups or at workstations Danielle would hold a clipboard, which she used to give students points for their work or record their attendance. During one class, Danielle grabbed the clipboard and stated, “let me give you all some points.” The clipboard, as Danielle noted, was

simply a sturdy item to write on. However, I had noticed that the students' bodies frequently moved when Danielle grabbed the clipboard. The class would also become a little quieter. Students would perk up and sit straighter. As Samantha asserted, "I don't think anybody likes to be under pressure." For Samantha, the clipboard made her feel as if she was being surveilled. As Gabriel noted, "it makes you feel like they are observing you and your behavior." The clipboard had a sense of thing-power; the clipboard exceeded its status as an object and had agency an affected the students (Bennett, 2010). However, rather than solely looking at the clipboard's thing-power, I recognize that the driving force behind this agent is schooling's onto-epistemic focus on surveillance, disciplining, adultism, and compliance that bring this intra-action and assemblage into existence. These forces provide the opportunity for this intra-action to emerge.

When a professor visited the classroom with her graduate students during the first week of March an administrator came into Danielle's classroom to conduct a classroom observation. This administrator visited the classroom for nearly 20 minutes. Everyone in the classroom was sitting while the administrator stood. She had her school ID badge hanging on a lanyard around her neck. The administrator did not speak, but when others spoke she took notes on a sheet of paper on her clipboard. She was writing on her clipboard constantly during her time in the class. This intra-action will be more fully discussed in the next chapter. However, as these intra-actions illustrate, the clipboard played an active role during these surveillance intra-actions.

Not only were the students being surveilled, but so too was Danielle. This was not the first time that I had dealt with teachers being surveilled in Vantage. I facilitated a professional learning community focused on bringing youth participatory action research into Vantage during the 2017-2018 school year. For the entire year I worked closely with the 9th and 10th grade Ethnic Studies teachers. During this professional learning community the teachers spoke of issues like the one mentioned above, where an administrator visited the classroom. Two of the four teachers in that professional learning community had left Vantage High by the 2019-2020 school year. Cassity, a 10th grade teacher during the 2017-2018 school year, stated that the administrators came into observe classes with their “checklists” on their clipboards. When it comes to the checklist, as Cassity stated,

They are looking for student engagement, but I don’t know what that looks like. That is a subjective term; some people are looking for discussion and are the students passionate, while others are looking for students who are quiet and listening. So it is a subjective term. There are also things like just clear organization, evidence that the teacher lesson planned...

This checklist heavily affected the teachers as they stated it impacted their teaching and approaches to teaching.

Another teacher in the professional learning community, Nancy, a female teacher of color, noted how she often felt surveilled not only by the administrators but also by the teachers in the history department. She called the history department “the haters.” She was not alone as the other teachers felt surveilled by the history department.

These moments of surveillance, the cameras, the teachers, the administrators, the clipboards, etc. functioned to discipline bodies. As Foucault

(1995) reminds us via the surveilling and disciplining apparatus of the Panopticon, surveillance was most effective when it “induced in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (p. 201). Here, the inmate (substitute student, teacher, etc.) begins to internalize the external surveillance apparatus and surveil themselves. This internalizing of surveillance was demonstrated during multiple lines of flight in this study. First, I surveilled myself when I entered and walked through the building. The cameras impacted me in a way where I shifted my mannerism. Second, the youth in Danielle’s classroom shifted and moved, surveilled themselves when they saw the clipboard. As Daniela stated, “when I see the clipboard I feel I’m being judged.” Samantha felt frustrated, “it just feels like you’re being watched, you’re being studied...It gives me anxiety.” When the clipboard appeared in Danielle’s classroom the students shifted their bodies and dispositions. Third, the teachers surveilled themselves. Danielle noted that when an administrator came into her class with a clipboard, “I shifted a little bit. I felt like I had to perform for her.” During the 2017-2018 professional learning community the teachers talked about how they felt surveilled and that impacted their teaching. Surveillance not only operated via external agents, but also within the body.

Punishment played out in various ways as students were not allowed to walk the hallways (as demonstrated from the earlier mentioned hallway intra-action between the student and teacher), were searched for perceived potential possibilities of drug possession (as demonstrated via the search policy), and were graded negatively if they did not fall in line with prescriptive entanglements of

curriculum. Many students in B7 believed they were often positioned as deficits within Vantage based upon their race and culture. Daniela noted how minoritized students were often punished more harshly than white students in the school. As Samantha stated, “teachers seem to have less patience with minorities, give them less chances in class, sometimes they just kick you out without even giving a warning.” Gabriel asserted that because of his persona, how he dressed, and how he talked, he would be more heavily punished than other students who did the same offense. While there can be arguments as to if Samantha or Gabriel’s statements are more or less accurate, what is true is that this is how they felt. Their intra-actions with these various bodies made them feel as if they were being punished for who they were (a person of color, their clothing, persona, etc.). The nonhuman agency of clipboards, cameras, and various other more-than-human actors buttressed agential schooling by restricting certain opportunities and influencing our ways of knowing and being so much so that we internally surveilled ourselves.

Conclusion

Adultism, hierarchical relationships, policy, curriculum, prescriptive entanglements, discipline/surveillance, and punishment re-produce problematic power relations and domination. Each of these apparatuses plays a role in supporting the onto-epistemic force of agential schooling. Having looked at how the various apparatuses of schooling operated in both Vantage and B7, they buttress the agency of school, they work in service of schooling, be they handouts, clipboards, policies, or cameras. As has been noted, by bringing each of these data points to the

forefront I am creating agential cuts, which make and unmake certain possibilities. My analytical apparatus is intricately entangled with the other human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies. The following chapter examines the spooky entanglements that emerged within the various schooling intra-actions during my fieldwork.

CHAPTER 6:
SPOOKY ENTANGLEMENTS: CLIPBOARDS, WRITE-UPS, AND RESIGNATION
LETTERS

Schools are complex assemblages, as demonstrated by Vantage and B7. At times, B7 was a space that encouraged freedom dreaming (Kelley, 2002; Love, 2019) where students used their classroom to push for the change they wished to see. However, this space was steeped in the dominating force of agential schooling. This chapter builds upon the previous chapter by putting the apparatuses in conversation with both theory and spooky entanglements that emerged during the three years of research at Vantage. In this chapter, I will be focusing on diffractively reading specific intra-actions through one another to more fully illuminate how agential schooling operated within B7 and Vantage High. The diffractive reading clarifies how differences matter and what occurs when those differences are read through one another.

I take account of those agents that often go unacknowledged in traditional humanist research by engaging with posthumanism. Beyond posthumanism, diffraction provides an avenue to explore relationships and emphasize differences, interference patterns, and the production of difference by reading insights through one another (Barad, 2007; Barad, 2017; Dixon-Román, 2017; Haraway 1992; Haraway, 1997). Barad (2007) reminds us that “diffraction is also an apt metaphor for describing the methodological approach that I use of reading insights through one another...attending to and responding to the details and specificities of relations

of difference and how they matter” (p. 71). Agency is not just in the hands of the humans, but emerges through entanglements with other human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies. As Bennett (2010) indicated, things animate and act.

Chapter Framing – Agential Cuts and Entanglements

This chapter uses a posthumanist, agential realist (Barad, 2007) analysis positioning schooling as a nonhuman agent. There were 15 students in B7. The following sections outline specific intra-actions that illustrate the effects of agential schooling. These events demonstrate the spooky entanglements between curriculum, hierarchical relations, prescriptive intra-actions, surveillance, policy, punishment, clipboards, classroom observations, teacher write-ups, humans, nonhuman agents, and discursive bodies. The lines of flight within B7 showcase the coercive power of agential schooling. These spooky entanglements appeared to act upon me, pulling me in, constantly drawing me back to them (see MacLure, 2020; MacLure, 2013).

The spooky entanglements demonstrate the agency of clipboards, teacher write-ups, and policies. Similarly, these schooling intra-actions illustrate the onto-epistemology – the knowing-in-being and being-in-knowing – of schooling. For example, when students were given the autonomy to create their own classroom space they reproduced the hierarchy they frequently spoke against. After exploring these spooky entanglements, I diffractively read them through theory and one another. This diffractive reading of the intra-actions of the buttresses of schooling demonstrates the onto-epistemic and coercive force of agential schooling. As this

work takes up agential realism I acknowledge that I chose which agents to focus on, and that there are many other actors that I could emphasize producing different lines of flight. The cuts play a productive role in the research.

Spooky Entanglements

Reproducing Schooling

Various schooling lines of flight emerged within B7. The students often spoke about how they hated the hierarchical relationships between teachers and students, the lecturing, and lack of collaboration that occurred in classrooms throughout the high school. However, when provided the space to create a solely student-driven classroom they reproduced the problematic components of schooling that they often spoke against.

Danielle walked into B7 one Wednesday morning and stated, “Hey, you all remember we are presenting our work this weekend, right?” The students responded, “Yes.” Danielle then replied, “great, you all create the PowerPoint agenda and I will be back near the end of class so you all can catch me up.” Danielle told the students that I was in the room and that I was to be treated either like a fly on the wall or another member of the learning community, it was up to the students. The only parameter of the day was that there would be a PowerPoint agenda created for Saturday’s event. Danielle later told me that she did this to see how/what the students would do with the autonomy and no teacher constraining their actions. As soon as Danielle left the space the students almost immediately went to reproducing a hierarchical classroom.

Stacey and Luis immediately stood up and walked to the front of the classroom and started to ask the students questions about what they wanted to do. There was no conversation about how the class would proceed or an appointing of Stacey or Luis as leaders. They took this task upon themselves. This action was met with a variety of responses. Maria and Samantha immediately withdrew from the activities and talked amongst themselves for the remainder of the class. In a later conversation, both Maria and Samantha stated that they felt frustrated that Stacey and Luis took control of the class without any input on the process, and because of that they withdrew. Samantha stated, "it was fine that they got up there, because somebody needed to, but she [Stacey] wasn't really trying to include everybody." While Samantha noted there should be some inclusion of everyone's voice, she also stated that someone needed to take control. Here, Samantha relied upon a notion of needing hierarchical relationships within the space. There needed to be a leader. Ben and Joseph pulled away from the class activity and talked amongst themselves about basketball. The remainder of the class stayed in their seats and directed their attention to Stacey and Luis.

Stacey took up the authoritarian teacher role as she asked students questions and then wrote her interpretation of their statements on the whiteboard. Shawn, being a member of Luis and Stacey's usual group, came closer to the board and listened to what Luis and Stacey had to say. He followed their lead and did as was directed. Victoria attempted to speak, but the other members of the class were talking amongst themselves loudly. Luis asked the students to abide by the classroom norms of having one individual speak at a time and being attentive to that

person's contribution. The majority of students stopped speaking. A few just lowered their voices.

For the most part, the students engaged in a passive manner as Stacey and Luis guided the class. Two students, Kelly and Juliana, came to the whiteboard and added to the potential agenda. After getting most of the agenda completed, Stacey asked the class a question about how they might divide the talking points. Sofia responded, but Stacey did not understand Sofia's comment and asked her to come to the board to draw out what she was saying. Sofia tensed up, looked around the room, and as her face grew red she stated, "no." During this intra-action there was a tension surrounding speaking publicly in front of the class and also about being 'right'. However, the students were attempting to engage in a dialogue, but the pressure of schooling reinforced notions of correct and incorrect even when they were just discussing ideas of what to do. Sofia later stated that there was too much attention and pressure on her at that moment.

Throughout the class time, Stacey was asking for students to contribute as Luis was circulating amongst the groups seeking their input. The students eventually started to engage with the process more, and most of them contributed to the task at hand. However, Stacey got frustrated with the students not engaging with the activity and started to be short with the other students. Stacey ultimately sat down and crossed her arms stating that she was done. The rest of the class remained quiet for a minute or two, with everyone looking around, before Luis took up the activity and finished the task before Danielle came back to the classroom.

This specific class session initially left me quite puzzled. The students reproduced the very thing that they constantly and enthusiastically spoke about hating. First, there was the hierarchical reproduction of school as Stacey and Luis took on the role of teacher. This was interesting as Stacey and Luis were the most vocal supporters of Ethnic Studies and avidly critiqued hierarchical schooling. However, not all students engaged with this schooling activity. Samantha and Maria never participated in the class's activities. Initially, this could be seen as defiant students or it could be imagined as students resisting a problematic schooling intra-action. Ben and Joseph stated they withdrew simply because they were not that into the activity. However, the rest of the class did not challenge the hierarchical relationship but participated as if Stacey and Luis replaced Danielle.

Beyond the hierarchical relationship, there was also a prescriptive engagement as Stacey and Luis were guiding the conversation while students were responding to those questions. This was not collaborative, but rather directed by Stacey and Luis. With Stacey and Luis standing at the board while the rest of the students were sitting there was also the intra-action between active and passive, surveilling and surveilled. When given the freedom to disrupt schooling, the students reproduced the very thing they passionately advocated against throughout the year. This moment represents an entanglement of the onto-epistemological knowing in being and being in knowing of schooling. The students intra-acted with the discourse of schooling, the oppressive onto-epistemic schooling, the physical setup of the classroom lending itself towards hierarchy with the desks being

oriented towards the whiteboard, the whiteboard, the agenda on the board, and the goal of producing the agenda for the Saturday activity.

“Space Invader”: Administrators, Clipboards, and Class Observations

“An administrator walked into B7. The room shifted. Students sat-up, closed their arms, tightened their legs, and stared at her. I tilted my computer screen to be closer to my chest, even though I know she was not there to observe me. The student directly in front of me, Joseph, sat-up and said, “damn.” Another student, Samantha, feverishly started to tap her foot, crossed her arms, and appeared to be quite agitated.” (Fieldnote, 3-4-20)

A second spooky entanglement was that of an intra-active moment where a school administrator, with her clipboard in hand, visited Danielle’s classroom. This administrator visited the class as the students were working in groups talking about the significance of student voice in school. As soon as the administrator walked in with her clipboard, the classroom energy shifted. The students sat up, their body language changed, and the space became quieter. Students appeared guarded as some crossed their arms and others leaned over their work. There was a performance, and as Gabriel asserted, “when you like a teacher, Yea, make them look good in a sense. When they [teachers] are in front of their bosses, we understand that.” Rather than having more open conversations the students were leaning into their groups. As an observer and researcher, I even sat up, leaned into my group, and pulled my computer screen closer to me. There was no reason for this, but it was my immediate response. The administrator and the clipboard evoked a physical and emotional response. I felt surveilled even though I had no relation to this administrator’s work. As a former teacher, I had been observed multiple times and was aware of teacher observation protocols. This moment immediately took me to Foucault’s (1995) notions of surveillance and hierarchical observations while also

invoking a memory of my conversation with the 2017-2018 professional learning community within Vantage where the Ethnic Studies teachers talked about the administrator's use of the teacher "checklist" when they walked into classrooms with their clipboards. Similarly, it evoked memories of my own teacher observations and the anxiety it produced as administrators circulated my classroom with their clipboards.

In this specific intra-action in Danielle's classroom the anxiousness was compounded as Samantha claimed "it was tense because usually she's [the administrator] the one that only comes in when she's heard something about somebody...and when you have already got into altercations with staff, its going to be like, "why are you here?" Samantha went on to state, "I think she [the administrator] went into the class with good intentions, but mix that with the fact that she's already had interactions with the students that weren't positive. It was just a little weird." Danielle later acknowledged that it also shifted her dispossession, "I felt like I had to perform for her."

Siting with my group, Samantha anxiously asserted, "I don't even know why she is here." Joseph built upon this statement by shifting his body language and raising his voice as he stated, "she invaded our space and ruined the vibe...she just tries to get people in trouble." Samantha and Joseph then continued a dialogue on how she is always just out watching students. The administrator stood throughout her time in the class while the students were seated. I tensed up at the administrator drifted towards our group. She stood above us for maybe one to two minutes and it was visibly uncomfortable for the group. Samantha crossed her arms over her chest

and Joseph leaned over his writing. As the administrator walked away Samantha shook her head and her leg was visibly shaking as she stated, “my anxiety is on max.” Beyond Samantha, Daniela noted “it made the room uncomfortable and tense. It made it a little hard for me to focus because it made it kind of like we couldn’t fully share our ideas.” As noted, this administrator was constantly writing on her clipboard throughout the class time. Going back to a conversation in the previous chapter, the clipboard was an agent and played a role within the intra-action and feelings of being surveilled.

The administrator left Danielle the following note as she exited the class, “Great to see the collaboration here with students and community members. Authentic work, hearing almost every students voice. Great engagement. Let’s talk more.” While this was a positive space and experience for the administrator, it was quite the opposite for the rest of the people in B7. Samantha was visibly angry for the remainder of the class and she shutdown. The day after the administrator visited the class Samantha handed me a sheet of paper that stated:

Often times school administrators will come in and observe teachers. There is no doubt that there are some students who have been targeted by administrators during a regular school day. On a day-to-day basis you have students that may just be going through it. Other students just might feel that school just isn’t for them. Whatever the case may be, most students have been in a situation where they’ve felt targeted or picked out; if you’ve ever been in this situation well then koodas to you because its never fun and almost never ends good for the student.

Now when you’re in class trying to focus on school work and not everything else going on in life, and then the same administrator that you were just feeling targeted by is sitting in your class watching you it can feel really awkward. For some it may even feel like they are only focusing on you.

Samantha felt very surveilled and she was not alone. Danielle stated:

“I definitely felt something. There was a shift. Their [students] body language changed instantly. Some students were openly agitated. It felt as if they were feeling, “this is our space, why are you here?...Now for me, when she came into class, I shifted a little bit. She came in with a clipboard. There’s just the presence of an adult who doesn’t belong to the community, popping into the class unannounced that shifts the dynamic.”

I later debriefed this class session with Danielle and she felt that a component of the heightened anxiety was the administrator’s interactions with students in the hall. As Danielle indicated, “all day long she is caught up in the nitty-gritty of being in the hallway telling kids to take their hats and hoods off....she is constantly nagging students without building relationships.” Danielle also noted this issue of the clipboard. In our discussion of the clipboard, Danielle noted for her the clipboard was associated with being critiqued. The clipboard, along with the administrator, evoked a sense of uneasiness and impacted Danielle’s way of being.

If we diffractively read these experiences through one another various responses to school emerge. Danielle and Gabriel, to some extent, perform, playing their perceived role within the space. Joseph, Samantha, and myself all felt anxiety and retreated from the activity, we shutdown rather than performing our role within schooling. For me, this was due to my own experiences of feeling surveilled as a past teacher. For Samantha and Joseph, this was tied to previous experiences with the administrator and oppression of schooling within Vantage.

During this moment, there were a variety of bodies intra-acting. There was what Joseph labeled, a “space invader,” the administrator who came into Danielle’s classroom. This administrator came into the classroom to observe Danielle’s teaching, and she left positive feedback, but for many of the students that did not feel like her purpose. The students had noted how they felt she was there to surveil

them. Daniela stated, “administrators are always walking around the building with clipboards assessing the students and teachers” For Daniela, the clipboard produced a notion of not only being surveilled, but also assessed. Similarly, as previously noted, the clipboard created tension. The clipboard, in conversation with the discourse of schooling and surveillance, illustrated a moment of thing-power. As Bennett (2010) stated, “thing-power gestures toward the strange ability of ordinary, man-made items to exceed their status as objects and to manifest traces of independence or aliveness.” (p. xvi). The clipboard was an agent intra-acting with the humans, other nonhuman bodies, and discourses. This intra-action illustrates the significant negative impact surveillance can have on the minds and bodies of individuals, while also illustrating the role that various nonhuman agents can play in such intra-actions. As mentioned above, I also recognize that the conditions for this thing-power (Bennett, 2010) to come to existence is in relation to schooling’s driving onto-epistemic focus on surveillance, discipline, and compliance which creates the conditions to make this intra-action and assemblage possible.

A Teacher Write-Up: “What is Your Students Name?”

On an early March morning, I walked into Danielle’s class about 10 minutes before the students came in. Danielle was visibly frustrated. I put my computer on the desk and asked what was going on. Danielle responded, “I got written up for insubordination.” I was stunned. Danielle is well respected in the school community and a dedicated teacher. I did not know how to respond other than asking, “well how did this happen?” Danielle then proceeded to outline a negative intra-action with one of the school administrators. It all started a few days before when

Danielle's classroom phone rang during her off period. A school administrator had called down to ask Danielle, "hey, what the name of your new student?" Danielle had been mentoring this student for some time. Danielle had fought diligently to get the student to return to school as he had dropped out of his last school and spent the past few months at home. The administrator knew that Danielle had a close relationship with this student. Danielle responded, "What happened? I have a close relationship with that student. How can I help?" The administrator stated that she did not need to share that information with Danielle. The two arrived at an impasse and Danielle stated she would go to the principal and talk to him about the situation.

However, by the time Danielle had arrived to see the principal the other administrator had updated the principal on the situation. When Danielle spoke to the principal he stated that she was going to be issued a citation for insubordination, and that she was to be summoned to a disciplinary hearing. Danielle went to the hearing with her union representative a day later and received a written referral that went into her permanent file.

In our conversation about the situation, Danielle stated, "My response was wrong, and I know that, but it was rooted in the toxic environment of the school. I was on high alert and was feeling very protective of my students." As noted in chapter three, the school played a role as an agent in the schooling intra-actions and so too did the weather of school (the anti-Blackness) and toxicity of the school.

Danielle felt that she was not heard and that she was given the citation for not following the hierarchical chain of command of the school. When it was over, Danielle stated,

“I felt like I was working in a hostile work environment where my boss straight up threatened me, that if I stand up for what I believe in, I’m going to be treated like a student. He’s going to patronize me and he’s going to send me home until he decides I can come back.”

This negative intra-action demonstrates some unique aspects of schooling. First, there was the hierarchical relationship between the administrators and Danielle, just as there was between Danielle and the students. However, the administrators used surveillance and punishment as their tools to control the school. As Danielle asserted, “I feel like that story is a really great example of how hierarchy played out. It didn’t matter to him [the principal] how she [the other administrator] had treated me, or disrespected me. What mattered was I am a teacher and I didn’t comply.”

This moment also demonstrates how schooling often dehumanizes the people in the school. Not only are the students constantly dehumanized, but so too are teachers via the hierarchical and punitive nature of the school structure. The hierarchical nature of relationships, surveillance, and punitive-oriented administration all intra-act curtailing certain ways of being. Referencing Danielle’s comment about the toxic environment, the culture of the school is an agent and operates on everyone’s mind and body. As Danielle noted, she felt the toxic environment enhanced her anxiety and that she needed to protect her students. The culture of the school, the nature of hierarchy within the school, the administrator’s view of her role, the mode of intra-action (e.g., over the phone), the principal, the write-up, Danielle’s student, and Danielle’s heightened anxiety intra-acted to produce a schooling moment that demonstrated the toxicity of schooling. There was a neglect of humanity (both Danielle’s and the student’s) and a focus on hierarchy, surveillance, punishment, and a strict adherence to school policy.

Policy: From Surveillance to Resignation Letters

The potential stop and search policy influenced the school's toxic environment. This policy acted as an agent on the minds and bodies of the humans in the school. In February, the principal put forward an idea for a stop and search policy at Vantage. As Danielle asserted, "it seemed very out of the blue."

The administration sent letters home to families stating that students would get searched based on a random number generator. The searches would happen one day a week. Two administrators in either the closest administrator's office or an empty classroom would search the students' pockets and backpacks. The letter also stated that police would be involved if there were possible felony implications (e.g., drugs and distribution, weapons, etc.). Students met the proposed policy with great resistance. The principal hosted a public forum to discuss the policy. The forum was recorded and put on facebook by a local public media organization.

In the public forum, Stacey stated, "Not only is it criminalizing students, it traumatizes students. It doesn't make us feel comfortable or building a school community. I feel like the school is looking at us like we are bad people. It is scary for me to come to school." Also within the forum, Gabriel asserted, "as a student that has been searched, they aren't disrespectful or anything, but you come here for a safe space. You don't want to come here like it is a jail. It is minoritized students being searched, it isn't white kids." However, when Gabriel and I spoke privately he stated, "I was violated. I feel like they didn't give us the privacy that we needed. They dumped my bag in front of the whole class, which was unacceptable to me... I was like damn, you can't put my shit back?" Only one person, a teacher, spoke in support

of the policy. Over 20 individuals, teachers, parents, community members, and students spoke against the policy with arguments ranging from the searches furthering the school-to-prison pipeline, criminalizing students, killing the school culture, increasing student anxiety, and hindering student learning by taking them out of class.

Two days after the principal's forum, the superintendent posted a video on facebook discussing the policy. The superintendent stated, "the last thing I want to do is erode the trust between the school and the community." He went on to state "safety is something we are very concerned with, but not at the expense of what I think makes schools the safest, strong relationships." The students continued to pressure the school and at the beginning of April the principal stated that there would be no stop and search policy at Vantage High. This attempted policy produced a great amount of tension within the school.

During the conversation on the stop and search policy, the principal stated that any administrator who did not comply would be written up. The only administrator who spoke out against the search policy was the one who visited Danielle's classroom. This administrator told Danielle "If I have to search a student, I'm quitting." Danielle indicated that the administrator went on stating that she had written up a resignation letter and had been carrying it in her back pocket for weeks, waiting for the moment she was asked to search a student. She was never asked to search a student. However, this administrator resigned at the end of the year.

In this spooky entanglement there is an intra-action between policy, facebook posts, students, teachers, administrators, discourses of surveillance, discourses around safety, hierarchical relationships, punishment, race, and a resignation letter. The principal stated that he believed it would produce a greater sense of safety while the students saw it as making the school unsafe, or in the words of Stacey “traumatizing.” The potential stop and search policy produced various lines of flight, most students and teachers heavily opposed it, most of the administration was silent, and the principal pushed for the policy. The policy was an agent that worked in service of the onto-epistemology of schooling, positioning students as either potentially dangerous or criminal while reinforcing adultism and hierarchical relations. The policy’s thing-power (Bennett, 2010) comes into existence in relation to the larger forces of power and schooling’s onto-epistemic emphasis on a weather of anti-Blackness. The policy worked in service of the larger forces of agential schooling. The weather and agential schooling created the possibilities for this intra-action.

Diffractioned Spooky Entanglements

Each of these spooky entanglements produced varied lines of flight within Vantage. The following section is a diffractive reading of those entanglements through one another. Diffraction, as Barad (2014) asserted, “is...an iterative (re)configuring of patterns of differentiating-entanglings” (p. 168). As Dixon-Román (2017) reminds us, “diffraction is not about the reflective search for sameness but the focus on differences that make a difference” (p. 69). In reading the spooky

entanglements through one another while being attentive to the apparatuses of schooling, I am making an agential cut, which could be made in other ways. I am actively part of the study, entangled, not some distant observer. My experiences in Vantage, my ways of knowing and being, the theorists I have read and re-read, my academic training, and my lived experiences are entangled with this project. This diffractive reading is as Lenz Taguchi and Palmer (2013) note “where differences get made in the process of reading data into each other, and identifying what diffractive patterns emerge in the readings” (p. 676). This reading, or re-reading of material through one another is productive; it produces new and different knowledge through the entanglement (Mazzei, 2014). There is attentiveness to the bodies and their entanglement (Barad, 2007).

This diffractive reading also recognizes that Vantage resided in a larger spacetime-mattering (Barad, 2007) of schooling that heavily emphasizes neoliberalism (Mirra & Morrell, 2011). The space, time, and mattering are co-constitutive (Barad, 2007; Ringrose & Rawlings, 2015). This neoliberalism was present in Vantage via the state receivership and district’s emphasis on increasing standardized testing. Beyond this larger neoliberal school context, there is also recognition of Sharpe’s (2016) assertion that weather represents the “totality of environments; the weather is the total climate; and the climate is antiblack” (p. 104). Within Vantage, the entanglement of student experiences/narratives (e.g., Gabriel, Samantha, Daniela, etc.), my school observations, my experiences in Vantage, the wall of fame, teacher comments, the curriculum, and policies represent a weather that is not only anti-Black but one that centers Whiteness. This weather

made itself intelligible to the students as they openly talked about the ever-present Whiteness.

When this Whiteness was challenged it was met with great resistance. For example, as demonstrated in chapter four, the 9th grade Ethnic Studies teacher of color and her students who challenged the principal and discriminatory du-rag policy were met with opposition. Only after a sustained campaign to change the policy was it rescinded. However, at the end of that year the teacher was not rehired for the 2019-2020 school year. Many of the students in this teacher's course believed her release was directly connected to challenging the principal, policy, and Whiteness. The larger neoliberal context intra-acted with the weather of Vantage (e.g., anti-Blackness centering Whiteness) and agential schooling to produce various lines of flight that centered hierarchy and racial domination.

By reading Luis and Stacey's reproduction of a hierarchical classroom, the administrator (e.g., Joseph's space invader) observing Danielle's class, and Danielle's write-up through one another we see the pervasiveness of schooling. Not only does schooling impact the minds and bodies of the students, but also the administrators and teachers within the school. When provided the space and autonomy to create any classroom activity Danielle's classroom relied on the very things they detested. B7 reproduced traditional hierarchical school rather than using a democratic process. Luis and Stacey stepped into the role of Danielle as she left the space. In this moment, it appeared that the discourse of schooling and onto-epistemology of schooling were so pervasive that the students saw this as the way things needed to be done, even though they constantly condemned it. However, there was opposition

from Samantha, but rather than uttering her resistance, her silent disengagement functioned as opposition. Hierarchical relationships and prescriptive entanglements buttressed the agency of schooling in this moment.

It was not just the students, but also the adult faculty who were inculcated in these problematic relationships. The administrator, clipboard, and classroom observation functioned as agents in service of hierarchical relationships and surveillance as they buttressed the dominating force of schooling. The same administrator who surveilled Danielle's classroom was under the constraints of schooling via the potential search policy as she walked around the school anxiously waiting for a moment where she may have to pull her resignation letter from her back pocket. This administrator told Danielle she was going to hand the principal the letter the moment she was asked to search a student. Beyond the administrator, Danielle was also under the gaze of schooling as she was not only surveilled by the administrators, but was punished for trying to support and protect her student. Danielle tried to intervene and follow her moral compass when she felt she needed to protect her student, but in doing so was punished.

By reading these experiences through one another there is an illumination of each of these processes buttressing modes of domination rather than supporting learning. Each of these moments took action on my body, evoking anxiety, fear, and frustration along with memories of fear and frustration from my high school schooling experience. The intra-actions of Danielle and B7 with the apparatuses of schooling resonate with my experience intra-acting with agential schooling.

When provided freedom to construct a learning environment the students relied upon, or were so deeply entrenched in the onto-epistemology of schooling, that they reproduced the very thing they railed against. However, it was not just that schooling functioned to dominate and constrain youth, but it also constrained the actions of the adults. Danielle was punished for standing up for her student, and this shifted her relationship with the administration and her ability to do her job. The administrator who observed Danielle's classroom dealt with a constant sense of anxiety and trepidation, so much so that she always had her resignation letter in her back pocket. This fear was caused by the potential policy and hierarchical relationship within the administrative chain of command.

I want to make an agential cut and timespacemattering shift to that of Spring Valley High School in South Carolina on October 26, 2015. A young Black student, Shakara, was using her phone in class and a teacher asked her to leave the classroom. Shakara refused, and the teacher brought in an administrator. The administrator asked the student to leave and she refused. The student resource officer, a white Sheriff's Deputy, was brought in. The officer violently tore the young Black child (16 years old) from her desk, slammed her to floor, drug her to the front of the class, and then put her in a restraint, handcuffed her, and arrested her. As soon as the incident began, a fellow student, Niya Kenny, took out her camera to record the situation. The video went viral via the hashtag #AssaultAtSpringValleyHigh and was picked up by ABC's *Good Morning America*, *The Huffington Post*, *CNN*, *MSNBC*, and a plethora of other media outlets (e.g., see Ford, Botelho, Conlon, 2015).

Initially, Shakara was charged with causing a disturbance in school and Kenny, who recorded the video, was also arrested, taken to jail and charged with disturbing school. In discussing the incident, Kenny asserted, "I was traumatized, I could not believe this was going on." Another student in the class, Tony Robinson, stated, "I was scared, I was terrified." Due to this trauma, Kenny ended up leaving the school and pursued her GED. This violent intra-action deserves an in-depth analysis, but for the purpose of this project I read it diffractively (Barad, 2007) through student experiences at Vantage (e.g., Stacey and Gabriel's), Wynter's (2003) work on the human and 'Man,' and the experiences of Danielle and the administrator who carried her resignation letter with her.

By plugging these intra-actions into one another and looking at the difference that this difference produces, a unique agential cut emerges. I also acknowledge that this cut could have been made in different ways, producing different intra-active entanglements. I too am entangled with this phenomenon. My interpretive apparatus is entangled with my training in African American Studies, and the nuances it affords when examining formations of race. This intra-active phenomenon illustrates an entanglement of race, human, Wynter's (2003) 'Man,' punishment, discipline, desks, and a variety of other nonhuman and discursive bodies. Together, they demonstrate various lines of flight that emerge within schools, but also the dominating force of the onto-epistemology of schooling.

If we are to read the Vantage administrator's experience through that of Gabriel and Stacey's with the stop and search policy, there is a fear and frustration with and from schooling. For the administrator, there was fear of being pushed to

violate her moral code, while for Gabriel and Stacey schooling evoked a sense of being “criminalized,” “traumatized,” and “violated.” Now reading Gabriel and Stacey’s experience through the narratives of Shakara and Niya’s there are similarities of being criminalized and traumatized. As noted in earlier chapters, Black and Brown youth are overly policed and dehumanized in schools. Gabriel was criminalized and subjected to being searched in front of his classmates and Stacey was traumatized due to the potential stop and search policy. The policy played an active role in those intra-actions. For Niya and Shakara, the violence of schooling came in the form of ‘punishment’ because of a failure to self-discipline, to abide by the dehumanizing onto-epistemology of schooling. Here there is an entanglement of policing and surveillance.

As noted in the introduction, Black lives have often and historically been positioning as mattering as matter, not as human (see Hartman, 2008). Following the incident at Spring Valley High School, many individuals were outraged and surprised by the heinousness of the police officer’s actions, and rightly so, but others were not surprised as those actions align with the dehumanization of schooling. If we read the actions of the police officer through Wynter (2003) and Weheliye (2014) these actions resonate with how the West positions people of color. There is a constant intra-acting of institutions, discourse, technologies, economies, etc. that bar “nonwhite subjects from the category of human” (Weheliye, 2014, p. 3). Thus, people of color reside outside of ‘Man’ (Wynter, 2003); they are “not-quite human” (Weheliye, 2014, p. 79). If we entangle the Officer’s actions with the West’s conception of ‘Man’ (Wynter, 2003), the violent assault is reframed as a tool for

compliance. This was the way to resolve the situation. As the student of color resides outside the conception of 'Man,' they are not afforded the same recognition as human as a White student is afforded. This is a key component of the onto-epistemology of schooling as schooling is saturated in anti-Blackness and Whiteness.

Reading these three intra-actions through one another illustrate how Whiteness is embedded in schooling. For the teacher, she was fearful of violating her own moral code, it was not tied to a positioning of her as lesser than or deviant. There was not a hierarchicalizing of her being. However, for Gabriel, Stacey, Niya, and Shakara, their very being was positioned as lesser than, deviant and criminal. As noted, the very conception of 'Man,' which is saturated with Whiteness, does not allow for other conceptions of being human (e.g., non-white ways of being and knowing) (Wynter, 2003). Similarly, the criminalizing of their bodies re-produces Rose's (2019) "neocolonial mind snatching," as the students are labeled as the problem, which is actually produced through the colonial mindsets of the white administration and police officer. Reading Wynter (2003) and Rose (2019) through the administrator, Gabriel, Stacey, Niya and Shakara's experience illustrates the differences produced via the schooling apparatuses. The students of color are situated as residing outside of the notion of 'Man' (Western European humanist conception of humans) and are positioned as lesser than. They are situated as deviant and dangerous. They are not afforded the same positioning within the hierarchy of human as that of the white teachers and principal. The Western

episteme of 'Man' influenced the ability of white administrators to see their students as students, as human.

A diffractive reading of Danielle's punishment through that of Gabriel's and that of the students at Spring Valley High illustrate how different bodies are able to defy schooling, and how that defiance is met to maintain schooling's order. For Danielle, a white woman, she was punished for violating the chain of command and was given a write-up, which has political and potentially financial ramifications. However, when students, and students of color violate schooling they were met with a different form of terror. Gabriel was positioned as deviant and criminal, in his words, "violated." Witnessing what happened in her classroom traumatized Niya. She left the school and pursued a GED. Shakara, the student who defied the representatives of the hierarchy of schooling, (e.g., the teacher, administrator, and police officer) was met with physical violence. She was violently assaulted by a police officer, and the only individual to intervene in that moment was another student, and a student of color. These moments illustrate how and who can defy schooling and to what extent. Danielle, as a white woman, dealt with political and economic consequences, but the students of color were met with a different form of terror, criminalization, and violence, which in all of their words was "traumatizing."

Vantage's school environment (e.g., the cameras, the corridor entrance, the potential search policy, the du-rag policy, surveillance of bodies, etc.) made itself intelligible to the students. These intra-acting bodies told Stacey and Gabriel that they did not belong. As has been noted, the climate of the school was that of anti-Blackness, and centered Whiteness (see Sharpe, 2016). While the Principal, a white

male, thought that the introduction of these new bodies (e.g., the new entrance and policies) would produce a sense of safety, they produced quite the opposite for students. As Stacey stated, "It is scary for me to come to school," or as Gabriel put it "I feel like I'm coming to jail."

This same administrator who visited Danielle's classroom and lived in fear of having to search students did not see the anxiety she produced for the students in Danielle's classroom. For the administrator, the classroom observations were a part of her job of improving the school, while the students saw it as an invasion of their learning environment. Rather than reading the room, she was focused on the clipboard and task of completing her observation. These observations deterred learning rather than enhancing it. These schooling instances, the reproduction of hierarchy in Danielle's classroom, the teacher observation, and the teachers' fears evoked a diffractive reading of Foucauldian (1995) surveillance through the experiences. The individuals were not only under the gaze of the state but also internally surveilling and disciplining themselves – producing new ways of being in response to the dominating force of schooling.

When Danielle stood on her moral belief that she needed to support and protect a vulnerable student, rather than being heard out, the administration punished her for violating the chain of command. There was a strict adherence to school policy. When I first heard Danielle tell me the narrative it instantly took me to a scene in the famous schooling film *Lean On Me*. In this scene, the draconian principal, Mr. Clark, interrupts the music teacher's class by demanding that she have every student learn the school song and be able to perform it on command or be

suspended. Mrs. Elliott, the music teacher, responded “yes, certainly Mr. Clark”, and then abruptly went back to her lesson with the students. Mr. Clark was not satisfied and demanded to see Mrs. Elliott in the hallway. The conversation spiraled downward and Mr. Clark canceled the student’s trip to perform in New York along with firing Ms. Elliott.

This episode in the film, like that of Danielle’s intra-action with the administration, illustrates a point of power and hierarchical relationships in schools. During both intra-actions the emphasis is on power and not that of students. Mr. Clark, out of frustration punishes the students to reposition Mrs. Elliott within the hierarchy. The administration in Danielle’s school punished her for violating the school’s hierarchy or chain of command. Both moments are saturated with issues of power. In reading these two intra-actions through Foucault (1995) we come to a diffractive view of power in Vantage. In thinking about power I am referencing Foucault’s (1995) notion that “power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth” (p. 194). This power, and its productive force operate at a “capillary form of existence” as Foucault (1980) illustrated that it “reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives” (p. 39). For Mr. Clark and the administration at Vantage, power was intricately tied to the onto-epistemology of schooling where hierarchy was to be preserved; order was to be maintained at all other costs. Mr. Clark and the Vantage administration were not necessarily demonstrating their power, but rather were the effects of the power of the onto-epistemology of agential schooling. As Foucault

(1980) reminds us, "Individuals are the vehicle of power...the individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of the articulation" (p. 98). Rather than seeing either Mrs. Elliott or Danielle as working in service of the students, they are perceived threats, like that of the student in South Carolina, offenders of school protocol. They must be dealt with to maintain order. Now, how one is dealt with depends upon their socio-political and racialized position within schooling.

Conclusion

In reading these diffractive moments through one another there is an illustration that the onto-epistemology of schooling works on the minds and bodies of individuals. The very way of being and knowing for students, teachers, and administrators is saturated in the problematic and dominating force of agential schooling. It is not just that schooling is the effects or outcomes of economic structures, racial domination, and complicated entanglements between individuals, discourses, and institutions, but schooling is an active agent influencing and shaping the very ways of knowing of being of all participants. The school's administrative hierarchy, the teacher observations, the potential search policy, and surveillance of teachers and students produced a schooling space where not only students, but also teachers and administrators were under the dominating gaze of schooling. Policies, curriculum, adultism, hierarchical relationships, prescriptive entanglements, along with discipline/surveillance/punishment operate as apparatuses supporting

agential schooling's domination so that schools are far too often places where many dreams go to die.

CHAPTER 7:
YOUTH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH:
SCHOOLING, LEARNING, AND FREEDOM DREAMING

Research is all too often used as a tool against marginalized communities (Cammarota et al., 2018). Traditional Western research is saturated with Whiteness and Western European humanism. Historically, the Western project has marginalized or sought to delegitimize people of color as knowers (Wynter, 2003). The focus has been research *on* or extraction *from*, rather than *with* or *in service of*. However, within participatory endeavor like youth participatory action research (YPAR), there are “theoretical undercurrents...that have continuously sought to critique and challenge the researcher-researched relation through an emphasis on the politics of participation in the research process” (Jordan & Kapoor, 2016, p. 135). YPAR as a way of knowing, being, and methodological intervention is steeped in critical scholarship and has the potential to push against the hegemony of Whiteness, capitalism, neoliberalism, settler colonialism, and other forms of domination (Ayala, 2009; Jordan & Kapoor, 2016).

This chapter focuses on a youth participatory action research project in relation to agential schooling to both understand potential interventions for challenging agential schooling and to examine how schooling operated in a non-schooling space. I outline how schooling operates as a nonhuman agent in an afterschool YPAR project and explore the possibilities and challenges of YPAR to intervene and disrupt schooling. The afterschool project was positioned within

Vantage High. As noted, this project situates schooling as a nonhuman actor that has agency intra-acting with human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies.

To demonstrate the agency of schooling I present key findings obtained from three years of work with a high school Ethnic Studies program within Vantage. The main focus of the analysis in this chapter is the third year where I was immersed in an afterschool YPAR project. The findings represent an analysis of participant observations, interviews, cognitive maps, and other intra-actions with human, nonhuman, and discursive agents.

Prior to diving into the findings, I discuss why I made the agential cut of using an afterschool YPAR setting to better understand schooling. I move from discussing the agential cut to framing the work done in the project and the participants in the YPAR endeavor. After framing of the project, I detail the students' experiences with schooling outside of the YPAR project. I then move into how schooling emerged in the YPAR space. Moving from schooling to the afterschool space I discuss the learning lines of flight and examine how YPAR, as an onto-epistemology, provided opportunities to intervene in schooling. YPAR is not to be seen as or positioned as a solution to agential schooling, but rather a line of flight with specific onto-epistemological opportunities that emerged from the assemblage of the multiplicities of forces and intra-acting bodies.

This chapter illustrates how schooling is a nonhuman agent and appears in critical anti-schooling spaces, like those of YPAR, and how YPAR has the potential to offer certain onto-epistemological opportunities that can intervene and challenge agential schooling. Within the afterschool space we were constantly in tension of

holding to and pushing against hierarchical relationships, adultism, prescriptive entanglements, and internally disciplining and surveilling ourselves. When it came to the learning lines of flight that emerged within the YPAR space we created community by making and holding space for one another. We rejected linearity and embraced the unpredictability of learning, following the process without necessarily having an intended outcome. By centering democratic collaboration, youth knowledge/experiences, and learning we demonstrated how YPAR can be a tool of resistance to the dominating forces of agential schooling.

YPAR: An Out-of-School Space

Youth participatory action research, as noted in chapter two, stands in opposition to traditional hierarchical schooling (Bautista, Bertrand, Morrell, Scorza, & Matthews, 2013; Irizarry & Brown, 2014; Mirra, Garcia, & Morrell, 2016; Scorza, Bertrand, Bautista, Morrell, & Matthews, 2017). Traditional hierarchical schooling bolsters a banking model of education (see table 7), while YPAR, as an onto-epistemological approach, emphasizes democratic participation. For these purposes, I chose to use a YPAR space as a secondary site exploring how agential schooling emerged and was challenged in a YPAR endeavor.

Table 7:	
<i>Problematic Hierarchical Relationships</i>	
<u>The Teacher....</u>	<u>The Student...</u>
Teaches	Is taught
Has knowledge	Needs knowledge
Talks	Listens
Disciplines	Is disciplined
Chooses activities, curriculum, Class material, etc.,	Has the illusion of meaningful choice

The afterschool YPAR site resided within Vantage High. This agential cut was made for two reasons. First, many youth programs do not have the option or financial resources to be housed within their own site. Second, this agential cut was made to see if/how the school-agent operated within the afterschool program. The afterschool project included six youth and spanned two years, 2018-2020. I started working with the Ethnic Studies program at Vantage in 2017. I supported the Ethnic Studies program through (1) a teacher professional learning community focused on teachers learning YPAR competencies (2017-2018), (2) the implementation of YPAR in a 9th grade Ethnic Studies class during two different academic years (2017-2018; 2018-2019), (3) and two afterschool YPAR initiatives (2017-2018; 2018-2020). For the purposes of this chapter, I primarily pull data from the 2018-2020 research initiative.

I do not position myself as an outsider or a purely distant objective researcher in this work. First, as agential realism and diffraction demand, we must take account of our agential cuts and we must recognize that as researchers we are always entangled with the phenomena we study (Barad, 2007). Second, I have a

political and ethical commitment to liberatory and anti-oppressive learning spaces. YPAR has often provided me the opportunity to engage in anti-oppressive and democratic learning environments. With YPAR, sites often operate in democratic and anti-oppressive ways. I chose the afterschool endeavor as a secondary site to both see how YPAR could interrupt the forces of agential schooling and to see how agential schooling morphed, shifted, and re-emerged in the YPAR site at Vantage.

I return to the YPAR literature prior to discussing the YPAR endeavor and agential schooling. Critical youth studies is rooted in a belief and knowledge that youth are agents in their community's development and are critical to the vitality of the community (Fox, 2019). There are three guiding principles of PAR (1) a collective exploration of a problem, (2) trust in local/indigenous knowledge as fundamental to understanding a problem, and (3) an emphasis on taking action to address the problem (McIntyre, 2000). The research is counter/anti-hegemonic (Ayala, 2009; Jordan & Kapoor, 2016). YPAR projects are "inherently political" as they push against social inequity (Bertrand & Ford, 2019). The process used within many YPAR projects is one that focuses on collective or democratic participation utilizing "subjugated knowledge at the center and...can be an epistemology of liberation" (Fox, 2019, p. 349). Within the process, there is a shifting of responsibility by decentering the traditional academic researcher and recognizing the importance of the research team and those most deeply affected by inequity (Jordan & Kapoor, 2016).

YPAR can be envisioned as an onto-epistemology that is youth centered, participatory and democratic in nature, emphasizes work that is research based and

action oriented. The research does not have to take one particular avenue, but may take a quantitative, qualitative, mixed-method, arts-based, post-qualitative, inter/transdisciplinary approach, etc.. The ways of knowing and being emphasize asset-based and aspirational approaches to democratic participation and critical social inquiry, which are inherently political as they attempt to intervene in social injustice.

This onto-epistemology was present in the afterschool space. However, as has been noted in the previous chapters, there were other human, nonhuman, and discursive agents operating in the endeavor. With the project residing within the school, the schooling dynamics were complexified as the school was an agent and operated on the minds and bodies of the youth. As noted in chapter four, the place-agent of the school emphasized surveillance (internal/external), Whiteness, and erasure. The school re-enforced the notion that a white able-bodied submissive student was the norm for the student body. All other students were othered and positioned as lesser-than.

The YPAR Project: Participants, Framing, and Collaborative Inquiry

All six of the students in the afterschool project identified as mixed-race or Latinx. Jessica was a quiet, reserved, and academically gifted participant who often kept the project on track. Mia, a fierce theorist and self-identified “anxious teen,” frequently pushed the project by asking deep theoretical questions. Lisa often kept track of communication and timeframes, guiding and directing our chats. Andrea, a highly involved student, was pulled in many directions as she was in the afterschool

project, the district's equity team, and worked with a variety of student organizations. Gabriela was more involved in the social life of the high school. Dereck, the only male youth who participated in the 2019-2020 YPAR project, was a shy but active participant in the project. I, the researcher and participant, was the only adult male within the space. I often oscillated between the role of a jokester and confidant. However, in this YPAR endeavor I was more cognizant of my positionality of "adult" and "researcher" than I was in B7. I operated more freely in the afterschool space compared to my participation in B7. This was not because of Danielle or any actions of individuals, but rather, simply the setting and onto-epistemology of YPAR. We were a small group that centered care and authentic relationships. In B7, I often engaged with school in schooling ways, both because of my long experience with schools and because I had once been a teacher. In the afterschool space I operated more freely as we did not have traditional social norms in regards to the language we used (formal, informal, or profanity) or the order in which we spoke. For example, people came and went as they pleased. If something sparked their attention or produced some line of flight, they would leave and return. It was a space of constant moving together and apart.

Table 8:			
<i>Key Participants in the Afterschool Project</i>			
<u>Participant</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Participating Space</u>
Jessica	Youth/Researcher	F	Afterschool YPAR 2018-2020
Mia	Youth/Researcher	F	Afterschool YPAR 2018-2020
Lisa	Youth/Researcher	F	Afterschool YPAR 2018-2020
Andrea	Youth/Researcher	F	Afterschool YPAR 2018-2020
Gabriela	Youth/Researcher	F	Afterschool YPAR 2019-2020
Dereck	Youth/Researcher	M	Afterschool YPAR 2019-2020
Thomas	Researcher/ Participant	M	All sites 2017-2020
Nonhuman Agents	Participants	-	School; Pizza; Paper; Desks;

Together, we created a space that emphasized democratic participation and centered youth voice. Our space was similar to Akom, Ginwright, and Cammarota's (2008) notion of a Youthtopia, as youth depended upon each other's knowledge, experiences, and perspectives to challenge social inequality. We chose to meet every Monday for one hour. During our first two meetings, we talked about what we wanted from the space and how we might work together. We arrived at a project that centered YPAR. Rather than other intergenerational collaborations we focused on what the youth wanted.

YPAR, according to Jessica, was a "way to find and take on problems in our society with action." Mia noted that YPAR "is a group of young people coming together to solve issues within our community. It is connecting with people and with their experiences." For Lisa, YPAR offered a place to build a platform. Building upon

this notion of action, community, and a platform, Andrea stated, “YPAR...sort of brings the community together and the community figures out what’s wrong and what they need to fix, how to make things better.” Mia asserted, “we do the work that we do because we care and we’re the ones that have to live in the world we create.” This youth endeavor was meant to be a space where students could freedom dream, talk openly about whatever they liked, and develop a project they desired.

The youth decided that as the adult I would play a role in the endeavor and we worked out how I might best serve the community. My role included pizza delivery, note taking, and bringing the co-created agenda to each meeting. At the end of each meeting, we created an agenda for the next gathering. The youth also used me as a support for developing tools to engage with their work. I supported them in the areas of research question generation, methodologies, and coding. Taking a critical approach and centering Ethnic Studies, they created a project that explored Ethnic Studies within their high school. This project was a qualitative endeavor and the youth created surveys and interviews for both students and teachers. The students’ aimed to better understand how students and teachers experienced Ethnic Studies, and what could be done to enhance the curriculum, learning experiences, and Ethnic Studies community.

Student Experience with Schooling Outside of the YPAR Project

Like the students in B7, the youth in the afterschool project talked about how schooling negatively affected their ways of knowing and being. To better understand

the experiences of the youth, I put their cognitive maps in conversation with their interviews. The usage of these cognitive maps was an agential cut aimed to add various modes of intra-action. Moving past traditional discourse, cognitive maps privilege images (Krueger-Henney, 2019; Ruglis, 2011). The cognitive maps that I utilized pulled together X-ray maps that Ruglis (2011) utilized and Krueger-Henney's (2019) critical body mapping. However, my maps were more aligned with Krueger-Henney's (2019) in that they "make visible some of the visceral – real and imagined impacts" of practices of schooling (p. 432). The afterschool YPAR students were provided a prompt asking them how schooling effected their minds and bodies. The students took roughly 20 minutes to draw their visual depictions and provided an artist statement articulating what their drawings meant to them. I was only able to collect four of the six cognitive maps and interviews due to COVID-19.

Mia created an image of a young girl with frazzled hair and teeth grinding. Within this girl's head was a smaller girl curled up alone. Mia's artistic description noted how schooling made her feel alone and stressed, which often physically manifested in her teeth chattering. Lisa's map had similar sentiments of being alone, as there was one girl (Lisa) off in a corner as other students were talking amongst themselves about Lisa. The students stated, "look at her," "do you see her face," "do you see her fit." Surrounding Lisa's head were three words: depression, insecure, and anxiety. Like Mia, Lisa noted how schooling, and the other students in the school, impacted her emotional state, as she frequently felt depressed, insecure, and anxious. She also spoke about how this was related to gender issues and sexism within the school.

Jessica and Andrea both drew maps that were more politically oriented. Jessica drew a picture of a student in chains with a hand pushing the head down. The student had tears running down their face. Beside the student was a picture of the globe with an X through it. There was also an empty space where the brain was meant to be, but instead of the brain there were the words “know little to nothing.” Jessica’s artist statement stated, “schooling makes you think you are small and have nothing in your mind. Schooling pushes you down and holds you back. It [schooling] lacks real world application.” Here, Jessica alludes to the oppressive apparatuses of hierarchical relations (e.g., “small” and “pushes you down and holds you back”), and curriculum that provides the youth with little to no real world critical application. This speaks both to the ontological and epistemological components of agential schooling as it operates both on the mind and body.

Andrea’s image was a book’s table of contents. The book was titled School, and the table of contents included: “Sexist dress code,” “Broken rules,” “How to change your entire sleeping schedule, Got Anxiety? Too bad,” and “Got depression? Too bad.” Like Lisa, gender and sexism played a role in Andrea’s picture as she noted the lopsided and sexist dress code of the school. She also noted how the school was built upon broken rules. She then moved to illustrate how schooling operated upon her body by noting how school dehumanized students. First, the school day starting so early and all of the other school commitments (homework, student organizations, etc.) hindered her ability to get adequate sleep. She also noted how schooling caused her to have both anxiety and depression, and how there was no room to talk about these issues within school.

By reading these body maps through one another they demonstrate some of the dehumanizing effects of agential schooling. The students emphasized how schooling produced stress, anxiety, and feelings of depression. These feelings emerged from a variety of experiences. Lisa indicated issues of bullying, Jessica's work spoke to the oppressive teaching practices and lack of criticality, while Andrea noted problematic policies and young people's voices not being taken into consideration.

The students expanded upon their experiences with schooling during their individual interviews. Jessica noted how the teaching practices and curriculum were apolitical; "they [teachers] are just making us remember things that won't mean anything in the future." Mia expanded upon this by noting "student's shouldn't sit in a room and be told things...in order to comprehend something, you should be able to give feedback and ask questions and add your own thoughts." Or, as Andrea stated, "you just sit there and they just teach you, that's not really learning, that's memorizing." Mia noted how schooling is prescriptive, "you do the same thing, you sit down, you get talked to not with." Building upon notions of prescription, Lisa stated, "in regular classes we have to follow this standard...we have to do things in one specific way. We can't do it our way, which messes up my creativity and how I want to express myself." Andrea noted that this traditional schooling "doesn't allow us to show our skills." As Mia asserted, "we have to filter ourselves." The prescriptive entanglements, apolitical curriculum, and hierarchical relationships embedded in teaching/studenting made these students feel isolated, alone, angry, and dehumanized. The apparatuses of schooling, be it the curriculum, policies,

hierarchical relationships, adultism, prescriptive entanglements, surveillance (internal and external), or disciplining of bodies (internal and external) negatively impacted the students' ways of knowing and being.

Each of the students spoke about the prescriptive curriculum, desks, and other nonhuman agents in the school. However, Mia was the only student to speak to the school as an agent. She remarked:

Everyone is unstable in this building because of this building...The paint is bland. The lights are too bright. I have to sit in the desks in a certain way, and be a certain way, they are uncomfortable. You get graded for everything. There are cameras not only outside of the building, but inside of it surveilling our every moment. There is a cop with a gun and a vest, how would that make you feel? There is just bad energy here. It makes me feel and be a certain way.

Mia eloquently spoke to many of the nonhuman agents operating within the schooling space. Her words echo those of Danielle's about how the school makes them both feel a certain type of way, a bad energy, a type of haunting (Gordon, 2008). Mia situated the school as an agent as she asserted that the school building was the one making everyone unstable. She noted how the various agents, the paint, lights, desks, grades, cameras, the cop, the vest, the gun, and energy of the building affected her ways of knowing and being, which often dehumanized her and made her feel anxious, uncomfortable, and not herself. These nonhuman agents animated, held a sense of thing-power (Bennett, 2010), and worked in service of agential schooling. The students' experiences evoked something within me. My schooling experience was saturated with feeling anxious, unheard, and depersonalized. I was entangled with the youth, their emotions, and the dominating onto-epistemology of schooling,

Schooling Lines of Flight: Schooling in YPAR

While YPAR spaces are meant to be democratic and counter/anti-hegemonic, schooling, as an agent, can shift, morph, and appear in such endeavors. The afterschool project at Vantage was not immune to schooling. The following section demonstrates how agential schooling appeared in a critical democratic anti-schooling YPAR space. As these intra-actions illustrate, YPAR spaces are not always liberatory, but also can be constrained by, buttress, and reproduce schooling.

As has been noted, schooling is an agent, and shifts as it is challenged. Curriculum, hierarchical relationships, adultism, prescriptive entanglements, discipline/surveillance/punishment, and policies are apparatuses of schooling, buttressing its agency. Within our project there was a continual battle within me, within the students, and in our intra-actions. As many of the students noted, schooling and hierarchical teaching was mostly what they had known when it came to adult-youth learning relationships.

The students often had me lead the meetings as the note taker and secretary of the project. I provided a weekly update of what we had done the week before and what we aimed to do in the future. This position often felt like walking a fine line between keeping a living memory of our work and that of an adult classroom facilitator. I often had to step back and not jump into leading the project. Within myself, I had to push back against my teacher training and trained biases that as an adult I should be running the activities to make them as 'efficient' as possible. The youth, at times, would defer back to me. This was similar to Danielle's classroom. The students would ask me "well what do you think?", and "how does this sound to

you?” This happened quite often with Dereck, as he was a new addition to the YPAR endeavor and often sought my validation. He would talk to the group and then finish his statements looking to me saying, “right?” There were moments where the youth sought my authentic response and others where they were deferring to me as an adult, seeking approval. We had to tease this out over many dialogues. We had to consciously push back against these schooling processes. It came to a point where I would often retort with, “well what do you think about it? Tell me more about your train of thought and what we are doing here.” These were some of the lines of flight that we constantly had to check ourselves on, and push against schooling.

One prime example of us pushing against schooling and challenging adultism surrounded our protocol for bringing in a new project member. Initially, as a team talked about how/if we wanted to expand the project and the students chose to do so. I asked the team, “how do you want to go about bringing in new members? Last year we interviewed you all, do you all want to do that again?” Without much dialogue, the students made a quick decision and they all stated, yes, lets do that again. We spent the rest of that day creating potential interview questions. Upon returning to the team the next week, I provided the weekly summary of what we had done and their stated next goal. As soon as I finished the summary Mia stated, “why are we doing the interviews again, those are boring, forget that, let’s do something else.” The students took a moment and they collectively agreed that the interviews “sucked.” They then went about creating “a day in the life” of our YPAR project where they would have the interviewee’s spend a session working with us. In this moment, the onto-epistemology of doing collective democratic work

encouraged Mia to challenge the traditional hierarchy of schooling and adultism. When I talked to Mia about this situation we both agreed that it felt different than traditional schooling. Mia challenged the adult framework we had used the year before and really pushed back against what adults had created, and did so without a fear of repercussion. She stated, “The interviews sucked and we needed something better.” She went on to note that she wasn’t afraid of me getting upset since we were a team. I was not her teacher but her collaborator. However, there were many other moments, and lines of flight, where we would revert to schooling that emulated teacher-student relationships, instances where we produced hierarchy and adultism. We had to consistently push back against these apparatuses as schooling’s onto-epistemology constantly shifted, morphed, and re-appeared in our intra-actions.

There were other lines of flight where we relied upon our YPAR method as if it were a curriculum. We knew that the process we aimed for was a nonlinear problem-posing praxis of constantly moving through the various stages of identifying a problem, analyzing a problem, developing a plan to address the problem, implementing the plan, and then evaluating our action. (Akom, 2009; Freire, 1970). However, even though we knew that our process was nonlinear, we engaged with the YPAR process as if it were a curriculum. Schooling’s onto-epistemology had such a grip on our ways of knowing and being that it was hard to move past. At times, we had difficulty sitting with the uncertainty of learning (Patel, 2016); we leaned upon the process as if it were a prescriptive curriculum. We had to push against this tendency for comfort and convenience, and lean into the unknown.

We had to allow our sessions to end without neat ends. We had to evade a reliance on traditional classroom activities where we finished a task or had some sort of mastery over a component of our process to feel a sense of accomplishment.

A part of this endeavor of fighting the onto-epistemology of schooling was our need to fight our internally disciplined bodies as students, researchers, etc. As a doctoral student, the schooling of higher education emphasizes how I need to have mastery over a subject, a skillset, a method, and some object of study. I had to put this impulse at the forefront of my mind and recognize that it impeded the work of our project. Not only my academic training, but also my training as a teacher influenced my ways of knowing and being. Within my training there was a focus on order, structure, prescriptive sequence, and this would influence my thoughts, feelings, and actions. For example, during one session I noticed that we were creating rhizomatic lines of flight, which felt like a shoots and ladders game of diving down one rabbit hole after another. This initially gave me anxiety and I felt like the day was chaotic, but after taking a moment I also recognized that learning happens in such ways. Learning is chaotic, rhizomatic lines of flight, rabbit holes, a constant becoming... This was a difficult tension, a discomfort, which Singh (2018) reminds us, “in Derridean terms, we call discomfort a hauntological affect that marks the present with the past, one that is in no sense easy to trace” (p. 152). Leaning into the unknown of learning and embracing that anxiety was difficult because schooling, for so long, had shaped my ways of knowing and being in such ways that I needed a sense of mastery, prescriptive entanglement, hierarchy, and linearity.

Learning Lines of Flight: When Learning and YPAR Intervene in Schooling

Schools and schooling have quite different onto-epistemologies than YPAR spaces. However, as has been noted, with schooling being an agent, it shifts, morphs, and can re-appear in critical spaces and places like YPAR. One significant difference between Vantage and the afterschool YPAR space was the option to participate. Within Vantage, students had no opportunity to opt-out. Those who opted-out, resisting schooling, were then met with the authoritative arm of the law by being labeled delinquent. Youth could come and go as they pleased within the YPAR space. We had no forced structure of participation. As Gabriela stated, “if you wanted to be here, you were here.”

Prior to discussing the learning lines of flight within the YPAR space I want to discuss why it is that the youth continued their participation. As Andrea succinctly stated, “I’m interested in making an impact.” She went on to note, “It’s important for our generation to speak out for themselves because if you have somebody else talk for you, then they might not interpret what you’re going through.” Jessica followed this up with stating that having a space the centered youth voice “gives us a chance to impact the world we live in...We get to learn about our world and we get to study problems we face.” Similar to Jessica and Andrea, Lisa focused on voice and social change, “we as youth get to rise up and share our thoughts...Just because we’re kids doesn’t mean we can’t have our voices be heard and do big things.” On a more personal level, Mia indicated, “I joined because they [other students and adults in the space] made me feel like I was being listened to.”

Creating Community: Making Space, Holding Space

From our first meeting and dialogue we focused on creating a communal space together. We recognized that we were in the school, and we spent time talking about how that affected us. However, even though we were in the school we were in an Ethnic Studies classroom, and in a teacher's class that they all loved. This was important, as the students were more open in this space than they were in the hallways with me.

I hosted a task party with the students to initially frame the space. As a white male entering the afterschool endeavor I knew that my academic positioning, race, gender, and age played a role in the space. I emphasized the use of play to build connections and destabilize hierarchy. I brought in a box with several tasks (e.g., tell someone your favorite song and why it is important? Create a 20 second dance routine with someone else, create a secret handshake, etc.). We each pulled a random task out of the box, conducted the task, then wrote a new task on a sheet of paper which we then put in the box, and pulled another task to complete. This routine went on for roughly twenty minutes. The space, unlike many classrooms I had been in, was full of laughter, smiles, and joy. At the end of the task party we talked about how we wanted to create a space filled with joy. A place where all contributed. We wanted laughter; we wanted community. We then set out on creating that space.

One key aspect of creating this space was generating our communal communication style. The youth arrived at (1) spreading love (don't judge people), (2) one-mic (listening intently to what others are saying and not saying), (3) speak

your truth, (4) step up, step back, and to (5) be open minded to all possibilities. With our space being that of a classroom there were some initial issues around desks. The desks felt formal, impeding the type of space we wanted to create. They were uncomfortable. As Mia noted, “they force me to be a type of way.” So we had to engage with those agents and intra-act with them in ways that we did not in traditional schooling. For example, I often sat on the top of the desk and put my feet on the seat while Jessica often sat on the top of her desk and would swing her legs off the front like she were sitting on a swing. We often put the desks together to create something similar to a long dinner table. This was intentional. I brought pizza to every meeting. I did this because the students wanted the pizza, the days were long, and I wanted to make sure everyone had something to eat. Also, in my experience, some of my greatest conversations have occurred while breaking bread with others. We dedicated the first 10 to 15 minutes of each session just being present with each other and eating pizza. During this time we talked about everything from the things that made us happy that day, what shows we watched the night before, or the occasional burping contest that Mia always won. These conversations were filled with laughter and jokes.

Our conversations did not emphasize expertise, facts, or asserting knowing, but were focused on coming to better understandings of ourselves, each other, and the world we were intra-acting with. This framing of how we approached dialogue was a core component to making the communal space. We were vulnerable in our listening and storying (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014). Leaning into community and

being vulnerable, as Mia indicated, “we could actually focus on the conversation and focus on what was being said rather than pushing along ideas.” She went on to note:

It is acceptable to do things where I’d get weird looks at in school. I felt comfortable. The YPAR space makes me feel more comfortable for what I have to say because we’re all moving towards the same thing. When I step into the YPAR space, each one of us is different and we bring something different to the table and that is okay.

The community space provided her the opportunity to express her ideas in ways she did not feel comfortable in school. Other youth also noted they could be free in the afterschool space. They really emphasized the notion of spreading love and not judging people.

We carried the dialogic style into all aspects of our work. Rather than engaging with texts, handouts, etc., the bulk of our work revolved around deep dialogue. We then put those dialogues in conversation with critical concepts learned through their engagement with Ethnic Studies and my own with African American Studies, theory (critical race, critical theory, posthumanism, etc.), and social justice education. We also pushed back against language norms within Vantage. The students spoke in any way that moved them. There was no surveilling of language usage. All of the students used the word “filter” in relation to speaking in school. Mia went further noting the different expressions, “Oh yea, like ‘this is bullshit, we need to change this now!’ Where in school I would have to be like, ‘well I don’t really like this and maybe we can do this’.” She went on to state how she could more fully express her emotions in our space.

In focusing on dialogue we did not center texts, handouts, etc. as these agents often play a role in service of schooling. I made this agential cut in an effort to push

back against schooling and the potential schoolification of YPAR. Schoolification, as Rubin, Ayala, and Zaal (2017) indicated, is where inquiry and action are transformed from “internally motivated holistic to a series of graded assignments” (p. 184). There was no grading, no concrete prescriptive design or intended outcome/work product. We had hopes for our work, but we did not have a designed target/outcome. For Lisa, not having grades or assignments was important “I felt different because we weren’t graded...we weren’t being pressured to be like oh, we have to do this and we’ll get a really good grade on it.” However, not having grades intra-acted with Andrea differently. Andrea stated, “being graded kind of makes me try a little bit harder. Because it counts for something and I feel if I’m being graded, then like they’re taking the time.” Here, Andrea noted how grades were important to her as it indicated that someone was taking the time to look over it to qualify and quantify her success. However, she also noted that she liked the freedom of doing work that had a wider impact than schooling. Schooling, as an agent, impacts our very ways of being and knowing. It plays a role in shaping our understanding of what can and cannot be considered learning. A prescriptive entanglement helped Andrea feel seen while for Lisa the lack of prescriptive processes made her feel she could more fully express herself.

Rhizomatic Lines of Flight: Rabbit Hole After Rabbit Hole, Non-Linearity

Just as there is a difference between schooling and YPAR in relation to opting in or opting out, there was a stark difference in relation to timelines. Each school year is a prescriptive entanglement in relation to time and promotion. However, as noted, this YPAR project spanned two years as the group did not feel finished at the

end of the first year. By focusing on learning, and the unpredictability of learning (Patel, 2016), there was no linear project, but rather flurries of rhizomatic lines of flight, rabbit hole after rabbit hole. As Mia noted, “YPAR is spontaneous and if it leads to a bigger issue then it becomes part of the discussion and not off track talk or things that aren’t on topic because in YPAR, obviously not everything is on topic, but if you start thinking bigger, everything is on topic.” Mia noted how schooling conversations can often be prescriptive in that there are on topic and off topic points, but in YPAR things that are off topic become on topic. We followed the flow of the dialogue, not the prescriptive topic. These ebbs and flows are not bound to the prescriptive structure of traditional classroom spaces. As Jessica indicated, “in out of school we came up with our own flow...It is more open out of school as there weren’t any limitations.” Andrea succinctly stated, “we could be independent and you could do what you want without getting penalized for it.” These statements, but more specifically Andrea’s, speak to schooling’s rigidity and surveillance while also speaking to YPAR’s emphasis on flexibility.

In regards to Mia’s notion of things not being on topic but then becoming topic, there was a day where our conversation on television shows like *Teen Wolf*, *Vampire Diaries*, and a few others led to deep dialogue about sexism and misogyny at the school. While dropping a piece of pizza, Jessica started the conversation, “hey did you see that episode of *Teen Wolf*?” We all laughed, Jessica’s enthusiasm for *Teen Wolf* was infectious and humorous. The conversation switched from *Teen Wolf* to *Vampire Diaries*, to boys at Vantage High, to sexist language in the school, to the sexist dress code restricting women’s bodies. This was not a unique case, many

conversations about instagram posts, Facebook, dying hair, food, etc. led to deeper dialogues around issues of justice and inequality. I called this the pinball effect, as we would bounce from thing to thing, drawing connections along the way without an intended journey, just a wandering and wondering, a becoming...

Another agent intra-acting and playing a role in our lines of flight were our emotions and their intra-action with the wider world we were situated in. In many instances, we followed our emotions, feeling, and bodies, what Fernández (2018) noted as theory in flesh. There were days where we were angry, or as Mia might say, “I am pissed off” about particular events happening in the wider Vantage community or things happening in Vantage High (e.g., the stop and search proposal, teacher student intra-actions, etc.). On these days, we did not engage with the research but rather held space to talk about what was important and happening in that moment for those in the room. Brion-Meisels and Alter (2018) speak to similar tensions within their project in relation to focusing on relationships and what is most urgent in each moment. Schooling’s prescriptive ways of being does not often allow for this type of engagement.

One day, mid-way through the year, I came into the school and the youth were moving in ways that felt different, something felt off. So I just asked the question, “How are you all doing? You all seem different today.” The students then went on to talk about how a student had died in the community and this death had led to some emotional responses where a student from a neighboring school took to Instagram and said he was going to come to Vantage High with the intent of causing harm. The youth were scared. They all opened up about how they had talked with

their teachers and the administrators, but none of them were listening. Gabriela angrily yelled, “they won’t listen to us or take us seriously.” For the rest of the day we just sat and I listened to them as they talked about their fears, frustrations, and uneasiness. I sat there and pondered how the day must have felt. These students sat through eight hours of classes with those fears, and feeling as if no one was listening to them. How dehumanizing can schooling be in those moments where schooling takes precedence over mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Resistance: Centering Collaboration, Youth Experiences, and Learning

By embracing YPAR and the onto-epistemology of centering collaboration, democratic participation, youth experiences, and the unpredictability of learning our work operated as a force of resistance to schooling’s hierarchical relationships, adultism, prescriptive entanglements, and curriculum. When conducting youth-centered research Fox (2019) noted, “we found the process of conducting research collaboratively and across generations was itself a form of resistance.” (p. 347). In theorizing around resistance, I borrow from Tuck and Yang (2011) as they note “resistance does do something, it does produce, or prompt, or prevent” (p. 526). Building upon this, Sosa and Latta (2019) note that “when we view resistance as produced from racial wisdom, we can see that acts of resistance resist something, but without a necessary or imposed outcome” (p. 109). The very act of collaboration and democratic participation was resistance; it produced, prompted, and prevented, but did not necessarily have an imposed outcome. However, as was mentioned, even as we decentered schooling it shifted, morphed, and re-appeared within the space. By creating a space that focused on democratic participation and collaborative

learning it allowed space for Mia to pushback against the adult created interview process and develop an activity more youth-centered. Our positioning of youth as valid knowledge holders and key researchers within the YPAR endeavor resisted schooling's emphasis on banking education and adultism that often positions youth as fragile or dangerous, and like Fox (2019) "we were claiming their lived experience as expertise" (p. 350). This re-framing of education not only destabilizes schooling's hold, but ruptures notions of learning and expertise.

However, I do not subscribe to the notion that YPAR as an act of resistance is a linear process leading one from oppression to liberation, nor do I subscribe to such binaries, but rather recognize various lines of flight emerged in mixed directions. As Tuck and Yang (2011) remind us, "change happens in ways that make new, old-but-retained, and previously unseen possibilities available at each juncture" (p. 522). Sosa and Latta (2019) pull from Indigenous work and call for us to think with theory "to more fully understand the nebulous and recursive nature of resistance" (p. 124). Various lines of flight and change were present within the YPAR endeavor, some new, others old-but-retained, and some unseen possibilities. The very act and process of researching was a form of resistance (Fox, 2019). I also recognize that just as there are forms of resistance that are pushing for more just and equitable spaces, there are those who resist such endeavors and seek to maintain the status quo of schooling (Tuck & Yang, 2011).

One component of the resistance to the onto-epistemology of schooling was the owning of the process, learning as we went. Owning the process came in many forms. By owning the process, I mean students driving the actions, learning, and

trajectory of the endeavor. This was illustrated in Mia's owning and restructuring of the interview day. The youth crafted the research agenda and created the research tools (e.g., interview protocol, student survey, teacher survey). After creating the teacher survey, Mia took it and spoke to a teacher about her views of the survey and tightened the language to resonate with the research population. Mia did this without seeking any adult support, and notified the research team of her work only after she had spoken with the teacher. This was her process; she did not need adult supervision, support, or guidance. The youth also created a 90-minute presentation to teach YPAR to teachers and graduate students at a regional education conference. However, the conference was cancelled due to COVID-19.

The students noted that our research process provided tools and opportunities that traditional schooling did not. For Lisa, research allowed her to conduct inquiry on things she wanted to examine and in ways she wanted to explore, "It was me doing it. I didn't have to be controlled by an adult. It was just my choices, what I wanted." Andrea also appreciated the autonomy as she stated, "you're kind of on your own doing your own thing in YPAR...you get to control what you want to do." She went on to note how teachers in school are often "nagging and bothering" her. Mia noted:

So many facts are hidden from us already. So when we get the power to look for, when we have the power now to go and do things ourselves and where the facts aren't shielded from us...Because we're doing it ourselves whereas in school there's a setting where everything is picked out for us.

Mia went on to discuss how the hierarchy of teacher-student relationships and the prescriptive entanglement of schooling made her feel a lack of agency and that

teachers were not telling her the whole story, but their interpretations. Mia wanted to have the agency to see various and differing views of specific material.

In our final interview, Mia likened schooling to being provided a glass shield, something that is both meant to shelter her and protect her. On the other hand, learning research methods provided Mia the opportunity to construct her own shield. She asserted:

I think that it's so important because where it's, it seems like again when we're being shielded from information, but it feels like they're trying to shield us with glass, you know what I mean? I mean that at any moment we could find out something and our glass can completely shatter and we're like we can hear everything and we can see everything, but no one wants to tell it to us straight. We can hear and we can see and we can feel all these things about it, but no one's giving us the choice to pick a different shield. You can't expect us to shield ourselves with something so fragile, so people at school are just saying, 'Oh, maybe you should watch the news. Maybe you should....' There's no perfect time for anything and if the shield shatters, I want it to be on my terms because I found out something and I want it to be real because if it turns out that you're just shielding me from something that I was supposed to know about, that it's just going to hurt a 100 more, like a 1000 times worse.

Mia asserted that schooling and the limited tools provided in school do not prepare youth for the real world. Mia wants choice, agency, and autonomy to develop skills to interrogate the world. Learning research skills provided Mia the opportunity to develop a skillset, a shield, to examine the world and make critical interventions.

Mia, being an active agent in her research and further developing her critical consciousness, was pushing against banking education. Groves Price and Mencke (2013) found similar results when engaging in YPAR with Native American youth as they noted, "when students become producers of knowledge and active transformers of society, they no longer become sedentary accepters of dominant ideologies through the banking-method" (p. 92). Mia saw, felt, and heard the

domination of schooling, it constantly infuriated her, and she spoke passionately about wanting change in Vantage.

In thinking about the work within the YPAR space and how the youth were continuously pushing back against the forces and apparatuses of schooling, I am pulled to Sosa and Latta's (2019) expansive view of resistance as they assert:

"This more expansive view of resistance brings into focus the micro-transformational moments in which students of color resist whiteness that shows up in the organizational and procedural aspects of everyday school life and aims to foreclose embodied and experiential ways of knowing. Students' counter stories and stories of survivance are resistance acts. Students' resistance insists that we hear and attend to what they are refusing and craft interaction that does not reproduce similar forms of oppression and instead allows for practices that are equitable and socially just." (p. 125)

The youth's words, experiences, racial wisdom, and experiential knowledge are counternarratives pushing against the dominating onto-epistemology of schooling which aims to subvert their agency and push them to question themselves, but just as Mia stated in response to the adult structured interview protocol, "Nah, that's whack, we are doing something else."

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates that (1) schooling is an agent shifting, morphing, and appearing in anti-oppressive spaces like that of YPAR, and (2) that this particular YPAR endeavor provided onto-epistemological learning opportunities and lines of flight via the entanglements of various human, nonhuman, and discursive agents. Even in such a liberatory space like our YPAR endeavor, schooling emerged. For example, during our YPAR endeavor we relied upon adult-youth hierarchies, leaned into the YPAR process as if it were a prescriptive rather fluid process, and were so

entangled with schooling's onto-epistemology that at times we reproduced the very things we came together to resist. However, during other lines of flight our YPAR endeavor centered collaboration, democratic participation, youth experiences, and the unpredictability of learning. The alignment of the multiplicities, forces, and onto-epistemologies offered opportunities to resist schooling's hierarchical relationships, adultism, prescriptive entanglements and curriculum.

CHAPTER 8:
TOWARDS LINES OF FLIGHT:
DREAM KILLERS, PLACES OF POSSIBILITIES, AND BECOMINGS...

As Samantha noted, “school is where dreams come to die.” Four years later, Samantha is now entering her senior year at Vantage. Unfortunately, this quote holds the same strength it did during her freshman year. This notion of schools as places of death has been acting upon me, agentially pulling on me, drawing me back to that moment, like an unbearable itch that cannot find relief (MacLure, 2013). It has haunted my own dreams and writing. This notion of schooling as a tool of domination is not new. Critical educators have noted how schooling has been used for social regulation and reproduction reinforcing problematic racial, gendered, and classed domination (Anyon, 1981; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Patel, 2016; Vaught, 2017). These modes of domination are heavily entangled with larger socio-political and cultural apparatuses connected to exploitative capitalism and white supremacy.

As I sit here just having read a piece on teachers dying due to COVID-19, as they were demanded to teach in person, I am reminded of Samantha’s assertion. Schools really are places of metaphorical and literal death. The work to dismantle these systems will not be easy; it will be met with heavy resistance, and will require new ways of thinking and being. We will have to shed the old ways of knowing and being, the onto-epistemic clutches of schooling, and embrace new onto-epistemologies, one’s steeped in radical relationality. One step in this direction is engaging in freedom dreaming (Kelley, 2002) and abolitionist teaching,

collaborating with our most oppressed communities, acting against injustice, and pushing towards freedom (Love, 2019). As Kelley (2002) reminds us, there is much to be learned from the Black radical imagination, artists, musicians, and activists. Much of this work will emerge from Sly and the Family Stone's "everyday people."

Incrementalism will not suffice. Today, students face a multitude of forces attempting to strip their humanity. We have zero-tolerance policies, schools gutting the arts, neoliberal agendas pushing standardization, white-washed curriculum, oppressive teaching practices, underfunded schools, and the ever-rising police-state in schools. Video after video of violent assaults against Black and Brown children, often by the very individuals entrusted to guard and protect them. Institutional attacks on Ethnic Studies and a president who positions anti-racist work as anti-American. Samantha's assertion that schools are places where dreams come to die is a terrifying reminder of how dehumanizing these spaces can be.

However, we should not be left in total despair. There are holes in these systems; there is light in the darkness. For example, Mia's experience below illustrates the possibilities of YPAR, learning, and inquiry:

There was this day last year when I was having, I was just feeling like complete shit and then I walked in and I'm sitting there and I'm genuinely trying to hold it. It's almost like I'm trying to hold onto that because I feel that's the only way to deal with it. Like, "Oh, it's not going to be over right now, so why should I not be upset?" I have the right to be upset, but then I walked into the YPAR and I'm sitting there and I'm trying to be upset and then we started talking about these amazing ideas and these giant concepts. We're trying to change world and we're genuinely trying to do better and I feel like when everyone has that energy, it makes me way less anxious.

The entangled multiplicities in the YPAR space provided Mia the opportunity to find refuge from schooling. She was able to engage with issues affecting her life, freedom

dream, participate collaboratively, and work towards making social change. There is power in inquiry, both in wondering and wandering.

In what follows I provide some connective remarks on the onto-epistemically dominating force of schooling, the possibility of spaces that are steeped in learning, ones like that of the afterschool YPAR endeavor, and embrace speculative freedom dreaming on what a B7 2.0 might look like.

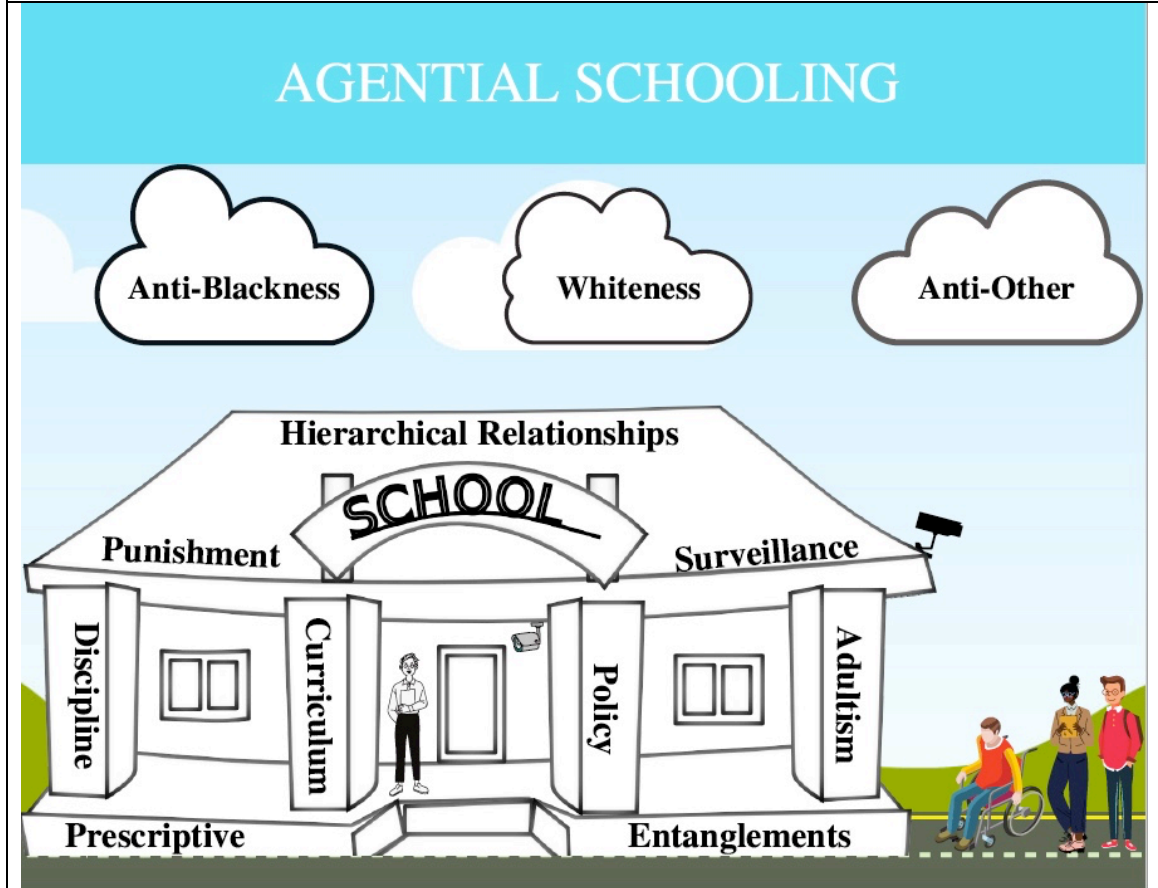
Dream Killers: Schooling, Mastery, and Domination

During a word association game in one of our afterschool YPAR session, Andrea noted that schooling was obedience and YPAR was creativity. While these are oversimplifications, they do illustrate what is emphasized in these two spaces. In thinking about schooling as obedience, there is also an emphasis on mastery. In *Unthinking Mastery*, Singh (2018) reminds us that mastery is about competition, dominance, and control. Schooling is a push towards mastery, as:

Mastery invariably and relentlessly reaches toward the indiscriminate control over something – whether human or inhuman, animate or inanimate. It aims for the full submission of an object – or something objectified – whether it be external or internal to oneself. (p. 10)

As the findings on agential schooling illustrated, schooling is onto-epistemically steeped in domination. Figure 2 illustrates those apparatuses that buttress the agency of schooling. These apparatuses work together supporting social regulation, suppression of dissent, and center Whiteness.

Figure 2: *Agential Schooling Apparatuses*



Pulling from the work of Sharpe (2016) there is a recognition of the weather of schooling at Vantage being one that was steeped in anti-Blackness, anti-other, re-enforcing Whiteness. The apparatuses – hierarchical relationships, punishment, surveillance, discipline, curriculum, policy, adulthood, and prescriptive entanglements – intra-act with the weather, human, nonhuman, and discursive bodies to produce schooling assemblages. The adultist policies and practices of the school’s administration re-enforced problematic hierarchical relations by re-entrenching schooling as mastery, “carving boundaries” between the students and adults subordinating the youth, their experiences, and their epistemes (Singh, 2018,

p. 12). The policies had thing-power (Bennett, 2010) and impacted student learning and opportunities opening some possibilities and limiting others.

The hierarchical relationships not only emerged within the school's hierarchy (administration, teacher, student) but also amongst peers. This onto-epistemic aspect of schooling influenced ways of knowing and being. In thinking about influence, I position "it is a capacity to induce effects quietly and indirectly, without fanfare, and often at the very margins of cognitive or even sensuous detection" (Bennett, 2020, p. 92). These hierarchical relations influenced the very ways of knowing and being of students as they reproduced those relations they often detested (e.g., intra-actions like Stacy and Luis 'teaching' class, students lecturing one another, and Danielle unintentionally reproducing hierarchy). Beyond being influenced by hierarchical relations, students were influenced by surveillance (Danielle surveilling them, the administrator surveilling them in the halls and during the classroom observation, and the staff in the hallways), the nonhuman agents (e.g., the camera's in-and-outside of the school), the panoptic circumstances (e.g., the new school entrance reminiscent of a TSA corridor or jail entrance) and disciplining conditions which produced varied lines of flight with individuals internally surveilling themselves.

The academic practices of schooling further illustrate the push for mastery as the curriculum and prescriptive entanglements often usher individuals to a particular understanding, meaning, or 'truth,' colonial, western notions of being and knowing (see Krueger-Henney, 2019; Rose, 2019). These taken for granted best practices, and onto-epistemic components of schooling re-enforce the problematics

of mastery. As Singh (2018) asserts, “there is an intimate link between the mastery enacted through colonization and other forms of mastery that we often believe today to be harmless” (p. 9). These intra-actions often emphasize physical and epistemic control/domination (e.g., teaching and studenting, policies limiting opportunity, etc.). Schooling, as an agent, asserts a dominating force over individuals. There is a centering of Whiteness, use of prescriptive curriculum, a mobilization of discipline and punishment to both demand and produce a docile passive student. As Andrea noted, “schooling is about control.”

Places of Possibility: Learning, YPAR, and Unpredictability

Just as Andrea asserted that “schooling is about control,” she also indicated that YPAR is about creativity. YPAR, as an onto-epistemology, pushes towards radically different experiences in relation to education. Rather than emphasizing social regulation and rote memorization via prescriptive endeavors, YPAR stresses learning. Learning is about the unpredictable (Patel, 2016). Within learning endeavors there must be a refusal of traditional practices that replicate rote memorization and regurgitation. As San Pedro, Murray, Gonzales-Miller, Reed, Bah, Gerrard, and Whalen (2020) acknowledged, learning endeavors need to “embrace pedagogical practices that engage in the messiness and unpredictability of dialogic learning in order to co-discover and co-generate knowledge that connects our lives, families, and communities” (p. 2).

In our YPAR endeavor, we created community by holding and making space for one another. We embraced the unpredictability of learning and leaned into the

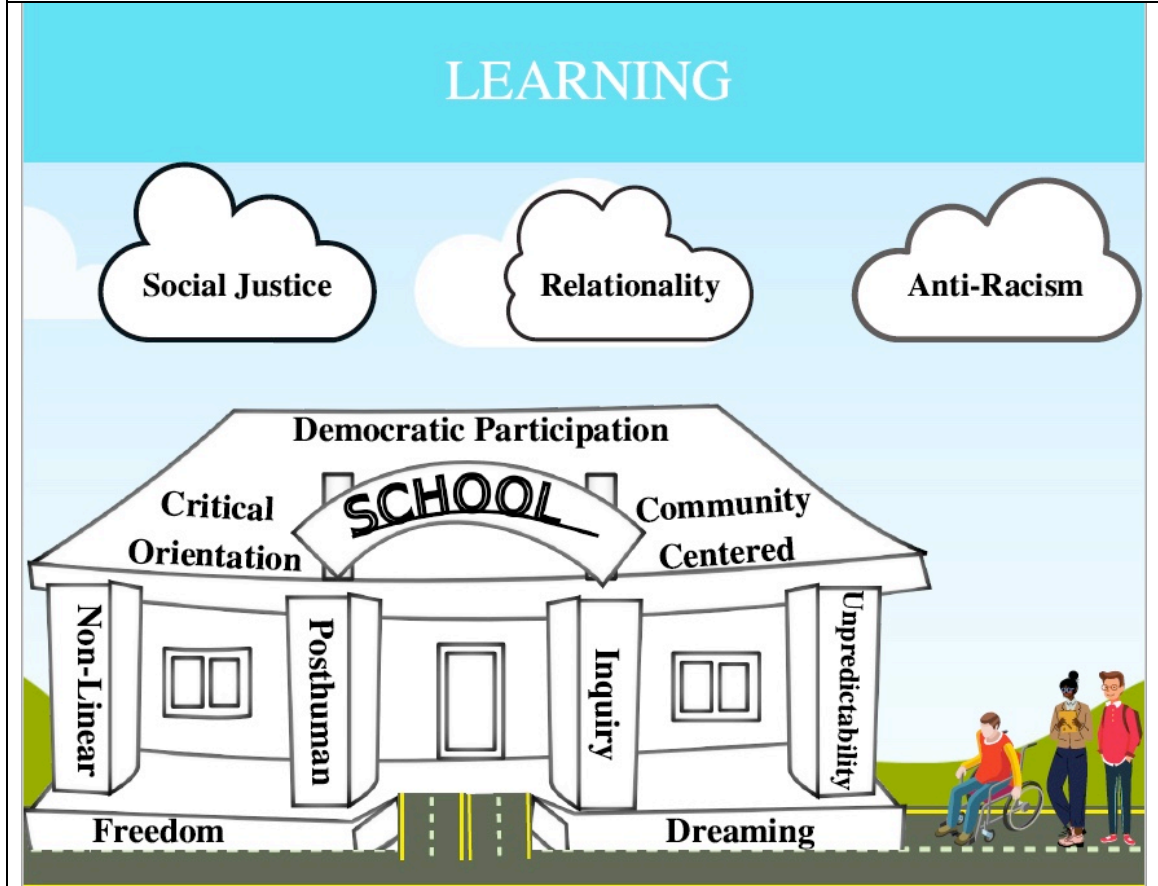
unknown, knowing there would be moments of non-closure. By centering democratic collaboration, youth experiences, and learning, we emphasized how YPAR can be a tool of resistance pushing against the dominating force of agential schooling. YPAR is not the solution, but a line flight where certain onto-epistemological opportunities emerged from the assemblage of a multiplicity of forces. One avenue for opening up possibility was the engagement with play. For example, when we used the task box and allowed for play to emerge (e.g., dancing, making up secret handshakes, etc.) we stepped away from prescriptive and fully scripted ways of being. Play also allowed for us to bring joy into the learning. Beyond Joy, we were attentive to our emotions, feelings, and bodies, the theory of the flesh (Fernández, 2018).

Within YPAR there is an emphasis on social justice and social transformation (Caraballo, Lozenski, Lyiscott, & Morrell, 2017). As Cammarota and colleagues (2018) acknowledged, it is not just the outcomes but the processes in PAR that can lead to “mutual transformation and liberatory change” (p. 21). Within such endeavors, youth are positioned as “knowers, researchers, and agents of change” (Caraballo & Lyiscott, 2018, p. 3). This way of knowing and being calls for a radical re-positioning of relationality in research as there is a reevaluating of how, why, and who is involved (Mirra, Garcia, & Morrell, 2016). In our challenging of traditional research processes and adultism “the research itself is an act of resistance” (Fox, 2019, p. 358). A major component of this resistance, our resistance, is that we encountered one another as equal partners (Jordan & Kapoor, 2016).

Schooling centers adultism, hierarchical relations, and prescriptive entanglements. These are buttressed by policies, curriculum, surveillance, discipline (internal and external), and punitive measures. Together, these agents work in service of schooling emphasizing control and regulation. YPAR, as an onto-epistemology, offers ways of intervening in the coerciveness of schooling by opening space and embracing unpredictability without the rigid structure and need for prescriptive schooling outcomes.

While I am still struck by Samantha's assertion that schools are places where dreams go to die, I am also continuously pulled back to and ruminate on what might it mean for schools if we infused the onto-epistemology of YPAR in such spaces? Figure 3 demonstrates key components for disrupting schooling, components that were present in the YPAR space. The weather of YPAR is saturated in anti-racism and social justice, and stresses relationality. The work is democratic, community-centered, and has a critical orientation (e.g., being attentive to issues of power and domination). There is recognition that learning is non-linear and unpredictable, often emerging through the process of inquiry. Within inquiry, there needs to be a widening of our analytical lenses by pushing against humanism's centering of the Western 'Man' (Wytner, 2003) and an embracing of posthumanism (Barad, 2007). At the heart of such work is freedom dreaming.

Figure 3: *Learning*



Putting the various lines of flight of schooling and learning into conversation provides implications for practice, policy, and research. This project illustrates how we as educators and teacher educators need to take seriously the entanglement of human, nonhuman, and discursive agents. We must acknowledge and take account of the intra-acting agents and thing-power (Bennett, 2010) operating in our educational spaces. For instance, I am making an agential cut and returning to the example of one of the teachers bringing in a handout to support the students' in-school YPAR projects to illustrate what this shift does for the field by widening our analysis. The teacher included various graphic organizers, Venn diagrams, and other

tools within the document to help provide the students a platform to express their ideas. However, rather than supporting the students in expressing themselves, the document, operating as an agent entangled with curriculum, discourses of schooling, and the students, further buttressed agential schooling's dominating force. If I looked at this from a humanist framing I might have missed the entanglement, intra-actions, and thing-power (Bennet, 2010) by solely focusing on the students and or teacher. Focusing on the students or teacher I might have pondered questions like: did the teacher not clearly explain the tool? Were the students not listening, did they not understand what YPAR was? What was the impediment to this learning interaction? However, these questions would center the human, position learning as an interaction between self-contained agents, and disregard nonhuman agents/agency. By accounting for the intra-action between the handout/curriculum, students, discourse of schooling, the onto-epistemology of schooling, and the teacher, there is an accounting for the co-constituting entanglement. When it comes to teaching, classrooms, teacher training, methods courses, and other classes we need to not just think about individuals and their dispositions, but also how those individuals are entangled with human, nonhuman, and discursive agents, all of which being co-constitutive.

We need to take seriously the role of the nonhuman agents in the space. How are desks constructed? How are desks effecting/affecting students? What is the layout/construction of the classroom environment? How are classrooms physically constructed (e.g., what lighting, material – brick, cement, etc., and matter comprise the space)? We need to account for the role of the various agents in the space. How

are handouts, clipboards, and other material playing a role in the materiality of the learning environment? How is hierarchy challenged or destabilized via these entanglements? Beyond taking serious the role of nonhuman agents, we must also find ways to create educational spaces that move away from prescriptive entanglements and emphasize inquiry along with the non-linear nature and unpredictability of learning. This demands a radical shift for many educators along with teacher education programs. We must move away from a traditional solely human-centered teaching/teacher training model. This shift requires we recognize that matter is mattering in the materiality of classrooms, schools, and learning communities.

Like curriculum, we must also re-imagine policy as having agency and acting in ways unforeseen. For example, in Vantage the policy the administrator created acted in opposition of his hope of creating a safer school for the students. The policy, entangled with the students, racial domination, and Wynter's (2003) discussion of 'Man' indicates how schooling is saturated with Whiteness and anti-Blackness. When constructing policies, we must take account of the various entanglements with other nonhuman and discursive agents along with the various histories and forms of anti-Blackness that permeate those contexts. This draws attention to the complexities and contradictions of creating policies that do not take into account the local context.

As researchers, we must acknowledge that we are a part of the phenomenon we are attempting study, and that the 'things' we are examining have agency and act upon us. Taking agential realism and diffraction seriously, we must account for our

agential cuts recognizing those things we explore and those things we do not. Our agential cuts could be made and unmade differently. The work is always becoming... Here there is recognition of the co-constituting relationship amongst inquiry, measurement, possibility, and materiality. Those cuts we choose to make play a role in the materiality of the phenomenon we are attempting to study. Similarly, those agents are operating on us, in us, and at times emanating from us. It was not just that I was studying agential schooling, but also that schooling was already operating on me.

What follows is a becoming freedom dream, a re-imagining of possibility within Vantage and B7. These freedom dreams are speculative and emanate from my work in Vantage, the afterschool YPAR space, and the dialogues within the research project.

A Becoming Freedom Dream Wondering and Wandering: Vantage and B7 2.0

As noted, incrementalism will not suffice, but those individual classrooms and afterschool spaces matter. The work done in B7 mattered, and for students like Samantha, these spaces may be the only refuge within oppressive educational settings. So on the one hand, I urge teachers to continue to do the critical work in their classrooms; on the other hand, I recognize that cannot be all. Change demands more. We need to expand the reach of Ethnic Studies (e.g., De los Ríos, 2017; Sacramento, 2019; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015) and abolitionist teaching (Love, 2019), while at the same time reconstituting schools and schooling.

There must be a larger shift in regards to our understandings and purposes of schools and schooling. We must imagine and create a new genre of education. Much is to be learned from the Black radical imagination. We must look to scholars like Wynter, Hartman, de Silva, and Weheliye, as their work speaks to challenging the current construction of 'Man' pushing for new genres of the human. Just as these Black Studies scholars have/are destabilizing the Western onto-episteme of 'Man,' we must destabilize the current onto-episteme of schooling. We need to interrogate the entanglements of racial discourses, capitalist exploitation, heteronormativity, patriarchy, Whiteness, and the various modes of domination that have become normalized in schools. What new lines of flight will emerge when we decenter mastery and domination emphasizing collaboration, the more-than-human world, and learning? These shifts expand notions of intra-connectivity and relationality.

Similarly, we must look to the work of those involved in the Long Civil Rights Movement, like Fannie Lou Hamer, Charles McLaurin, Ella Baker, Bob Moses, and the many foot soldiers who lived and worked in the Black Belt of Alabama, the Mississippi Delta, and all of the small and large towns across the country as they pushed for a new, more democratic nation. Their work speaks to the vision and collaboration it will take to challenge such deeply entrenched modes of domination. We must also decenter the human, and recognize the complicated co-constitutive entanglements that emerge within educational spaces. Beyond posthumanism, we need to look to indigenous ways of knowing and being that speak to socioecological sustainability and justice. A move away from extraction and exploitation to a recognition of intra-connectivity with the more-than-human world. For example,

critical place inquiry recognizes “the embeddedness of social life in and with places” (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 2). We must move from the Western focus on safety as domination and look to ways of knowing and being that focus on safety as harmony and sustainability, both in relation to the human and the more-than-human world.

The shifting of how we understand the work will reverberate throughout all sectors of education. We will need to see shifts within individual classrooms to districts to unions to policy to how we think about schools in our teacher education programs. There is much promise in what Strom and Viesca (2020) call the complex turn in education. This complex turn shifts away from dualism and linearity recognizing entanglements of multiplicities, situatedness (e.g., politics, power, material flows, etc.), becomings, intra-actions, and the agency of nonhuman actors. For example, the complex turn calls into question our current mostly “process-product driven” teacher education models shifting from linearity to hybridity, from individuals to entangled multiplicities, and a focus on potential relational lines of flight in learning-practice becomings (Strom & Viesca, 2020, p. 1). Thus, teacher development and training are not linear activities but situated and temporal becomings that recognize teachers are not self-contained entities, but are entangled with other human, nonhuman, and discursive actors.

Much of this work will draw upon freedom dreaming, “an unleashing of the mind’s most creative capacities, catalyzed by participation in struggles for change” (Kelley, 2002, p. 191). As Love (2019) indicates, “Freedom to create your reality, where uplifting humanity is at the center of all decision” (p. 89), but I would also push this freedom dreaming to dream up those critical possibilities of change that

center socioecological justice emphasizing the more-than-human world. What follows is a speculative freedom dream, an entanglement of the various freedom dreams put forward in B7, a becoming B7 2.0. This speculative work presents other possibilities that may or may not be seen, but they allow us to move beyond the limitations of our current moment.

Pushing against the rigidity of schooling and mastery, this freedom dreaming is both a wondering and wandering. As noted, the weather at Vantage was one that centered Whiteness while emphasizing anti-Blackness and anti-other. Adultism, policies, hierarchical relationships, surveillance, discipline, punishment, curriculum, and prescriptive entanglements all operated as buttresses supporting the agency of schooling. This onto-episteme emphasizes linearity, hierarchy, control, and domination. Yet, learning and becoming spaces can have a weather that is relational stressing social justice and anti-racism. Such endeavors are buttressed by centering a critical orientation, an inquiry focus, unpredictability and non-linearity, community-centered democratic participation, and freedom dreaming. These spaces also recognize the more-than-human world.

Walking into B7 2.0 one can feel the community, the caring relations that are present. There is genuine joy as individuals are smiling, laughing, hugging, and engaging in play. This community trusts, acknowledges, and supports one another. Individuals are vulnerable and lean into the community seeking support and help when needed rather than shying away from fears of being ridiculed or laughed at. The reason folks lean into each other is that they have a deep sense of connectedness; they have lifted each other up. These relationships allow for

individuals to embrace their identities, recognizing that they are always becoming, and feel they can freely express who they feel they are rather than hiding it. Beyond the community in the class, the material they discuss speaks to their lived experience and draws upon the brilliance of communities of color. The learning occurring in this space balances the socio-emotional with the academic. However, when thinking about the academic content there is a de-emphasis on mastery and a focus on wandering and wondering, which emerges through critical inquiry. Youth develop skillsets to ask questions rather than only master content. Emphasis is put on processes, not outcomes. As Danielle noted, students are intrigued, constantly questioning, pushing themselves to new boundaries and wanting to push themselves and their community. The students are appreciating and affirming one another.

Collaboration is built upon the individual and communal talents. Rather than hierarchy, there is an acknowledgement that each and every individual in the said entanglement holds a vital key to each process being undertaken. Because of this network of support, the students feel valued, heard, and seen and have a sense of self-confidence to bring their skills to the work. However, these students also know they are in process and becoming, they are not static, but dynamic entangled multiplicities. Within the collaborations, the teacher-scholar-facilitator-logisticscoordinator-learner-student replaces the notion of a teacher or student, but rather recognizes that all are becoming and constantly shifting and changing. Those who are socially privileged as being labeled adult utilize their privilege and resources to further the aims of the community in B7.

The collaborative processes emphasize creating new knowledge and possibilities. By learning through inquiry, individuals are able to conduct research, make claims, and support their ideas recognizing that there are constant lines of flight and non-linear paths. Research is a capacity to aspire, “to systematically increase the horizon of one’s current knowledge, in relation to some task, goal, or aspiration” (Appadurai, 2006, p. 176). Furthermore, research is the “the capacity to make disciplined inquiries into those things we need to know, but do not yet know” (p. 167). Research is both a wandering and wondering. These tools are not for mastering schooling, but rather to help build the world that one dreams. For example, one day a student in B7 2.0 asks, “what are we going to do in this class?” Danielle responds, “What are your dreams?”

On a cold, dark, New England winter day I visit B7 2.0 sitting with students as they are waiting for class to start. I overhear a conversation where a group of young brilliant folks are cracking jokes about the day before and the larger struggles in the world. This group is talking about music, politics, and their hopes and aspirations. Samantha takes a pause, then utters, “Shit, school is where I come dream.”

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