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Postcolonial Directions in Education is a peer reviewed open access journal produced twice a year. It is a scholarly journal intended to foster further understanding, advancement and reshaping of the field of postcolonial education. We welcome articles that contribute to advancing the field. As indicated in the Editorial for the inaugural issue, the purview of this journal is broad enough to encompass a variety of disciplinary approaches, including but not confined to the following: sociological, anthropological, historical and social psychological approaches. The areas embraced include anti-racist education, decolonizing education, critical multiculturalism, critical racism theory, direct colonial experiences in education and their legacies for present day educational structures and practice, educational experiences reflecting the culture and 'imagination' of empire, the impact of neoliberalism/globalisation/structural adjustment programmes on education, colonial curricula and subaltern alternatives, education and liberation movements, challenging hegemonic languages, the promotion of local literacies and linguistic diversity, neo-colonial education and identity construction, colonialism and the construction of patriarchy, canon and canonicity, Indigenous knowledges, supranational bodies and their educational frameworks, north-south and east-west relations in education, the politics of representation, unlearning colonial stereotypes, internal colonialism and education, cultural hybridity and learning in postcolonial contexts, education and the politics of dislocation, biographies / autobiographies reflecting the above themes, deconstruction of colonial narratives of civilization within educational contexts. Once again, the field cannot be exhausted.

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CHALLENGES OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH FROM A DECOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT: In this article, we develop a critical reflection on the challenges of educational research from a decolonial perspective. We argue at the outset that the decolonial epistemological turn present in the growing set of Latin American, Brazilian, and Amazonian academic production in the field of education needs to be accompanied by a methodological turn, which possesses an inventive and transgressive capacity in the processes of knowledge production. We use as theoretical sources contributions of decolonial thinking, black feminist epistemologies, popular education, participatory action-research, and other counter-hegemonic thinking paradigms. We analyze, in particular, the need to overcome the pedagogical coloniality and eurocentrism present in universities and in traditional processes of knowledge production; the construction of a participatory perspective and a political-transformative commitment to the social and educational realities investigated; the need to research education in dialogue with the experiences lived by subalternized subjects – their memories, ancestral elements, and wisdoms. Among the challenges pointed out, we also propose the incorporation of sensitivity and ethical commitment in the investigations, the assumption of corporeality in the processes of knowledge production, the construction of sensitive and decolonial writing and the adoption of intersectionality as a methodological perspective of decolonial research.

RESUMO: Neste artigo, desenvolvemos uma reflexão crítica sobre os desafios da pesquisa em educação em perspectiva decolonial. Parte do argumento de que o giro epistemológico decolonial presente em conjunto crescente da produção acadêmica latino-americana, brasileira e amazônica no campo da educação precisa estar acompanhado de um giro metodológico, que possupõe uma capacidade inventiva e transgressora nos processos de produção do conhecimento. Utilizamos como fontes teóricas aportes do pensamento decolonial, das epistemologias feministas negras, da educação popular, da investigação-ação participativa e outros paradigmas de pensamento contra-hegemônicos. Analisamos, em particular, a necessidade de superação da colonialidade pedagógica e do eurocentirsmo presentes nas universidades e nos processos tradicionais de produção do conhecimento; a construção de uma perspectiva participativa e um compromisso político-transformador em face das realidades sociais e educacionais investigadas; a necessidade de se pesquisar a educação em diálogo com as experiências vividas por sujeitos subalternizados, suas memórias, ancestralidades e sabedorias. Dentre os desafios apontados, também se propõe a incorporação da sensibilidade e o compromisso ético nas investigações, a assunção da corporeidade nos processos de produção do conhecimento, a construção de uma escrita sensível e decolonial e a adoção da interseccionalidade como perspeciva metodológica das pesquisas decoloniais.

Keywords: Research in Education. Decoloniality. Intellectual colonialism.

Introduction

The academic production known as "decolonial" (despite its genealogy being linked to the epistemic practices of denouncing colonialism and coloniality both present in the colonized populations' resistance movements since the beginning of the Conquest) begins to self-refer as this term at the late 1990s and early 2000s by Latin American intellectuals linked to the "Latin American modernity/coloniality research

program" (Escobar, 2003). This program proposed a radical break with Eurocentric models of knowledge production, or a "decolonial turn", understood, according to Maldonado-Torres (2007), as a change of perspective and attitude that is found in colonized subjects' practices and forms of knowledge, and also as a project of systematic and global transformation of the assumptions and implications of modernity, taken on by a variety of subjects in dialogue.

This production initially circulates in the Andean countries, mobilized by Latin American intellectuals in the field of Philosophy and Social Sciences, some of whom were diasporized in the United States and, thus, this production had little influence on the Brazilian academy at this first moment.

It is at the turn of the first decade of the 2000s to the second that the decolonial perspective begins to be more present in Brazilian academic debates, and the field of Education has been one of the spaces in which decolonial thinking is being appropriated and recreated with greater enthusiasm.

Although many of the questions raised by intellectuals of the so-called "modernity/coloniality network" were already present in Latin American critical production prior to its emergence, we agree with Maldonado-Torres (2019) that one of the potentialities that brought decoloniality as a concept was offering two key reminders – "first, colonization and its various dimensions remain clear on the fight's horizon; second, it serves as a constant reminder that the logic and legacies of colonialism may continue to exist even after the end of formal colonization and the achievement of economic and political independence" (p. 28). It is in this perspective that research or theoretical essays made in the field of Education have appropriated these "key reminders", applying them to the investigated educational phenomena.

Without claiming, in this text, to locate the origin of decolonial debates in the field of Education in Brazil, we maintain, based on surveys in databases such as *Scielo*, *Google Scholar*, and *Portal de Periódicos da CAPES*, that at least three research groups, located in different states of Brazil, have been playing an important role in the dissemination of the decolonial perspective in Education and its reinvention based on the Brazilian educational reality. These Research Groups are: "Mediações Pedagógicas e Cidadania" (UNISINOS), in Rio Grande do Sul; the "Grupo de Pesquisas sobre Cotidiano, Educação e Cultura(s)" (PUC-Rio), in Rio de Janeiro; and the "José Veríssimo e o Pensamento Educacional Latino-Americano" (UFPA), in Pará.

In Rio Grande do Sul state, at least since 2009, we have found research that is located at this intersection between education and decoloniality. Examples of this production are Streck; Adams and Moretti (2009) on education and emancipatory processes in Latin America; Adams and Streck (2010) on popular education and new technologies; Moretti and Adams (2011) on participatory research and popular education; Streck and Adams (2012) on research and education, social movements and epistemological reconstruction in a context of coloniality; Streck and Moretti (2013) on coloniality and insurgency in Latin American pedagogy, among others. In common, we notice that these authors' focuses of interest are on popular education, participatory research, and Latin American pedagogical thinking, in dialogue with the decolonial perspectives.

In Rio de Janeiro state, the first two articles published on decolonial education/pedagogy in journals are from 2010 (Oliveira and Candau, 2010; Candau and Russo, 2010). In the first text, the authors

explicitly address the theme of decolonial pedagogy in its relations with anti-racist and intercultural education in Brazil, and in the second, the authors discuss interculturality and education in Latin America, with theoretical support in concepts of decolonial thinking. Even before these articles in journals, Oliveira and Lins (2007) published a paper in the proceedings of the *I Encontro de História da Educação do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (2007)* on the presence-absence of African history in History curricula of universities in this State. In common, these articles emphasize the debate on anti-racist education and intercultural education, and are somehow linked to the decolonial perspective by the influence of Catherine Walsh's thinking and her concept of "critical interculturality". With this author, the group has maintained dialogues, either through joint publication or through some type of exchange – such as Walsh's participation in events in Rio de Janeiro, for example.

In the context of these collaborations, the relations between critical interculturality and decolonial pedagogy were discussed by Catherine Walsh (2009) in a chapter of her authorship published in a book organized by Vera Candau, "*Educação intercultural na América Latina: entre concepções, tensões e propostas*". We consider this text to be one of the first sources of reflection on decoloniality to influence the Brazilian academic production in the field of Education.

In Pará state, Sônia Araújo's study (2010) is highlighted because of its pioneering nature on Rural Education in its relations with post-colonial debates. Although the study's is linked to "post-colonial" studies, the essay establishes an important dialogue with decolonial intellectuals. Moreover, starting with this publication, progressively, the studies carried out within the Research Group "José Veríssimo e o

Pensamento Educacional Latino-Americano" (UFPA), under Araújo's coordination, began to give centrality to decolonial thought, with several works under her guidance addressing the construction of a genealogy of Latin American pedagogical thought in the 19th and 20th centuries (Mota Neto, 2013; Mota Neto; 2015; Viana, 2015; Lima, 2016).

Since the 2010s, therefore, and not only in these three Brazilian universities, but also in many others in all regions of the country, articles in journals, master's dissertations, doctoral theses, and essays presented in events' proceedings have been deepening the decolonial debate in the field of Education. This has been applied to several of this Field's thematic sub-areas, some of which stand out, such as popular education, ethnic-racial relations, Indigenous education, intercultural education, Latin American pedagogical thinking, among others.

We can thus assert that there is an effort by Brazilian researchers in the field of Education to break off with eurocentrism, westernism, and intellectual colonialism –all of them so present in the history of research in education in Brazil– dialoguing with coloniality-critical theoretical sources elaborated in Latin America itself, but also in the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia. This is allied with a commitment to recognize the "sources" or "origins" of decolonial pedagogical thinking from black, Indigenous or third-world intellectuals, in addition to resistance social movements – these also being understood as spaces for decolonial knowledge production.

Particularly in the Amazon, theoretical and methodological efforts have been made to better understand the theme of decolonial pedagogies, and for this reason, in 2019, the *Rede de Pesquisa sobre Pedagogias Decoloniais na Amazônia* (RPPDA) was created, with three lines of investigation. These lines

are divided as: a) *decolonial pedagogical practices in the Amazon*, which investigates insurgent pedagogical practices arising from the resistance of socially subordinated groups/classes; b) *genealogy of decolonial pedagogical thought in the Amazon*, which proposes to investigate, in the history of Amazonian education, the construction of pedagogical thoughts of resistance to coloniality, produced not only by intellectuals from the academic sphere, but also by "intellectuals of the people", social movement activists, popular educators, and social fighters; c) *decolonial pedagogies and intersectionalities in the Amazon*, which proposes to carry out studies on decolonial pedagogies and intersectionalities, articulating the education debate with feminist, anti-racist, gender, and sexuality perspectives, especially from the voices and struggles of social movements – crossing categories such as race, ethnicity, class, and others, all of them necessary to understand the Amazonian reality's complexity.

Then there are RPPDA-linked researchers from various universities in the North Region of Brazil and several Master and Doctoral programs' students participating in the Graduate Programs in Education at the Universidade do Estado do Pará and the Universidade Federal do Pará. They are building dissertations and theses in the area of Education with a decolonial focus.

In the debates that we have been promoting at RPPDA, an ever-present question concerns the theme of this text – *the challenges of educational research from a decolonial perspective.* It is evident that an epistemological turn must be present in the dissertations and theses produced, but this turn also presupposes an inventive and transgressive capacity in the research methodologies used, in the knowledge production processes, in the relationship between

researchers and their interlocutors in the field, in the produced data's analysis strategies, and in the ethical care that presupposes an investigation in a decolonial perspective.

Thus, the objective of this work is to contribute to the debate on the challenges of educational research from a decolonial perspective. We take on this task of reflection in order to analyze what we have read and thought about the subject, and also to systematize what we have accomplished in our research or what we have followed in terms of research under our guidance and that of other colleagues linked or not to the RPPDA. Therefore, even if signed by two people, this text is marked by a dialogical polyphony, in which many subjects print their voices: Latin American intellectuals from the decolonial perspective, Brazilian and Amazonian researchers of Education, black feminists, original populations from the Amazon, and others.

The text emphasizes three challenges that we identified in educational research from a decolonial perspective: a) overcoming the pedagogical coloniality and Eurocentrism present in universities and in traditional knowledge production processes; b) assuming a participatory perspective and a political-transformative commitment towards the investigated social and educational realities; c) research education in dialogue with the experiences lived by subordinate subjects, their memories, ancestry, and wisdom.

At the same time that we present the main challenges identified, we also point out some strategies for facing or overcoming these challenges, suggested by intellectuals with whom we have dialogued or by ourselves, based on the research we have carried out, guided or accompanied. The challenges are not presented in order of importance, but follow a discursive logic in which we seek to analyze different

interrelated aspects of decolonial research in education.

Overcoming pedagogical coloniality and Eurocentrism present in universities and in traditional knowledge production processes

Recurring questions in debates that we have conducted are: how to do research in education with a decolonial perspective if our universities and their graduate programs continue to replicate the Eurocentric logic and the pedagogical coloniality that constitute them? Wouldn't the criteria usually used to validate knowledge on the qualification and defense boards for dissertations and theses not be overly colonialist to the point of rejecting knowledge production processes from a decolonial perspective? How can we decolonize the university and graduate programs if the presence of groups historically excluded from these spaces (Indigenous, quilombolas, black women, among others) remain restricted and the selection processes for entering the programs, in general, do not embrace affirmative action policies?

These issues seem to us extremely relevant and, in fact, constitute an urgent challenge to be faced: overcoming the pedagogical coloniality and the Eurocentrism of universities and graduate programs.

However, what is this pedagogical coloniality and how is it present in the university?

As it is known, one of the most important distinctions present in the decolonial debate is around the concepts of colonialism and coloniality. According to Restrepo and Rojas (2010), colonialism refers to the process and apparatus of political and military dominance that is employed to guarantee the exploitation of work and wealth in the colonies for the colonizer's benefit. Coloniality is a much more complex

historical phenomenon, which extends to the present and refers to a pattern of power that operates through the naturalization of territorial, racial, cultural, and epistemic hierarchies, enabling the replication of domination relations.

Since it is a complex phenomenon, different interconnected dimensions of coloniality have been analyzed by decolonial theorists, such as the coloniality of power, being, knowledge, gender, the cosmogonical-spiritual, alterity, and others. We understand that educational institutions play a fundamental role in the reproduction of coloniality and, therefore, we affirm that they operate, through pedagogical coloniality, subordinating the knowledge and life experiences of groups socially excluded by the modern/colonial world system. Furthermore, these institutions, such as westernized universities, implement a control regime not only of the knowledge produced, which only becomes considered valid if it is in accordance with the epistemic-methodological principles of modern Eurocentric science, but they also control whoever accesses these spaces, guaranteeing that the subordinated classes are excluded from them, by an extremely elitist logic, at the same time racist, patriarchal, sexist, and at the Market's service.

In this sense, one of the challenges for educational research from a decolonial perspective is to fight for effective democratization of the university and graduate programs. Black and indigenous scholars, for example, need to be present in these spaces, with their bodies, their struggles, wisdom, and ancestry to produce, from their own research, the knowledge that breaks with the current Eurocentrism. This does not mean, of course, that non-indigenous scholars cannot research indigenous education, for example. However, Indigenous researchers must take a leading role in the

processes of producing knowledge about their peoples, cultures, and educational processes.

The dialogue between knowledge that can be enhanced by the presence of these other subjects, will give rise to the construction of other pedagogies (Arroyo, 2012), challenging the traditional forms of knowledge production and allowing them to be disfigured, transfigured or reconfigured. This will require that university curricula start to incorporate, for example, black feminist intellectuals in their bibliographies, or Indigenous intellectuals, producing "fissures" in epistemologies, methodologies, and hegemonic curricula.

Grosfoguel (2016, p. 26), questioning the knowledge structure of westernized universities, based fundamentally on an epistemic racism/sexism, teases: "How is it possible that the canon of thought in all disciplines of Social Sciences and Humanities in westernized universities (Grosfoguel, 2012) is based on the knowledge produced by a few men from five countries in Western Europe (Italy, France, England, Germany, and the United States)?"

For him, in westernized universities, the knowledge produced by "other" epistemologies, cosmologies, and worldviews is considered "inferior" to the "superior" knowledge produced by a few westernized men from these five countries, forming the canon of thought in the Humanities and in the Social Sciences (Grosfoguel, 2016).

Education research, inserted in the field of Human and Social Sciences, has also systematically excluded these "other" epistemologies, cosmologies, and worldviews, which constitutes a challenge to be overcome by those who question the coloniality of universities.

According to Patricia Hill Collins (2019), black women have long asserted knowledge that challenges

the production of elite white men. However, as they have been denied access to positions of authority, they often resort to alternative knowledge validation processes.

> Consequently, academic disciplines have usually rejected this knowledge. Added to this is the fact that credentials controlled by white academic men have always been denied to black women who use alternative standards, on the grounds that their work does not constitute legitimate research (Collins, 2019, p. 144).

In the educational field, black researchers such as Nilma Lino Gomes (2019) have demonstrated how pedagogical coloniality operates in Westernized universities, schools, and teaching and research institutions. For her, coloniality is the result of "imposition of colonial power and domination that manages to reach the subjective structures of a people, penetrating their concept of subject and extending to society in such a way that, even after the end of colonial rule, the bonds persist" (p. 227).

By emphasizing curriculum's discussion, Gomes (2019) states that the Brazilian decolonial black perspective is one of those responsible for the process of decolonization of curricula and knowledge in Brazil. The author provides the black perspective of educational theory as part of Latin American decolonial production.

In this sense, we understand that one of the challenges for educational research from a decolonial perspective is to critically analyze both the reproduction of pedagogical coloniality through curricula, methodologies, teaching-learning processes, evaluation, didactic materials, and the effort to overcome this coloniality, carried out by black,

indigenous, quilombola, women, the LGBT+ community, and other groups historically excluded from formal spaces of knowledge production. Studying the trajectory and thinking of female black teachers, the performance of quilombola and Indigenous student associations, the impact of affirmative action policies, the struggle of social movements to decolonize the university, are all possibilities that are part of the challenge highlighted.

An important research agenda can be established around this challenge, which also has implications for the history of education, which needs to be rewritten based on the voices, struggles, and realities of socially subordinated groups. If the official history is an artifact that operates by reproducing elitist, racist, patriarchal, and sexist narratives, a History of Education in a decolonial perspective may be able to help us reread the events that have historically marked education, from an "other" view, much more critical of processes of exclusion and oppression, breaking with the "discursive normality", the "consensus perspective" and the "imperial voice" that preside over the traditional writing of the history of education.

Historiographic efforts are needed to trace the genealogies of Latin American, Brazilian, and Amazonian pedagogical thinking. An example of excellent work of this type are the books "Fontes da Pedagogia Latino-Americana: uma antologia", organized by Streck (2010) and "Fontes da Pedagogia Latino-Americana: heranças de(s)coloniais", organized by Streck; Morretti and Adams (2019). We need to move further in this direction, mapping unknown educational thinkers, insurgent educational experiences, and decolonial pedagogical productions.

Assuming a participatory perspective and a political-transformative commitment when faced with the investigated social and educational realities

Revealing the reproduction mechanisms of pedagogical coloniality is fundamental, but not enough in research on education from a decolonial perspective. This research, seeking to break away from the positivist structure of modern science, is also characterized by taking on the researcher's political-transformative commitment in the face of the social and educational realities investigated.

According to Grosfoguel (2016), the subject x object division and the neutrality myth, which produces a supposedly "impartial" knowledge, not conditioned by the body or by the location in the space of the person who elaborates it, remains a criterion used for knowledge validation of disciplines at westernized universities.

In the same direction, Patricia Collins (2019), citing positivism as one of the classic paradigms of modern Western thought, states that there are several requirements that need to be met for knowledge to be considered valid, according to this Westernized perspective. First, research methods require a distance between the researcher and his/her "object" of study. A second requirement is the exclusion of emotions from the research process. Third, it is considered that ethics and values should not have a place in research.

This Eurocentric epistemology, which guides traditional investigative processes in which the subject x object dichotomy is present, as well as the lack of commitment to the investigated realities, is confronted with the principles of black feminist epistemology, for example, and certainly with other epistemologies produced by social groups subordinated by

modernity/coloniality. Referring to black feminist epistemology, Collins (2019, p. 147) asserts:

> Many black women have had access to another epistemology, which encompasses patterns for arriving at the truth that are widely accepted by African American women. Black feminist epistemology is founded on experimental and material basis, such as collective experiences and corresponding worldviews that American black women have consolidated from their peculiar history. The historical working conditions of black women, both in black civil society and in the exercise of paid labor, gave rise to a series of experiences that, once shared and transmitted, formed the collective wisdom from the point of view of black women. In addition, a range of principles for assessing real claims is available to those who have shared such experiences. Such principles sedimented the wisdom of black women in a general nature and further consolidated what I call black feminist epistemology here (p. 147).

In this sense, as evidenced by black feminist epistemologies, the sharing of knowledge and experiences marks the knowledge production process of black women. Producing knowledge is not an isolated attitude, with the pretense of neutrality, but a collective experience, of daily, shared learning, in order to critically understand society and education, and engaging in their transformation.

For Collins (2019), black American women considered that, "since knowledge derives from experience, the best way to understand someone else's ideas would be developing empathy and sharing experiences that led them to form such ideas" (p 151).

For her, this particular socialization process encourages particular forms of knowledge.

This author also tells us about the use of dialogue to evaluate knowledge. "A primary assumption that underlies the use of dialogue in assessing knowledge is that connections, not separations, are an essential component of the knowledge validation process" (Collins, 2019, p. 153). She further states that such a belief in connections and the use of dialogue as a criterion of methodological adequacy has African origins, in oral traditions inherited from Africa and in African-American culture. In this method, the fundamental prerequisite resides in an interactive network construction, in which there is active participation by all individuals.

> Furthermore, we argue that those ideas confirmed as true by African-Americans, Latin-American lesbians, Asian-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other groups with their distinct points of view – with each group using epistemological approaches that constitute their unique positions – render truths more 'objective'. Each group speaks from its own point of view and shares its own partial and situated knowledge. However, as each group recognizes the partiality of its truth, the knowledge is unfinished. Each group becomes able to consider the other groups' points of view without waiving the uniqueness of its own point of view, or suppressing the partial perspectives of other groups (Collins, 2019, p. 166).

Therefore, this knowledge production process requires engagement, commitment, and a transforming attitude. The idea of "attitude", by the way, has been pointed out as fundamental in the production of knowledge from a decolonial perspective. Maldonado-

Torres (2019) states that while the "method" defines the relationship between a subject and an object, the "attitude" refers to the subject's orientation in relation to knowledge, power, and being. The author concludes: "Thus, a change in attitude is crucial for a critical engagement against the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being, and to put decoloniality as a project. The decolonial attitude is, therefore, crucial for the decolonial project and vice versa" (p. 45).

From the history of Latin American social thinking were born some of the most important contributions to a research that were critically engaged against colonialities and with a transformative attitude. We could not fail to mention the Participatory Action Research (PAR), systematized by the Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda.

For Fals Borda, PAR is, at the same time, an *investigation method,* an *educational technique,* and a *political action.* It is not just investigating, nor just educating, nor just acting. It is a triad permeated by a *life philosophy,* which saturates it as a whole, and with which society could be rebuilt as a new force. PAR is, therefore, a methodology within an experiential process (Fals Borda and Zamosc, 1985).

Emphasizing the experiential aspect, Fals Borda and Rahman (1989) defined PAR as an open process of life and work, a progressive experience towards the structural transformation of society and culture, a process that requires commitment, an ethical stance, and persistence at all levels. Combining scientific research with political action, PAR aims to radically transform social and economic reality, and build popular power for the benefit of excluded groups. In this complex process are included popular education, the situations' diagnosis, critical analysis, and practice as sources of knowledge to probe problems, needs, and dimensions of reality (Fals Borda, 1985).

The final purposes of PAR, according to Fals Borda (1985), are: 1) to enable the classes and groups explored to effectively engender the transformative weight that corresponds to them, translated into concrete projects, works, fights, and developments; and 2) to produce and elaborate the socio-political thought proper to such popular bases. In his own words, Fals Borda (1998, p. 182) defined the PAR as follows:

> a method of study and action that goes hand in hand with an altruistic philosophy of life to obtain useful and reliable results in the improvement of collective situations, especially for the working classes. It claims that the researcher bases his/her observations on coexistence with the communities, from which he/she also obtains valid knowledge. It is interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary and applicable in continuums that go from the micro to the macro of the studied universes (from groups to communities and large societies), but always without losing the existential commitment to the vital philosophy of changing that characterizes it.

From the above excerpt, we can define PAR as "a method of study and action" and "a philosophy of life", which aims to "improve the life situation of the working classes", and whose knowledge production is based "on interaction with the communities", "interdisciplinarity or multidisciplinarity" and "existential commitment" between the different investigation's subjects.

PAR is a political-pedagogical experience, in the precise sense of popular education, insofar as it seeks to ideologically and intellectually arm the most exploited classes in society, so that they consciously assume their role as players in history. For Fals Borda (1978), this is the final destination of knowledge,

validated by praxis and guided by revolutionary commitment. Following the sense of popular education as a political-pedagogical process of organizing the working classes, Fals Borda (1985) considers PAR as a scientific method of productive work (and not just research), which implies organizing and promoting working classes' social movements, so that it is difficult and unproductive to distinguish between study and militancy.

For Fals Borda (2007), the general bases of PAR are as follows:

> 1. Search for an interdisciplinary science/knowledge centered on realities, contexts, and struggles, such as those of the tropics and subtropics.
> 2. Construction of a useful science/knowledge and at the service of working classes, seeking to free them from situations of exploitation, oppression, and submission.
> 3. Construction of techniques that ease the collective search for knowledge, of native peoples and other groups' critical recovery of their history and culture, and the systematic and easy-to-understand return to ordinary people of the acquired knowledge.
> 4. Mutually respectful search for knowledge between formal academic knowledge and informal wisdom and/or popular experience.
> 5. The researcher's personality/culture transformation to emphasize his/her personal experience and moral-ideological commitment to the struggle for radical change in society.

For Mota Neto (2016), this set of characteristics and motivations reveals three of the main decolonial marks present in the thinking of Fals Borda and his

investigative proposal, insofar as: a) they break the subject/object duality that characterizes knowledge in the modern scientific paradigm; b) they subvert the dichotomy between scientific knowledge and popular wisdom, which has been an ideological weapon of Eurocentric thought to determine the perceived 'inferiority' of the worldview of the working classes and other subordinated groups; c) they transcend evaluative neutrality and the lack of commitment to social transformation typical of the positivist sciences.

Therefore, we consider that the dialogical and collaborative perspectives of knowledge production proposed by black feminist epistemologies and the participatory and transformative commitment present in PAR are some of the most fruitful possibilities for knowledge production from a decolonial perspective.

Research education in dialogue with the experiences of subaltern subjects, their memories, ancestries and wisdoms

A fundamental challenge for researchers in the field of Education presupposes understanding it – education – beyond the official knowledge standardized by national curricular policies. This knowledge, as we have already seen, reproduces the Eurocentrism of westernized universities and schools, and places themselves in a position of non-dialogue – of superiority – over popular knowledge, insurgent wisdom, or the memories of social subjects subalternated by modernity/coloniality.

It is necessary, thus, that Education researchers open themselves to "other" pedagogies and "other" knowledge produced by popular communities, social movements, and native populations.

This debate is very present in black feminist epistemologies. Collins (2019), for example, tells us

about the lived experience as a signification criterion. "Living life as a black woman requires wisdom, since knowledge about the dynamics of intersected oppression is essential for black American women's survival. When evaluating knowledge, African-American women give this wisdom great credibility" (p. 148).

Considering experience as a signification criterion and a fundamental epistemological principle of African-American thinking systems, Collins (2019) proposes the "narrative method", which "requires that history be told, and not systematically dissected; reliable in what it has of most fundamental, and not 'admired as a science'" (p. 150).

The narrative method, in educational research, presents itself as an important possibility of transgressing modern science, since knowledge considered socially "inferior" or "invalid", such as popular culture or collective memories, comes to take over another epistemological status: as "valid", "significant", and "real" knowledge.

For Walsh (2013), collective memory has been the space where, in practice, the pedagogical and the decolonial are related. For this reason, the author states that decolonial pedagogy is related to the memories that indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, for example, have been maintaining as part of their existence and their fight. For her, collective memory articulates the continuity of a decolonial approach, it is like "this living of light and freedom in the midst of darkness" (2013, p. 26).

For Marín (2013), in the same understanding, projects and practices in the field of memory can be conceived within the horizon of decoloniality, for two reasons: first, by the visibility of *epistemes* that were subordinated by the logic of colonial power and by coloniality; second, because they mobilize dynamics for

the transformation of colonial legacies that still persist today.

This author calls *critical recovery of history* for this intellectual tradition, born in the late 1970s and implemented during the 1980s in Latin America, and which for her is one of the clearest antecedents in the configuration of critical political and epistemic scenarios in the collective memory field. The author points out that this tradition arises or "feeds" from the contributions of Participatory Action Research and Popular Education, under the decisive influence of Orlando Fals Borda and Paulo Freire (Marín, 2013).

Still according to Marín (2013), the collective recovery, according to Fals Borda and Freire, showed us the possibility of producing knowledge from the political and ethical praxis, as well as from the different knowledge logics within the popular sectors. As a result, "other" historical narratives began to be produced, which took on a dissident form in relation to the official ones, pointing to knowledge produced within the popular movement (Marín, 2013).

We can denominate this knowledge in several ways. In the Education Graduate Program at Universidade do Estado do Pará (PPGED-UEPA), in which there is a research line on "Cultural knowledge and education in the Amazon", cultural knowledge can be conceptualized as "a unique form of the real's intelligibility, rooted in culture, with roots in the warp of relationships with others, with which, certain groups creatively reinvent daily life, negotiate, create survival tactics, pass on their knowledge, and perpetuate their values and traditions" (Albuquerque and Sousa, 2016, p. 240).

This definition, developed by researchers at PPGED-UEPA, is linked to the efforts of other researchers in this Program, including the authors of this text, who since 2003 have been developing, in

theoretical and methodological terms, what we call "cartography of knowledge". According to Oliveira (2018, p. 109), cartographies of knowledge "analyze the production and circulation of cultural knowledge, artistic-aesthetic knowledge, among others, in different educational contexts. Despite being able to focus on certain knowledge, the relationship between knowledges is affected by the daily practice of social practices. It is sought to map and understand the meaning of knowledges for the local culture's population and education".

Another way of conceptualizing these knowledges is found in Arias (2010), who talks about *insurgent wisdom*s. For him, valuing these wisdoms does not mean leaving aside the dialogue with the epistemologies that are built in the academy, nor failing to consider that these wisdoms have their own epistemology, as can be understood by academic knowledge. There is an epistemology, but these wisdoms go further, since they are anchored in the very lives of subordinated subjects and incorporate an "other" horizon of an ethical, political, and affective meaning. For this reason, these wisdoms, more than composing our study material, should be seen as sources of meaning, dialoguing on equal terms with critical epistemic proposals developed by scholars.

It is in this perspective that, learning from the insurgent wisdoms present for example in the ancestral traditions of Brazilian and Amazonian Afro-religious cultures, the differentiation between "knowledge" and "wisdom" is established by the encantado[1] (enchanted) Légua Boji[2]. He was

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[1] *Encantado* (enchanted) designates a spiritual entity generically called *caboclo* or *caboco*, and may represent, at a *Tambor de Mina*, the voduns and orisha, deities of this religion. For Eduardo Galvão (1976, p. 66), referring to the Amazon, the concept of *encantado* "is defined locally as a magical force attributed to the supernatural. Human beings, animals, and objects may be enchanted by the influence of a supernatural. The concept does not apply to Christian saints or deities".

[2] In the *Terreiro* (worship place of Afro-Brazilian religions) researched, Légua Boji introduces himself as being over 500 years old and of Angolan origin. The historical

incorporated in a preacher of a Tambor de Mina[3] house, in Benevides town - Pará state in Brazil, and ethnographed in a previous piece of research by one of the authors of this text (Mota Neto, 2008). The differentiation is as follows:

> *Knowledge you learn from studying, it is something mechanical, you insist, insist, until you learn, and may later forget. Not wisdom, wisdom we learn from experience, life teaches us, we do not forget (Caboclo Légua Boji).*

With this statement, Mr. Légua distinguishes two types of knowledge: formal knowledge, of methodical learning and of a bookish nature, disconnected from life and represented by school knowledge; and everyday knowledge, based on experience, in daily social relations, "knowledge that is learned, but not taught", since it comes from the experience acquired over time.

In Tambor de Mina, the traditional knowledges are socialized from one generation to the next in direct communication relationships, in conversations, and in daily contact, using oral narratives that convey the collective memories of religion and the *povo-de-santo* (people-of-saint: people who worship orishas and voduns, African entities in Brazil). In this educational culture, the idea of *experience* is fundamental, since

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narrative of this cabloco shows his departure from Africa, towards Trinidad and Tobago in Central America, and later coming to Brazil, where he appears as a cattle drover in the Codó forests, in Maranhão state, where the noble Dom Pedro Angaço adopted him as a son (Mota Neto, 2008).

[3] More widespread denomination of Afro-Brazilians in Maranhão state and the Amazon rainforest region. The word *"Tambor"* (drum) derives from the importance of the homonymous musical instrument in worship rituals, and *"Mina"* (mine) derives from the African people of Costa da Mina. This name was given to slaves coming from the east coast of Castle of São Jorge de Mina, in the current Republic of Ghana, brought from the region of Togo, Benin, and Nigeria Republics, and who were known as *mina-jejes* and *mina-nagôs*. (Ferretti, 2000).

wisdom is acquired in daily religious practice, shaped by time (Mota Neto, 2008).

For Tramonte (2004), under the intercultural prism, the practices of Afro-Brazilian religions are presented as a hybrid field of identity construction. This field enables the creation and circulation of intercultural knowledge, which is preserved in religion due to the important role of preachers and other followers who, through oral speech, mythological narratives, counseling, and development work, socialize knowledge and traditions recorded in the *povo-de-santo*'s collective memory.

In this sense, memory can be characterized as an essential source of knowledge in the Tambor de Mina's tradition, understanding tradition as a set of models, norms, patterns conveyed by memory and collective traditions, with the function of ordering day-to-day existence. For Zumthor (1997, p. 13), taking inspiration from Ortega y Gasset, tradition is "a collaboration that we ask our past to solve our current problems".

Therefore, the traditions' knowledges provide members of the *terreiro* community with elements to constitute their cultural and religious identity, with their own way of being, thinking, and acting on the world. The memory not only records the past episodes but also teaches, through the knowledge of tradition, ways of acting and explaining the current world. The preachers and the *encantados* are the main ones responsible for safeguarding such knowledge (Mota Neto, 2008).

Research on education and the wisdoms built in the Tambor de Mina brings up fundamental issues for research on education, such as the interculturality perspective, memories, ancestries, spirituality, corporeality, ecology, ethics, and aesthetics.

In our field experience, in addition to the "cartography of knowledge" already mentioned, the ethnographic perspective has been used. We believe that in research in education, ethnography is an important methodological strategy to study the wisdom, memories, ancestries, and life experiences of the working classes. We agree with Arias (2010) when he says that despite the colonial heritage that is the origin of Anthropology, nowadays this science has a great decolonizing potential, which can contribute to the fight against the dominant colonial reason.

Arias (2010) proposes a decolonial ethnography and, in his study, besides offering a wide theoretical discussion about what he calls "anthropology committed to life", synthesized in the expression *corazonar*, also offers an interesting methodological reference for decolonial ethnographies realization, which may be well used by researchers on education. When referring the reader to Arias' own work, we just want to highlight one of decolonial ethnography's characteristics: *collaboration*, the need to build knowledge *with* people and not *about* them. It is necessary, therefore, to: "Being willing to collaborate with people, that is one of the best ways to earn their trust, it is from where that you have to try to join the community activities, help in collective work, […] their parties, for example" (Arias, 2010, p. 367).

Decolonial ethnographies can also be called *collaborative*, as proposed by Mariateresa Muraca (2015), who conducted a study on popular, feminist, and decolonial pedagogical practices of the Movimento de Mulheres Camponesas de Santa Catarina (Movement of Peasant Women of Santa Catarina state). Muraca's work, in turn, is based on Lassiter's formulation (2005) on collaborative ethnography, which is characterized as dialogical and which puts at the center of the debate what, in general, remains only

a background, constantly consulting the research subjects throughout the knowledge production process.

Thus, we consider that narrative methods, processes of collective history recovery, studies on memory and oral history, the cartography of knowledge, and collaborative decolonial ethnographies offer rich possibilities for research in education.

Other (many) challenges

Since it is a new theme still, not widely addressed by researchers in the field of Education, the challenges of research from a decolonial perspective are many. These challenges have been presented in the very investigation process, carried out in our studies and by many others who have endeavored to investigate education with theoretical-methodological options and attitudes that are consistent with the epistemology of decoloniality. This is also a knowledge that is built collectively, collaboratively, and sometimes in networks.

If we want to decolonize science and research in education, we also need to change our strategies for knowledge production and socialization, avoiding academic exclusivity and the frantic search for status through the investigations and publications that we develop. On the contrary, the research exercise needs to be increasingly dialogical, collaborative, in solidarity, accurate, done with academic commitment, solidarity/sorority ethics, and carried out with a transformative feeling and affectivity.

Doing research in Education from a decolonial perspective implies, in fact, incorporating sensitivity and ethical commitment in investigations. Collins (2019) tells us about the ethics of care as constitutive of black feminist epistemologies. "The theme of

speaking from the heart touches the ethics of care, another dimension of an epistemological alternative used by African-American women [...] the ethics of care suggests that personal expressiveness, emotions, and empathy are central to the process of knowledge validation" (p. 156).

For the author, emotion, subjectivity, life stories, ethics, and reason are connected and are essential components of the search for knowledge. "In this alternative epistemology, values are located at the center of the knowledge validation process, so that investigations always point to an ethical objective." (Collins, 2019, p. 160).

Orlando Fals Borda, in the same direction, speaks about the popular educator and the participatory researcher as a *senti-pensante* (sensing/thinking, empathetic) intellectual, that is, "that person who tries to combine the mind with the heart, to guide life along the good path and endure its many obstacles". It, therefore, evokes the possibility of another educator and researcher profile, in direct opposition to the cold and supposedly 'neutral' attitude of the positivist, traditional, and Eurocentric scientist.

Since Participatory Action Research develops in experiential processes, Fals Borda spoke of the alterity construction and of dialogue in the search for knowledge. "When we discover ourselves in other people, we affirm our own personality, our own culture and we harmonize with a vivified cosmos" (Fals Borda and Rahman, 1989, p. 20). On another occasion, Fals Borda (1998) defined altruism as a "Polar Star", endowed with subversive potential in this decomposed contemporary world.

These reflections are able to guide investigative processes anchored in ethics. They also allow us to raise debates about the ethical procedures that we have used in our work and about the current ethics

committees that analyze our projects and those of our advisors. Are we being able to build research based on an ethics of solidarity, committed to communities and careful with people, affections, knowledge, and nature? Or are we just following bureaucratic protocols, created by researchers in tune with the modern science paradigm? How can we cause cracks in these westernized structures that significantly shape ethics committees and procedures?

Another challenge that seems fundamental to us is to take on corporeality in the knowledge production processes. Paulo Freire (1987) talked about the human being as a *conscious body*, whose conscience is intended for the world. He said that human beings, "because they are a 'conscious body', live a dialectical relationship between conditioning and their freedom" (1987, p. 90).

To take on corporeality is also to face the Eurocentric science model, which is intended to be disembodied and without geopolitical location, according to Bernadino-Costa; Maldonado-Torres and Grosfoguel (2019). "The decolonial project takes on the need to assert the body-geopolitics for knowledge production as a strategy to defuse this 'cultural bomb' that Wa Thiong'o talks about" (Kenyan writer) (p. 13).

Maldonado-Torres (2019) talks about the *open body* as a questioning and creative body.

> The open body is a questioning as well as a creative body. Artistic creations are ways of criticism, self-reflection, and proposition of different ways of conceiving and living time, space, subjectivity, and community, among other areas. [...] Decolonial aesthetic performance is, among other things, a ritual that seeks to keep the body open, as a continuous source of questions. At the same time, this open

body is a body prepared to act (Maldonado-Torres, 2019, p. 48).

In addition, according to the author, when the wretched (reference to Frantz Fanon's book *The Wretched of the Earth*) communicates the critical issues that are based on the open body's lived experience, another discourse and another way of thinking emerge. For this reason, writing is for many Black and Colored intellectuals a fundamental event. Writing is a way of rebuilding oneself and a way of combating the effects of ontological separation and metaphysical catastrophe (Maldonado-Torres, 2019).

A decolonial sensitive writing also seems to be a challenge to be taken up in research in education. The academic rigor inherited from positivism taught us to write in an "objective", "disembodied", "cold" way. Patriarchy taught us to write only in the masculine, hiding and subordinating the place of women in intellectual history. Racism drifted from us words that reproduce racial asymmetries. Capitalism imposes a marketing, utilitarian, technical vocabulary on us. It takes courage, *an open body*, a willingness to learn, and daring to be able to build other writings that are more sensitive and inclusive.

Writing is a complex action, as are the other ways of expressing oneself about the world (painting, sculpting, and poetizing) because they are ways of creating, ways of giving meaning to the world – and for those who historically have had this right subtracted, such as subalternized populations (black, indigenous, working class, women), starting to write about their history and the meaning of life is a painful but necessary act of freedom.

The feeling of demand and the lack of response that Anzaldúa reveals when writing, especially for women in the Third World, are far beyond gender. It is

also a historical-cultural feeling. She leads us to reflect when she wonders:

> Who has given us permission to practice the act of writing? Why does writing seem so artificial to me? I do anything to postpone this act: I empty the trash, answer the phone. A voice is recurring in me: Who am I, a poor chicana at the end of the world, to think I could write? How did I dare to become a writer while crouching in the tomato fields, bending under the scorching sun, numb in an animal lethargy by the heat, swollen and callused hands, inadequate to hold the quill? (2000, p.231)

For the author, writing is an act of recreating the world in which we live. It is denouncing that this current system is unable to meet the needs of human lives; writing is also an act of announcing. Writing is an act of alchemy, of creating a soul, of seeking oneself at the center of human existence, of deconstructing the imposed "other". In this construction, the subject who is born is no less fearful, but is a more courageous and determined person to write the following words:

> Because the world I create in writing makes up for what the real world does not give me. In writing, I put order in the world; I put a handle on it so to be able to hold it. I write because life does not appease my appetites and my hunger. I write to record what others erase when I speak, to rewrite the badly written stories about me, about you. To become more intimate with myself and with you. To discover myself, preserve myself, build myself, and achieve autonomy (Anzaldúa, 2000, p.232).

Finally, a challenge that seems to be fundamental is to consider intersectionality as a methodological

perspective of decolonial research. We need to overcome our Cartesian tendency to separate and prioritize categories and processes of oppression. The reality, in this perspective, is like a square with other small squares inside. Each dimension of reality, society, and education fits within a specific grid. When these dimensions communicate, it is in a dichotomous and hierarchical perspective.

This means that in our research we reproduce this Cartesian logic and build isolated, dichotomous categories that, instead of allowing a more complex view of society and education, reduce reality to linear, schematic, and reductionist processes.

In decolonial thinking, there is a heterarchical view of society and the oppression processes. Even when emphasizing, for example, the role of racism in the organization of modern domination relations, it is not intended for racism to explain everything, or to be explained without analyzing other intersecting oppression processes. Let us see Grosfoguel's position (2019, p. 59-60) in this respect:

> In the decolonial perspective, racism organizes modern domination relations, maintaining the existence of each domination hierarchy without reducing one to the other, but at the same time without being able to understand one without the others. The principle of complexity is as follows: one hierarchy of domination as an epiphenomenon cannot be reduced to another that determines it in the 'last resort', but neither can one understand a hierarchy of domination without the others. This principle of complexity is what Aníbal Pinto (1976) called a 'historical-structural heterogeneity', Kyriakos Kontopoulos (1993) called 'heterarchy', and black feminists call 'intersectionality'.

Indeed, for black feminists, such as Collins (2019), the recognition of the intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation seeks to outline an alternative paradigm that may constitute an important part of black feminist epistemology.

The Black Collective Manifesto (1982) was of fundamental importance for constructing other interpretations, since the articulation of other ethnic groups exploited and violated in the process of conquering territories in the global south by Europeans and, later, the United States, shows the differences of gender, women, and culture. These cannot be limited within a theoretical standard of white women and of universal dimension, concealing the differences of all social orders. For the authors Brah (2006), Collins (2019), and Hulko (2009), to name a few, there is a need for articulating different theoretical categories to show that oppression is combined, in other words, intersected/intertwined in the web of complexity that is life.

For the author Audre Lorde (2009), there is no oppression hierarchy, because intolerance, difference, and oppressive violence happen in all shapes, sizes, colors, sexualities, genders, and others. For her, establishing hierarchies of importance in oppressions is to establish a division in the liberation process, which compromises the collective emancipatory horizon. When hierarchizing oppressions, it is as if we were to place an oppressed group against others, that is to say, yet another cynical attack by the dominant system that has competitiveness as its principle.

The growing attacks on lesbians and gay men are just an introduction to the growing attacks on Black people, wherever they are, this country's oppression manifestos in themselves have Black

people as potential victims. And this is the banner of right-wing cynicism, to encourage members of oppressed groups to act against each other, and for so long people have been divided because of our particular identities that we cannot all join together in effective political action. Within the lesbian community, I am Black, and within the Black community, I am a lesbian. Any attack on Black people is a lesbian and gay issue because hundreds of other Black women and I are part of the lesbian community. Any attack on lesbians and gays is a Black issue because hundreds of lesbians and gay men are Black. There are no hierarchies of oppression (Lorde, 2009, p. 02).

When thinking about the non-hierarchy of oppressions, this leads us to understand that they are intersectionalized and interwoven, but that it does not mean, either, an imprisonment. For Davis (2016), intersectionality does not produce a normative straitjacket to monitor, test, and inspect compliance with the normalized standards, trying to maintain an exact and correct line; on the contrary, it promotes academic encouragement, especially feminist, to become critically involved with its own hypotheses, taking into account the interests of a reflective, critical, and responsible feminist investigation.

Conclusion

The reflections shared in this text are intended to be a contribution to the debate on decolonial epistemologies and research methodologies in the field of Education. This field, like the others in the Humanities and Social Sciences, is marked by the historic reproduction of *intellectual colonialism*, as Orlando Fals Borda said, or *coloniality of knowledge*, in the most contemporary

decolonial grammar. In Brazil, as well as in other Latin American countries, we know little about our own thinking path. The colonialities of knowledge and being, always articulated, have been working towards the denial of human existences, therefore, their knowledge; as well as promoting epistemicide and, through it, the human being's ontological dimension as a knowledge builder, is also annihilated.

The decolonial attitude is an explicit refusal of colonialities in their various facets. It mobilizes thoughts and bodies to rise up against oppression. At the intellectual level, it provokes a debate about the need to invest efforts in the originality and creativity of our thought, which also needs to be critical and transformative.

Achille Mbembe (2017) says that we live in a time when history and things are turning to us, and when Europe is no longer the gravitational center of the world. This is the fundamental experience of our time. This is a provocative statement. Even if we may disagree with it, the statement causes us to assume the usurped place of knowledge producer and to attribute legitimacy to what we do, what we propose, and what we think. Usurpation and legitimacy, as Albert Memmi (2007) taught us, are procedures used by the colonizer to discredit and hide the colonized. 'How can usurpation try to pass for legitimacy?' asked Memmi. And he gave the answer: "Two procedures seem possible: to demonstrate the usurper's eminent merits, so eminent that they ask for a reward like this; or to insist on the usurped ones' demerits, so profound that they can only provoke such a misfortune" (p. 90). Consequently, "The usurper's restlessness, his thirst for justification, requires him, at the same time, to lift himself up into the clouds, and to sink the usurped one under the ground" (p. 90).

Then, out of the underground, we go. Better yet, that with the land, the forests, and the waters with which men and women in the Amazon, for example, build their way of life and their insurgent wisdoms, we can unlearn repetition and we can exercise creation.

On this journey, we are going to face many challenges. It is not going to be an easy task to decolonize our thought, daily life, and the world in which we live. However, if we believe that science and education can contribute to overcoming colonialities, then we need to do science in line with the principles that move us.

Unlearning the westernized and colonial/modern way of doing research is going to imply, in our view: a) overcoming the pedagogical coloniality and Eurocentrism present in universities and in traditional knowledge production processes; b) the assumption of a participatory perspective and a political-transformative commitment when facing the investigated social and educational realities; c) an exercise in researching education that dialogues with the subaltern subjects' experiences, their memories, ancestry, and wisdom. It will also imply, among many other challenges, incorporating sensitivity and ethical commitment in investigations, taking on the corporeity of knowledge production processes, producing sensitive and decolonial writing, and considering intersectionality as a methodological perspective of decolonial research.

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EXPERIENCES OF VULNERABILITY IN POVERTY EDUCATION SETTINGS: DEVELOPING REFLEXIVE ETHICAL PRAXIS

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Abstract: In Timor-Leste's education system poverty is widespread and vulnerability is experienced by both students and teachers, entangled in the fragile web of policies and day-to-day challenges. As a teacher and researcher working in high poverty education settings across two contexts in Timor-Leste and Australia, I have been interested in exploring my own situatedness in the policies and discourses that perpetuate and define such realities, as well as how 'vulnerable subjectivities' are enacted, constructed and experienced within poverty education. How can further engagement with poststructural notions of subjectivity and an autoethnographic methodology help develop praxis within poverty education? This paper uses vignettes which describe violence against students to further examine the ideas of vulnerability. In this paper I argue for a greater understanding of praxis for educators and for ethical autoethnography to be explored by more researchers as central to ethical research particularly in education and postcolonial studies.

Keywords: vulnerability, corporal punishment, poverty education, autoethnography, poststructuralism, praxis.

Introduction

In 2015 I began my teaching career as a history and geography teacher in western Sydney. The school is in a part of Australia often referred to in media depictions as "the road to nowhere" or "struggle-street" (Wynhausen, 2006; O'Rourke, Cone, Green, Schist, 2015), referencing the area's low socio-economic status and a variety of social challenges often faced by families and school children. In 2018 I moved to Timor-Leste and began working as an English teacher at a rural Catholic school. I was an English teacher became the Vice-Rector of formation, and a coordinator of a boys' boarding house. Despite being a Catholic school, run by an order of priests, the majority of teachers are paid for by the Government. The school has over fifty staff and six-hundred students from kindergarten to year twelve. I was employed as a volunteer teacher and am paid no more than the local teachers. I ended up in Timor-Leste permanently after first visiting in 2009, I was 16, as a part of a sister-school program. That visit was the catalyst for my career in education yet also formed the site of my own critique as an early-career researcher as I questioned the ethics of sister-school programs and volunteer tourism, including my own journey within it (Blackman, 2017).

I've since felt discomfort towards my work in Timor-Leste however, critique from a poststructural framework should not lead to inaction. There is work to be done in the decolonisation process, which can be achieved through engagement within it. And so I've continued to be implicated within these colonial contexts, at times demonstrating conformity and resistance.

Naming myself a postcolonialist and being an Aboriginal man opens up a paradox between 'I' and the institutions I work in. In my Australian setting I *felt*

more Aboriginal and was able to challenge practices, incorporate Indigenous pedagogies, and support my Aboriginal students. In Timor I *felt* white, as I was there to teach English and support the school's development. That is what was expected of me within a development paradigm by the school leaders and teachers. Suggesting Indigenous ways of learning to my Timorese colleagues didn't align with a quest for modernity and I subsequently put those ideas aside, which through my autoethnographic reflections I've begun to regret. I was in a school in national school system based on a western model of Education. On top of that, it was a Catholic school. Although Catholicism is considered an intrinsic part of the Timorese identity, it has and continues to be a colonising force that detracts from pre-colonial cultural identity. Historically the Church was an international supporter of the Timorese peoples' right to self-determination during the brutal rule of Indonesia, strengthening the hold of Catholicism in Timor-Leste. There are continued tensions between 'I' as a protestant yet 'I' as profoundly aware destructive impact of Christianity on my own peoples and culture.

Trying to make meaning of myself as a teacher and academic, including the aforementioned contradictions of *I,* has emerged as one central focus of my time as an early-career teacher and researcher. I am interested in my relationship with how poverty and vulnerability is experienced by students, teachers, and communities, entangled in the fragile web of policies and day-to-day challenges. How can further engagement with poststructural notions of subjectivity and discourse, and an autoethnographic methodology help develop praxis within sites of poverty education?

This article invites the reader to think about how we can develop research and educational 'praxis' through the lens of untangling how 'vulnerable subjectivities' are enacted, constructed, and

experienced within poverty education. I present a vignette of my time in Timor-Leste and unpack how the discourses in the vignette can be re-mobilised and (de)constructed in a productive way. I'm driven to argue for research and praxis that opens up the already hidden "possibilities for different worlds that might, perhaps, not be so cruel to so many people" (St Pierre and Pillow, 2000, p.8).

Part 1: Theoretical Framing

Language plays a role in constituting worlds, and acting as a discursive practice on bodies. Language isn't the main focus of this discussion, but it is worth noting my entanglement within them. To better become embedded in Timor life, becoming fluent in the local language was an obvious channel to enrich my engagement, life, work, and understanding of culture. The two national languages are Portuguese and Tetun, with Bahasa Indonesian and English defined as working languages in the constitution. It was entirely necessary for me to quickly learn Tetun. This allowed for the forging of better relationships, and an ability to discuss and debate my subjectivities in collaboration with colleagues.

Subjectivity recognises the role discourse and regimes of truth play in the formation and desires of bodies as subjects. A poststructural understanding of subjectivity comes from recognising discourses as "practices which systematically form the objects about which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p.49). Subjectivity is a continuous process whereby we are discursively constituted by that which is around us and we begin to embody particular subjectivities in response to those discourses. Often in education, policies manifest as discursive practices that construct and order bodies, such as those of 'good teachers' or students, or conversely 'bad', are being worked on us whilst we also

try to become those discourses like a 'good teacher'. Discourses work on us while we try to become – or are positioned by others as 'good teachers' or students. A student's perceived willingness to engage in the set curriculum and lessons often positions them in one way or another, such as being an engaged/disengaged learner, the latter making them vulnerable to disciplinary practices. So "discourse comes to appear circular: discursive practices constitute discourse at the same time as being constituted by discourses" (Youdell, 2006, p.35). When we do come to untangle subjectivities and critique them, it is not to transcend them but to massage and better recognise them. In turn, this can also allow for once hidden possibilities of change and difference to emerge.

Students are often described by teachers and policies through identity markers based on race, class, language background, sexuality and so on (Youdell, 2006). These markers are often deficit, structured, and binary rather than understood as flexible, fluid, or changeable. Instead of using these identity markers, vulnerability emerged through my research. Vulnerability could be attached to experiences and social interactions rather than defining bodies with identity markers. Vulnerability provided an opportunity to describe and analyse a moment, encounter, relation or the ways a body is subjugated. This opportunity I began to explore through an autoethnographic methodology. Researching moments through a lens of vulnerability explores not the bodies as fixed individuals but rather the relations and experiences that emerge in the dynamic space of the classroom. As Butler says "vulnerability is not a subjective disposition. Rather it characterises a relation to a field of objects, forces, and possessions that impinges on or affect us in some way" (Butler, 2016, p.25). In this paper, I am observing and analysing a social relation where vulnerability is

relational, fluid, and productive in acting on the bodies of teachers, students, and myself as part of the dynamic field of the classroom.

Vulnerability is used across disciplines, with fixed definitions of it often focusing on characteristics of harm, defenselessness, or weakness. Thus, vulnerability as a discourse attached to groups of people lays a foundation for allowing policies or actions to be implemented to protect these identities (Misztal, 2011). It is understood to be a part of our common humanity and is invariably linked to being at risk, and thus requires the need (from the non-vulnerable) to minimise or protect humanity from that risk. A critical understanding of vulnerability needs to consider power relations, governmentality, and discourses of help and aid that impact on particular subjects in particular contexts and moments. In this reading of vulnerability, it is "a specific label that can be deployed to justify targeted actions towards/against specific groups of people" (Van Loon in Misztal, 2011, p.35).

However, I was drawn to the idea of vulnerability through Butler, Gambetti, and Sabsay's (2016) exploration of the interrelated nature of vulnerability and resistance, where vulnerability is an experience that may form one of the conditions that is needed to demonstrate resistance. In the previous understandings of vulnerability, vulnerability implies a need for the powerful to take on paternalistic forms of power. This includes neocolonial responses through, for example aid, in the Pacific and elsewhere. Butler argues that if we understand vulnerability as a social relation, rather than an identity, then "we make (a) a general claim according to which vulnerability ought to be understood as relational and social and (b) a very specific claim to which it always appears in the context of specific social and historical relations that call to be analysed concretely" (2016, p.16). Page explains that vulnerability "is productive (rather than being positive

or negative): it is doing something and exists in relation to the bodies, communities and contexts in which vulnerability is lived with" (2017, p.282). Butler, et. al. (2016) argues that vulnerability is localised and framed by "micro level details of lives" (p.282). If vulnerability is explored as a context specific social relation, we can move the narrative beyond generalising descriptors of people's lives and bodies, towards analysis of specific experiences, as an ethically aware form of research and praxis.

Praxis can be illustrated as actions and practices of experimentation rather than philosophical speculation. Expanding on the question of what is praxis in education, Kemmis (2012) provides an extensive discussion, from which I take the following key points. Praxis is: history-making action, in the good interest of those involved and of human kind, which is morally committed and tradition informed, with a long-term perspective on the work we educators do. A methodology of autoethnography provides a site then to engage in reflexive and (de)constructive dialogue to influence my praxis for the good interest of those involved (Blackman, 2017).

An integral part of praxis is reflexivity, and this has manifested as an autoethnographic methodology to much of my research and conduct as a teacher. In the interest of "challenging the arrogant assumptions of empowerment and the authority of knowledge" (Parkes, Gore and Elsworth, 2010 p.172), I argue for a deeper understanding and use of critical autoethnography in research, as presented through my later vignette and analysis. Turning the gaze inwards, back on the author, as I witness and am a part of the social interactions I analyse, allows the reader to experience a more robust, embodied, and emotional story. It allows for a more equipped ablity to critique and deconstruct subjects within the research context.

Autoethnography acts as "a self-narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social contexts." (Spry, 2001, p.710). It is not narrative which looks to disclose the truths of an "I", or present lived experiences as true, real and fixed. In my own research and in this piece, I have chosen to use vignettes - evocative, emotional descriptions of moments - which help frame broader research ideas and questions. Evocative autoethnographic writings and analysis can frame and give narrative form to a broader research discussion. Autoethnography entails a process of focusing in on the descriptive detail and then zooming out to apply the analysis to a broader context (Chang, 2008). Autoethnography invites researchers to place personal narrative at the front and center of our thought/research and in doing so destabilising the "I" who is researching the "other".

Part 2: Vignette and discussion

I worked a rural Catholic school on the southern coast of Timor-Leste. The community families are primarily subsidence farmers who grow corn and raise animals. It takes around four hours by motorbike to reach the village from the capital Dili and two hours to the district's 'capital city'. The school population is made up of a majority of students from the village and surrounding area, as well as students from the boys' and girls' boarding houses. When the school was burnt down in 1999 by Indonesian militia, the newly appointed rector created relationships with communities in Australia to support the rebuilding of the school. My school (when I was a student) became involved in 2007.

It's 7:50am, I'm late, and I ride through the front gates of school, remembering then to lower my motorbike stand on a rock so it doesn't fall in the mud again. There are only a handful of motorbikes around, yet a sea of white and blue uniforms as students stroll off to class. Why hurry? There aren't many teachers here yet. Others continue to sweep the concrete and gather leaves from the dirt. I walk to my class, already sweating, and notice some students lined up in the quad waiting to be punished by a young teacher wielding a stick. It's a piece of flexible cane. They were probably late, like me, or aren't wearing the complete school uniform. Their heads are bowed as the line moves slowly, one-by-one, like people solemnly waiting to receive holy communion in Mass. One by one I hear the cane swing through the air, making contact with the back of their legs. Swoosh - Whack! Swoosh - Whack! At least they're not kneeling for the whack on the hands today.

I continue to walk, still sweating, and the library comes into view. DAMN IT! It's locked and I need the textbooks for my year 11 lesson now. Frustrated, I continue to my class, trying to think on-the-spot of what I'm going to teach in the absence of the textbooks.

How does this vignette help understand the ideas I'd like to explore? Questions framed by 'how' "open up and enable us to explore the discourses at play in whatever context we are interested in." (Petersen, 2015, p.68). In this line of thinking, I ask how are the discourses in my vignette created and maintained? How can they be re-mobilised and (de)constructed in a

productive way? How are bodies constructed, constituted and enacted as vulnerable? Running across each of these questions is vulnerability, as a subjectivity and as an expression. The following analysis of the emerging themes, as I see them, is an invitation for the reader to continue to think back to the 'how' questions in order to explore these discourses in other familiar contexts.

Why hurry? There aren't many teachers here.

Teacher lateness and teacher absenteeism are common challenges across schools in Timor-Leste. This is not an individual problem but rather a symptom of the greater illnesses that plague education in Timor-Leste. Teacher professionalism and their absences should be understood as a structural and social phenomenon rather than an individual one. This includes limited teacher training, social discourses about the status of teachers, resourcing, and a lack of opportunities for teachers to express their professionalism together (see Burns, 2017). There are also the day-to day challenges faced by the teaching profession of home responsibilities, travel distances, a lack of support mechanisms and resources, and the cultural flexibility of time or "Timor-time". This new idea of time was initially a site of enormous tension for me, as I didn't understand it and was constantly frustrated by teachers who were always late to school or school being cancelled for a cultural ceremony. I held the same views as "Jane's earlier idea of professionalism had suggested a valorisation of productive time also typical of an industrial, industrious modernity" (2009, p.148). Balancing the need to use the school day effectively whilst respecting flexible definitions of time remains a difficult balancing act. Are there possibilities for Governments and schools to enact policies that massage this tension

between what a western system of education (as has been copied and inserted into Timor-Leste and many less industrialised countries) and local understandings of time? Against this web of issues, including notions of "Timor-time", and the result of poor teacher attendance, students are expected to be on-time and are regularly punished for being late - as many of the students in the story are being physically published for just that: not respecting the 7:45am start time.

The students lined up waiting to be punished by a young teacher wielding a stick.

In this moment we can focus on the bodies, space, and objects. Firstly, I would struggle to get my Australian classes to wait in a line to enter the classroom. To see students passively waiting in a perfect line to be punished, is indicative of how the students are both constructed as vulnerable (victims of corporal punishment) and actively enacting their vulnerability (waiting in an orderly way and without protest). To react with emotional condemnation, which is how I initially did (oh how disgusting!) prevents trying to understand more critically how violence is used in schools and how violence could be (de)constructed in a manner that opens new violence-free possibilities. In this context, and perhaps others, violence is not only an act on vulnerable peoples, but also an expression of vulnerability, in this case an act on students by a teacher who is a body experiencing vulnerability, as I'll elaborate on later.

Could the students resist? What if they didn't line up so willingly? Much like it is possible to imagine (and often see) university students protesting - harnessing vulnerability (their cause) and deliberate exposure to harm (resistance) such as police violence or university sanctions - so too could the school students decide enough is enough and not wait in a line, potentially

exposing them to greater harm. Yet it would be harm that comes from their resistance not their subjectivity as late / or bad. How could the students better be supported, if at all, to resist corporal punishment? There is a broader conversation to be had about how students can and should be supported to question, understand, and resist the subjectivities through which they are constituted by others and the discourses that both dominate and construct their lives.

Next let's turn to the space (quadrangle) and the object (a stick). The students are lined up in the school quadrangle, very public, as others go about their school morning. The teacher is holding a stick, a piece of flexible cane. The space is public, the middle of the school where all classrooms look onto and open up to. It is where students line up every morning to listen to school information, sing the national anthem, and pray. It is also their main area for rest between classes. Yet it is also frequently a site of public discipline. How is the space being used discursively in the sense of establishing norms, expectations and realities? Objects and space play crucial performative work on bodies and in creating norms (Taylor, 2013). The quad is the centre of many schools, a feature of mass education infrastructural design. As a physical space it represents the centre of the schooling institution. And so for students to witness/experience violence within that space normalises violence as a part of the mass schooling institution. Petersen articulates that "institutions, material objects, social behaviours or spatial arrangements, for example, are discursive in the sense that they are entangled in historically and culturally contingent power/knowledge relations" (2015, p.64) and we see that at play in this vignette. The quadrangle is entangled in the historical power relation of mass education and the stick acts, much like the cane previously in Australia and other western

countries, as an implement that aids social order through a clear student/teacher hierarchy of domination and subordination. So perhaps in many ways the space has not allowed for the students to resist, but it is the space, not just the teacher, that demands order and the students to wait for their corporal punishment.

Swoosh, Whack!

The teacher hitting the students is enforcing Ministry of Education and school rules on student attendance and uniforms. The teacher *is* carrying out their professional obligation. Violence as a discipline is quick, at least temporarily *effective*, and most likely their experience when they were once a student under Indonesian colonial rule. In the absence of classroom management training (or a limited amount), corporal punishment presents itself as "the only way" or "what they respond to", phrases often expressed to me. In a UNICEF report commissioned by the Ministry of Education in Timor-Leste and the Commission on the Rights of the Child, 71% of surveyed students reported being victim to violence by a teacher at school in the previous 12 months (Hamilton, Yarrow and Raoof, 2016). This number was as high as 84% in research conducted by a local NGO *Ba Futuru* (Ba Futuru, 2013). Yet violence against students is not solely used as a punishment for breaking the rules. It is an expression of power (and I argue vulnerability) that organises bodies into a social order or hierarchy. Ordered violence, as witnessed in this vignette, is interpreted as having power and control in a very public and arguably brutal way that presents the school-hierarchy as stable and natural, despite its fragility. In other practices, such as a teacher screaming and being violent angrily (a tantrum), demonstrates weakness and lack of control.

In some contexts, if teachers are without an array of teaching and classroom management strategies, strict discipline can become the default way teachers 'do their job' and express their *professionalism* within the school-hierarchy, despite a level of vulnerability in not being confident educators. A teacher who is not prepared to teach might focus their attention on discipline problems - lining up, silence, uniform, hats off - more than one who is prepared to focus on teaching. Discipline applied to issues such as these provides a facade of order and professionalism. It can hide a level of vulnerability, teachers not being confident in their pedagogy or understanding what their roles are. Interpreting the teacher as also vulnerable in this moment signals my desire to open up possibilities for different interpretations. In one reading of the situation, a lack of training as a factor in using violence in contrast to the risk of criminal prosecution for using violence may render the subject as vulnerable in any moment of using violence as discipline. Or is it unreasonable to view a 'lack of confidence' in their craft as rendering them vulnerable? Perhaps their conformity to a system which normalises acts of violence – with emphasise placed on the gap between rhetoric of the state and *cultural* expectations – may demonstrate complacency and subordination within a hegemonic oppressive system. With alleviating student vulnerability still at the forefront, does our gaze need to be broadened towards the conditions of subjectification and the entrapment experienced by teachers as actors within this type of system? How can widening our understanding of vulnerability in poverty education towards teachers as also experiencing vulnerable moments, rather than evoking blame or condemnation, create new conditions for change?

The teacher is a relational body, constructed by policies, cultures, experiences, and entangled in a poorly resourced and fragile system of education. They are upholding/enacting community views that violence is okay as a form of punishment and means of control. Simultaneously, they are rejecting new rhetoric such as "zero tolerance" to violence in schools as first stated in 2008 (Ba Futuru, 2013) and reaffirmed in the Ministry of Education guidelines on technical and teaching and learning methodology resource in 2015 (Hamilton et. al., 2016). There are a number of reasons why there is a slippage between policy and what is happening in practice, namely the lack of alternative behaviour management strategies provided and no general sense that violence is undesirable or socially unacceptable as a form of discipline against children (Hamilton et. al., 2016).

Casually in staff room coffee chats I tried to interrogate with colleagues ideas such as how a breach of some rules, such as students wearing the wrong colour socks, impacts their learning. "How is your punishment linked to their behaviour and how does it help them correct their behaviour?". Questions like this help unpack and separate discourses of schooling, with the strong focus on discipline and order, from education which is the focus on teaching and learning. (De)constructing educating as more important than schooling reduces the emphasis on *problems* such as incorrect uniform and removes the need to use time for punishing rule-breakers. To replace time that otherwise would have been used focusing on these minuscule problems with teaching and learning requires resources, both material and pedagogical, which are still lacking (Shah 2014, Burns 2017).

Back in Australia, for a moment. . .

The school where I first taught was in a western Sydney low socio-economic community. The school had around 400 students from a wide diversity of ethnic backgrounds including a majority of Polynesian and Aboriginal students. I don't want to reduce the lives of my students and their communities by providing a set of government statistics – that would be counter to the type of research I arguments I've made already. In detailing the contextual challenges; crime was high including domestic violence, attendance was a problem for many students, and poverty a reality for many families. Despite this, the community was close, religious, and supportive of one another. My students actively took pride in where they were from, and many recognised the role they had in pushing back against wider Australian perceptions of their suburbs.

> "You know what? I think it's time I ring your mum and discuss how you are stopping yourself and everyone else from learning! You clearly aren't interested in listening to me", I yelled across the classroom at a student.
> "Aw come on sir! Don't be a dog sir! You know I'll get a hiding (beating) sir!", he whined back at me, elongating each 'sir' .
> I thought about his response, very respectful with his repetition of 'sir'. It's probably very likely he will get hit if I ring home, I suppose.
> "Well maybe you should remember that the next time you want to disrupt everyone else's learning and your own. Don't push me again – I will ring your Mum", I smugly remarked as I got ready to return to

teaching the lesson without his disruptions hopefully.

I was a beginning teacher invoking fear by outsourcing violence to a parent as a means of classroom management. A threat to phone home, with the knowledge their parents may use violence as a punishment, highlights within an Australian context the same challenges I've described in relation to my experience in Timor-Leste. In that moment, I was frustrated and looking for a quick *solution* to a student's challenging behaviour. Perhaps if I had more experience behind me it wouldn't have been how I managed situations like this in my earliest years of teaching. Yet, phoning home about behaviour problems is a common practice of teaching in Australia, under the descriptors of quality teaching as it appears to involve parents and families in their child's learning and development.

Back to Timor . . .
The library is locked and I need textbooks!

The Timor-Leste national curriculum (and national exams in years 9 and 12) focus on content rather than skills. A syllabus is available, however in all my time in Timor-Leste I've never seen it. In the Australian context there is a syllabus, curriculum and then textbook / student workbook resources. In Timor-Leste these three items are all rolled into one nationally provided book, which for primary school includes a lesson by lesson guide. And so access to textbooks is essential. The textbooks for grades 10 to 12 have been provided, and this is what is written on each book through the *"Cooperação entre o Ministério da Educação de Timor-Leste, o instituto Português de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento (IPAD), a Fundação Calouste*

Gulbenkian e a Universidade de Aveiro" (Cooperation between the Ministry of Education of Timor-Leste, the Portuguese Institute for Development Support (IPAD), the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the University of Aveiro). Simply; the textbooks have been provided through Portuguese institutions. Their source invites us to question their relevance. The lower year textbooks were written specifically for the Timor context and use a mixture of the two official languages (and language-based subjects like English). The grade 10 to 12 English textbooks were difficult for even me to follow and teach due to being content heavy and culturally irrelevant. There are entire chapters that are Eurocentric and include texts for students to read on ballet, Cinderella, and street performers; all foreign to students in Timor-Leste.

The books being locked away can represent two challenges to teaching and learning in Timorese schools: No resources or not enough resources so the limited supplies are locked away and protected; and a lack of understanding on how to use the resource. The scarcity of resources and schools not knowing when they may receive more, can lead to books being on site but not available for use. We can consider if the source of the texts and their contextual relevance plays a role in determining whether or not teachers access them.

These challenges emerge as constant obstacle for teachers and can relate to my first point about teacher absence and my third point about a focus on discipline. The material reality of no or limited resources feeds a discourse that "we can't teach (well) because we have no access to resources". Shah's research discovered that "many teachers cited practical constraints as a reason for the dissonance between their knowledge of better practices, and what they were able to implement" (Shah, 2014. p.67). When delivering professional learning sessions about pedagogy, many times I was met with comments like "that might work

in Australia, but here we have no resources". This comment even appeared when the activities I presented were pedagogical tools that only require set subject content and a chalkboard. There may be both ideological as well as technical barriers to developing pedagogy. However, "significant alterations to systems of teaching and learning must engage with local values and beliefs" (Brown in Shah, 2014 p.62). Certainly in moments I experienced, teachers expressed some resentment that their values and beliefs have not been a part of curriculum design. The country continues to build an education system that is tugged and pulled in different directions by international actors and donors, trying to have the most influence over shaping the system. (Burns, 2017).

The locked library irritated me because now I needed to think on-the-go about what to do with my class. For me this was a nuisance rather than problem that can't be resolved, just like when the internet doesn't work in Australia. I can have a class discussion, use my daily planner, do some group work, revise previous material and so on. However, if a teacher's pedagogical toolbox consists of translating and copying from the textbook; without it you are exposed and vulnerable. This exposes a link between poverty and vulnerability. The connection is materialized as the emergence of a correlation between limited resourcing (both material and systemic support) and the moments of vulnerability that both actors experience – students and teachers – as poverty remains entrenched. Whereby poverty can be understood not only as material lack but also subordination within a neocolonial culturally irrelevant system of education.

The Vignette and me

Vignettes in research are presented as stories in the hope they create "a space of dialogue, debate, and change" (Holman Jones, 2005, p.764) beyond the forms and conventions of academic writing. They are stories of particular moments situated within specific times and places. They may be reconstructed from notes or journal entries recorded at the time of the experience, memories, and reflections that aim to bring the moment to life in embodied, relational, and emotional detail. In my approved ethics application for my PhD research, I described using autoethnographic vignettes as focusing on micro details with the potential to be expanded into different contexts, resonate with a collective, and in some circumstances influence macro analysis and policy change. Thus, autoethnography must be a "deconstructive textual practice that represents and troubles the self at the same time" (Gannon, 2006, p.477).

The "I" of my vignettes is a body, my body, that is constrained, constructed, and enacted through discourses in spatial entanglements. I am in a Timorese Catholic school, but I am not Timorese or Catholic. I am a Vice-Rector responsible for teacher formation, yet still early in my career. I am an English teacher and native English speaker. I am a foreigner from a developed country, in a less industrialised country to participate in discourses of development. I am an Aboriginal Australian seen simply as a white Australian in Timor-Leste. I am a witness to violence, and a perpetrator of it. I am new and learning, yet constantly asked to advise and lead. This web of subjectivities is presented to provide different framings of "I" in the vignettes.

Emphasis on different subjectivities can provide a different reading of each story. Why did the I as Vice-

Rector not intervene and stop the breach of Government policy on violence against children? How was the I as a foreigner becoming a part of the norm, such as being late to school? What expectations could the other bodies within the moment have had of me? did the students think I would intervene?

I not only witnessed that moment but was a part of it, as much as a foreigner can be. The I was a late teacher without access to resources unfazed in the moment by violence against students and the absence of other teachers. These moments represent relations and experiences rather than individual identities. It is not merely a description of an individual teacher, specific students, an individual school without resources. There is no universality or singularity in the bodies and experiences, rather the vignette is an expression that may resonate with other bodies and actors operating within and against the maelstrom of poverty education. The vignette is inspired by a specific place and time yet, as I argued in my ethics process, undergoes a process of fictionalising and creating composites. It comes from a "fractured and fragmented subject position" (Gannon, 2006, p. 475) and aims to provide "an insight into a singular experience that resonates with some collected tales" (Appleby, 2009. p. 139).

This discussion of the "I" - who is implicated and complicit at the same time as seen to be part of the solution- is needed across research that is situated within similar contexts, such as education, postcolonial studies, and international development studies. I argue there is value added by both extending and troubling understandings of the 'I' in a way that enriches the analysis of praxis. We are a part of our/the realities we research, especially if we work within them not as academics only but as actors embedded in the context of our research, like a teacher (in my experience). The personal becomes incorporated

into research to allow the subjectivities of the researcher to be represented and troubled so that they are not granted, "absolute authority for representing 'the other' of the research" (Gannon, 2006 p. 475). The task becomes an act of researching and writing from positions that are always already compromised and fractured to make subjectivities relational, flexible, and visible.

Conclusion

So what did I do? How did I respond in praxis to the vignette, the violence against students, aside from analysing it in this article? Autoethnography at worst can be narcissistic, rather than productive (Pathak, 2010) and I do not want to fall into that category. Instead of writing a conclusion that summarises the article and tries to tie it up in a neat package, I am going to return to my story - which is not finished nor packaged nicely. It continues to evolve as I now no longer work in either sites, but at a distance from the catholic school. I continue to provide my colleagues there with support in an evolving capacity from Dili, where I now work. Being a volunteer for two years in the remote community impacted my health and caused personal financial debt. I continue to act as a conduit between various donors. Manage some infrastructure projects, provide professional learning and support as a visiting colleague, and maintain a strong connection with the boarding houses and student alumni association.

When I was still working on-site, I set out to work on reducing violence against students by promoting professional learning for teachers in my capacity as Vice-Rector of formation. This position of 'power' was problematic in many respects. Taking on a leadership position as an outsider within a short period of time presented hurdles. More was achieved when I stepped

down from that role, instead taking on a position of support rather than leadership. However, as Vice-Rector and afterwards, we collaboratively developed policies, provided professional learning opportunities run by a Timorese NGO, established classroom observations and group mentoring. Resources were developed (in Tetun) in collaboration with my teaching peers, the NGO *Ba Futuru, and* influenced by government policy. None of the documents or professional learning activities we created called out violence specifically, but rather discuss positive pedagogy, positive discipline, and supporting teachers to manage their workload. Trying to shift the discourse away from anything that may come across as a judgment from an outsider was a conscious decision made in trying to move forward working together with the school community. The Government rhetoric of "Zero Tolerance to violence in schools" doesn't carry with it support for teachers to do things differently and feel empowered in their profession. Nor does it acknowledge the ideological debate needed to advance the belief that violence as a means of punishment is 'bad'. Attempts to change decades of colonial educational practices that are rooted in structural deficiencies won't happen overnight. I of course recognise Catholicism as a colonising force, in many respects, however it has provided a theoretical/theological framework for bringing about an ideological awakening and practical changes. It was through my own critical reflexivity that I turned to thinking of what values/discourses am I not seeing or blind to in my pursuit of reducing violence. I turned to Catholicism. Positive pedagogy and a discipline framework was implemented based on theological pillars of compassion, care, and peace. It is also in a timely way tied to the global focus of the Church on the protection of the child. The intrinsic link between Catholicism and a Timorese identity allowed for the

pursuit of positive teaching practices that come from within an existing belief system; not an imposition of my own. My role became a facilitator between consulting on theology and translating that to how teachers can teach and reorientate their discipline focus to create a positive classroom. This was more effective than influencing policy as a part of the leadership team. My praxis as the practice of experimentation, informed by tradition and morally focused, has long-lasting pedagogical impacts; violence continues to disappear and the void its absence leaves is filled with a moral commitment to the some tenets of Catholicism. Despite the source, they are values of humanity.

It has been in returning to my vignettes that I've been able to critically reflect on my micro context to try and implement changes that are responsive and respectful to the setting. A systematic and structured use of autoethnograhy acted as a source of evolving evidence to constantly engage with my own implicatedness as an actor in a play which isn't mine. I continue to engage with autoethnography because I continue to exist and work within sites that cause me unease; including the ever-present risk that I conform or become non-cognisant to my own implicatedness and subjectivities. Autoethnography does not erase such a risk but opens an avenue to remain critically reflexive of 'I' within the settings in which I work. My emerging engagement with autoethnography continues to allow for transformative praxis in the link between lived and emerging experiences and refinement of my pedagogy and roles within education. Through understanding the social relations we work in/with through an autoethnographic praxis, as well as reflecting on the different way I myself have used a form of violence as classroom management, has allowed me to better understand the issues as structural. It opened up possibilities to have

meaningful conversations with teachers out of solidarity and support, not paternalistic help. I hope through this narrative and discussion, the reader is able to pose similar questions to their own specific contexts and better understand the relations that exist between vulnerable bodies and yourself as an educator or researcher.

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"SECOND-CHANCE" EDUCATION: RE-DEFINING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN GRENADA

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Abstract: With the end of the Grenada Revolution and the subsequent American invasion, the nation's education policies shifted from being conceptualised as a national development strategy "fashioned in our own image", to being a project aiming to strengthen the region's global marketplace participation through the creation of the "ideal Caribbean person/citizen/worker". Recognising the discursive shifts in education and development, this article focuses on how Grenadian youth (16-24) interpret these institutional objectives through their participation in "second-chance" education, or non-formal education. Following Henri Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad, the analysis examines the concept of "second-chance" education as a socially produced space conceived by the state, perceived by organisations, and lived by the students. The article reveals gaps between discourse and practices of youth *in* development, highlighting ways in which youth actively navigate and respond to the socioeconomic and geographic realities involved with "second-chance" education organisations, national growth, and regional integration.

Abstract (Spanish) Con el fin de la Revolución de Granada y la subsiguiente invasión estadounidense, las

políticas nacionales de la educación pasaron de ser conceptualizadas como una estrategia de desarrollo nacional "hecha a nuestra imagen", a ser un proyecto que apunta a fortalecer la participación del mercado global de la región a través de creación de la "persona/ciudadano/trabajador caribeño ideal". Reconociendo los cambios discursivos en la educación y el desarrollo, este artículo se centra en cómo los jóvenes granadinos (16 a 24 años) interpretan estos objetivos institucionales a través de su participación en la educación de "segunda oportunidad", o educación no formal. Siguiendo la tríada espacial de Henri Lefebvre (1991), el análisis reconoce el concepto de educación de "segunda oportunidad" como un espacio producido socialmente, concebido por el estado, percibido por las organizaciones, y vivido por los estudiantes. El artículo revela las brechas entre el discurso y las prácticas de la juventud en el desarrollo, resaltando las formas en que la juventud navega y responde activamente a las realidades socioeconómicas y geográficas relacionadas con las organizaciones educativas de "segunda oportunidad", el crecimiento nacional, y la integración regional.

Introduction

In Grenada, a postcolonial and postrevolutionary state, education policies have transitioned from being a strategy that promoted the goal of equity and national development during the socialist-oriented Revolution (1979-1983), to being a regional cooperative project aimed at stimulating participation in the global marketplace in the years after the American invasion (Hickling-Hudson, 1989; Rose, 2002; Mocombe, 2005; Jules, 2013). Although the Revolution came to an end with the death of Prime Minister

Maurice Bishop and members of his cabinet on October 19, 1983, significant strides were made in the span of "1,681 days" to combat colonial structures, and socioeconomic hierarchies (Jules, 2019).

America's invasion on October 25, 1983 marked not only the nation's development shift, but also the region's path for growth. As a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM),[1] Grenada has adopted regional policy frameworks in national education policies with reference to creating the "Ideal Grenadian Citizen" – that is, "a valued and productive member of national and global society" (Grenada, 2006, 6, 11). This vision is influenced by CARICOM's concept of the "ideal Caribbean person/citizen/worker", which promotes markers of productivity for a competitive regional workforce through a global-oriented framework (Jules, 2014). As the CARICOM document outlines, the "Ideal Caribbean Person" is someone who can demonstrate multiple literacies, critical thinking skills, a positive work ethic, respect for cultural heritage, and creativity and its development in economic and entrepreneurial spheres (CARICOM, 1997).

To deepen the coordination of such skilled workers, CARICOM developed a strategy for the uniform delivery of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and introduced Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQs). This regional certification scheme ensures the ability to demonstrate occupational competency standards and

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[1] The *Treaty of Chaguaramas*, signed in 1973, established the Caribbean Community and Common Market, primarily consisting of English-speaking countries previously under British control. After socialist-oriented development efforts in the region, the *Treaty* was revised in 2001, asserting the shift from a "conservative, inward-looking, protectionist, functionally constrained organisation to an open, liberalised, efficient, internationally competitive, outward-looking and deliberately flexible institution" (CARICOM, 2001; Hall and Chuck-A-Sang, 2007, 3, 117-118).

facilitates the free movement of skilled labour amongst member states (CARICOM, 2003; Newstead, 2009). In 2009, Grenada established the National Training Agency (GNTA) to oversee the local development and delivery of TVET and of CVQs as a "viable entrepreneurial, growth building and honourable alternative in the labour market" (GNTA, 2017, 10). This opening came a year after the World Bank reported that a "lack of skills and education" remained the main obstacles for Grenada's economic competitiveness, adding that education and training systems were "*not* grooming school leavers and the unemployed for the available jobs" (emphasis in original, Blom and Hobbs, 2008, 4, 10).

Against this background, I conducted a study in 2019, also the 40th anniversary of the Revolution, to investigate how these official discourses and targets of education for development are interpreted and experienced by the subjects of policy— youth. My focus was on young people between the ages of 16-24 attending "second-chance" education and training organisations, or the non-formal education sector (NFE). Following Henri Lefebvre's (1991) model on the social production of space, this article presents a sociospatial analysis on the concept of "second-chance" education as conceived by the state, perceived by the organisations, and lived by the students. The complementary perspectives of state representatives and organisation staff were included in the study as their views informed and interacted with the lived practices of youth in non-formal learning. This analysis reconceptualises the meaning of "second-chance" education as a space *for* youth representation. It reveals gaps between institutional discourses of youth development and the diverse experiences of youth *in* development. The findings presented derive from a more extensive study aimed at

having youth in NFE participate in the conversation on Grenada's development (Perez Gonzalez, 2020). Together, the study suggests that young persons are not merely recipients of doctrine but rather responsive agents. Their strategies in pursuit of opportunities reflect not only educational shortcomings and strengths, but also critical development and growth projections.

Background – Education, Formal Schooling and TVET

Grenada consists of three small islands with a combined area of 133 square miles (344 km[2)] and less than 110,000 inhabitants— around 75 percent comprising of African ancestry and nearly 50 percent of the populace under the age of 30 (Grenada Tourism Authority, 2020; National Portal Government of Grenada, n.d). Despite its small size, the country has experienced complex development shifts that make it an interesting and important case study. These transitions include British colonial legacies, a violent dictatorial leadership (1967-1979), the first and only socialist-oriented revolution to come into power in the Anglophone Caribbean (1979-1983), a direct invasion by the U.S. (1983), and a shift towards deepened regionalism and global market participation. Amongst these unique contexts, education remains an important sector that continues to be reshaped for development objectives. Thus, to understand the deeper implications of these shifts, it is pivotal to examine how young people and workers alike relate to the nation's trajectories for growth through their education experiences.

Noting the socioeconomic effects of inherited and inadequate learning systems, the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) pushed for an education sector "fashioned in our own image"; centred on improving community-school relations and increasing domestic

economic independence with relevance to the nation's topography (Bishop, 1982). As De Grauwe (1991) observes, participation and collectivity were significant components of the educational values of the PRG, in contrast to schooling reforms by the New National Party (NNP) (an interim government after the U.S. invasion). Although both governments advocated for re-orienting elements of education to the world of work, they had different approaches, "the PRG stood for a politically relevant education for liberation, built up through participation of students, teachers, and community. The NNP advocated a politically neutral education, characterised by discipline and order" (1991: 351). Chadwick and Albrecht's (1989) study follow some of the direct impacts of these transitions on secondary school students' educational and career aspirations. Their findings showed that the presence of American forces had been considered a setback by students in their education goals, due to dissatisfaction arising from perceptions that the PRG's promises were withdrawn. In effect, many of the Revolution's programmes and reforms were altered or discontinued after the invasion (Mocombe, 2005). Nonetheless, the role of education remained central for the tri-island state's development.

Currently, formal schooling systems face challenges in engaging with students and preparing them for the desired world of work. Although Grenada achieved universal secondary education in 2012, this feat centred on the quantity of students entering secondary school rather than the quality of their preparedness (Knight, 2014). Students with weak literacy and numeracy skills continue to be given passing grades, and consequently, dropout and repetition rates at the secondary level remain a concern (Grenada, 2014; Knight, 2014).

According to the Caribbean Development Bank, the region also exhibits some of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world in comparison to other regional groupings (Cunningham and Correia, 2003). Grenadian youth (aged 15-24) in particular, account for 42 percent of all unemployed persons in the country, with young males facing a higher risk (Trinidad & Tobago, 2007-2008). In response, the government has expanded the implementation of TVET and CVQs to address the transition of young people into the labour market. In 2013, the government launched the New IMANI Programme to tackle youth unemployment by offering financial assistance and job training to young persons between the ages of 18-35 through GNTA-approved facilities (Lewis, 2010). However, the Programme faces scrutiny due to the continuation of stipends despite youth participants not attending placements, and in some cases, stipends exceeding pay of full-time employees, which has prompted resentment and a view of encouraging dependence on government handouts (Cunningham and Correia, 2015). In the 2017-2018 school year, the state also equipped five secondary schools to provide CVQs, but only one of these registered enough students to implement the programme. Of these, only 11 received a level 1 certification for general construction (GNTA, 2018).

Amongst ongoing efforts to reconcile shortages of skilled labour with high unemployment levels and the demands of a changing economy, the GNTA continues working to strengthen training institutions' capacity to deliver certified training. In 2011, the Agency began to issue CVQs, and by 2018, 3,976 persons received accreditation (GNTA, 2016; GNTA, 2018). Nonetheless, compounding issues have made the appeal and implementation of TVET a challenge due to social stigmas

and gendered divisions of labour that hinder interest in technical training. For instance, in 2018, 78 percent of those that received certification were females against 22 percent males. As the GNTA notes, a key issue is attracting and retaining males to complete their CVQ training (GNTA 2018).

The contrast between development discourses and practices of education in Grenada raise critical questions on what the role of education should be. Concerns surround the increasing demand for skilled workers in the face of high youth unemployment, the relevance of an academically-streamed curricula in an economy that is increasingly service-based and agricultural, and, as scholars point out, the continuing implications of systemic inequities in education that are overlooked by a narrowing focus of transitioning youth into the labour market (Bailey and Charles, 2010; Lewis, 2010). In effect, reform efforts have done very little to re-think the function of education across the region (Louisy, 2001; Jules, 2008; Hickling-Hudson, 2004; 2015). Nevertheless, the engagement of youth in the processes of learning, whether formal or non-formal, remains an area that requires further inquiry. This article, therefore, draws attention to the important role that spatial representations play in producing and accessing a NFE space. And more importantly, the ways in which students identify and respond to these complex contexts through their active participation in non-formal learning.

Conceptual Framework and Aims: Situating "Second-Chance" Education

Scholars have acknowledged that structural differences play a significant role in students' opportunities to enlarge their capabilities, especially those that go beyond schooling standards (Robeyns, 2016). There are organisational

differences between formal schooling and non-formal education: the former a hierarchical, chronologically graded system, and the latter a programmatic approach to education (Brennan, 1997; La-Belle, 1981; 1982). Notably, as NFE spaces are more voluntary and encouraging of new learning approaches, they not only focus on the completion of academic subjects or acquisition of skills, but also on how youth come to see themselves in and around the experiences of transitioning into adulthood (Romi and Schmida, 2009; Polidano et al., 2015). That being said, "second-chance" education has become a prime example of NFE, principally because it recognises how learning opportunities are structured and accessed differently for different groups of youth (McFadden, 1996; Munns and McFadden, 2000; Ross and Gray, 2005).

However, the increasing focus of NFE on implementing TVET programmes draws notable concerns, particularly in small island states where great dependence is maintained on external actors. Despite government efforts to simultaneously confront education matters and issues of youth unemployment through TVET, the supply and demand side of labour invariably remains sensitive to foreign market interests (Lewis and Lewis, 1985; Watson, 1994). Moreover, emphasis on educational progress measured through global benchmarks of growth neglects contextual specificities of states, and the possibility of unemployment rising amongst youth due to imposed foreign policies, rather than only domestic outcomes (Sehnbruch et al., 2015). In the Caribbean, for instance, increasing requirements for linkages of education with the global world of work are inconsistent with historical mechanism for growth. Until recently, an "unlimited supply of labour" was historically the economic driver in the region, with limited and unequal linkages between

education and the productive sector (Maloney, 2006). The shift to increase these relations on an international scale accentuates the prevalence of neocolonial terms and standards that continue to legitimise selected forms of knowledge for growth (Louisy, 2004). Consequently, these attributes contribute towards the disconnected reception of TVET in the region, as vocational training is often viewed to be inconsistent with opportunities for upward mobility in society due to "status-effect" notions and stigmas entrenched by colonially inherited academic education systems (Foster, 1965; Selveratman, 1988). These sentiments endure through memories of enslavement that have rooted an "aversion to and contempt for manual labour", and subsequently affect the consideration of and legitimacy for TVET in education sectors (Williams, 1951, 35; Lillis and Hogan, 1983).

Although the views mentioned acknowledge the various tensions between education (in)formalities and sustainable paths for development, the literature is inadequate in examining the ranges and the diverse experiences, challenges, and interests of youth. It generally fails to see them as the focus of education discourse, and in particular, fails to explore their understanding of and interest in NFE spaces. As youth strategies for development increasingly involve movement in pursuit of opportunities, the manner in which young people are defined and define themselves varies greatly through time and space (Jeffrey and Dyson, 2008). Thereby, youth development necessitates acknowledging youth *in* development, including their interactions with resources that are available to them in addition to those they seek.

My study aimed to engage with students between the ages of 16-24 to examine how they respond and relate to the country's strategies for growth through their

participation in "second-chance" education organisations. However, focusing on youths' lived experiences necessitates contextualising the sociospatial bounds and access to NFE. Thus, the relationships between educational discourse, organisation objectives, and student experiences were conceptualised using Henri Lefebvre's (1991) model on the social production of space that encompasses two aspects of social space and the practices that mediate, and are mediated by, the social spaces (33, 38-39, 52; McCann, 1999, 172-173). The triad includes:

(i) *Representation of space* (conceived space): conceived spaces are constructed through discourse, or bureaucratised space. This form of space-making remains abstract and homogenous as it is visualised and produced through the role of planners and social engineers rather than directly lived. However, while it emphasises homogeneity, it also exists by accentuating difference.

(ii) *Representational space* (perceived space): perceptions of space are acknowledged through associated images and experiences that in effect help produce a meaning of space.

(iii) *Spatial practices* (lived space): lived spaces embody a close association between daily and urban reality. It is the everyday routines and experiences that are mediated between the two social spaces created, such that it is practiced within the bounds of conceived abstract spaces, while being shaped by perceptions of used space.

On deepening an understanding of the sociospatial process of NFE, my study showed how "second-chance"

education was formed and informed by different relations to abstract and material spaces, and to the symbolic pedagogical structures that NFE represents. This was attained through the conceived perspectives of state representatives from the Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Youth, Sports, Culture and the Arts (MOYSCA), the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD), and the GNTA; the perceived role of the organisations as outlined by the staff of the Grand Anse Social Development Centre (GASDC), the Programme for Adolescent Mothers (PAM), and the New Life Organisation (NEWLO); and the lived practices of students attending these "second-chance" education and training organisations. Through spatial analysis, this article breaks down the social construction of NFE in relation to the development landscape imagined and lived for the function of diverse ideals, ultimately redefining the role of youth *in* development. As Gulson (2001) emphasises, there is a need to convey where schooling takes place and how education itself relates to and makes space, allowing for a more engaged understanding of discourses in practice.

With this background, the article will first provide a brief overview of the NFE organisations examined followed by an outline of the methods employed in the study. Second, the spatial analysis of "second-chance" education will follow, presenting the state's conceptions, the organisations' perceptions, and the lived practices of youth as they navigate social and material NFE spaces. Lastly, by examining the social construction of "second-chance" education, the discussion notes the deeper complexities at play within educational shortcomings and realities. The article unpacks not only discursive gaps in the concept of education for development, but also how youth actively re-

define themselves in a globalised and changing world in pursuit of opportunities.

Identifying "Second-Chance" Education: The Organisations

My study focused specifically on three organisations that were recurringly identified by community members as offering youth a "second-chance" at education. Although these spaces share similar approaches, they also have key differences. An overview of each is provided below.

The Grand Anse Social Development Centre

GASDC opened in 1999 catering to young female students between the ages of 14-18. The organisation supports students who are not performing well in the formal sector, but are interested in learning a skill (GASDC, 2019). Students are encouraged to work at their own pace and to achieve their potential through the training opportunities that develop leadership values and social skills. Training offered includes food and nutrition, hairdressing, clothing and textile, and computer literacy, in addition to academic courses in preparation for the Caribbean Examination Council's (CXC's) final exams in subjects under the MOE curriculum. The GASDC has been working towards becoming a CVQ approved centre, with a GNTA audit held in 2016 (GNTA, 2016). At the time of study, 27 students were enrolled.

The Programme for Adolescent Mothers

PAM began operating in 1994 with a focus on empowering teenage mothers and pregnant adolescents up to age of 19. The organisation provides counselling and continuing education support through an integrated approach of MOE subjects in preparation for CXC's and skills training, such

as textile and clothing, food and nutrition, and health and family life courses amongst others (PAM, 2018). Although the Education Act does not prohibit young mothers from returning to school, there are stigmas that discourage adolescent mothers from continuing or returning to their formal studies. Thus, PAM provides the option for students to complete their secondary education with free nursery care. PAM underwent an audit in 2017 by the GNTA and is working towards becoming an CVQ certified centre (GNTA, 2017). At the time of study, 28 students were enrolled.

The New Life Organisation
NEWLO was founded in 1984 to support youth from vulnerable backgrounds who shared an interest in TVET—most prominently youth who dropped out or who were discouraged by their inability to keep pace with formal academic structures (NEWLO, 2020). The organisation provides a learning space for both male and female youth between the ages of 17-24. Its structure is also unique to Grenada, as it first requires students take part in an Adolescent Development Programme (ADP) to develop general competencies in numeracy and literacy, as well as life skills that emphasise personal development. There are ten programmes offered, including hospitality arts, plumbing, general construction, cosmetology, and garment construction (NEWLO, 2020). The in-class training is supplemented with internships and job training. NEWLO is certified with the GNTA and offers CVQs. At the time of study, around 210 trainees were registered.

Methods
During three months of fieldwork in Grenada, attention was placed on the meaning given to "second chance" education based on experiences by the participants. In

total, 21 interviews were held with all groups, which allowed individuals to express in-depth interpretations (Seidman, 2006). Two focus groups were also conducted; however, these were kept solely for youth participants as the approach provided an opportunity to engage with students in a manner that facilitated sharing and analysing individual and group outlooks (Chioncel et al., 2003). The research questions posed in both methods were initially informed by regional and national educational discourses and literature on NFE, however through field observations these were continuously adapted and revised based on contextual specificities. Recognising that I was an outsider to the Grenadian environment, I often reflected on my position and used it to establish certainty in relation to whose search was more "valid" but also "less intrusive" (Crick, 1989; Merriam et al., 2001; Cross, 2006). This was especially the case when speaking with different participants on sensitive topics like memories of the Revolution, and on personal learning experiences. On this matter, consistent emphasis was placed on confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the importance of comfort.

There are two limitations to the study. First, youth voices are not represented equally. There was a disproportionate representation of female participants, particularly youth, since NEWLO is the only space for young males. Recognising this, I inquired on the reality of this discrepancy with staff and government participants and would suggest that this is a point for further study. Second, the research did not include youth from sister-isles Carriacou or Petite Martinique, as the study took place on the mainland. I realise that this did impact my efforts to emphasise Grenadian youth voices, but I would also encourage this as an opportunity for further research.

Producing "Second-chance" Education Spaces

In studying the meaning and practices surrounding "second-chance" education, it became apparent that interpretations varied amongst respondent groups based on their perception, relation to, and participation with NFE. This section presents findings on the social construction of "second-chance" education as analysed through Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad. First, government conceptions and representations of "second-chance" education are examined. Second, the representational space of "second-chance" education as perceived by organisation staff. And finally, the spatial practices and mediated experiences of youth in "second-chance" learning are analysed. Altogether, these views were complemented by the spatiality of youth bodies as expressed with how they use, occupy, and relate to social and material spaces of NFE in and outside of Grenada.

Conceiving of "Second-chances": A State Perspective

When conceiving of "second-chance" education, state representatives conveyed their understanding in relation to mainstream youth development discourses, noting that "second-chance" education spaces were (1) for youth who were falling back, (2) for youth of age who were unemployed and unemployable, (3) and as a space where youth could be functionally integrated and categorically conceptualised into socio-legal and economic contexts.

In conversing with participant 1(G), there was initial awareness to some of the challenges youth face in formal schooling. Principally, a mastering of literacy and numeracy skills, the challenges of implementing TVET in secondary schools, and the subsequent role of "second-chance" education within these learning imbalances,

"There is a comfort zone of teaching to the average learner, but the average learner happens to be an underperformer […] We tried introducing CVQs in 5 pilot schools in 2017, and even the teachers themselves, they perceive [the curriculum] to be overloaded and too many subjects […] and if the children are weak, again they need more time. So, for that reason the introduction of CVQs was on top of 32 subjects already, and there was this turn between having students who wanted to do CVQs and having those core subjects. Although the buzzword is TVET, only 7 students were able to complete the programme in 2 years […] And when you ask why, they say parents didn't want their children to be there because skills are deemed to be that of children who can't make it with academics. So, it's a paradigm, a shift that has to take place, it's a big cultural shift that is required."

The meaning of "second-chance" education followed,

"…given how things are happening for students in their basic education, who doesn't deserve a second-chance? Because in a lot of the cases, the students will have fallen through the crack through no fault of their own […] there will be many success stories coming out of second-chance activities in Grenada. Yes, persons who were thought to be dunce have blossomed into highly skilled professionals coming out of second-chance initiatives […] we do need second-chance institutions for students who

don't get a second-chance while they are in the basic education program"

On this view, "second-chance" education was perceived as supplementary to the general function and limitations of education. However, it was expressed as a separate space guided by different efforts for a differentiated imagining of young persons, or those "thought to be dunce". This view was also informed by unsuccessful implementation and generational conceptions of NFE. In this way, "second-chance" education was mapped as a space that redresses structural and individual learning challenges.

Official 2(G), expanded on the importance of "second-chance" training in the context of economic growth, arguing that current education systems were "not fit for purpose",

> "A country will always have issues if the policies that guide education is not fit for purpose […] the education system is training people on the more white-tie positions when there is growing demand for skill-based personnel. So, you always going to be importing people to fill big positions within your country when the education curriculum is actually not fitting what we are looking for."

Their understanding of "second-chance" education was linked back to the new IMANI Programme and goals of the government initiative to address youth unemployment,

"Well, it can go both ways, it can go as a second-chance initiative, and also as a first-chance initiative because we do have a lot of people in the [IMANI] programme who are highly qualified but are looking for a job, or for the experience. So, in that case they are not looking for a second-chance, they are looking for a first-chance because they would've never worked before […] the second-chance programmes that we do are based on skills and TVET. So, what they would've missed out from high schools, they actually get it from the programmes we are implementing"

Respectively, the relations between skills as curriculum, labour market as opportunity, and government-led efforts as providing "second-chance" training for youth conveyed an abstract understanding to how youth ought to be organised within education settings and society, wherein employability was regarded as key. As such, a discursively constructed space relating to a cohesive form of society was suggested through an improvement of youth skills that can address unemployment and unemployability.

There were also categorical considerations to take into account in evaluating the institutional construction and access to "second-chance" education spaces. While speaking with these officials, gendered and age-appropriate approaches were used to rationalise the socioeconomic purpose of "second-chance" education and the distinction of youth bodies that occupy these spaces. For participant 1(G), the idea of access was framed around the role of the organisations and the socio-legal contexts of the state, noting although legally age remains the only limitation to completing formal education, "the

system is not really receptive to adolescent mothers returning to the secondary schools", thus PAM was the only alternative for young mothers,

> "Persons have been advocating for a return of pregnant students because the fathers in most cases are in the schools and they continue, but the girls can't because of our religious heritage […] some of them who really struggle, they can also go to [GASDC], or NEWLO [but] NEWLO only takes them at 16 and sometimes you have them dropping out at 14, so they basically become street children because they must be of age to get into NEWLO"

Participant 2(G) relatedly recognised that although the new IMANI Programme aimed to ameliorate gender parity in "second-chance" training, it remains geared towards persons between the ages of 18-35, given that "under 18 years it means we cannot pay them, or we cannot give them a stipend […] based on the laws". It was also indicated that NEWLO was the only "second-chance" learning space in Grenada for male youth under 18, given that those below 16 were legally under the MOE, and thus "truancy officers" were to play a critical role in encouraging the return to school.

Similarly, participant 3(G) suggested that young males were more socially accepted into the formal/informal labour market without necessitating a certified form of education, which seemed to be reasoned as to why they were not offered a "second-chance" space in the same way as young female students. However, the respondent noted that these gendered relations were now presenting barriers for youth in their pursuit of education

and self-development interests, consequently lending itself as reasons youth continue to drop out.

Perceiving "Second-chances": An Organisation Perspective

The produced meaning of "second-chance" education through the perspectives of organisation staff brings forth associated images of the education sector and the social experiences of students. This was evidenced by a shared perception that youth had been "failed" by formal systems limited to meeting specific academic benchmarks, rather than acknowledging and encouraging the different potential and abilities of students. By recognising the differing life stages and challenges students face in and outside school systems, staff perceived "second-chance" education as a space that symbolised and offered a foundational opportunity for youth to participate in their learning while enhancing self-development. Notwithstanding, the term "second-chance" became relative in some respects, as some considered it in relation to the opportunity for youth to "continue", while others used it in view of "starting over" in their education.

Since both GASDC and PAM follow an MOE curriculum for their academic subjects, teaching participants suggested that these sites provided students with the opportunity to "continue" their education, especially as it was a "chance" that was not offered in the formal system. With PAM specifically, the opportunity given to young mothers was perceived to encompass more than academic standards, as it was also an encouraging and supportive space, materially and through the curriculum, cognisant of not only the importance of education, but also the socioeconomic challenges adolescent mothers face.

Similarly, teaching staff from GASDC referred to "second-chance" education as an opportunity for young girls to continue and enhance their learning through an approach that catered to individual social development. This included academic and vocational skills but was understood to be a place for students who were academically "left behind" by the formal school system. However, respondent 1(A) questioned the unequal gendered obstacles to access "second-chance" learning,

> "I see what they have here as a second-chance because if they did not come here there is no way they can fit into the regular secondary school program […] They would definitely be left behind or just be wasting the money. As some people would say, they go up and they go out. They just pass them through and give them some subjects to write, knowing that they are not capable […] I am not so certain what happens to the male students, because [GASDC] only caters to girls, so I always wonder what is happening to the male student who would not have passed the secondary school exams […] that boy who might have been left behind in his reading, in his mathematical ability, in his literacy, what happens to him?"

Conceding to the challenges youth face in formal schooling, teaching staff in these two organisations perceived "second-chance" education as a site that incorporated and provided a more wholesome and practical learning opportunity for female students in relation to their realities, and the spaces of school and education. Markedly, for the three organisations, gender and age stood

synonymous with "second-chance" education access, especially as they were both determining factors to length of stay and opportunity to enrol.

The idea of "starting over" was more so used to describe "second-chance" education and training at NEWLO. However, this was understood to be because NEWLO follows its own ADP stages and CVQ standards. The suggestion of "starting over" referred to the opportunity given to male and female trainees for a new beginning, and for respondent 1(C), "the chance to feel important":

> "The second-chance education means giving people a chance, really that's what it means because if you think about it, most youth in the adolescent age [...] they going through different phases, personal things, their own moods and all of that [...] that is why we call it New Life Organisation [...] that's why we start with the life skills. We give you a chance to start over [...] So, some people need 10 chances, some people need 5, some people need 1, some people don't need. So, the word there is relative and of course it's also the youth could feel like okay, if I didn't do well this time, I also have NEWLO where I have another opportunity to do something with myself."

The self-empowerment, life skills and training offered in NEWLO were also viewed in relation to applicability, particularly in terms of employment opportunities. Participant 1(C) alluded to Grenada's weakened education system, a small population, constant rate of migration, and low turnover in employment sectors that were deemed to present challenges for youth to find stable and formal

employment. In recognising this constraint, the participant referred to responsibilities of the state,

> "Government needs to have foresight in terms of seeing how can we engage our young people, what can we do to create employment for them. So, it's not like we had during the Revolution; we had a lot of industry, a lot of agro-processing, they had the slogan "Grow what you eat and eat what you grow", so they did less importing. Government could do less importing to create employment […] with importation there's less room for farmers to produce on a mass amount. Grenada didn't import all these things; we canned our own fruits. So, there's a lot of things that they did before […] so we were there already, you know? But with the invasion of the U.S. coming in and all of that, some of the things been stolen and destroyed, some of these machines that was provided by Cuba and Russia and so on, you know? And we like back to square one. So, I think government needs to bite the bullet and say "look, we cutting back on our food imports bill and we're going to do this and do that", and engage the youth, creating things for them, so you can keep money in the economy and things could start rolling. It's going to be small but it's gotta start somewhere."

With reference to the Revolution, the respondent noted the pivoting points in the prospects of youth development and national growth. Markedly, "back to square one" reflected the regression to dependence on external actors and interests in Grenada, and the shift from a progressive

sense of self-sufficient and collective development, to individualist growth. That being said, for this participant, NEWLO offered youth an opportunity to re-shape their lives and actively learn while improving personal development. In effect, it was about "good brain washing".

For administrative staff of the organisations, there was a similar view to the notion of "second-chance" education as an opportunity for youth to learn something that was not previously offered. However, this was more so expressed by linking it back to community engagement, development, and the mission of the organisation. As respondent 2(C) explained,

> "Second-chance programmes within Grenada, [are] an avenue to help our young people redefine and rediscover their potential. Right, because they have it, that's why I use the word 're-define' and 're-discover'. It's there, just that in the course of their education, certain things didn't go well, and so they were not able to achieve whatever it is that they were supposed to achieve. But, the importance of second-chance programmes in Grenada cannot be overemphasised because as a small country— a population of about 110,000— every year we admit 210, between 210-240 young people who go through the programme. I mean, not all of them didn't finish secondary school, but a majority of them don't finish"

This respondent seemed to acknowledge the social responsibility of the nation and communities when it comes to the experiences of youth and their education systems, as referenced with the size and population of

Grenada and the intake of students. With this notion, "second-chance" education was perceived as a space that encourages youth to be active participants in the opportunities available, and to be ready for those they aspire, such that the goals of the organisations define boundaries of learning and lived spaces in ways that interact with youth.

Both teaching and administrative staff identified areas of concern within the formal education sector and national development, and likewise perceived "second-chance" spaces as offering an opportunity to address relevant and contextual concerns. To some extent, the organisations have become something more than a "second-chance", as these have become spaces that youth increasingly rely upon for relevant education, training, and self-development. That being said, organisation staff did not recognise a "second-chance" space in Grenada for boys below the age of 17 that offered those same opportunities.

Living "Second-chances": Student Experiences
In conversation with youth, "opportunity" became almost synonymous to their interpretations of and mediations in "second-chance" education spaces. However, their expression of opportunity differed in connection to their practices of learning. It is these differences that help inform the spatial practices of youth, and how they navigate conceived and perceived relations of space. For the purposes of this section, the mediations identified by youth are noted as (1) an opportunity in reference; (2) an opportunity to participate; and (3) an opportunity for spatial interactions.

In the interviews, participants expressed "second-chance" education as an opportunity in reference to their formal school experiences, and their perception of post-

secondary education to explain their understanding of pursuing and rationalising the "second-chance" education space.

Participant 6(D) expressed her interest and choice to join the organisation, referring to "second-chance" education as an opportunity implicit within the perceived space, and separate from previous schooling and education spaces and experiences:

> "People say NEWLO is better than [T.A. Marryshow Community College], in my point of view. In high school, we are learning about values, subjects […] Here, it's skills and abilities. If I don't finish school, NEWLO gives second-chance to prove ability and see strengths you may not get in high school"

Participant 4(D) also indicated his interest and choice to continue his studies in the organisation:

> "NEWLO gives chance to make best out of your time […] to build your skills. Not many colleges offer things NEWLO offers. To me, [it's] one of the best for students, doesn't only teach theory, but practical and experience at the end of the year. You get CVQ and get out in the world; they try to find work for you. I did consider to go to college, but then when I really sit and think about it NEWLO is much cheaper than college, and it offers one of the most greatest opportunities for teenagers, a second chance in life. It means a lot, because then I have new opportunity to get what I missed off in high school. To me it really means a lot."

Although the participants may have completed different levels of formal education, they both shared in the sentiment of gaining a new opportunity that was not available to them, or that they had not experienced. In this way, interpretation and assessment of "second-chance" education was influenced by lived experiences and the perceived benefits set out by organisation approaches (i.e. improving self-esteem, skills curriculum, financial). Notably, these were framed in relation to their critique of the unsatisfactory purposes conceived of formal education structures.

Second, the opportunity to participate was framed around the concept of engagement cited by youth in their responses. This included the opportunity to actively insert themselves in the processes of learning as informed by their ideas, outlooks, and aspirations. Thus, they relayed how "second chance" education, as a symbolic and pedagogical space, was used and lived.

Participant 2(B) expressed her education trajectory, bringing to light some of the direct impacts of the academic-streamed curriculum and a personal sense of loss that has been overlooked by the general conception of "youth who fall back". She shared some of her own passions for learning and continuing her education,

> "My dream goal was to be a veterinarian [...] you needed biology, chemistry, all these big stuff you know? I was on board at a point in time, but then when things get really hard and you start falling back, and then you really didn't have the motivation to continue. So that was a big disadvantage and you know, it makes you very disturbed, mentally and physically. You don't

see yourself succeeding in any of the courses in that area, so yeah, that was the biggest problem I had […] But, if you have a goal, a dream, that you would like to follow on, and you fall short on that, you could actually pick it up afterwards. That is what I am trying to do with me right now. Because you see, if you have a passion, you're going to do to your best abilities […] I'm good at writing, I'm good at reading, but I really have to focus where I can see a window, and right now my window is basically hairdressing, what I don't like, and food and nutrition, so yeah, that's where I am, stuck."

Her meaning of "second-chance" education followed,

"Second-chance education is basically when you have a second-chance you should grab it, and you should not spoil it because the thing about it is, at least, there's many people out there who are willing to have a second-chance in life, and they don't have it, and you know, if you are lucky enough to get a second-chance I will say go for it. Don't spoil it, I mean, make a difference."

In noting that the methods of teaching in formal school were not suitable for her, she indicated that her opportunities lied in the "windows" that were open through "second-chance" education spaces, despite feeling "stuck". Although formal schooling structures had impacted her initial goals, it was her perseverance and having access to a "second-chance" at learning that remained in her outlook of possibilities. Nevertheless, education was central to her

visions of development, understood as an opportunity for self-realisation and participation to make a difference.

While speaking with student 5(D), he mentioned that he had recently moved to Grenada from another Caribbean nation. Although he did not attend high school in Grenada, he did share on some of his interests in pursuing NFE, particularly as it was the reason he moved:

> "They say NEWLO gives you a skill, high school gives you life knowledge, I believe. And me, when I was going to high school I used to go through a lot in life, you know, so my high school experience was more…hmm…more gangster…respect have to be given […] I reached to form four with the same kind of behaviour. I was going to form 5, but that was under a conditional pass […] certain things happen, and I got kicked out of secondary school […] Right now, you know, I'm looking at life differently, and I see something I can really work with to enhance my life, you know? Plumbing. Plumbing is unbelievably great, feel like a plumber already, you know? Feel professional already. I can use it to start my foundation in life, back it up with my electrical later on"

While considering their daily realities and the experiences of their surroundings, both students defined their sense of self with, in, and outside of the "second-chance" education as a pedagogical boundary and a representational space in their lifepaths. For both students, "second-chance" education was understood as a venue for an involved process of individual learning and growth, whether through windows of opportunity or working toward enhancing their

life. This sense of "second-chance" was practiced through visions of the opportunity to follow one's passions. And more importantly, it was about having a space that enabled the opportunity to actively do so.

Finally, spatial interactions as an opportunity are centred on understanding youth perceptions of "second-chance" education through a consideration of how they use space, how they relate to it, and how they plan to occupy it. In effect, mediating and "deciphering" "second-chance" education as part of their own social space (Lefebvre, 1991, 38). Although their relations with the organisation would have shaped their understanding, the responses to the meaning of "second-chance" education were relayed through personal sentiments continuously shaped by spatial practices.

For student 5(D) this came across when speaking about how his "second-chance" education experience continued to shape his sense of self and life experiences,

> "Second-chance education is like, wonderful, I wouldn't burn it down or say bad about it, it's a wonderful opportunity for people, for society, for everywhere, you know? So that people can actually make the best of themselves instead of living under that universe that they can't do anything because they don't have anything. There's another chance [...] I gotta wait till next year to get my certificate, so yeah, I want to know where the hell will I get a job. People don't believe you until you show them some proof these days, but it is what it is. I don't mind [working in Grenada] but, [I'm] trying to work something out to get like a work visa to America

[…] life is all about making it and helping people making it"

The use of "second-chance" education as a social space comes as an opportunity to engage with society, to exercise movement, and to occupy broader spaces through the skills and confidence acquired.

Similarly, participant 1(B) referenced "second-chance" education as an opportunity implicit through the forms and processes of learning informed by past, present, and future convictions of schooling, employment, and movement. Based on her observations, she noted differences of "second-chance" education through her interaction with organisation activities and personal experiences:

"You get the opportunity to do things, like we never do in the other schools before… I like when we doin' dancing, swimming […] we learn more skills and things like that […] I understand that nothing in life come easy, like things hard, you have to work to get where you want […] I don't want to stay home after graduation, like after I graduate I don't want to just sit at home and do nothing. I want to be active; I have skills I could do here and… I just want to make more money…I just don't want to stay home […] I don't want to work in Grenada. Here is too hard, too like rough. Like, I don't know, people in Grenada can't have money…well I'm trying to do my visa, my mother help me so I can go and meet my auntie in Canada."

Together, for these students, the spatial relationships involved in "second-chance" education included using their

skills both as "proof" and to be "active" in their communities, as well as broadening their abilities and considering opportunities outside of the organisations, the country, and the region. In this way, they were cognisant "users" of the conceived structures for productivity outlined by regional and national economic discourse, and also of the perceived images of NFE shaped by what opportunities their training offers. However, "second-chance" education was not only grounded on a skill or set within a classroom setting, rather, it was embraced as a social space that offered the opportunity to re-define individual strengths, abilities, and outlooks that ultimately placed them as producers for and agents of their own spaces.

Discussion

Discourses on education and development lose meaning when students do not feel a part of society, or believe they can fully participate (Jeffrey and Dyson, 2008; Ansell, 2017). This sense of disengagement was evident in the ways in which education stakeholders argued that schooling systems were unfit, and whereby youth expressed their criticism of imported learning structures, notably feeling "stuck". As observed, the current system remains rooted in (neo)colonial structures and functions that are not conducive to the experiences or resources students are seeking. This was apparent through student accounts of ill-equipped formal learning structures, which did not meet their aspirations to be active in society, and it explains their increasing interest in NFE. With an emphasis on education for economic growth and employment, youth are also after opportunities and strategies to engage in the labour market, and it is technical skills and NFE that present a more viable and affordable option. The colonial imagining that remains in

Caribbean schooling has embedded a criterion for success based on approaching a distant ideal (James, 1969). And this remains true in Grenada, in so far as regional outcomes and international benchmarks have become the focus for measuring education progress and growth and as conducive to domestic development. As such, education in the tri-island state remains beholden to external support and interests, something Gregory (2004) and Hickling-Hudson (2013) refer to as a contradictory condition of the colonial present, but one which differs from the colonial past. Yet, as this study suggests it is not only about identifying the problems imposed, but also and more importantly of taking into account the way in which youth actively respond to these complex contexts.

Redefining Second-Chance Education Space
The spatial analysis conducted through Lefebvre's (1991) framework provided an understanding of how education opportunities are structured and accessed by different groups of youth through conceived, perceived, and lived spaces. For state representatives, conceived notions of "second-chance" education remained rooted in the discursive objectives of education. Initiatives like IMANI and the implementation of TVET in formal schools appear as reactionary efforts to engage youth rather than proactive measures. For example, CVQs in secondary schools were established within already weakened systems, which does little to affect TVET stigmas or improve learning support for youth. Consequently, NFE was viewed as an integrative practice for immediate economic needs rather than a sustainable approach for long-term socioeconomic development. In speaking with organisation staff, the perceived notion of "second-chance" education was marked by a space that offered youth an opportunity to "re-

discover" their potential and a pedagogical avenue to improve their self-awareness through resources and support not previously offered. And lastly, for youth, this concept was informed by interactions between the material and pedagogical spaces where they are able to improve their learning, engage in their abilities, and enhance their sense of self-awareness.

According to student narratives, those who continue or start over in their education through "second-chance" organisations are cognisant of the spatial relations associated with being in a small-island state, the movement afforded by CVQ certification, and proximity to the U.S. as impacting visions of development itself. Although experienced very differently for adolescent boys and girls, the interest to employ their skills and strengthen their abilities through these spaces appears and appeals as direct openings to a sense of mobility and autonomy that youth seek. For this reason, "second-chance" education contributes to the development of persons, not in isolation of labour market skills, but in addition to placing value on other capacities and experiences such as building self-esteem, moral virtues, and an appreciation of diverse learning backgrounds (Robeyns, 2016). Thus, "second-chance" education provides a social space where youth identify, navigate, and enact prospects of their own development, and a lived space in consideration of the needs of young persons and the roles that they can play in society through a holistic and heuristic approach to learning.

Redefining Youth Development
The study also revealed the many complexities that youth encounter in their relations between global and local exchanges, and importantly, how categories of youth are

continuously reshaped and redefined for development agendas. This matter became evident with varying restrictions and access to "second-chance" organisation spaces. In particular, gender and age were instrumental in marking the legalities and responsibilities of formal schooling, the age range for young girls to enter and graduate from PAM and GASDC, and the age range for young males and females to enter NEWLO as well as the IMANI Programme. In each, youth are defined as encompassing of different categories, although education stakeholders often referred to a homogenised concept of "youth". Mizen (2002) refers to this notion as a "transitional" construction of youth, claiming that in the state's defining process is the "political management of social relations" (6). In this way, youth categories are not only culturally constructed through CARICOM notions of the "ideal Grenadian/Caribbean person/citizen/worker", but also maintained in the division of labour and hierarchy of material relations that appear as a "natural and inevitable response to the steering logics of economic globalisation" (Maira and Soep, 2005; Rizvi et al., 2006, 255; Gilbert-Roberts, 2014a; 2014b).

This study itself categorised youth through a particular age range that also encompassed some of these variances. However, in being aware of these issues, the analysis sought to examine the contexts that have homogenised their status by drawing on the voices and realities of youth. Notably, for young persons who participated in this study, their sense of self was not merely defined by age or gender altogether (albeit impacted by these attributes), but rather by their capabilities, skills, and interests as learned and supported by "second-chance" education organisations, and how they could apply these along with their knowledge to the world around them.

Conclusion

In this article, I set out to provide a contextualised sociospatial analysis through heterogeneous and multi-agent perspectives on the production of "second-chance" education in Grenada. In doing so, revealing gaps and broadening the discursive scope of conceived and perceived approaches to "second-chance" education against the lived experiences of youth *in* development. Mainstream education and youth development policies have homogenised and conceptualised the status of young persons as a disadvantaged group based on socioeconomic concerns, such as youth unemployment and consequences associated with a waste of human capital (Gilbert-Roberts 2014a; 2014b). However, by recognising local youth practices within contexts of ongoing shifts, the article highlights the meanings young people have created for themselves through their interest in, participation with, and use of "second-chance" education. Through their interactions with NFE, students re-defined their sense of self and engaged with the opportunities they imagine in the interest of wanting to be "active." As such, their relationship to the "Caribbean/Grenadian ideal" was not entirely enacted the way policies outline, but rather formed and informed by the ways in which youth plan to occupy space in response to socioeconomic and geographic realities. In a way, national growth and regional integration prospects are fashioned in their own image as they navigate and pursue opportunities *for* representation.

This paper has presented conceptual and policy-related contributions in the hope of continuing the conversation on postcolonial directions in education with youth as responsive partners, critics, and agents of change *in* development. Amongst complex contexts on the

role of education in Grenada, youth strategies emerge as spaces of possibility to the trajectories of national progress. Thus, education reforms can no longer focus solely on the provision of basic schooling. They must also delve deeper to reconsider the compounded impact of global agendas on the quality of local learning, and the lasting implications of systemic inequities that continue to make education a disconnected sector to the potentials of the Grenadian environment. Drawing on memory of the Revolution, an organisation staff member noted, "we were there already."

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADP	Adolescent Development Program
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CVQ	Caribbean Vocational Qualification
CXC	Caribbean Examination Council
GASDC	Grand Anse Social Development Center
GNTA	Grenada National Training Agency
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOSD	Ministry of Social Development
MOYSCA	Ministry of Youth, Sports, Culture and the Arts
NEWLO	The New Life Organization
NFE	Non-formal Education
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NNP	New National Party
PAM	Programme for Adolescent Mothers
PRG	People's Revolutionary Government
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

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REVIEWS

THEATRE

Theatre for the moment: addressing racism, imperialism and colonialism in the *National Theatre at Home* series, broadcast on youtube during the Covid lockdown.

The following article reviews three of the plays that were broadcast on YouTube between March and July 2020 as part of the UK's National Theatre at Home *series. They all tackle themes of racism, colonialism and imperialism in thought-provoking and innovative ways, and resonate strongly with the current moment in light of the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement.*

Regardless of the degree to which countries were "locked down" during the pandemic, one area that was hit particularly hard everywhere as a result of the health crisis was the arts and culture sector. In most countries, large-scale cultural events, including the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and the Venice Architecture Biennale, were cancelled or postponed indefinitely, while countless museums, performance venues and cinemas closed their doors (in some cases permanently) to visitors. In order to remain financially afloat, many arts organisations across the world turned to online platforms. One of the most high-profile of these forays into the virtual realm was the *National Theatre at Home* series, which made 16 productions from the

UK's National Theatre available to watch for free on YouTube for a week at a time. Viewed over 15 million times in nine million households across 173 countries (National Theatre, 2020), *National Theatre at Home* became nothing short of a global arts phenomenon, exceeding even the reach of the *National Theatre Live* programme, which has broadcast plays to cinemas across the world since 2009. Aiming to provide theatre that does not only entertain, but that is "challenging and inspiring" (National Theatre, n.d.), the National Theatre has always also been an educational institution - supporting schools with educational resources and their large-scale youth theatre scheme, *NT Connections* (Busby, 2019). The plays that were selected for *NT at Home* also reflected their mission's pedagogical dimension, including innovative takes on Shakespeare's most performed plays (an anarchic production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* deserves particular mention), stage adaptations of classic Victorian novels (*Frankenstein* and *Jane Eyre*) and political satire targeting both historical and modern wielders of power (*The Madness of King George* and *This House*).

When, in late May, our collective attention shifted - however briefly - away from the virus and towards the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement which was sparked by the murder of George Floyd, three of the NT at Home series' plays emerged as especially resonant with the current moment, speaking to our zeitgeist with a heightened urgency: *Small Island, The Barber Shop Chronicles,* and the series' final production, *Les Blancs.* All three plays tackle questions of race, imperialism and colonialism and explore how the complex power relations that underpin them manifest themselves in various historical and geographical contexts.

When it was first performed in 2019, in the aftermath of the Windrush scandal, *Small Island* was hailed as "one of

the most important plays of the year" (Billington, 2019). It tells the story of a Jamaican couple's arrival in postwar Britain, in particular their interactions with a white British couple. It relates their experiences with warmth and humanity, without failing to portray the blatant and pervasive racism that members of the Windrush generation experienced both during and after the war. The play was adapted from Andrea Levy's widely acclaimed eponymous novel, which in 2007 was selected for a large-scale national reading event to commemorate the 200-year anniversary since the abolition of the slave trade. This, along with a BBC TV adaptation have secured its status within the canon of postcolonial literature. It has, however, also been criticized for giving equal space to Queenie and Bernard (the white British couple) as to Hortense and Gilbert (the Jamaican couple), thus ensuring that "white British voices remain central to this black British story" (Carroll, 2014). Although the play reproduces this bias in the novel's narrative structure, it is at its most emotionally engaging in its portrayal of the injustices Hortense and Gilbert face in Britain, and the determination with which they nonetheless set out to make a life for themselves there.

While *Small Island* taps into the ongoing (and increasingly exacerbated) debate about who is and is not allowed to come and to remain in the UK, *Barber Shop Chronicles* is in itself a cultural artefact of this debate. Its playwright, Inua Ellamas, whose family fled from Nigeria when he was a child, has lived in the UK for twenty years, yet has to date not been granted a permanent right to stay (Bull, 2018). The play, set in barber shops across six cities in six countries; London, Johannesburg, Harare, Kampala, Lagos and Accra, is based on interviews Ellamas conducted in each of these cities, and illustrates barber shops' vital role as a safe space for black men to discuss politics, identity,

masculinity, family and relationships. With a network of geographically dispersed characters who are revealed to be connected on multiple levels - family ties, football club allegiances, and shared experiences - the play testifies to our increasingly transnational existences and identities. Where *Small Island* complicates the relationship between the colony and the "motherland" by drawing our attention to the stark contrast between the expectations of the Jamaicans arriving to Britain and the harsh reality they encounter there, *Barber Shop Chronicles* questions the very dualism of the centre versus the periphery, substituting this traditionally bipolar world with a multipolar one. It is a world on the move, as is illustrated by the play's fast-paced dialogues, energized hip hop dance interludes, and continuous references to people migrating and mingling across countries and continents. Ultimately, as Ellamas has stated himself, the play is reclaiming and rewriting the overwhelmingly negative existing narrative about black men by "inviting the world into our own space, on our own terms" (Collins-Hughes, 2019).

Like Ellamas, Lorraine Hansberry used theatre to critically address the representation of black men. Her play, *Les Blancs* was a direct response to Jean Genet's play *The Blacks* and to two essays by Norman Mailer, criticised by Hansberry for what she called their "new paternalism" - an attitude towards black men which claimed to be anti-racist by glorifying their perceived hypermasculinity and excessive sexuality, but which in fact reproduced racist ideologies that viewed black men as inherently violent (Burrell, 2014). *Les Blancs,* despite being set in a fictional African country at the brink of a war of independence, is just as much an allegory of race relations in the USA as it is about imperialism and colonialism, and one of its greatest achievements lies in drawing clear parallels between the two. These parallels

crystallize in the conversations between Tshembe Matoseh, the village chief's son who has returned to his home country and is contemplating joining the independence movement, and Charlie Morris, a white American journalist. Morris accuses Matoseh of not wanting to move on from past injustices to find common ground with the colonizers. Meanwhile, Matoseh points out that although white liberals might recognize racism as a "fraudulent device" that is used to maintain power, they will never experience the device's deadly reality. However, Hansberry does not dismiss the notion of being a "white ally" as entirely inconceivable. As the play progresses, and as the characters' complex relationships and the extent of the violence committed by the colonizers become evident, she makes clear that there is a need for radical action and commitment to social justice on both sides, and that women play a crucial role in putting this to practice (Wilkerson, 1972).

It is perhaps due to the fact that it was originally written at the height of the civil rights movement, to which Black Lives Matter traces a direct heritage, that *Les Blancs* felt the most pertinent to our current moment, in spite of it being first performed half a century ago. Hansberry's use of a fictional setting (allowing her to retain a critical distance to her subject matter whilst simultaneously highlighting its universality), and the quasi-didactic dialogues her characters engage in, have provoked comparisons to Brecht's epic theatre (Barrios, 1996). Brecht's notion of "alienation" is certainly worth revisiting in the context of *National Theatre at Home* and other virtually mediated live performances - for example, how does the experience of watching an audience watch a performance affect our own sense of being alienated from the play? It is also worth remembering that for Brecht, the goal of theatre was for the audience to leave a performance inspired to take political

action (Brecht, 1953). To this end, he devised increasingly participatory forms of theatre, culminating in his *Lehrstücke* (translated by Brecht as "learning-plays"), which erased the boundary between audience members and actors entirely (Jameson, 1998) - comparable to Augusto Boal's notion of "spectactors" in his *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1993). Arguably, *National Theatre at Home* embodies the very opposite of this experience, with audience members not even sharing the same physical space as actors. Nonetheless, the series' regular schedule and limited availability, the possibility for audience members to react to plays and interact with each other via YouTube and other social media platforms, and perhaps above all the individual plays' timeliness, all contributed towards something akin to the "concentrated co-presence" (Sullivan, 2018, p.59) and the "community of perception" (Wardle, 2014) that are so essential to theatre. In our hyper-digitalized world, in which an endless stream of arts and entertainment is always available to be consumed instantly, this is no easy feat. *National Theatre at Home* helps us imagine new possibilities for experiencing art that bring us together in meaningful ways, spark conversations about social change, and perhaps even inspire the kind of radial action Hansberry envisioned when writing *Les Blancs.* One thing is certain: the continued importance of the arts in helping us make sense of our physically confined, but in other ways endlessly connected realities, and as a catalyst for anti-racist, socially transformative education.

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PHYLLIS COARD 1943 – 2020.
A TRIBUTE. A CONTEXT.

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Phyllis Coard was a social worker, teacher, university lecturer, co-founder of the National Women's Movement in Grenada (1977 – 1983), and activist in the struggle to win rights for women, children and the impoverished. Her work as a novelist and poet developed during her experience of persecution over nearly seventeen years of political imprisonment after the collapse of the Grenada Revolution in 1983.

Phyllis was born and educated in Jamaica, and attained her undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications at the University of Reading, UK, the University of the West Indies, (Jamaica campus), and the London School of Economics. I am sorrowing at her loss, for she was my lifelong friend. She left us in a year of losses for me. Her death in September 2020 came shortly after the death from pancreatitis of my almost-twin, my year-apart brother Frederick Hickling, for whom I have written a tribute in another journal (Hickling-Hudson 2020). I never imagined that any part of my life would be without the two of them. Phyllis had suffered from a heart condition for the last four years. She died just before her 77th birthday, leaving her husband, Bernard Coard, three adult children, four grandchildren, and her sister who lives, with her husband, in Western Australia.

My schoolfriend Phyllis was more than a friend, a wife, a mother and a sister. She was a distinguished

Jamaican woman who fought for the rights of women and children in the Caribbean. She suffered wrenching hardships that arose from her struggles for justice. Phyl attained greatness in her life, both in what she achieved and what she endured. A report from the e-newspaper *Now Grenada* has this succinct outline of her achievements while she worked in Grenada, her husband's birthplace:

> 'Upon her passing in early September 2020, Phyllis Coard's contribution as an advocate for Women's Rights in Grenada unveiled a silent hero with a legacy that is bringing benefits to a generation of women born after her conviction: Maternity Leave in law, Mobilisation of Women's Cooperatives and women's involvement in non-traditional occupations such as driving heavy duty construction equipment. The work of Coard goes back to the 1970s. From very early days she began community work, founding the River Road Day Care nursery' which 'was set up primarily under a series of programmes which the New Jewel Movement (NJM) had put in place called 'The Economic Enterprises of the People'' (Straker, 2020).

The newspaper noted that Phyl had also organised training for young journalists in Grenada, and helped put in place systematic, regular radio and newspaper journalism.

"A generation of women born after her conviction". This phrase introduces an important part of my memoriam for Phyllis. I will provide historical context for what many newspapers describe as the fact that she was the lone woman convicted in 1983 for the murder of Maurice Bishop. After that, I will go back to reflecting on what her loss means for her family, friends and the region.

The 'Conviction for Murder' of Phyllis Coard. What is the context?

Phyllis Coard started work as a young social worker helping people in London, where she did postgraduate studies and met her Grenadian husband Bernard Coard, famous for his youth work and writing that exposed the racism suffered by Black children in the UK in the 1970s (see Curtis 2005, Coard 2005). Phyllis was an excellent organiser. She and Bernard Coard were among the key figures in the socialist-oriented revolution, led by Maurice Bishop in the tiny Caribbean tri-island state of Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique (population c100,000). From 1979 to 1983 the process of socio-economic change, affectionately called the 'Revo' by Grenadians, initiated decolonising transformations in a society that had been impoverished and exploited by some three hundred years of French then British colonialism. The changes were moderately socialist-oriented, in the sense of introducing into the almost entirely capitalist economy a small share of state sector ownership and people's cooperatives, as well as establishing and strengthening popular community associations such as the women's movement led by Phyllis. She was elected leader of the National Women's Organisation in Grenada, and became the Minister for Women's Affairs. In these areas Phyllis, together with many inspired and committed Grenadian colleagues, led teams of Grenadian women to implement life-changing projects for women and young children. Such projects were nurtured by the growing efficiency of the economy led by Minister of Finance Bernard Coard.

The tragic collapse of the Grenada Revolution in October 1983, after four years of innovative and foundational social change, came about with the fratricidal killings of Maurice Bishop and other leaders. This was followed within a few days by the US invasion.

The Caribbean and especially Grenada was traumatised by the murders of the popular Maurice Bishop and his colleagues, the result of in-fighting within the leadership of the small Marxist party that led the People's Revolutionary Government. Trauma increased with the army-imposed curfew that followed the murders. These chaotic events in Grenada provided the opportunity, in the context of the Cold War, for the Reagan-led government of the USA to send nearly 8,000 heavily armed troops to invade the tiny population, the size of a city suburb. The invasion, welcomed by some, condemned by others, resulted in the US capture of Grenada's left-wing leaders, their torture, the allegation that they had carried out the murders, a systematic US propaganda campaign against them, the establishment of an unlawful 'court of necessity' to try them, the seizure of documents by the invaders, and the disappearance of the bodies of Bishop and his colleagues. The outcome of the trial was the sentencing to execution of Bernard Coard, Phyllis Coard, and other leaders, who came to be known as 'The Grenada 17' (see Gibson 2018).

Phyllis' death in September 2020 has aroused a fresh stream of attention to Grenada. Many of the current news reports of her life and death give distorted and misleading accounts of her historical context, especially that which relates to the Grenada Revolution. These accounts say that she 'was convicted for murder', but do not mention the illegality and travesty of the US-financed trials that sentenced 14 of the Grenada 17 to the gallows, and the other three to life imprisonment, with allegations that they had carried out the murders of Bishop and his colleagues.

Their 'convictions' were based on one man's evidence easily proved to be completely false, as was shown in reports from Amnesty International (2003), from Ramsey Clark (1997), former Attorney General of the USA, from Doris Kitson (1991), New York Times journalist, and from

the UK High Court in 2014. These internationally respected sources also use evidence to show that the Caribbean judges and lawyers were paid by the invading forces, that some of the defendants were tortured to extract false 'confessions', that the jury was selected by a former member of the prosecution team, that some jury members publicly stated before the trial their wish to see the defendants dead, and that the appeal court has never released a written report of its judgements

Following an international outcry, the death sentences imposed on the NJM leaders were commuted to life sentences. In 2000, Phyllis was released on compassionate grounds, after nearly 17 years in prison, to return to her home country, Jamaica, to receive medical treatment for cancer. The sixteen other leaders, including her husband Bernard, were released after enduring twenty six years of imprisonment. Phyllis' sister Dr. Beverley Noakes, a retired University of Western Australia professor of French studies, has co-written a tribute to her sister Phyllis that describes the outcry that helped to prevent the seventeen captives from being hanged (see Noakes et al 2020).

When I and co-writers, utilising available sources, made the point that the convictions of the Grenada 17 were based on an unjust trial and false evidence (Hickling-Hudson, Scott, McKenzie, Tate and Bartholomew 2020), there were a variety of hostile reactions on-line. One called our article 'a brazen attempt to exculpate Phyllis Coard', while another wrote: 'If they are all so innocent… then who killed Maurice Bishop, Jacqueline Creft, who I understand was pregnant with his child at the time, and all the others who were executed by firing squad in 1983?'

Part of the heavy price paid by the society for the legal travesty that played out was that, indeed, the travesty hid for decades 'what really happened' in the Grenada tragedy. This is currently being pieced together

by researchers who have been studying the Grenadian documents seized by the USA and now obtained under a Freedom of Information Act. An important and interesting analysis is provided by a retired American professor, Rich Gibson, who visited Grenada frequently, interviewing inhabitants including many of the incarcerated Grenada 17. Gibson says:

> I spent 1996 in Grenada interviewing many of the jailed NJM leaders. To say they were innocent of everything is not the case. To say they were innocent of the charges brought against them is. Serious mistakes were made by the New Jewel leadership. The prisoners, in prison and after their release, issued extensive, indeed insightful, apologies to that effect, taking responsibility for the crisis of the revolution, but not for the murders they did not commit (Gibson, 2018).

Another account of 'what really happened' - how the tragedy of the murders unfolded – is by Dennis Bartholomew. He draws attention to the role of the USA:

> The US has systematically sought to discredit everything brought about by the Revolution and the people who organised it, including the ordinary Grenadians who sacrificed so much to achieve these gains. The false evidence of Cletus St Paul was designed to destroy the reputation of the leaders of the Revolution, like that which befell the leaders of the Fédon Revolution, thus ensuring that the noble experiment of self-determination would not be tried again (Bartholomew 2020).

The entire population suffered tragedy and trauma following the collapse of the Grenada revolution, the murders, the further killings as a result of the US

invasion, the relentless US disinformation, and the disappearance of the bodies, preventing burial by loved ones. Decades of incarceration separated the Grenada 17 from relatives, their partners, their young children and their society. Noreen Scott, referring to documents released from US archives, relates that the Governor General of Grenada Sir Paul Scoon had been informed, immediately after the unexpected tragedy of October 19th, 1983, about how it had unfolded. He had agreed to an independent inquiry which could be supported by the British Commonwealth Secretary General, and he participated in discussions about funerals for Maurice Bishop and others who had tragically died at the fort. This was prevented because of the US invasion. As she writes:

> Had an independent inquiry taken place it is likely that the historical facts of what actually happened would have been established.
> Instead, 37 years later, the nation is still divided – from damaging rumours, false and misleading pre-trial propaganda – which has left many individuals, including many who were falsely convicted, and their families, traumatised from torture, injury and personal loss (Scott, November 2020).

Reflecting on Phyllis Coard's legacy for the Caribbean
Phyllis has been vilified by those who have absorbed US disinformation. The rich significance of her life, however, was always appreciated by those who worked with her, and is unfolding further as a result of reflections following her death. Negative newspaper reports are being countered by informed tributes that are cutting away the falsehoods told about her. To talk about the life of Phyllis Coard is to face some unpleasant realities of the Caribbean and its geopolitical context, as well as to gain hope from the strength of those who, like Phyllis,

are striving to overcome the region's adversities and embrace its promise. She grew up during British colonialism in Jamaica, and her determined, activist challenge to tackling the distortions of neo-colonialism and Cold War politics plunged her into the difficulties and suffering of her long imprisonment. The tribute by Jacqueline McKenzie, one of the lawyers involved in the team defending the Grenada 17, is particularly successful in portraying the achievements of Phyllis and her Grenadian colleagues, as well as her anguish in the context of Caribbean adversities (McKenzie 2020). A three-hour virtual memorial organised online on 12th September 2020 by Valerie Gordon and the 'Grenada: Forward Ever' group, involved friends of Phyllis from Grenada and around the world. It expressed the deep esteem in which Phyl was held, and the affection she attracted from colleagues and friends.

Working closely with Phyllis and Bernard Coard and other Grenadian friends in the Grenada Revolution taught me much about how difficult is the task of decolonising our societies stagnating after centuries of colonialism. The significant and exhilarating changes that Grenada's 'Revo' achieved in only four years – as well as the circumstances of its collapse – make it worthy of a prominent place in world history. Those changes implemented by Grenada's revolutionary leaders, including Phyllis, are reforms that Caribbean countries still need to strive for today.

I was involved in the Revo, together with my husband Brian and our two boys, for two years, Brian heading the Town Planning department in Grenada, me working in the Grenadian Ministry of Education in teacher education and other important education projects (see Hickling-Hudson 1989), and Dominic and Alexis doing their first two years of high school at the Grenada Boys' Secondary School (GBSS). Our family's two years in the 'Revo' (September 1981 to August 1983)

led to life-enhancing watersheds for my understanding of education and society – including working in a teaching team with Paulo Freire in a two week seminar for Grenadian teachers (see Hickling-Hudson 2014), and working as a member of the National Women's Organisation in the social reform programs organised by Phyllis Coard and her colleagues (see Hickling-Hudson 1999).

The career of Phyllis Coard as a social worker and political activist/leader consumed much of her adult life. But she was also a successful teacher and an excellent writer. While imprisoned in Grenada, she taught literacy and English language use to female prisoners who asked for classes. During some of her post-prison years in Jamaica (from 2000), she worked part time as a tutor to undergraduates in the Department of Language, Linguistics and Philosophy at UWI, the University of the West Indies. She taught a UWI course, the 'Fundamentals of English', preparing students for an English language examination that they had to pass in order to be awarded their degree. In 2012, 85% of her case-study group passed the exam, compared to a pass rate of 42% for students in other groups. Her successful teaching methods were described in her academic article, co-written with her UWI colleague and the course coordinator Dr. Caroline Dyche, entitled "Integrating Psychological and Sociocultural Dimensions into the Teaching of English to UWI Students Who Speak Jamaican Creole: A Case Study", published in the journal '*The UWI Quality Education Forum'*, Vol. 19, 2013. The article won a UWI research award in 2014. It is a fascinating discussion, providing pedagogical, cultural and policy insights in the teaching of language in a bilingual 'Creole' society such as Jamaica.

In prison and afterwards, Phyl wrote short stories, a novel 'The Healing', recently published by Amazon, a

collection of poetry that was later sensitively analysed by a Croatian writer (Natasa Tusec 2007), and two memoirs. One memoir is a short book with the title *'US War On One Woman'* (1988) describing her ordeal in the initial years of being a prisoner of the US and Grenadian governments. Phyl's second memoir, *Unchained. A Caribbean Woman's Journey Through Invasion, Incarceration and Liberation,* published in 2019, is a detailed and poetically written description of her years in prison and her release. A 2019 Facebook post commented on this book:

> It is said that you do not really know someone – including yourself – until a person encounters a profound crisis in life. In *Unchained,* fascinating insights into the real Phyllis Coard emerge as she faces the growing personal crises of her capture, isolation, psychological and physical torture, character assassination and judicial malpractice, five years on death row, and a total of sixteen and a half years in prison.

On a personal level, Phyllis enriched my life with her affection, cheerfulness, sharp intellect, and fun, ever since we met at Sunday school, and studied in the same cohort for our eight years at St. Andrew High School in Jamaica. We went to different universities, but re-connected in the UK when we were newly married. Our friendship deepened when we returned to the Caribbean in the 1970s to develop our careers, our social activism and our young families.

Those who knew Phyl rejoiced in her love of her family, her warmth towards her friends and colleagues, and her concern and activist care for the marginalized and needy in the societies in which she lived. In Bernard Coard she found her perfect partner, who shared her

life's goals to help change society for the better. When he was released from his prison ordeal and rejoined her in 2009, as her sister Beverley writes, 'they managed to recapture the happiness of their earlier years, enjoying life in the countryside of Jamaica and swimming together as they loved to do. Together they had 52 years of faithful married life. When Phyl became seriously ill, Bernard was there at her side: she was never alone, but always with the person she trusted above all others. All those who loved Phyl are so grateful to Bernard for his devoted care of her. We wish him peace, and happy memories of Phyl' (Noakes, 1st October 2020).

The loss of Phyllis Coard is the loss of one of my closest friends, my forever friend since childhood. Remembering the life of Phyllis, some of our St Andrew High School classmates sent condolences to her family via our e-mail schoolfriend group (which we dubbed 'The 59ers', since we took our Cambridge O Level School Certificate exams in 1959). I will end with two of these e-mailed messages from schoolfriends.

From Valerie, 8th September:

> Anne, sincere thanks for sharing some of your memories of our beloved friend, Phyllis. It was with extreme sadness that I learned yesterday of her passing after her valiant battle with health challenges over the years. She was one of my dearest school friends and I will always hold her close in memory. I have often rued the fact that the demands of family life in different countries resulted in our inability to maintain close contact after she left for England. Nevertheless, we were heartened to renew contact at our 2011 class reunion in Jamaica and it was if all the lost years just rolled away when we met again.

Phyl was a favourite of the family and dear to my mother, who was always very concerned to know what was happening and could be done to help her during her awful trials in Grenada. It was only on reading her book that I got a better understanding of the travesty of it all.

As Phyl's family home was very close to mine when we lived on Ruthven Road, we would often visit each other and travel home from school together, discussing all our experiences and sharing the recent novels we were reading.

As you're in touch with Bernard, please extend my heartfelt sympathy to him and the rest of the family, including her sister Beverly. It gave me great comfort to know the love and respect Phyl and Bernard always had for each other and to learn from Phyl about their two lovely daughters, Sola and Abi, son Neto, and four grandchildren. May Phyl, now free from pain and suffering, indeed Rest In Peace.

From Charleen, 8th September 2020

Sad to lose Phyllis, my condolences to the family. I admired her dedication to the cause of Grenada and was very moved by both her and Bernard's books. I also noticed that the news report diminished her position with the Grenada government and outright lied about Bernard's involvement in Bishop's death, using a favourite preface to a lie: Many people say…Some people say. It is scary to think that one of the key traitors to the revolutionary government is still in a responsible position with the present Prime Minister. Rest in peace, Phyllis, you are gone from us but always part of history.

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OLIVER FRIGGIERI (1947-2020): POET, CRITIC AND EDUCATOR

Adrian Grima
University of Malta

When I discussed with Oliver Friggieri the inclusion of his much-loved collection of poems *Mal-fanal hemm ħarstek tixgħel: poeżiji, 1961-1988* (Your face lights up next to the lamplight: Poems, 1961-1988), chosen by Toni Cortis and published in 1992, in a national syllabus for 16 to 18 year old students studying Maltese language and literature, he was adamant: he would only accept on condition that 'Biljett ta' Suwiċida' (1979), translated by Peter Serracino Inglott as "A Suicide's Card," was left out. The book had already been in this syllabus in the past and the poem had not been left out. It was also one of the 29 poems Philip Farrugia Randon, a personal friend of the poet, had chosen out of hundreds, to include in his readings of Friggieri's poems published in a CD album.

To be honest, I had seen this coming. "Biljett ta' Suwiċida" was one of his memorable poems that he had repudiated in his later life. When people mentioned it to him, he would react almost with disgust. Despite his eloquence, he would struggle to find words to describe his disdain for that poem. Or rather, he was at a loss not so much because he did not have the words to express himself on the matter but because he refused to put it into words, so great was his emotional discomfort.

To me and to many others who had read and listened to his poems over the years and who viewed this poetic "suicide note" as an integral part of his repertoire,

Oliver's decision was something we had to come to terms with. When Oliver Friggieri emerged as a soft spoken but hard hitting rebel with a cause in the 1980s, I was at precisely the same age of those students he was determined to protect from his first novel *L-Istramb* (*The Misfit*) and some of his darker poems. He became a leading public intellectual and a writer who had the words and the audacity to articulate our angst as ultimately solitary and insignificant human beings struggling to come to terms with an indifferent universe.

At that historical juncture, Friggieri also offered his deeply disturbing interpretation of our experience as a community, as a nation. He was deeply troubled by the "fratricidal" conflicts and the pettiness within Maltese society, more so because, as a Romantic at heart, he never subscribed to the view that the nation is an imagined community. Although as a highly perceptive literary critic he was fully aware that the Romantics created a national mythology, he never understood the nation as an act of fiction, or myth. He sought to influence the national narrative but refused to equate the "nation" with "narration." I was one of those many young men and women who were moulded by his metaphors and turns of phrase. They had seeped into our language and consciousness, at first surreptitiously, and shaped important aspects of our understanding of our lives as individuals and as members of a "national community."

So the fact that in his later years Oliver Friggieri distanced himself from some of the works that had influenced me most was something that I couldn't ignore. In our youth, but also in our adult life, many of us are fascinated by suicide. We find the stories of writers who take their own life gripping and there are moments in our lives when we identify with their despair. We read poems like "Biljett ta' Suwiċida" as honest explorations of those same feelings that we have. Many of us find solace in

that honesty. We appreciate the confession, the declaration of weakness. In many ways it is healing.

In his later years, however, Oliver Friggieri the father, the grandfather, the educator who spent many hours of his days listening to the troubled stories of young people who sought his counsel, became acutely aware of the influence of his words on his readers. And this probably led him to question the wisdom of exposing young people to the theme of suicide. Whether he was right to repudiate these works is not the point here. The Oliver Friggieri we have celebrated in the days and weeks following his passing away on the 21st of November 2020 at the age of 73 is not only a great public intellectual and "voice of the nation," as many have described him, but also an inspiring teacher who devoted much of his life to his students and to all those who wrote to him and asked to meet him to talk about the things that mattered most to them.

His decision to shield students preparing for adulthood from his poetic "suicide note" raises important questions about our role as writers and educators. Many writers are also teachers; many teachers are writers. There is no denying that these roles can come into conflict with each other. Professional educators can use literature to discuss very sensitive issues in the relatively safe environment of school and help their students deal with them in healthy ways. But the writer is not that kind of educator. It would be insincere of us to deny that literature "educates" us, but it does so in other ways. Writers are not teachers.

In an extraordinary graduation speech, he gave as a leading academic at the University of Malta in 1991, months before the publication of his iconic collection of poetry, he talked about what he had learnt from his students: their honesty, their commitment to social change and the protection of Malta's natural environment and cultural heritage. But he also exhorted

the graduands to sow poetry in a country that was becoming increasingly monotonous and soulless, to meet in public spaces and recite the poems that uplift us. He asked them to question, to doubt and to criticize, to refuse to wade in the "stagnant waters" of Maltese society, to treat words with the utmost respect denied them by our inconsiderate society. He urged them to tell it as it is and to fear no one and nothing but their own conscience.

This is the totally honest Oliver Friggieri that I will always cherish and that will remain with us even now that he has left us; the poet, father and educator that had such a profound influence on me as a student and as a person, but also on an entire nation; the sensitive human being who always sought to make the lives of those around him better.

IN MEMORIAM- EDWARD KAMAU BRATHWAITE (11/5/1930 – 4/2/2020)

Anne Collet
University of Wollongong

> *For on this ground*
> *…*
> *the Word becomes*
> *again a god and walks among*
> *us;*
> *look, here are his rags,*
> *here is his crutch and his*
> *satchel*
> *of dreams; here is his hoe and*
> *his rude implements*
>
> *on this ground*
> *on this broken ground.*
> (Kamau Brathwaite, '*Vévé*',
> *Islands*)

It is curiously fitting that I write this memorial piece on Barbadian poet Kamau Brathwaite on the day I retire from an academic career that began with poetry. I am reminded of T.S. Eliot's last published poem, 'Little Gidding', in which he writes: 'What we call the beginning is often the end / and to make an end is to make a beginning.' I have taught the poetry of T.S Eliot for as long as I have taught the poetry of Kamau Brathwaite – for me they are entwined. But the first poet with whom I

felt affinity was Judith Wright, a poet whose love of the natural world, specific to Australia, was my love. My father gave me a volume of her poetry (*Five Senses*) in the year of its publication (1963) when I turned seven, and throughout my childhood and adolescence I would write poetry modelled on hers –

> Now my five senses
> gather into a meaning
> all acts, all presences;
> and as the lily gathers
> the elements together,
> in me this dark and shining,
> that stillness and that moving,
> these shapes that spring from nothing,
> become a rhythm that dances,
> a pure design.
> (Judith Wright, 'Five Senses')

I stopped writing poetry in my late teens, and although I wrote my honours thesis on Judith Wright, it was in the second year of that undergraduate degree in English at the University of Queensland that I discovered Edward Kamau Brathwaite. Brathwaite was an eminent historian and social commentator, but for me he was and is primarily a poet, albeit poet as historian of 'the tribe' – of Africa, of Africa in the Caribbean, Africa in the New World, Africa in the World:

> E-
> gypt
> in Af-
> rica
> Mesopo-
> tamia
> Mero-
> ë

the
Nile
silica
glass
and brittle
Sa-
hara, Tim-
buctu, Gao
the hills of
Ahafo, winds
of the Ni-
ger, Kumasi
and Kiver
down the
coiled Congo
and down
that black river
that tides us to hell
…
Never seen
a man
travel more
seen more
lands
than this poor
path-
less harbour-
less spade.

(Kamau Brathwaite, 'The Journeys', *Rights of Passage*)

Kamau Brathwaite was the poet of my young adulthood – the poet through which I discovered the excitement of language play. This was play for life – play in which the power of words to move, to transform, was more than

personal and emotional - it was social and political. Not that Wright's poetry wasn't/isn't political, but I didn't register the political in her work then, perhaps because it was too close, too much me, too much my world: White Anglo-Celtic Australian, middle-class, female – privileged. Brathwaite spoke to me of another world – a world as far from mine as I could imagine: Black Afro-Caribbean, working class/underprivileged, male – impoverished and yet the source of (to me) surprising wealth. Kamau Brathwaite would be the 'Word/World making man' of my MA thesis, of whom I wrote in the abstract:

> For Brathwaite loss of 'Word' implies both the loss of god and the loss of language (the silent or unheard African drum is image of this loss). When the New World African lost possession of his Word he became a 'mimic man'. His image of god was replaced with the Christian/European image of 'God' and the accompanying de-humanizing values of Mammon, and his African language was usurped by the English language – the language of the conqueror. When the language of a people is separated from their specific cultural origins the relationship between word and meaning becomes disjointed. Images of the Word no longer enhance meaning – they only evoke confusion and disorientation.
> Brathwaite attempts to re-instate African based Word in the Caribbean through the rediscovery and recognition of African gods that in fact still survive (in evolved form) in the underground culture of the Caribbean 'folk', and in the promotion of 'nation-language' – an Africanized English that he believes to be the creative and unadulterated image of his people. His poetry 'After Africa' (in particular *The Arrivants* and *Mother Poem*) is image of the 'creative rebellion' he espouses – a rebellion of Word. 'By creating the concept of change, the concept of

rebellion, the concept of freedom', Brathwaite claims, 'you can in fact encourage its encompassment.' (Anne Collett, *Edward Kamau Brathwaite: The Wordmaking Man: An Exploration of Edward Kamau Brathwaite's Philosophy of Word*, MA, University of Queensland, 1987)

Although Brathwaite's poetry speaks the anguish of a broken world and broken people, his poetry also offers a promise of healing and wholeness, achievable through the power of w/Word: here was the potential to 'make it new', although not quite in the way Ezra Pound and the modernists might have envisaged. Brathwaite was a modernist, influenced by the poetry of T.S. Eliot; but unlike Eliot and Pound, his modernist search for poetic and spiritual value in 'other' cultures was not an appropriation of otherness – it was a desperate recovery of self. In 1970, Brathwaite published a reflection upon a personal journey that, poetically transformed, would become the tribal, historical and mythical journey of *The Arrivants* (1973) – the trilogy (made of the separately published volumes *Rights of Passage* [1967], *Masks* [1968] and *Islands* [1969]) upon which his career as Poet was founded. After completing a BA at the University of Cambridge in the early 1950s, Brathwaite speaks of himself as 'a West Indian, rootless man of the world', recalling numerous applications for work in places as varied as London, Cambridge, Ceylon, New Delhi, Cairo, Kano, Hartoum, Sierra Leone, Carcasonne, Jersusalem. From among those many possibilities, Brathwaite writes of 'ending up' in a village in Ghana, of which he observes:

> It was my beginning. Slowly, slowly, ever so slowly; obscurely, slowly but surely, during the eight years that I lived there, I was coming to an awareness and understanding of community, of cultural wholeness, of the place of the individual within the tribe, in

society. Slowly, slowly, ever so slowly, I came to a sense of identification of myself with these people, my living diviners. I came to connect my history with theirs, the bridge of my mind now linking Atlantic and ancestor, homeland and heartland. When I turned to leave, I was no longer a lonely individual talent; there was something wider, more subtle, more tentative: the self without ego, without I, without arrogance. (Kamau Brathwaite, 'Timehri', *Savacou* 2 [1970])

But in order to arrive at this place of recovered belonging, recovered self in community, Brathwaite had to enter that dark wood of Dante Alighieri's imagination: 'In the middle of the journey of our life I came to myself within a dark wood where the straight way was lost. Ah, how hard a thing it is to tell what a wild, and rough, and stubborn wood this was, which in my thought renews the fear!' ('Inferno', Canto 1, *The Divine Comedy*)

The refrain, or rather, the magical incantation of 'slowly, slowly, ever so slowly' that Brathwaite intones in his autobiographical reflection is drawn from the poetry collection, *Masks,* and more significantly, the last poem of the volume, 'The Awakening':

and as the cock
now cries in the early dawn

so slowly slowly
ever so slowly

I will rise
and stand on my feet

slowly slowly
ever so slowly

This is a return to new life through the dark night of the African soul. Here, as recorded in *Masks*, the Poet travels back in person and in communal spirit to the roots of his African heritage. He travels through the trauma of slavery and the painful recognition that Africa is light, but it is also darkness; that the Afro-Caribbean man and woman must both acknowledge their African heritage and also accept that they are strangers to Africa and Africa is stranger to them:

> I travelled to a distant town
> I could not find my mother
> I could not find my father
> I could not hear the drum
> (Brathwaite, 'The New Ships', *Masks*)

Through libation, the ritual making of the drum, the calling up of the old gods, and the sometimes imagined, sometimes performed, re-enactment of masked journey through an ancestral and more recent past, the poet is remade as Poet-Drummer. He is the poet-historian of 'the tribe', a role that Brathwaite conceives as a means of maintaining connection with past lives and creating meaningful viable futures for a dispersed people. This was the material of my MA.

After completing my MA in 1988 I moved on to other things – a growing family and a PhD in the UK – and only kept up with Brathwaite's new publications sporadically and at some distance. There was much else to occupy me. But I introduced students to Brathwaite at the Universities of London, Aarhus (Denmark) and Wollongong, primarily through *The Arrivants*, *Mother Poem* (1977) and *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean poetry* (1984). The print texts were brought to life as only performance can do, by a cassette recording of a talk Kamau gave at the University of Canterbury on *Mother Poem,* an LP of

Brathwaite reading *Masks*, and a live recording of Kamau reciting 'Negus' (from *Islands*). The latter is part of a wobbly, snowy, sputtering video recording of a televised BBC Open University program that included conversation with Mikey Smith, C.L.R. James and the very young Linton Kwesi Johnson, an also very young Fred D'Aguiar and a not so young, crusty but charming Derek Walcott. This combined repertoire (whose sound quality suffered even further from repeated transcription into the latest technology) has been my mainstay for 25 years – this and the endless ventriloquising of Brathwaite whose poems I would perform year after year, almost to the point of parody …

One of the reasons I didn't keep up with Brathwaite's ever more experimental poetry was its increasing dependency on visual notation/transcription. For someone who admired his verbal nuance and wit, for someone whose interest lay in the linguistic power of word, his 'Sycorax *video* style' seemed to negate what poetry 'is', or at the very least, to deny its depth. But when a copy of the volume, *Born to Slow Horses* (winner of the 2006 Griffin Poetry Prize) arrived in my mailbox in hope of review, my interest was piqued – in particular I became interested in the idea of trace, and the poet's use of repetition. Was this just a rehash of old material from a poet whose muse had up and left some time ago? or was this something else? I decided on the something else, in part out of loyalty to the poet who prompted my love of Caribbean poetry, but perhaps more importantly, the poet who I believe changed English language poetry in the latter half of the twentieth century as fundamentally and significantly as T.S. Eliot did in the first half. But where Eliot and Pound played at black face (writing to each other in characters drawn from the Uncle Remus stories), much as Picasso played with African mask, Brathwaite performed Africa in the Caribbean through the language traditions of a dispersed and reinvented

Africa that had revealed him to himself - praise song, worksong, blues, calypso, jazz... In that autobiographical piece of 1970 he recalls, 'I came home [from Ghana] to find that I had not really left. That it was still Africa; Africa in the Caribbean.' (Brathwaite, 'Timehri') In *Islands*, Brathwaite had identified and mourned the loss of that cultural recognition, a disconnection between Africa and the Caribbean, writing in the poem 'Jah' of a land that 'has lost the memory of the most secret places.' Here he claimed that

> We see the moon but cannot remember its meaning.
> A dark skin is a chain but it cannot recall the name
>
> of its tribe.

Here Brathwaite's politics and poetics is focussed upon the recognition, revaluation and celebration of Africa in the Caribbean – 'tribe' is a reference to African heritage, African belonging. The journey undertaken into that 'dark wood' enabled Brathwaite not only to name himself (Kamau) but to name his calling. 'The Awakening' begins:

> Asase Yaa, Earth,
> if I am going away now,
>
> you must help me.
> Divine Drummer,
>
> *'Kyerema,*
> if time sends me
>
> walking that dark
> path again, you
>
> must help me.

If I sleep,

you must knock me
awake …

and as the cock
now cries in the early dawn

so slowly slowly
ever so slowly

I will rise
and stand on my feet
(Brathwaite, 'The Awakening', *Masks*)

Here the poet speaks both for himself and for his people. Here he accepts the mantle of acolyte of the Divine Drummer with the power to recall the name of the Tribe, to call out those who have forgotten, and to find the means by which to remember and reinstate that name.

So how then are we to understand these lines transcribed into a volume of poetry published some 35 years later in a very different context and time? – specifically, America post 9/11. To forget tribal name is to isolate the self from the ties that bind us to others, to culture, history, language, nature and divinity. In that isolation we become small, hurt, angry, violent, desperate. We are rendered powerless and ineffectual. It might seem that Brathwaite's 'Jah' advocates a return to the divisiveness and isolationist politics of tribalism and religious separatism. But by inserting a trace of this poem in a new collection of poetry that sympathises with the privation, loss and suffering of isolated individuals in a global world affected by Hiroshima, Chernobyl and 9/11 (all referenced in the volume of poetry), the poet shifts the original focus of the poem from the specific

agenda of creating Afro-Caribbean community, or even a wider pan-African/Black community, to something more humanist. Brathwaite's awareness of the problem of a fragmented world that had specific application to the Caribbean in the 1970s is understood in this century as applicable more generally, in fact, globally. To recall the name of the Tribe in the twenty-first century is to recall that which makes us Human. But, importantly, recall is made through specific remembrance of the work done in the cause of a Black politics and poetics. Toward the end of 'Mountain', the last poem of *Born to Slow Horses*, Brathwaite calls upon the compassion of his audience to help him see and say, recalling the original humbleness of his mission as poet and tribal drummer. He gives thanks and praise 'for what you have allowed me / helping me to find my space w / in yr welcome,' and it is with gratitude that he acknowledges the blessing of

> … these hard-
> working prayers of yr hands
> yr maroon & Marcus Garvey rastafari fight for human
> rights & justice
>
> in the world. that black & poor & dispossess are forces in
> the universe
> like pride & passionate & knowin who yr folksongs are
> o song so strong even in a strange land now yr own yr
> honeycomb yr hoom

To recall the name of the Tribe in the twenty-first century is to call on our humanity, our compassion, the intimacy of our connection to each other, and indeed, to the planet.

Recently I have returned to Judith Wright, but Wright in relation to Brathwaite. In a keynote given at conference last year in Bremen, Germany, I developed

relationship through their shared concern for the violence done to peoples and planet in the name of 'civilisation' and its tools - conquest, colonisation and capitalism, aka greed and selfishness. I spoke about an entanglement of what might be called 'postcolonial' environmental and social activism and the act and art of poetic word craft. Wright sets up cyclical relationship between destruction of indigenous people and land and the kind of future we are thereby creating in 'Nigger's Leap, New England':

> Did we not know their blood channelled our rivers,
> and the black dust our crops ate was their dust?
> O all men are one man at last. We should have known
> the night that tided up the cliffs and hid them
> had the same question on its tongue for us.
> …
> Night floods us suddenly as history
> that has sunk many islands in its good time.
> (Judith Wright, 'Nigger's Leap, New England', *The Moving Image*, 1946)

No matter how deep or wide the ocean, time and tide inevitably uncover the skeletons: the bones of the disappeared ones – the indigenous peoples, the indentured and enslaved peoples – are flung back onto the shores into the light of day; the voices of the dead return to haunt us. We might understand those shores to be literal: graves are uncovered on the excavated ground of modern building sites; skull and thigh, finger and hip are revealed when rising sea levels undercut and wash away apparently stable land. But these skeletons are also uncovered by the archival work of historians and laid bare in the shore lines of poetry, or speak through a kind of poetic ventriloquism. Some turn a deaf ear to the whispering of ghosts and a blind eye to the altered forms

of eroded remains that *might* be something else if we just wish hard enough; but Wright and Brathwaite insist on remembrance and recognition of the ground upon which our present and our possible futures might be built. In 'Negus' Brathwaite famously declares:

> It is not
> it is not
> it is not enough
> it is not enough to be free
> to bulldoze god's squatters from their tunes, from their relics
> from their tombs of drums
>
> It is not enough
> to pray to Barclays bankers on the telephone
> to Jesus Christ by short wave radio
> to the United States marines by rattling your hip bones
>
>
> I
> must be given words to shape my name
> to the syllables of trees
>
> I
> must be given words to refashion futures
> like a healer's hand

Words. Name. Trees. Future – of peoples and planet. It is not insignificant that 'The Awakening' of *Masks* and of the Poet, is a tribute and a call for help from Asase Yaa, Earth; and that the final poem of *Born to Slow Horses* should be in part a praise song to the beauty of that Earth:

from spider lilies' fading stars thru turquoise greens of
days of sky & ocean
water blades' translucent grass the orange of the fruit &
citrus sunset into
red & crimson indigo

So i turn back turn back to ship & journey here & water
flowing my beginning. quiet ending
the great mass of the memory mountain

rising up slowly out of the sea before sun
before sun
-rise

for even when it is dark. it is dark. it is home. it is here

Kamau, I thank you for the beauty and power of your
words and I wish you peaceful journey in that final
turning back into that slow rising out of dark out of sea
into sunrise. into home. into that great mass of memory
mountain.