Jenseits von Being and Reason:
Imagining Otherwise and the World History Classroom

By
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Committee in charge:

Professor Daniel Perlstein, Chair
Professor Zeus Leonardo
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Abstract

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Despite increased literature on the disciplining of black and brown youth in schools, there has been little attention to implications for content area instruction. This study examines the disciplining of knowledge in world history classrooms, and the impacts of this on students who often get labeled as troublemakers. Although many world history classrooms make claims of a shared humanity, such spaces often reproduce value systems that deem some as historically significant, while negating and excluding others. I employ qualitative methods to examine how such disciplinary practices impact students. I conducted individual student interviews and think-aloud tasks with twelve tenth grade students, to document how students understand themselves in relation to world history. To identify students and gain context of their learning, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in two out of three sections of tenth grade world history classrooms in their small urban Title 1 school, with predominantly African American and Latino students, over the course of six months. I read the world history classroom and how students think in light of queer theory, critical theory and cultural studies, and subaltern studies.

This study shifts the focus on so-called troublemaker students from a behavioral focus that aims to integrate them into the status quo, to consider their ways of thinking in broader socio-political contexts. This work builds on the ways these students productively trouble the logics of traditional world history pedagogy, and complicates historical thinking by engaging challenges within the discipline of history itself. I turn to history as a disciplinary space to consider how scholars from marginalized populations have challenged the work of history, including the archive, document production and preservation, narrative production, and the relations of knowledge production within the history discipline. This study ultimately aims to alter how teachers think about and teach world history, in light of these marginalized students.

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Chapter One: Introduction
It's a Discipline Problem
Or, Let's Make Trouble
Or, A Pedagogy of Prison Abolition

Tadashi: Is there discrimination in the school system?
Timothy: Maybe not with color anymore. Maybe it's with behavior. If you have behavior problems you get less of a chance in life. Maybe not race, but sometimes it is about race. The school tends to be more of a black or Hispanic school that acts up. But it's not like that all the time… They have less money so they tend to go through more problems in their life and they tend to lash out in school.

It does not seem strange that lambs bear a grudge against the great birds of prey: only this is no reason to hold it against the great birds of prey that they snatch themselves little lambs. And when the lambs say to each other "these birds of prey are evil; and whoever is a bird of prey to the least possible extent, rather even its opposite, a lamb - does he not have to be good?" then there is nothing wrong with this construction of an ideal, even if the birds of prey were to look upon this a bit sarcastically and perhaps say to themselves: "we do not bear a grudge against them, these good lambs, in fact we love them: nothing is tastier than a tender lamb." –Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, p. 236

Tadashi: What about how black people are seen?
Isaiah: Half of us in jail, so you don't really see us.

Defining the Problem

Timothy and Isaiah are both in tenth grade. Let's start off with Timothy. This is Timothy's reading of the world. This is his response to my question about discrimination. Schools discriminate based on behavior. And[1] then he explains his understanding of where that behavior is coming from. And he connects it to race sometimes. He mentions black and Hispanic schools, money, problems, lashing out in school, and behavior. He mentions chances in life.

This is how Timothy puts these things together. So how do we read what Timothy says, and what do we do with what he says? Is this actually still about race, now coded under the guise of behavior? Is he saying it is really a class issue and not a race issue because "they have less money so they tend to go through more problems in life"? This statement that "if you have behavior problems you get less of a chance in life." Is he saying that we should place the responsibility on the individual, individual blame, because everyone is getting an equal chance in school? And if you act up, you don't deserve as many chances, according to some people?

What I find fascinating in Timothy's response is how these different threads come together and intersect (Crenshaw, 1991). He links race, class, discipline, behavior, and success in schooling all together.

Timothy identifies as black and Panamanian. He is not a student that has a record of

[1] My frequent use of the preposition "and" is influenced by Eve Sedgwick's work, as conjunction, as multiplicity, as analogic, as a list, as identity alongside all of its non-identity. It reflects her appreciation for Silvan Tompkin's work (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 96).

getting in trouble in school. Timothy's school has many restorative justice programs. His small public school has a strong sense of love and care in the hallways. The school turned to restorative justice practices, as many schools do, because the staff was disturbed by their own high rates of suspending students. It is this schooling environment in which Timothy made this statement.

This dissertation started from my experiences of teaching 9th grade world history in New York City public schools for some ten years now. It comes from my experiences of putting students into this category of trouble-makers, of bad kids, of disciplining kids and giving them detentions and punishing their behavior. And yet, those students who get in trouble in my class are often (not always) the ones who ask some of the most provocative questions. This is the problem-space from which this dissertation begins.

The question is, what is this trouble all about? One old answer was that black people are undisciplined, racially inferior, and uncivilized. Another old answer was that black culture is a culture of poverty, where black people don't know better and must learn and adopt a better culture. Another answer is that racist teachers and schools oppress black children.

I'm asserting here that some of the things it is about are reason, being, morality and aesthetics. The prevailing order of white supremacy (an order inflicted/inflected by capitalist, patriarchal, homophobic interests) has placed black and brown youth on the other side of reason, being, morality and aesthetics. Certain bodies and minds are linked to power in our society. It is about those lines we draw between good and bad, between reasonable and unreasonable, between able bodies and minds and disabled ones, between the hopeless kids that we'd rather send somewhere else, and the ones in which we are willing to invest time and energy and resources. And ultimately, this comes down to race.

How can teachers understand differently these students who get put into this category of causing trouble? How does this impact history pedagogy? The question then becomes, what do these kids' discipline problems have to do with my content area? The answer is quite obvious. It's a discipline problem.

It's a Discipline Problem

As a world history teacher, I am primarily interested in how the disciplining of knowledge within the world history classroom excludes brown and black bodies from reason and norms of acceptability, and how this impacts students.

Bodies and minds are linked to power. Through capitalism, black and brown bodies are set on the other side of being and reason. This dissertation explores what is on the other side of being and reason, withholding the temptation to redeem those bodies and minds to be on the side of good, reason, intelligence, etc. This introduction establishes some of the concepts to better articulate these relations of power, bodies, and minds. Foucault, Marxist scholars, queer theory, and prison abolition scholars provide some of this groundwork.

When I interviewed Isaiah, an African American and Puerto Rican tenth grade student, about how black people are seen, he replied, "Half of us in jail, so you don't really see us." Isaiah explained further how black people get stereotyped based on certain individuals: "You can't judge a whole race based on certain people, cuz for all that we can say every white person's psychotic, cuz you have these niggas shooting up movie theatres and shit. And every time they do it they never go to jail Tad; they get psychiatric treatment and shit. They not crazy, they know what they doing. Like they be wallin out."

Isaiah's response to my question reveals the hegemonic common sense (Gramsci, 1948/1971) of white supremacy, which disciplines black bodies and minds in our society. Bodies

and minds become sites of discipline. Isaiah lays out the logic of white supremacy, where punishment and discipline are not really determined by reason and one's psychiatric state; but rather, the question of reason, of mental illness, is understood ontologically in how bodies are raced. For Isaiah, white people are deserving of psychiatric treatment because their state is temporary, treatable, redeemable, whereas black people are ontologically set outside of that reason. The illness of black people is their blackness, which is unredeemable, unforgiveable, and hence white supremacy deems that black people must be put away. For Isaiah, half of black people are not seen because their place in society is to be locked up, set aside, contained.

Now, you might feel lost, asking yourself why this dissertation is about black people in prison when the interest is in teaching world history and pedagogy? Bear with me. I'd like to dig into a few concepts laid out by Foucault, because he helps me understand how bodies and minds and power function through discipline.

Foucault's (1975/1995) genealogy of discipline and punishment asserted that the disciplining of bodies is coterminous with the disciplining of knowledge. Classrooms become a tangible site to consider how discipline functions upon student bodies and minds.

> Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity', which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection. (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 138)

Discipline becomes a form of social control, a technology of capitalist production. Bodies and minds "have" these properties. This mirrors the capitalist endeavor of turning the commons into private property. Bodies and minds lose their innate capacities, and school becomes the site through which bodies and minds are disciplined, to earn those properties of intelligence, skill, and reason. This form of child labor earns them these properties, in the form of credit, grades, certificates, diplomas. Rather than starting with the assumption that all children are rational at all times, capitalist schooling makes reason into property, something to be earned and acquired. Through the establishment and maintenance of things like the "achievement gap," certain privileged bodies and minds are granted better access to earning these properties than others.

Discipline in schools is in the service of particular forms of knowledge production, and the control of that production.

> [P]roduction was divided up and the labour process was articulated, on the one hand, according to its stages or elementary operations, and, on the other hand, according to the individuals, the particular bodies, that carried it out: each variable of this force--strength, promptness, skill, constancy--would be observed, and therefore characterized, assessed, computed and related to the individual who was its particular agent. (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 145)

Discipline turns these capacities into stages of development and acquisition. Schools and school districts chart these stages in vertical plans that sequence these skills by content area over time. The Common Core, state standards, and national standards determined by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) and others, create official sequencing of this measured development. Schools develop horizontal plans to compartmentalize these skills across disciplines. Teachers' own skills to teach students skills are further measured in rubrics (the Danielson rubric, for example (Danielson, 2014)). Schools maintain and reproduce order, hierarchy, sequences of development and acquisition. According

to such rubrics, student thought that does not fit into these measured categories seems to matter less, and can become unremarkable.

This is because with discipline comes the norm. There is the normal body, the normal mind, the normal child, and normal behavior. "Standardized" state exam questions and answers are normed for consistency. Schools become spaces that norm and discipline.

> The power of the Norm appears through the disciplines. Is this the new law of modern society? Let us say rather that, since the eighteenth century, it has joined other powers – the Law, the Word (Parole) and the Text, Tradition – imposing new delimitations upon them. The Normal is established as a principle of coercion in teaching with the introduction of a standardized education and the establishment of the *ecoles normales* (teachers' training colleges). (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 184)

Part of the process of norming is cutting off certain paths, saying no, of creating new realms of disregard. The quirky and strange become hierarchically lesser, hold less value, or hold negative value. The norm becomes the tool of discipline, to learn the correct path or answer.

With norm comes deviation, deviance, the queer. We learn that if there is a normal body and normal mind, then there are also disabled and abnormal bodies and minds. We get "special education" and accommodations. Through this process, schools establish what is good, productive, and valued, in opposition to what is bad, toxic, sick, unhealthy, and wasteful. As the saying goes, one man's garbage is another man's treasure. There is so much there in the realm of the strange, the queer, the weird, the wastelands. My aim is to sit amidst that realm, amidst the wrong answers, the disregarded statements students make, the seemingly off topic, but not for some 5 cent redemption. There is so much fantastic stuff there, if only one could imagine otherwise.

Let's Make Trouble

Just as discipline has this double valence, the term trouble does as well. In the preface to the 1990 edition of *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler explained her use of the term "trouble" as troubling accepted norms (1990/2006, p. xxx). Rather than thinking of certain students as getting into trouble in this bad sense, what if we re-interpret them as "troubling accepted norms"? Butler asked, "But how can an epistemic/ontological regime be brought into question?" (1990/2006, p. xxx). Butler's feminism interrogated dominant epistemologies of gender for falsities upon which they rely. Butler stated, "trouble is inevitable and the task, how best to make it, what best way to be in it" (1990/2006, p. xxix). I use the term troublemakers both as a term that is used to identify some of the students I've interviewed, and for those who rebel against the dominant and naturalized systems of reason for understanding the world. Hence, my goal is not to reinvent these students as normal, to prove that they're not really troublemakers after all, but to consider, how best can we make, or be in, trouble within the world history classroom?

School to Prison Pipeline

When I asked Isaiah, "Do you like school?", he replied, "Personally, I don't think this is a school. I think it's more of a prison you have to go to." I can imagine teachers dismissing his statement as being hyperbolic. Teachers perhaps who are invested in the good work they're intending to do, who want the best for Isaiah, who believe in restorative justice. And yet, this is Isaiah's lived experience, that school is a prison.

In our society, black is in opposition to the white norm. Black is positioned on the side of trouble. The background of this behavioral discipline problem has a long and deeply institutional

history. There is a growing body of literature on the disciplining and punishment of black and brown youth in today's school system, and the larger school-to-prison pipeline (Ferguson (2000), Winn (2011)). Michelle Alexander's book *The New Jim Crow* (2013) explored the new ways that old Jim Crow systems of racial discrimination and disenfranchisement have become institutionalized in the US. Schools are one of those institutions.

Victor Rios' (2011) book traced the direct ways that male students of color get picked up by the police in Oakland, and showed that these students of color get police records started for very simple things, records which often escalate quickly. "As the system punished and entrapped these young people, and developed a reproductive resistance that pipelined many deeper into the system, it also developed within them an oppositional consciousness, as they became well aware of the process by which they were punished" (Rios, 2011, p. 162-163). Schools serve the same state that the police and prisons serve. Students who resist schooling are not against developing their own intelligence. It is often through the development of their own intellect that they come to a consciousness of the ways that the state (and schooling as a technology of the state) is set against the existence of marginalized populations.

Restorative Justice, Transformative Justice

In response to concerns of high rates of school suspensions and the ways black and brown youth are punished in schools, a growing number of schools have turned to a restorative justice approach. The school site of my research has focused on restorative justice practices. The school had a high number of school suspensions early on, which felt highly unproductive, and turned to restorative justice practices as a strategy to reduce suspensions. The concept of restorative justice is in contrast to punitive justice, which focuses on punishment. Restorative justice has roots in the legal system, and international human rights situations (Zehr, 2015; Cornell & Muvangua, 2012).

Here are the three pillars of restorative justice at this school: "1) Restorative justice focuses on harm. (both the harmer and why they might have chosen to harm others, their needs, the community, and the individuals directly harmed). 2) Wrongs and harms result in obligations. How do we make things right? 3) Restorative justice is based on participation. We have a justice panel because it is important for the person who causes harm to participate in a discussion about her or his actions." Each grade has a justice panel made up of students who hears cases and decides the obligations that students agree to. Restorative justice practices also include the incorporation of circles into advisories. Circles are an increasingly popular way of having small group discussions with students to promote community-building and social-emotional growth (Riestenberg, 2012; Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2014).

There is another term that circulates as well. The term transformative education is used within Freirian education circles. Within a number of trans and queer people of color community organizing spaces, there is a preference for the term transformative justice over restorative justice. The critique is that there is nothing there to restore, that the existing system is unjust and not worthy of maintaining. It is not enough to merely reproduce the status quo. The goal is not to get more people into the side of good. It is not to include more marginalized people into the textbook's narrative of civilization, and prove that all these non-white peoples are just as valuable as white people. It is not to get black kids to perform whiteness better, to want to be white.

For example, Generation Five is an organization that takes a transformative justice approach to ending child sexual abuse within five generations. Generation Five expressed the choice of transformative over restorative as follows:

> the emphasis on restoration assumes the conditions that existed prior to an individual incident of abuse are desirable and should be restored. This ignores the common lack of rights for children, abuses of power, gender inequality, legacies of slavery and colonization, and other types of violence that pre-date and co-exist with ongoing incidents of violence. As such, these models often focus on the restoration of the status quo and ignore the challenge of transforming the conditions of social, economic and political injustice that are the context for, and cause of, violence. (P. Levy, Shah, M. Kim & J. Carr, 2007, p. 21)

How can we work toward a model of justice that helps transform society? This dissertation aims to transform, invert, or queer the dominant forms of relationality.

In schools that try to enact restorative justice practices, conversations around the larger structural issues might occur, but given the realities of the school year, it can be difficult to set aside the resources within a budget and staff already stretched thin to address the larger structural problems. We must address the ways that violence is linked to both bodies and minds, and to transform relationships to both. G5 further stated, "we quickly rejected Restorative Justice models because of their co-optation by the State… We also questioned the implication that a sense of justice had been present in the past that it was possible to restore" (P. Levy, Shah, M. Kim & J. Carr, 2007, p. 4). There is an irony to schools trying to create restorative justice programs, as agents of the state. This reveals the distinct difficulties, if not limitations, in trying to do this work within institutions that produce and reproduce the problem itself. As Victor Rios (2011) put it, "The key is to provide all marginalized youths a stage with good props, good lighting, and a supportive audience. In this way, acts of resistance, resilience, and reform, which go hand in hand, can become the basis for helping young people transform their lives" (p. 166).

Prison Abolition

> Until we have some shit where we control the fuckin school system
> Where we reflect how we gon solve our own problems
> Them niggas ain't gon relate to school, shit that just how it is
> Knowhatimsayin? And I love education, knowhatimsayin?
> But if education ain't elevatin me, then you knowhatimsayin
> It ain't takin me where I need to go on some bullshit,
> then fuck education.
> ---"They Schools" lyrics, Dead Prez

Many groups that work towards transformative justice are also aligned with the movement to abolish prisons. All of these movements, including this dissertation, have to do with a critique of public institutions that serve particular publics, and function to annihilate the existence and livelihood of the most marginalized parts of the public in our society. We cannot have public institutions that ultimately try to get rid of and ignore the "undesirables," or to fix people to a particular exclusionary norm.

Through campaigns by groups such as the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, and their Everyday Abolition project, I became aware of the obvious links between prison abolition and transformative justice work of marginalized groups, particularly queer and trans people of color

organizing. The Sylvia Rivera Law Project is named after Sylvia Rivera, a Puerto Rican and Venezuelan transgender activist and veteran of the Stonewall riots. SRLP is a collective organization that fights for and supports the self-determination of all people in their gender identity and expression regardless of race or class, especially as it relates to material repercussions in their lives. In 2015, Reina Gossett, as an activist-in-resident at Barnard Center for Research on Women, produced a series of videos entitled "No One is Disposable" (Gossett & Spade, 2014) documenting conversations between scholars and activists Dean Spade and Reina Gossett around prison abolition, especially in relation to queer and trans people of color organizing. Such work points to the intersections of marginalized populations, peoples deemed as problems for society, pushed to the margins to be ignored and disposed of. Putting people in prisons, functionally exiling them from society and humanity, kicking students out of classrooms and schools, is not meeting the needs of the entire public. No one is disposable.

Angela Davis, in her book *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (2003) suggests alternatives to the prison industrial complex:

> In other words, we would not be looking for prisonlike substitutes for the prison, such as house arrest safeguarded by electronic surveillance bracelets. Rather, positing decarceration as our overarching strategy, we would try to envision a continuum of alternatives to imprisonment-demilitarization of schools, revitalization of education at all levels, a health system that provides free physical and mental care to all, and a justice system based on reparation and reconciliation rather than retribution and vengeance. (Davis, 2003, p. 107)

What does this mean for schools and the world history classroom?

Prison abolition is radical in that it presumes that nobody is expendable, disposable, that we cannot merely put aside, marginalize, those that we deem unfit for society. Public school is a radical idea in that everyone is a part of the public and deserves an education. We cannot simply kick out those we do not think deserve to be there. Abolishing prisons in k-12 schooling means trust, means a constant commitment to shared humanity. It means listening to and attending to the needs of the most marginalized. Nobody's thinking is to be dismissed, to be given up upon. When teachers are set on their own trajectory, this can potentially cut off student growth. This dissertation focuses on the capacities, the rich resources that get deemed as waste, that not only get ignored, but are poisoned and made out to be toxic.

What if we allowed those students that cause trouble in the history classroom to actually trouble the discipline of history? We must question dogmatic adherence to epistemology, and hermeneutics, and historiography. We must open up spaces of inquiry, open up space into the realm of thinking and being otherwise. This leads into questions of how knowledge is produced in the classroom, and the relations between students and the teacher and texts.

Bio-power, Power/knowledge at the Behest of Capitalism

Discipline in itself is not necessarily a bad thing. Parents discipline their children. One must learn self-discipline to complete tasks such as dissertation writing, of course. It is discipline as a tool of capitalist production and white supremacy that is problematic.

School is a site where these larger societal inequalities are learned and reproduced. Black and brown bodies and minds have historically been excluded from mattering, and hence need to be affirmed through social movements which assert that indeed black lives matter. Although Timothy says it is no longer about race but behavior, he nonetheless says it "tends to be a black or Latino school that acts up." This move from race to behavior is reflected in the shift from

biological-race to cultural-race, as reflected in Oscar Lewis' (1959) notion of the "culture of poverty." I assert it is both behavior and race, that these black and brown bodies and minds move in ways that contradict and resist the white supremacist capitalist state. To reconceptualize the relationality beyond a focus on knowledge that upholds the status quo, we must grow our capacities to listen to those ideas amongst students that disrupt the status quo, that go against hegemonic reason and common sense.

As mentioned earlier, discipline is a form of power over both bodies and minds. Foucault's concepts of power/knowledge and bio-power further help articulate how bodies and minds are always already linked to power. In *Discipline and Punishment*, Foucault wrote, "it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power/knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge" (1975/1995, p. 28). In a history classroom, how is knowledge understood in relation to power? In a space such as a school, which is so charged with power dynamics, are marginalized student populations allowed to have power by way of knowledge?

By understanding power/knowledge as a process wherein the two are inherently linked, it forces me, both as a researcher and as a teacher aiming to develop liberatory pedagogical practices, to observe each interaction with knowledge as one embedded in systems of power, and each act of power and discipline as one linked to the regard of knowledge. Knowledge that goes against the status quo is always already an act of resistance. Throughout this dissertation, I will address examples of student thought that go against hegemonic common sense, to consider the disempowering function of knowledge through schooling.

Bodies matter in schools and classrooms. How are power and knowledge inscribed onto these bodies in the classroom? In a global studies classroom, for example, each student's body is linked to a family history, and those families are linked to historical events in other countries around the world, and some of those histories and events are made to matter more than others. Some forms of logic and reason are stated as appropriate answers on the state exams, whereas others are not given credit to pass. In his *History of Sexuality vol 1* (1976/1978), Foucault explained the concept of bio-power, this link between bodies and power. "Power would no longer be dealing simply with legal subjects over whom the ultimate dominion was death, but with living beings, and the mastery it would be able to exercise over them would have to be applied at the level of life itself; it was the taking charge of life, more than the threat of death, that gave power its access even to the body" (1976/1978, p. 142-143). The system of capitalism harnesses the power of bodies for the sake of production. When "The school tends to be more of a black or Hispanic school that acts up", as Timothy stated, and when these are disenfranchised, disempowered communities, Foucault's terms help understand that such behavior is linked to power, and to the disciplining of their bodies and minds.

These interactions between teachers and students do not happen in a vacuum, but are embedded within a larger understanding of schooling within a national (and global) political-social-economic structure. The school system, as Louis Althusser observed, "takes children from every class at infant-school age, and then for years, the years in which the child is most 'vulnerable', squeezed between the family State apparatus and the educational State apparatus, it drums into them, whether it uses new or old methods, a certain amount of "know how" wrapped in the ruling ideology (French, arithmetic, natural history, the sciences, literature) or simply the ruling ideology in its pure state (ethics, civic instruction, philosophy). Somewhere around the age of sixteen, a huge mass of children are ejected 'into production': these are the workers or small

peasants" (1971, p. 155). Regardless of teacher intentions, students' schooling careers are shaped by this ruling ideology imposed by the state.

The state is interested in reproducing both the ideas and beliefs in the ideology, as well as the physical workforce. Althusser went on, saying, "The reproduction of labour power thus reveals as its sine qua non not only the reproduction of its 'skills' but also the reproduction of its subjection or the practice of that ideology" (1971, p. 133). Thus, we find that the state creates an education system that acts to maintain the interests of the dominant class. The bodies of students and teachers conflict in the space of the classroom, in that teachers are directly a part of the labor force, as workers of the state (at least public school teachers), disciplining bodies in the classroom. This process includes the separation of reason and knowledge from student bodies, so that many students, rather than enhance their innate capacities of reason, learn that they are stupid, and that their behavior and ideas are unreasonable.

The body of the adult is deemed as having adult subjectivity, and the capabilities of full citizenship. The mature adult body is deemed capable of knowledge and power in ways that the bodies of students are not (yet given the racialization and infantilization of certain races, some adults are always already deemed immature or having unreasonable minds in this framework). The bodies of students are deemed not fully formed. Teachers are deemed to have a certain power granted them by the state, in relation to students legally constructed as pre-subjects. This impacts how adults interact with students, and arguably shapes the possible flows of knowledge/power. Although many teachers claim to be teachers in order to change the system, their bodies must nonetheless be read as a part of that system. Teachers might aim to respect students' voices and ideas, yet students arguably are maintained within this subjected role in the schooling system. This matters as we begin to read classroom interactions on the basis of knowledge/power in process.

Discipline involves the appreciation of certain qualities, and the punishment of others. Bowles and Gintis' classic, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976/2011), addressed the current state of education in 1976, the historical contours that shaped the current state, and the possibilities for future change through education. They contested the three major components of liberal democratic educational theory, which promotes the integrative, egalitarian, and developmental functions of schooling. Bowles and Gintis used prior statistical studies to disprove the meritocratic argument for schooling, proving that schooling actually penalizes traits such as autonomy, diligence, and independence, and promotes social conformity to unequal class positions. Claims that increased cognitive ability through schooling result in higher economic status and opportunities are disproved by Bowles and Gintis. They claimed that schooling reproduces and prepares students for larger societal structures of inequality and subordination, by instilling ideologies that benefit the capitalist class order. Education serves not an egalitarian function, but an integrative one, so that the poor and others view poverty as personal failure. And yet, the history of changes in education are understood less as simple domination by the state and ruling class, but as more complex, with changes seen as the result of outright class conflict, which can result in (while limited) benefits for the working class.

On the Other Side of Being and Reason, Beyond Being and Reason

The title of the dissertation plays on Nietzsche's *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*. I utilize the German phrase *Jenseits von* because it simultaneously means "on the other side of" as well as "beyond." This dissertation starts from the idea of "on the other side of being and reason," exploring the space of negation that students of color experience, the alienation from being fully

human, and being reasonable and rational. As stated in the quote by Nietzsche at the start of the chapter, when you are on the side of the lambs, you come to invert the relationship between the lambs and the birds of prey, between good and bad, and between good and evil.

Schools are spaces of racialized bodies and racialized knowledges. Frantz Fanon (1952/2008) spoke of the zone of being and non-being. Chapter Three examines how students experience this negation of being and reason through schooling. Who is understood in the realm of living beings, healthy and organic bodies, versus those outside of being? The question is not whether one *has* reason, something one has acquired, a fetishized possession, but rather where reason takes them, that particular contextualized form of reason.

As the following chapter on queer reading and negative dialectics will explore, being in the space of negation, of darkness, is not just something to get out of as quickly as possible. Ultimately, my aim is to end up in the realm beyond being and reason. What else is beyond that other side of the dialectic? What possibilities might exist in the beyond? We come to these magical imaginative spaces on the other side of being, when you are on the negative side of the dialectic, on the queer side of failure, where, in Baudriallard's phrasing, it is more fun to be an object, in the space of #blackgirlmagic, where there is the possibility for the black fantastic, for Afro-futurism. This is the space beyond being and reason, in the realm of imagining otherwise.

When you are excluded from the game or from the table, you also enter a space of liberation, where you get to create and imagine whatever table or platform or sphere or dimension you want. In Neil Robert's book *Freedom as Marronage* (2015), he examines historically that space of non-being in its own right, stating, "The abyss is a realm of the unknown and zone of nonbeing that paradoxically is a source of knowledge and world- building" (p. 167). When your family's heritage of names has been robbed, you get to spell black girl names however you want (I have witnessed many white teachers criticizing how black girl names are spelled). How one makes sense of the world depends upon their particular contextualized situation, their orientation within socio-political economic matrices, webs, and entanglements.

What if those students we often say have so much potential but fail, what if they were the ones who were actually successful in school? The ones who master the critical thinking we aim to teach through measured skill acquisition? We reproduce a status quo that privileges certain ways of thinking, certain responses and behaviors over others.

Subjugated Knowledges

In the disciplining of knowledge, some forms of knowledge are subjugated under dominant forms. On the other side of the "good," "civilized," and "legitimate" knowledge are what Foucault called subjugated knowledges. Foucault spoke of two meanings of subjugated knowledges. First:

> Subjugated knowledges are, then, blocks of historical knowledges that were present in the functional and systematic ensembles, but which were masked, and the critique was able to reveal their existence by using, obviously enough, the tools of scholarship. Second,… I am also referring to a whole series of knowledges that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naive knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity. (Foucualt, 2013, p. 7)

There ought to be room in the world history classroom for both meanings of subjugated knowledges. The first meaning refers to indigenous epistemologies, outside of the dominant

Eurocentric rationality. Walter Mignolo's term "colonial difference" refers to that power differential between subjugated knowledges and dominant systems of knowledge (2000, p.8). Mignolo used the example of Fritjof Capra and Tu Wei-ming's approach to the relationship between "modern physics" and "Eastern mysticism" to illustrate the impacts of this colonial difference in understanding knowledge. While Capra framed the differences between these two as "historical and "superficial" rather than ontological," Capra nonetheless maintained the "universality (nonhistorical) of the Western concept of reason" (Mignolo, 2000, p.6). Capra, like many other Western scholars, attempted to respect the legitimacy of alternative forms of knowledge, but ultimately became blinded by this privileged assumption that Western reasoning ultimately trumps other forms of knowledge. Mignolo argued that Tu Wei-ming attempted to "redress the balance between equal epistemological potentials that have been subordinated to each other by the coloniality of power and the articulation of the colonial epistemic difference" (2000, p.6). By placing Confucianism squarely in its own legitimate epistemological space, we avoid being blinded by the West's tendency to universalize itself.

Another example of how indigenous knowledges become subjugated in world history is in Vine Deloria Jr.'s analysis of Paul Feyerabend and Thomas Kuhn's approach to science. Deloria stated, "Both Feyerabend and Kuhn agree that the best advances in science and philosophy are made by the outsider" (1999, p.7), yet goes on to state that "Kuhn feels that Western information gathering is unquestionably superior" (1999, p.10). Deloria recounted that the indigenous epistemology for developing the Senaca's planting of the sisters' beans, corn, and squash become subsumed by the need to place this agricultural advancement within a scientific framework of the balanced nitrogen cycle (1999, p.12-13). Doing so ultimately ignores the fact that this sustainable agricultural system was developed without the methods of science, by a fully legitimate and effective indigenous epistemology. If we are to create a truly global version of world history, we cannot continue to privilege one epistemology as universal, but must acknowledge the ways that the coloniality of power has subjugated all other epistemologies[2].

Low Theory

The second meaning of subjugated knowledges refers to this lower level of knowledge and thinking, seen as insufficient, naïve, and inferior. It is these spaces of student thought, these in-between spaces, between the cracks of disciplinary knowledge, which I aim to explore and reconsider, to read otherwise. Sarah Ahmed, in *Queer Phenomenology* (2006), spoke of the importance of those in-between disciplinary spaces: "I was 'brought up' between disciplines and I have never quite felt comfortable in the homes they provide. The lines of discipline are certainly a form of inheritance… Disciplines also have lines in the sense that they have a specific "take" on the world, a way of ordering time and space through the very decisions about what counts as within the discipline. Such lines mark out the edges of disciplinary homes, which also mark out those who are "out of line"" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 22). Her words return us to the notion of prison abolition. Prison abolition is not about creating more humane ways to deal with society's problematic individuals. Prison abolition is about taking this problem of discipline and punishment as an opportunity to learn, to know in different ways, to find new ways of seeing. Those who are "out of line," who fall outside of the disciplinary norm, perhaps those are the lines we ought to follow. Perhaps those black and Latino individuals with behavior problems that Timothy commented upon in the epigraph, perhaps they have ways of thinking and acting that

[2] I will return to Anibal Quijano's idea of coloniality of power in chapter three.

are out of line that can lead us, or them, in new directions.

Judith Halberstam's articulation of low theory "tries to locate all the in-between spaces that save us from being snared by the hooks of hegemony" (2011, p. 2). Chapters Three, Four, and Five will examine explicitly examples of these in-between spaces. Halberstam explained the roots of low theory as beginning:

> from Hall's comment on Gramsci's effectiveness as a thinker. In response to Althusser's suggestion that Gramsci's texts were "insufficiently theorized," Hall notes that Gramsci's abstract principles "were quite explicitly designed to operate at the lower levels of historical concreteness" (413). Hall goes on to argue that Gramsci was "not aiming higher and missing his political target"; instead, like Hall himself, he was aiming low in order to hit a broader target. Here we can think about *low theory* as a mode of accessibility, but we might also think about it as a kind of theoretical model that flies below the radar, that is assembled from eccentric texts and examples and that refuses to confirm the hierarchies of knowing that maintain the *high* in high theory. (Halberstam, 2011, p. 16)

Troubling disciplinary knowledge in the world history classroom is not only about finding alternative epistemologies, but being open to new ways of thinking, to moving past the assumption of hierarchical knowledge. Chapter One will dig into this dynamic of missing and misreading student thought, especially as a researcher trying to make sense of data.

Chapter Four looks at student references to conspiracy theory, as those "eccentric texts" that might seem below legitimized thought and high theory. In the struggle to break the status quo relations of knowledge production, "Low theory might constitute the name for a counterhegemonic form of theorizing, the theorization of alternatives within an undisciplined zone of knowledge production" (Halberstam, 2011, p. 17-18). The conspiracy theories students are drawn to ultimately reflect all these ways students are trying to make sense of the world around them, and all of the ways that the "sense" which schools provide to students do not help students make sense of the worlds in which they live.

Of great importance to the move past hierarchies of knowledge and learning as teleology is a letting go of attachments to what knowledge looks like, letting go of our investments in and our expectations of our capacity to explain the world. "Building on Ranciere's notion of intellectual emancipation, I want to propose low theory, or theoretical knowledge that works at many levels at once, as precisely one of these modes of transmission that revels in the detours, twists, and turns through knowing and confusion, and that seeks not to explain but to involve" (Halberstam, 2011, p. 15). Halberstam's notion of low theory fits well with Eve Sedgwick's reparative reading, which will be discussed in Chapter Four. This also gets into the problem of *aufheben* and understanding, which will come in Chapter One.

Letting go of our investments is difficult. Jacques Ranciere asserted that the traditional teacher, in his adherence to the discipline, revels in his superior knowledge, his mastery of rationality, but "the "ignorant schoolmaster" must actually allow students to get lost in order for them to experience confusion and then find their own way out or back or around" (Halberstam, 2011, p. 14). The teacher must take a risk in letting go of some of that control, that investment in order. It requires a Benjaminian tiger's leap into the unknown. It requires trusting the students more in their investment in learning and knowledge.

All of the concepts in this introduction become tools for understanding this problem-space that Timothy set up at the beginning of this chapter. Through these ideas of transformative justice, prison abolition, biopower and power/knowledge, we come back to Nietzsche's contextualized inversion of morality, of social mores marking out who and what is good and bad,

who has bad behavior, who deserves punishment and needs to be normed. A commitment to transformative justice within the world history classroom means rethinking of the relations of knowledge production in the classroom. Prison abolition in schools means not softening the punishments for students that go against the norms; it means inverting some of those basic relationships upon which schooling and society function, to make central the most marginalized in society. This problem-space pushed me to ask students questions to draw out how they make sense of the world. If this is a discipline problem, then the problem is in how we engage students in this discipline of world history? What is it that schools miss? The following research questions aim to uncover how we might reimagine the relationships between students, world history, and the classroom.

Research Questions

This dissertation addresses the following research questions:

How do students of color understand themselves in relation to world history?
What are students of color's experiences with world history and schools?
How do these students make sense of the worlds in which they live? How do they describe their world?
What parts of the broader history discipline might be utilized to engage how these students think about and relate to world history?

Methods

In order to answer these questions, I employ a mix of qualitative methods. The bulk of the dissertation centers on interviews with twelve 10th grade students. These students came from two untracked 10th grade global studies classes taught by one teacher, in a school with a large percent of marginalized students (privileging race and economic background as signifiers of marginalization). The school is a Title 1 public school in a large Eastern seaboard metropolitan center, with approximately 99% non-white students, 80% students receiving free/reduced-price lunch, and 20% students on record with disabilities. The teacher is a white male with over 15 years of history teaching experience in this city's public schools. He has been at this specific school for four years, and is a veteran 10th grade global studies teacher. The school has a state mandated global studies exam that all students must pass. The curriculum and world history narrative is predetermined by that exam. I have changed all names and contextual details to maintain subject anonymity, while maintaining demographic details when significant to the analysis.

The students I ended up interviewing were mostly upon the recommendation of the 10th grade global studies teacher, in whose class I observed. I began by sitting in the back of the classroom, and through conversations with the teacher early on, the teacher gained a sense of what I was aiming to do. While making sure I did not disrupt the classroom, knowing my prior teaching experience, the teacher promptly had me talk to students in the class. I spent a number of hours helping to tutor students at lunch with their global studies work. The teacher tried to pair me up with students who have been seen as at risk, trouble-makers, have been suspended, and struggled against school, and understood as such by the grade team and previous teachers. I attended grade team meetings, and gained a sense of which students came up in teacher comments and concerns.

Although I attempted to create a focus group of students primarily of the students most identified as at-risk and trouble-makers, the reality proved less ideal. Some of the students I

wanted to interview, however, rarely came to school, and/or did not want to participate in the study. As with any archive or documentation, these absences and silences reveal just as much as what is present. Some of the most marginalized students remained inaccessible to me, as whatever life circumstances kept them from making it to school regularly.

My methods evolved over the course of this work. I intended to have ethnographic fieldnotes play a more central role in my analysis, but those observations became the backdrop to the research. The ethnographic side of the project was influenced by scholars on race in schools such as Ann Ferguson (2001), Jeannie Oakes (2005), and Mica Pollack (2004). I wrote field-notes daily in the two classes five days a week over 5 months, guided by Emerson and Shaw (1995), to document observations and reflections, in light of the research questions. Observing the classroom allowed me to witness how the teacher created opportunities for knowledge production, the narrative of world history covered, and the role students play in that process.

As I began to interview students, however, I realized that those responses would become the crux of the dissertation. I audio-recorded three semi-structured interviews with each student, in order to gauge how the students think about themselves in relation to world history, and what is expected of them as students in the classroom. After the first round of interviews, I developed the question, "what do you think about the government?", because I noticed many students said things around conspiracy theories. That question led to a number of responses discussed in the following chapters.

In the data analysis, I turned to methods from cultural studies and related fields, in the form of reading practices. Chapter One explains the theory and methods that shape the bulk of this dissertation, focused on negative dialectics and queer reading practices. Chapter Two utilizes these practices, and Chapter Four builds on this through Eve Sedgwick's paranoid and reparative reading practices.

Chapter Three relies on a separate set of methods, based in cognitive psychology and history education research. I supplemented interviews by asking students to do thought tasks individually, and audio-record their thinking aloud as they considered the questions related to world history. These methods build off of the work of Wineburg (2001), Epstein (2000), Barton & Levstik (1998), and others, to grasp student thinking in ways that interviews might not reveal. This included asking students to think through the question, "Were the ancient Egyptians black?", and to tell the story of world history, off the top of their heads. Studies on identity construction in schools (Pollock 2004, Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1995) suggest allowing categories to be revealed over time, rather than predetermining categories. I coded the interview responses, informed by Saldaña's (2009) methods. Chapter Three explains these methods in more detail.

As an informal system to check my analysis, I had several students, and the teacher, review my early interpretations of what students had said, in order to check on my readings of students. In particular, I spoke with Lee and FlyGuy, after I had written much of Chapters Two, Three and Four, to make sure they felt ok with the interpretations I had written about their statements. In order to account for silences and absences in the interviews, I consider James C. Scott's (1990) theoretical framework of hidden and public transcripts, on how the political dynamics of research can create silences that might mean different things to the subjects researched than the researcher.

Chapter Summaries

"Chapter Two—Theory and Method: Negative Dialectics and Queer Reading Practices" addresses the violence that comes with the project of education. Reading is often connected to violence, not just to liberation. Schools are sites of learning to read and write, and the history classroom is a space of learning how to read the world. I examine the idea of the dialectic, which has been important to the development of the history discipline, and the education field. I primarily draw on Theodor Adorno's work on negative dialectics, to question the privileging of the identity over the non-identity, non-identity being all of the contradictions outside of identities. Negative dialectics aims to sit with those contradictions, to consider what is on the other side of being and reason, for example, rather than focus on the redemption and legitimation of those deemed on the other side of being and reason. Queer reading does not seek to redeem, but to speak against power. This section attempts to invert our frame of reference, to be open to new readings, to listen differently to students. How can we challenge them to explore new viewpoints? How can we as teachers learn to create practices of staying open, to not just let our assumptions be affirmed?

"Chapter Three—Being Lesser, Being a Piece of Shit: The Negation of Being and Reason in World History" examines the ontological and epistemological questions that arise when we read student experiences in world history classrooms against works in critical race theory, cultural studies, and queer studies, amongst other frameworks. I specifically utilize the works of Charles Mills and Frantz Fanon to expose underlying logics of exclusion within the world history classroom, which in turn provokes possibilities for more rigorous world history pedagogy.

"Chapter Four—Were the ancient Egyptians black? Racial Identities and Historical Thinking" looks at the intersection of racial identities and historical thinking within an urban public school. By asking 10th grade world history students the question, "Were the ancient Egyptians black?" this research addresses how students' historical thinking often lies outside of the dominant history pedagogy. Many historians would say this is a bad and anachronistic historical question, because the Egyptians did not have the modern construct of race. David Lowenthal (1998) warned against the search for mythic historic lineages which value heritage over history. Where does this line between heritage and history fall for groups that have been excluded from history? Students rely on their naturalized axioms in order to make sense of the past.

"Chapter Five—Reading the World with Suspicion: Between Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, Conspiracy Theory and Critical Theory" explores how marginalized students of color turn to what are popularly called conspiracy theories, and asks how this turn to conspiracy theories outside of school reflects types of critical thinking largely untapped and ignored. What do conspiracy theories offer that they are not getting in school? I assert: 1) these students engage in paranoid readings of the world; 2) students turn to conspiracy theory as a theoretical framework that helps students make sense of the world; 3) paranoid reading is a form of counter-intelligence; 4) these students' paranoid readings of the world offer both a critique of traditional civics curriculum, and reveal a fount of critical inquiry that ought to be paired with forms of historical thinking within the history discipline broadly.

"Chapter Six—Conclusion: A History Pedagogy of Ethics" contemplates where to go from here. Walter Benjamin said, "Being a dialectician means having the wind of history in one's sails. The sails are the concepts. It is not enough, however, to have sails at one's disposal. What is decisive is knowing the art of setting them [N 9,7]" (1999, p. 473). This chapter posits

a history pedagogy based in a practice of ethics, as this oscillation between paranoid and reparative readings. This conclusion draws on Rey Chow's notion of ethics after idealism.

Chapter Two
Theory and Method
Negative Dialectics and Queer Reading Practices

#thelibraryisopen. Twenty-first century reading, darling.
–RuPaul, *RuPaul's Drag Race*

I'mma read that bitch
I'mma school that bitch
I'mma take that bitch to college
I'mma give that bitch some knowledge
–Zebra Katz and Njena Red Foxx

Everything about reading I hate
–Isaiah, 10th grader

A Literacy Gap

Reading is what we do when we make sense of a text. When we read, we rely on prior knowledge, building links between the text and other reference points. When we read a text, the things we connect it to and how we create those relationships matter. What are we doing when we relate texts to each other? Let's take a look at two quotes: one from an interview with a student, and one from an academic text, from esteemed scholars Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis' *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976).

> Tadashi: "What do you think about school, in general?"
> Lee: "It's a weird place. Schools are weird because they just want you to do the same thing. They want you to grow up and go to college, get a job, and then have a family and then watch your kids grow up, and then you die."
> Tadashi: "What do you think about that?"
> Lee: "I don't like that. Because you can see these things happening. It's just stupid. I don't think that's right. Because people don't want to be the same. People want to be different and stuff."

> Conformity to the social order of the school involves submission to a set of authority relationships which are inimical to personal growth. Instead of promoting a healthy balance among the capacity for creative autonomy, diligence, and susceptibility to social regulation, the reward system of the school inhibits those manifestations of personal capacity which threaten hierarchical authority. (Bowles and Gintis, 1976, p. 41-42)

What is the relationship between these two passages? What are our methods for making sense of this data? Am I pointing out that Lee is quite insightful, that his thought should be considered just as valuable as Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis? Am I committing disciplinary violence by matching this student's off-the-cuff comment against thoroughly revised research? What does it do when we label things that students say under certain terms? Am I saying that Bowles and Gintis are getting credit for saying obvious things that any teenager knows, and that Bowles and

Gintis are in fact terribly unoriginal? In order to begin making sense here, we must first explore the underlying assumptions in how we relate these statements.

When we put these two quotes together, it exposes a central tension in this task of doing education research. Reading can be connected to liberation, but reading can be connected to violence as well. There are at times violent effects in the dismissal, and the refusal to recognize. There can be damage done in the seeking of recognition and maintenance of the status quo. There can be violence in creating hierarchies of value. How we read texts implicates us in various forms of the violence of reading. This chapter frames the theory and method behind reading practices from three positions: from a researcher position in how I read student interviews as texts; from a student-as-historian position in how students read historical documents, and from a pedagogical position in how teachers read students. Throughout this dissertation, references to reading practices will move between this researcher context, the student-as-historian context, and the pedagogical context. This chapter utilizes the ideas of negative dialectics and queer reading as tools that help negotiate this tension.

First, I will address the idea of the dialectic, as a structuring principle that influences how I as a researcher encounter my research subjects, how teachers encounter students, and how students encounter history. Digging into the dialectical model is important because it addresses a main model of relationality, central to the establishment of the history discipline and the field's strong Germanic roots, and addresses the relationality between pupil and teacher, and researcher and subject. It provides a larger overarching framework for considering these different relationships. For example, how do students take new historical documents and incorporate them into what they already know about history?

Theodor Adorno's negative dialectics helps us focus on that realm of negation, that other side of being and reason. Briefly, negative dialectics challenges one's tendency to focus on the identity, at the expense of the richness of all of the contradictions and everything outside of that identity. The idea of negative dialectics allows us to dig into the complexities of the relationship between these two statements, to both muddy and clarify their connections.

In addition to negative dialectics, queer reading offers a way to consider the individual practices of making sense of the world. The term queer is inherently set against the notion of identity (and further reflects Adorno's notion of non-identity, which we will come to shortly). The phrase "queer identity" is an oxymoron, a set of terms in contradiction. The notion of queer works against norms, against the status quo, against regimes of exclusion and privilege, and is a marker for a critique of identity formation. Queer reading does not seek to redeem, does not seek recognition which merely reinforces the dominant power structure. Queer reading is the practice of reading against the grain, listening to all of the things outside of the identity that hegemonic ideology wants us to see and hear.

No matter how much I might wish to be free of the ways identity constrains me, my intersectional identities as a gay middle class Japanese American cis-gendered man shape my orientation in reading. Building on Roderick Ferguson's (2004) assertion of a queer of color critique, I explore the particularities of these reading practices, the ways that one's intersecting minoritizations mean that one is always already alien. There is nothing else but to refuse the status quo, to refuse definitions of intelligence, of reason, of civilization. There is nothing else but to engage from that other side of being and reason, that realm of thinking other-wise. Such queer of color critique acknowledges the scars left from having identity formations (particularly racial) tattooed into one's retina, and the material conditions resulting from what society does to minorities, yet attempts to move beyond the limitations of reading through and for identity. Such

queer reading practices point to the non-identity, the disconnection, and the alienation that surrounds us daily but which we might desire to or otherwise be able to ignore.

The Violence of Reading

So, what does the musician Zebra Katz mean by "reading" that bitch? What is implied when he says "I'mma school that bitch?" Perhaps Zebra Katz does not properly understand what the words "read" and "school" actually mean. Do his lyrics sound violent and terrible? One might say this represents the violence in schools and amongst youth and amongst black people. But these lyrics highlight this double valence of the term reading, this civilizing act, exposing the barbaric underbelly of what that action does.

Zebra Katz's use of reading references the vernacular culture within New York City drag balls of the predominantly African American gay community from the 1980's, as documented in the film *Paris is Burning* (1991). Drag queen Dorien Corey explained, "Shade comes from reading. Reading came first." Dorien gave an example of shade as when you express to someone, "I don't tell you you're ugly but I don't have to tell you you're ugly because you KNOW you're ugly". E. Patrick Johnson explained that throwing shade is often nonverbal, which can involve ignoring the other person, to disregard what they said and their existence (Johnson, 1995, p. 126). Reading is the verbalization of throwing shade, and is an age-old means of throwing subs, or subliminals, of subversively saying things to someone, critiquing them without really saying it. Basically, reading someone is the act of interpreting their characteristics (eg, ugly). "Throwing shade" and "reading" are the non-verbal and verbal expressions of that read, or interpretation of another. On the television show *RuPaul's Drag Race*, each season drag queen contestants participate in a mini challenge where they must "read" their opponents, and RuPaul opens the challenge saying, "the library is open." Contestants are judged on their ability to give good reads of their opponents. For example, in her introductory quote in the first episode of season six of *RuPaul's Drag Race*, drag queen Bianca del Rio gave a read of the previous seasons and the other contestants, stating, "I feel it's my duty to show America that some queens have good teeth and good hair." This implied that up until her, all of the drag queens on the show have had bad teeth and bad hair. Another example of reading is, "She [he] tryin' to work them shoes like she got them from a real store, knowing that she got 'em from Payless. SNAP!" (Johnson, 1995, p. 126). These drag queens are reading: they are looking at the body as a text and making sense of it.

In today's New York City classrooms, students talk about throwing subs, or subliminals. Throwing subs is a form of this reading. It is saying something without being explicit in what you are saying. Within one's community, reading and throwing shade can often be playful, as in *RuPaul's Drag Race*. When done on the street to those outside of one's community, reading can be a fierce attack. When a student reads a teacher in a classroom, or throws subs, it is a means of symbolically challenging power, of getting away with critique that just walks the line of getting in trouble.

But does this count as reading? Does it only hold value when the teacher, anthropologist, or greater authorities deem it has value as reading? There is first a violence in defining what counts as reading and writing, the violence within that power to recognize, to label and define and include. This power to deem something as reading or writing can be an abusive and abused power. The violence in this act is reflected in Jacques Derrida's discussion of Claude Lévi-Strauss's "A Writing Lesson" (in *Tristes Tropiques* (1955)) (1997, p. 110). Derrida critiqued Levi-Strauss's refusal, or worse his incapacity, to understand the existence of writing in forms

other than the standard European model. Even when trying to be respectful and comment on alternative forms of writing and reading, many experts become so embedded in their definitions and norms, in the identity formations they are accustomed to, that they misread, and reproduce violence in spite of self-proclaimed respect for others. This violence is systemic, reproduced in the documentation of cultures around the world, in the telling of world histories, in the making sense of students and their learning of world history. It is embedded in the systems of thought, in society's hegemonic ways of making sense of the world.

The development of cultural studies out of the Birmingham School was a project based within disciplinary traditions and methods, which simultaneously pushed against the boundaries and definitions of what counts as a text, and methods for reading those texts. As Stuart Hall summarized, Richard Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy* (1957/2009) deployed "literary criticism to 'read' the emblems, idioms, social arrangements, the lived cultures and 'languages' of working class life, as particular kinds of 'text', as a privileged sort of cultural evidence. In this sense, it continued 'a tradition' while seeking, in practice, to transform it" (1996, p. 5). Cultural studies applied reading methods to interpret neglected cultural archives and documents, particularly mass material culture. By bringing this tradition of "reading" from New York City drag balls into institutionalized discussions of reading, I aim to both acknowledge my position working within the disciplinary space, while questioning the boundaries. What are we doing when we say that this has nothing to do with "serious" literacy strategies? Or that their use of the word "read" has nothing to do with actual literacy? But what happens when we follow RuPaul's lead and consider this as truly twenty-first century reading, darling?

A second form of violence in reading can be found within the very act of teaching one to read. Teaching reading and writing is often seen as this act of bringing one to culture, and yet that bringing one to culture can be both a judgment of prior barbarism and a barbaric act in itself. Literacy and education are intimately linked to violence in American history. Education has been a primary tool of cultural genocide, in order to bring civilization to natives through reading. Native American boarding schools in the US were sites for disciplining Native American children's bodies and minds (Adams, 1995). There can be so much violence in the good intentions of bringing peoples to culture, of recuperation, of granting legitimacy and recognition to groups, of education as civilizing act.

Even within the work of Paulo Freire, whose work I deeply respect for its liberatory project against oppression, something seems missing. Freire asserted that "[r]eading the world always precedes reading the word" (1987, p. 23). He expanded ideas of literacy outside of the classroom, and remained grounded in the material realities of the oppressed. Yet his literacy is tied to a certain teleology of promise, of movement to liberation[3]. He is invested in the promise and the possibilities of literacy. This misses the impossibilities of literacy, the utility of illegibility[4], the queer within the failure of literacy. This misses students like Isaiah, who remain in this space of pessimism, maintaining this stance that "Everything about reading I hate." Queer scholars such as Sara Ahmed's *The Promise of Happiness* (2010), Lauren Berlant's *Cruel Optimism* (2011), and Sianne Ngai's *Ugly Feelings* (2005) address the queer melancholy and

[3] This critique of Freire mirrors Walter Benjamin's critique of the Social Democrats' and vulgar Marxists' progressive pedagogical project, which ignored the destructive side of modernity experienced by the masses (2002, p. 256 & p. 266).

[4] To remain illegible can be a strategy of resistance for marginalized populations, as noted in James C. Scott's *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (1990).

pessimism. It is not that Freire is wrong. It is that in my own respect for and adherence to a Freirean project as a teacher, I continually miss those individuals at the margins of my classroom like Isaiah, and fail to create spaces that actually account for his stance, rather than subsume his stance under oppressive forms of success and failure.

I do not mean that Isaiah ought to be affirmed in his hatred of reading and left there. I am saying that as a tenth grader, strategies to get him to read and to get him to love reading thus far have not worked. Perhaps they will eventually. But perhaps we need to rethink how we attempt to engage students in reading, and rethink how we see the ways they are already engaged in "reading." How we read kids, and how we read the trouble they make might be linked to systems of violence which we ignore. The result of many teachers over the years teaching Isaiah to read has led him to learn to hate reading. There are other factors, but perhaps the failure is in the schooling and the approach rather than in Isaiah.

Reading as the Struggle Over the Production of Meaning

As teachers, we tell students every day what is important for them. We believe that we know better, that we know what is best for them. That's our job; we're paid to do that. We determine what is important for their lives. Within this judgment over knowing better is a judgment that they know worse, their inchoate capacity to think and reason. In our society, there are lowered expectations for students of color, a settling of expectations, of meeting them where they're at developmentally. This mirrors processes within colonialization, of meeting the natives where they're at, of settling expectations given what the colonists have to work with.

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and Black Panthers activist Stokely Carmichael explained, "those who can define are the masters. White Western society has been able to define, and that's why she has been the master" (2007, p. 80)[5]. The capacity to read the world, to have ownership over the ways you read the world; that is a dangerous power. Reading is a political act; it does things (J. L. Austin (1962/1975)). For marginalized populations who have repeatedly been told they're bad, the power to redefine, to create new terms, to imagine themselves otherwise, has been an important tool.

This dissertation primarily uses methods derived from cultural studies to look at and listen to how knowledge/power function for students of color in world history classrooms. At many moments in this dissertation, I utilize a Marxism-inflected framework, such as Zeus Leonardo's assertion that the means of production and the production of meaning are overlapping processes (Leonardo, 2010, p. 17). The Marxist linguist Volosinov explained that each ideological sign has an inner dialectical quality, yet the established ideology's dominance over the sign's meaning submerges all other contradictory meanings (Volosinov, 1973/1986, p. 23-24). These contradictions come out through revolutionary change. How can reading subvert the status quo relations of the production of meaning?

Within the Hegelian-Marxist discourse of the dialectic, the idea of *aufheben* is central. It is often translated as sublation. *Aufheben* has this performative quality to it, the two parts of the verb meaning to lift[6] (*heben*) onto/upon (*auf*). Both of the terms, "understanding" and "aufheben," infer action. Implied in the verb *aufheben*, as something is lifted up, something else

[5] The articulation of Western society as female is interesting here. Is this to be seen as a sexist putdown? Or a reproduction of past visual imagery of land and the spirit of civilizations as female?

[6] This is one meaning of the verb. The verb *heben* also means to preserve.

is obscured, set underneath[7]. In understanding, something is similarly standing under. Whose term is then lifted up, set above? The primacy of *aufheben* in the Hegelian-Marxist discourse of the dialectic often means that all history is made understandable through Hegel's universal "Reason", and Marx's "class." It becomes teleological, and less dialectical.

In high school history textbooks such as McDougall Littel's*: Patterns of Interaction* (2006), we find this progressive narrative of history, where differences are subsumed under a European development of reason. The relationship between the French Revolution and the Haitian Revolution exemplify this. Unit 2 is titled "Absolutism to Revolution 1500-1900" with Chapter 7 focused on "The French Revolution and Napoleon", and Chapter 8 focused on "Nationalist Revolutions Sweep the West". The first section of Chapter 8 is "Latin American Peoples Win Independence", and the second subsection, "Revolutions in the Americas" is about 2/3 of the page, focused on the Haitian Revolution. Within the physical structure of this textbook, we are made to only understand the Haitian Revolution as an iteration of the French Revolution, a mere 2/3 of a page in this larger unit on Europe's trajectory from absolutism to revolution. We understand it under the terms that we learn first, those of the French Revolution. To frame the Haitian Revolution as just like the French Revolution has a certain violence to it. Even to say the Haitian Revolution is just as important as the French Revolution can carry violence. The sentence structure "just as ____ as ____" seems to imply a symmetry, and yet it reinforces hierarchy, a seeking of recognition as valid. The primacy of the original is set above the secondary lesser one. If this structure were contextualized as one way of making sense of the Haitian Revolution amongst many, there would be less concern. The problem lies in how such curricular narratives limit the understanding of places outside of Europe solely when they enter a larger Eurocentric narrative, or fit under European models. This connotes a consumptive form of the dialectic, which we will return to later.

This concept of *aufheben* applies to how we read those two statements above by the student Lee and by Bowles and Gintis. How do I put these two ideas in relation to each other? There is a certain violence in taking what Lee said, and subsuming it under established theory. I make Lee's words legitimate because I fit it under pre-existing legitimate thought. I create lineages of citations. This might seem good to legitimize student thought as actually relating to this high theory, but it maintains these power relations. Bowles and Gintis are not the only ones aware that this process happens. Lee did not conduct an intensive quantitative data analysis to come to his conclusion. He synthesizes his daily experiences in school; he is an expert in knowing schools. Reading these two statements can easily have a tone of showing the legitimacy of student thought in how it is similar to established valued thought. But this mirrors the violence of saying that black people did great things comparable to the greatness of white Europeans, such as the Haitian Revolution. The violence lies in limiting valid interpretations to one line of logic. How can we read and make sense while being aware of and minimizing the violence in such acts?

My aim is to open up other ways of reading students, and historical texts, other than the readings we expect, and are trained to look for according to state standards and exams. Showing how Lee's ideas are similar to Bowles and Gintis is important, and it is also important to show how Bowles and Gintis came to their conclusion through rigorous research methods and revision.

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[7] Walter Kaufman (1978) discussed aufheben, as sublation, as what happens when thesis and antithesis interact. Gayatri Spivak also discussed aufheben in Derrida's *Grammatology* (1997, xi).

But we can read Lee's statement outside of this as well. This requires a deeper discussion of the dialectic.

I. Negative Dialectics

Hegel's Dialectic

The kind of dialectic we imagine can reveal or hide the underlying political relations between past and present, identity and difference, student and historical object, and experience and historical knowledge.[8] I will trace five articulations of the "dialectic" to examine how this concept has the potential to frame inquiry into the relations of knowledge production in the world history classroom[9]. I will first outline the prevailing "Hegelian" dialectical model, followed by Marx's dialectical materialism. Thirdly, Adorno's reinterpretation of the dialectic, which employs the terms identity and non-identity, provides the foundation for moving beyond the limitations of the first two understandings of the dialectic. I expand Adorno's framework to a more global level of world history through the contributions of Frantz Fanon and the Subaltern Studies Group, to address both ontological and epistemological issues within the dialectic. Finally, I will examine how both queer theory and critical disability studies allow us to consider the dialectical experience of knowledge production within the history classroom.

Although he never framed a dialectic under these terms (Kaufmann, 1965/1978/), Hegel's dialectic is often mistakenly attributed to and simplified as a repeated thesis-antithesis-synthesis structure, as an ultimately forward-moving spiral. Regarding world history curriculum, I will focus more on how he has been popularly taken up and how this "Hegelian" model has impacted world history rather than his actual writings. Admittedly, I do not properly examine the complexity of Hegel's dialectic, and present this oversimplified popular model of his dialectic (and I admit that doing so participates in misreading and misrepresenting Hegel). In each cycle of the dialectic, the identity of the thesis remains dominant, the antithesis gets folded into the thesis, and the resulting synthesis maintains some aspect of the original thesis. In the Hegelian model, change occurs over the course of history, yet the World Spirit remains an unquestioned and consistent unit, the thread of Reason that is always already there throughout each dialectical encounter.

This Hegelian model makes two important contributions. One, it places within the narrative those who have otherwise been solely the objects of history. Second, it emphasizes that the position of the master and the slave are essentially intertwined through the notion of dialectic. For example, one could tell the story of the slave in isolation, yet Hegel's dialectic demands that the master is understandable only in relation to the slave, and vice versa. Education research that simply focuses on getting failing students to join the ranks of successful students structurally

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[8] The notion of the dialectic itself can be a limiting structure, inherently reliant on the binary. For example, many French scholars, such as Foucault, Deleuze, and Derrida, have pushed against the dependence on the dialectical structure. The dialectic is a particularly useful way to approach world history pedagogy, however, because it demands a broad interrogation of power relations in the world history classroom.

[9] My explanations here do not do justice to the complexity of each scholar's writing, and I admittedly fold some scholars under the language of dialectics, even though they might not conventionally be categorized as dialectical scholars; my aim is to rather loosely map the terrain I bear in mind as I observe this process of knowledge production in the classroom.

miss the intertwining relational character of how the success of some students is dialectically dependent upon the failure of others in school (Brantlinger 2006).

Two limitations result from Hegel's model, however. Its application usually necessitates a teleology toward a set end-goal, and it privileges an unbalanced narrative structure, focused on the fulfillment of a particular understanding of Reason, thereby ignoring everything outside of that fulfillment of reason. Within Hegel's commitment to Reason is a rather undialectical teleology. The structure of a mainstream high school modern world history textbook exemplifies how the Hegelian dialectic shapes many world history classrooms. The "Prologue" of McDougal Littell's *Modern World History: Patterns of Interaction* (2006) textbook is titled, "The Rise of Democratic Ideas", with sections on "The Legacy of Ancient Greece and Rome", "Judeo-Christian Tradition", "Democracy Develops in England", and "The Enlightenment and Democratic Revolutions" (Beck et al. 2006, vii). As a prologue, these sections set the terms through which modern world history is to be understood and narrated, defining this continuous thread of Reason. This continuous thread of reason reproduces Hegel's model of history as progressive movement of the World Spirit and Reason, but is not actually dialectical. Such curricula create a universal identity of the modern global citizen, and the ideal democratic nation-state, narrowly defined through European categories and values.

A teleology with reified terms does not alone equal a dialectic. As the textbook narrative progresses, these categories are utilized to make sense of any encounter with difference, the World Spirit as Reason sublates difference under these terms of the ideal nation-state, and the ideal citizen-subject. I relate a pejorative aspect of sublation within a Hegelian dialectic to Carla Freccero's (2006) uses the term cannibalism: "cannibalism is the desire to make what is other same, to annihilate or assimilate the other by incorporation" (p. 88). Although sublation leads to the retention of aspects of both thesis and antithesis, it ultimately privileges the preservation of the status quo in the form of this continuous thread of Reason[10].

As the textbook narrative encounters difference, it consumes difference and incorporates it under the established terms of Reason. The dialectical synthesis is *aufgehoben*, lifted up, with difference-as-other present, yet domesticated under/within Reason. By not questioning and attending to the negation, this narrative structure naturalizes the process of European domination, concealing all contradictions to the narrative. Any regions or peoples outside of Europe (and even those marked as different within Europe) must seek legibility under these predetermined ideals. In such a framework, minority groups identify within the category of difference, and seek inclusion and recognition within the existing dominant narrative.

Likewise, students are judged by the school system as intelligent and reasonable according to a predetermined end-goal of the good democratic citizen. Traditional models of learning emphasize the Hegelian affirmation of Reason's continuous thread at the expense of an actual dialectic. The student begins with their deficient knowledge base, and through each encounter with difference, folds difference into pre-existing categories, making difference intelligible and incrementally moving closer to becoming intelligent. The prevailing version of the Hegelian dialectic limits pedagogical work by skewing the lens to filter out difference in order to sharpen the visibility of a particular preconceived notion of Reason. Students that exist outside of these notions of reason and intelligence are categorized as failures and unintelligent (Erevelles & Minear 2010), but may become intelligent by incrementally moving closer to these

[10] The prevalence of this Western thread of Reason within spaces of learning has been documented and analyzed in John Willinsky's *Learning to Divide the World* (1998).

predetermined ideals of reason and intelligence. Any divergent forms of intelligence (i.e. Gramsci's organic intellectuals) are filtered out of view, and students are coerced to seek recognition as intelligent along a singular path. As the next chapter notes, the New York state Global History and Geography Regents exams provides teachers with a scoring and rating guide which includes predicted and expected interpretations of evidence and argumentation for grading student essays. This then encourages teachers to teach students those predictable lines of reason and interpretation that graders are told to look out for.

Historians such as Collingwood utilize this universal thread of Reason as a defining aspect of our shared humanity across time and space that allows historians to imagine what Caesar might have thought crossing the Rubicon. Students are capable of historical thinking solely through their ability to tap into this continuous thread of the World Spirit as Reason. What we need is not to abandon an idea of a shared humanity, but to critically examine the construction of that humanity, and the range of human experiences we validate in the classroom.

Marx's Dialectical Materialism

Marx's dialectical materialism made two major contributions central to this conversation. First, he moved the conversation from the idea to production and the material, and second, he shifted the focus to the proletariat rather than the slave. Marx inverted Hegel's focus on liberation through the ideal realm by placing the material reality of economic relations as prior to the ideal. This shifts the world history narrative from focusing on the successful development of Reason, to revealing the struggles of the underclass, valorizing the slave's liberation from the master. This attention to materiality also acknowledges the resource inequalities within schooling, and emphasizes how these material inequalities shape possibilities of learning. In the classroom, this also means that how one interprets world history is not based in a universal understanding of Reason. A proletarian student will often understand a historical event differently than a bourgeois student.

Marx's dialectic is often applied, however, in a manner that reproduces the structured relationship of sublation between this universal ideal of communism in the future, and difference, which is intelligible only under his universal categories of class and labor. Privileging class as the transhistorical category means that race and gender, for instance, remain secondary to class, and class remains just as unquestioned and unhistoricized as Hegel's Reason, incorporating any difference under the project of class.

The preservation of Hegel's dialectic structure requires that difference seek visibility through assimilation into the existing teleological narrative. Many teachers might call for a Howard Zinn version of a world history textbook to counteract this dominant Eurocentric narrative, yet this merely replaces one progressive narrative structure for another, maintaining the subservience of difference toward that dominant European universal identity. Such a populist framework ultimately relies on a narrow politics of recognition, which reinforces, rather than challenges, the dominance of History's central categories.

Adorno's Negative Dialectic

Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin articulate the third dialectic. Walter Benjamin (2002) asserted that the application of Marx's dialectical materialism often remains teleological, reproducing the status quo rather than challenging it. By maintaining the predetermined teleological progressive narrative and the relations of history knowledge's production, there is little room for the organic critique of the underclass. Rather, experts of Marxist history remain in

a privileged position to instruct the correct means of interpretation within this new regime of knowledge production. Although Marx and Hegel herald difference, they do so in a way that folds difference into the narrative. Adorno's attention to negation's relational complexity resolves this problem I have signaled of continually dismissing the realm of negation and absence in the history and the student, on behalf of affirming what is present.

One critique of the social justice approach in the world history classroom is that its focus becomes political content and the redemption of the injured subject in the present, and not a disciplinary intervention into the relations of knowledge production. Theodor W. Adorno (1982) warns of the idolization of difference in the form of the peasant in Brecht's work. The peasant as difference becomes flattened into the new good identity, serving as evidence of the Marxist historian's progressive narrative against the tyranny of the dominant identity that once claimed itself good. This idolization of difference solidifies "difference" in an antagonistic static relationship against "identity", turning "difference" into its own identity category. In the name of a radical Marxist politics, student experiences of difference are often honored as legitimate knowledge and interpretation, un-interrogated, in an attempt to right past wrongs against their identities as subjugated peoples.

Rather than relying on difference, Adorno (2007) begged a focus on the non-identity, as all of the contradictions that resist being folded into conceptual identity[11]. For Adorno, part of the task of critical thought is to train one's mind to constantly consider the non-identity, in spite of the identity that the dominant liberal rationality claims things to be. This liberal rationality determines who and what counts in history, as well as which bodies and knowledge count in the history classroom. Adorno's re-articulation of the dialectic, as this constant awareness of the tension between identity and non-identity, allows us to loosen the limitations of Hegel's and Marx's dialectical models.

Relations of Knowledge Production

Moving beyond a teleological model of learning requires us to resituate students, teachers, and historical texts, within the production of meaning in the classroom[12]. Rather than knowledge as a pre-packaged product consumed by students, knowledge is produced by students interacting with historical texts through their specific relational experience with history. Additionally, historical objects must be understood in their own right, rather than as mere objects of the subject. A past that is understood solely for the development of the student in the present loses its depth, and the complexity of the historical object's non-identity (all of its contradictions) gets ignored.

When we resituate knowledge out of the hands of the teacher, and place it relationally between students and texts, we encounter a new problem of what authority the teacher has, and how that teacher corrects misinterpretations, or misunderstandings of the text. Within my research, and the scholars I engage, there is an underlying commitment to history as a discipline, and at least a minimal investment in drawing some line between legitimate interpretations of the past and illegitimate ones. Ultimately, students' experiences with the text are mediated by their

[11] Adorno's emphasis on non-identity did not mean he appreciated all difference. Adorno has been critiqued for being very elitist in his own hierarchizing of culture. For example, he repeatedly wrote critiques of jazz as a cultural form (1944/2002, p. 101).

[12] This section has been developed primarily through the works of Walter Benjamin and Fredric Jameson.

contemporary mode of production, and the political unconscious (Jameson, 1981). When we ask students to interpret a historical text, they do so based on their contemporary framework of what those words or images mean.

This calls for honing students' skills in perception, to read texts with an awareness of the historicized modes of production of their own time and place, as well as historicize the text under scrutiny. Rather than the teacher telling students why an Aztec pyramid represents grand civilizational achievement in the Americas, this framework calls for a constant questioning of readings, to contextualize this object within the relations of its production and preservation, and to reveal how students' positions within contemporary society shape their readings of this object. Adorno's negative dialectics directs this pedagogy to consider the non-identity of the historical object, all of its contradictions that go against the identity that the dominant paradigm wants it to be. This also forces a consideration of the non-identity of the student outside of the prescribed rational global citizen identity.

This focus on the non-identity allows space for different student interpretations outside of the teacher's expected interpretations. Additionally, Fredric Jameson's focus on the relational experience and modes of production moves beyond a depoliticized cognitive psychology framework that might historicize the past, but fails to historicize the present, and the position of students within our contemporary unequal relations of production. This also moves beyond an affirming and progressive curricular agenda that aims to validate any student experience with history, but fails to interrogate the past in all of its complexity and contradictions.

Critique of the Dialectic

Dipesh Chakrabarty (2009) critiqued Jameson for deeming "mode of production" and "the political unconscious" as the means to interpret history across time, universalizing, rather than historicizing, these terms as tools for understanding. The fourth articulation of the dialectic is exemplified in the subaltern studies group, extending Adorno's dialectical model in a more global historical context. The subaltern studies group examined the construction of identity as European universals, through subsuming global difference as "other", as particularities of the European universal categories (Chakrabarty, 2009). The subaltern studies group furthered these questions by interrogating the possibilities for difference to be knowable, and how to write histories of the subaltern. The subaltern represents that which has been unknowable, through their exclusion from the production of archives and documents. Rather than understand archives and documents as the raw materials which the historian reads through the tools of objectivity, subaltern studies exposes the politically unequal relations of world history's production. How can we read past the identity of historical documents, to destabilize our reading practices, and interrogate the non-identity and the realm of difference embedded within each document?

These scholars, often working on the fringes of the history discipline, have pushed against the givenness of the historical subject. Gayatri Spivak (1988) referred to the subject-effect, the appearance of an operating subject through the confluence of strands of history, ideology, language, politics, and so forth. Joan Scott (1991) similarly asserted that writing histories of difference must contest rather than reproduce ideological systems which naturalize these categorical identities of difference; that historical knowledge shapes subjective experience, and that subjective experience shapes historical knowledge (Scott, 1991). Drawing attention to the underlying dominant ideological system, Scott (1991) wrote, "The project of making experience visible precludes analysis of the workings of this system and of its historicity; instead, it reproduces its terms" (p. 779). I turn to student experiences as a beginning point for

the classroom, but turn to history as a tool of alienation from the givenness of the terms students rely on to make sense of their worlds.

In the world history classroom, promoting a transhistorical humanity, determined through this narrow vision of Reason and the global citizen, places the very notion of being human at stake. Frantz Fanon (2008) and Charles Mills (1997) both pointed to the underlying ontological determination of who is capable of being a subject of history and Reason, prior to any questions of recovering histories of the "other." Enlightenment's ideals of Reason and historical development are dialectically dependent upon the constructions of those beyond and outside of Reason and history. Thus, the very forces that allowed the enslavement of peoples as sub-human reverberate within the world history curriculum and the classroom.

Through his notion of analectics, Enrique Dussel (1985) moved beyond the positioning within a Hegelian dialectics, wherein the third world, the subaltern, is always already negative and "other". Through analectics, there is the understanding of alterity, and an emphasis on singularity. Dussel interrogated the construction of the totality, of Europe as the center, and its violent impact on the geopolitics of knowledge, throughout history, and how we talk about theory. Analectics attempts a more global understanding of knowledge production, and more geopolitically contextualized. For example, rather than the textbook tendency to inscribe the Haitian Revolution under the terms of the French Revolution, how can the Haitian Revolution be understood outside of a European framework? Instead of rooting this revolution in the Enlightenment, we can encourage students to ask what epistemological influences within West African thought and traditions might have influenced this revolution? Maroon societies in the Caribbean become central under analectics, as this refusal to seek recognition, to not seek legitimacy by those with power, but to create and imagine new societies outside of the oppressive society. Analectics unsettles the position of negation, but it perhaps allows one to ignore the realities of power structures over the other.

Queer and Disability Studies and the Dialectic

Finally, queer studies and disability studies offer a fifth elaboration of the dialectic. These fields consider material bodies in real spaces, and question the hierarchical relationship of the identity of the normal (or "normate" (Thomson, 1997) body over bodies of difference, whose goal is to earn legitimate entry into the world of normalcy. Much work in disability studies critiques the medical model, which views the student as the problem, as difference, and aims to assimilate that different student into the identity of the good and able student. This is ultimately a reproduction of the status quo, following a flattened version of the Hegelian dialectical structure, rather than a systemic intervention. In seeking to open up space for marginalized students in the world history classroom, how do we do so in a manner that does not merely fold them into preexisting categories of legitimacy?

Extending Walter Benjamin's critique of narrative, these frameworks additionally aid in disrupting the authority of the flat progressive teleology adhered to in traditional world history classrooms by breaking with narrative. Scholars such as Lee Edelman (2004) and Judith Halberstam (2011) question the equating of failure with bad; queer bodies that fail to reproduce need not seek redemption by finding surrogate paths to reproduction. Halberstam (2011) explained, "failure allows us to escape the punishing norms that discipline behavior and manage human development with the goal of delivering us from unruly childhoods to orderly and predictable adulthoods. Failure preserves some of the wondrous anarchy of childhood and disturbs the supposedly clean boundaries between adults and children, winners and losers" (p. 3).

Ultimately, the lure of history to reify our identities as good people of progress restricts rather than liberates. These scholars allow space for the barbaric and the failure to escape the promise of legitimacy, and engage the utility of pessimism rather than the tyranny of optimism. When a subaltern student is unable to find historic legitimacy by tracing their lineage of greatness through the archive, when a student reacts negatively to history class in a way that gets labeled as irrational and against the expectations of a responsible citizen, these frameworks provide a different way of understanding that student.

Through a critical disability studies framework, it is history as a discipline that fails, rather than the individuals of difference (in the past and the present) that fail at history. Instead of understanding these individuals simply as failures, what is their relational experience with history, in light of their current position within societal relations of production? What might a pessimistic interpretation of the history classroom reveal that is otherwise dismissed as teenage rebellion or irrationality?

Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* (2007) points to the various ways that a Hegelian dialectics affirms identity at the expense of non-identity's complexity. Attention to the relations between identity and non-identity means that we cannot simply change the curricular narrative, but must also examine the dialectical relations of epistemologies on a global scale, and the construction of trans-historical categories that generalize difference into identical continuity. Interrogating the dialectic within pedagogic practices shifts the focus from getting failing students to meet status quo definitions of the good student, to consider learning history from the position of negation[13] and social marginalization, how these students experience and relate to history from that position. The dialectic requires that the experience of knowing history be interrogated within the discipline of history, regarding how the historian can know the past, while simultaneously addressing the ideological systems that undergird research methods on how students learn and know history in the classroom.

II. Queer Reading

Positionalities and Orientations

One must learn how to read for the non-identity, or rather, one must unlearn how to read identity in what one sees. Building on Foucault's notion of bio-power, bodies matter when talking about reading and making sense. The classrooms in which I spend my time tend to be in schools with a large number of white staff members of a more middle-class standing, teaching students who overall receive free/reduced price lunch, live in high poverty areas, and are mostly black and Latino. The race and class dynamics matter here. The ways that I am not like the students in these schools makes me complicit in the reproduction of violence in the reading of students, data, texts, and in the writing of this dissertation. My particular body shapes how others have placed me socially, which in turn influences my social position and orientation towards my object of study.

As Martin Jay (2002) noted in his review of David Simpson's *Situatedness* (2002), there is this dilemma in knowing which identity category is responsible for a particular understanding. I mean to acknowledge how such identity categories are made to matter in daily practice, and

[13] I do not mean to construct history that sympathizes with all of the losers of history. The US Confederacy and fascism in Europe must be examined in all of their complexity, but ultimately an analysis of power is what is required. In the conclusion, I emphasize a practice of ethics, as this attention to power and its dangers.

would be remiss to comment on how my not being a low-income black or Latino teenager in New York City means that I don't understand how being black or Latino and poor in New York would shape how I think about things. This emphasis on positionality is the beginning point, not the end point. Ultimately, the aim is to put those attachments to identity into question, and take time to notice all of the things outside of those emphasized social identity categories.

Sara Ahmed's work on queer phenomenology stressed that bodies are effected by sedimented histories. "Phenomenology helps us to explore how bodies are shaped by histories, which they perform in their comportment, their posture, and their gestures…What bodies "tend to do" are effects of histories rather than being originary" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 56). Our identities are inscribed into our flesh, branded, and we learn to respond when we are referred to by those identities, those histories, not just by society at large, but by our families, our loved ones, our friends.

The presence of theory in this work reflects a tension between those who have been made to feel at home in theory spaces, versus those who have been positioned as objects of theory and made to feel outside of and below a theoretical realm. My use of theory in this dissertation positions me within that realm, and exposes me as participating in that history of exclusion. I grew up seeing theory as merely the realm of dead white men, something that people of color and women just do not do. Marginalized populations have always had to theorize on their own, however, to imagine the world outside of what they've been taught by the dominant forces.

The use of theory here also appears at odds with my desire as a teacher to always produce practical curricular documents and lesson materials that I could use in my high school classroom. But even when teachers are given critical curricula, if it is understood and implemented under the influence of white supremacy and capitalism, it ultimately reproduces the status quo. Really solid curricula must come from listening to one's own students in their contexts, to how they think and how they read the world, and learning better how to make sense of what students say (Giroux (1988), Apple (2004), Dozono (2016)). Those skills of listening, of taking pause, of meditating on and mediating how we make sense of what students say and think, are ultimately what this dissertation is about.

The reading practices present derive from my particular orientations, associations, and social vocabularies. I had to reimagine how I was taught to understand myself, to transform my own relationality to the world. Growing up in the 1980's, I learned to understand my body through the movies I watched, showing Japanese businessmen as nerdy, bespectacled, emasculated, unattractive and often lustful chasing after white women (*Bachelor Party* (1984), *Gung Ho* (1986), *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961). Through these gendered, sexualized, xenophobic renderings of American paranoia of Asia's rise, I internalized that Asian male bodies such as mine are sexual jokes[14]. As a gay man, I grew up knowing I was wrong, and learned to hide what was deemed shameful and bad. I grew up experiencing forms of psychological negation, and I spent much of my adolescence trying to make myself straight, thinking that perhaps it would be better to be dead than to be gay for the rest of my life. I learned that my body was at odds with the American norm, and was dysfunctional in the project of America.

I eventually learned to read the world queerly. I sought out Greek mythology in sixth grade because there were sexual relationships between same-sex gods, and gods and men. I was drawn to Kafka's stories for their strange and peculiar happenings. I learned to invert those status

[14] I did not grow up watching Bruce Lee's films, which were produced within Hong Kong's context of race, sexuality, and gender, and fit differently into this set of images. However, because his films were widely watched in the US, I was aware of how he symbolized a version of strong Asian masculinity.

quo relationships that negate certain bodies. The identities I have grown to adhere to shape how I am oriented toward a particular object. As one who has grown up in a society that sees me as wrong, as bad at my core, as going against the basics of human nature and existence (the failure or refusal to reproduce), I read the world in search of deviation, of that which is negated and alien.

Queerness reminds me to resist the temptation to prove that I'm good, to get redemption, to seek recognition and legitimacy. I am weary of the push for multicultural histories that memorialize dead cultures for the sake of legitimizing present identities, at the expense of loosening the firmament for new ways of thinking, or at the expense of the complexity and richness of the past. This aligns with transformative justice work in schools, to move beyond decreasing student suspensions and changing the ways we punish students for behavior, to transform teachers' ways of interacting with students in the classroom, teachers' authority over knowledge/power/reason, and students' relations to knowledge and school and world history.

Even in how teachers claim authority over their own identities ought to be disrupted. My students sometimes read whiteness in my racial performance, and comment on it. That is their reading of the world and of me. During my first year teaching in New York, I referred to myself as a person of color, and my almost exclusively black and Latino students argued back that I'm not a person of color. My initial reaction was to further argue to them that in fact, I was a person of color, that I had studied this as an undergraduate, and that there is all of this literature around ethnic studies that Japanese Americans and Asian Americans have contributed to. But I stopped myself to consider that perhaps they were right. They have had a completely different set of experiences from me, that according to them, in their frame of reference, I didn't fit into that category. While I might see alignments of oppression in some ways, I don't know what it feels like to be a black and/or Latino youth in New York City public schools. I might share some sense of experience of alienation, of oppression, but there is a difference there. One might argue that Asian Americans, like Jewish Americans, have been "whitened." In some ways, these students put forth a non-essentialist, non-skin color theorization of race that I was tempted to shut down. The task is to disrupt these lines of difference, to peer into the non-identity of my and their ways of understanding the world, and our adherence to our identity categories.

The Refusal to be Read

Isaiah said, "everything about reading I hate." For most teachers, there is probably a desire to correct this. We must find the right books for Isaiah, so that he sees that he can actually enjoy reading. But there is something else worth noting in Isaiah's statement. There is this thread of refusal in several other statements of his addressed throughout the dissertation: a refusal to answer questions, a turning away from history. The refusal has long been a technology of the marginalized. Queer reading practices work against the desire for recognition, because recognition merely upholds the hegemonic power dynamic. By asking for recognition, one accepts their own subordination in the need to ask. Foucault saw that "[v]isibility is a trap" (1975/1995, p. 200). He used Bentham's conceptualization of the panopticon, as a prison with a central surveillance tower surrounded by a peripheral ring of cells, to exemplify the modern technology for discipline and punishment. "Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power"" (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 201). In asking to have one's queer identity recognized, there is a demand to be read in a certain way, asking for a legitimized form of difference and to be accepted into the vocabulary of a politics of recognition. The desire and need to be historical,

to be included into a narrative of historical legitimacy. One can find comfort in being swaddled within the confines of narrative possibility.

As Isaiah noted in the introduction, school feels like a prison. Many students resist school rules that maintain constant surveillance. School is a space where students are required to ask for recognition as smart. In the classroom, the hoodie and headphones serve as the anti-panopticon. For many students, it is their technological counter-move against recognition, cutting off visibility, and cutting off their sensory receptors. We don't need recognition from a system that negates us.

There is something else in the refusal to be read, and to read. Halberstam emphasized the value of illegibility against discipline, stating "Illegibility may in fact be one way of escaping the political manipulation to which all university fields and disciplines are subject" (2011, p. 10). There is agency in this refusal to be interpellated by hegemonic identity formations, the refusal to turn and look, to be seen. Jose Esteban Muñoz's *Disidentifications* (1999) explained this refusal: "Disidentification is meant to be descriptive of the survival strategies the minority subject practices in order to negotiate a phobic majoritarian public sphere that continuously elides or punishes the existence of subjects who do not conform to the phantasm of normative citizenship" (p. 4). It is not the student that is the problem in refusing to participate in the project of public education. What is it about Isaiah's educational experience that has led him to turn away from it?

Some formerly enslaved persons escaped to create maroon societies in the Caribbean, disregarding and dismissing the dominant system of power. For Neil Roberts, the notion of "marronage" becomes a useful concept and tool. "Flight from the zone of nonbeing to zones of refuge results in keeping states at a distance. Escape from state legibility and the enactment of local forms of lawmaking, epistemology, organization, agriculture, and relations is a mechanism to avoid the appropriating dynamics of state power" (Roberts, 2015, p. 152). My goal is not to encourage Isaiah to turn away from school, but to acknowledge the ways school and the state have perhaps ultimately worked against him.

We can return to Nietzsche's moral inversion of the status quo, in how the lambs know who is good and bad, in opposition to the birds of prey. Stokely Carmichael knew that he was not the problem, but rather white society's incompetency. "I know I can live anyplace I want to live. It is white people across this country who are incapable of allowing me to live where I want. You need a civil rights bill, not me. The failure of the civil rights bill isn't because of Black Power or because of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee or because of the rebellions that are occurring in the major cities. That failure is due to the whites' incapacity to deal with their own problems inside their own communities" (Carmichael, 2007, p. 47-48). The Black Panthers knew better than to rely on mainstream white society to understand and respect and care for black America. Schools taught Isaiah to hate reading. The failure is in the typical world history classroom's incapacity to make sense of Isaiah. As stated in the introduction, one principle in the movement to abolish prisons is the notion that no one is disposable. A society must meet the needs of everyone, especially those of the most marginalized. What needs to change in the classrooms Isaiah has been in in order to allow him to benefit from his education rather than turn away from it?

Learning to Read: Ethics, Mediation, and Meditation

Queer reading works against the violence of power structures. It works against the violence in speaking for and about others, and towards means of listening. Queer reading practices are connected to critical theory lineages (Walter Benjamin's mediating reading

practices, Jacques Ranciere's staking an ignorant position to students), to women of color epistemologies (Patricia Hill Collins, Gloria Anzaldua) and feminist/queer scholars (Halberstam's low theory, Eve Sedgwick's reparative reading), all of which emphasize forms of listening that question what you do with what you've heard, how you make sense of what you've listened to. These practices build one's critical capacities to dismantle rather than uphold the status quo.

The reading practices here attend to ethics, and mediation, and meditation. Chapter Five will develop the notions of mediation and meditation through Eve Sedgwick's paranoid and reparative reading. The conclusion builds toward this notion of reading through ethics. Ethics is about power over oneself, to both own one's investments, and be simultaneously critical of these investments. Rey Chow emphasized the need for reading practices based in "ethics," in contrast to mores and morality which adhere to common sense identities of good and bad. Chow's ethics emphasized "non-benevolent readings," and a "willingness to destroy the submission to widely accepted, predictable, and safe conclusions" (1998, p. xxii). Her ethics builds on Adorno's negative dialectics, and utilizes the notion of non-identity. We must resist those temptations to read identity and a positive ideal into texts, into students, and into ourselves. We cannot read the meanings that we want to see in things. Just as the reader in the present must assert their agency in the production of meaning, we ought to practice an ethics towards the object of study. We must not enforce our interpretive and political desires upon the past, or upon the students we teach and read.

The work here is about learning to listen better. Not just get students to listen to the past with open ears, but how to listen to our students. Not just engage them in what we know, but to recognize and listen to how they are always already engaged. We miss so much in our assumptions of expertise. Edward Said proposed that "the intellectuals' spirit as an amateur can enter and transform the merely professional routine most of us go through into something much more lively and radical: instead of doing what one is supposed to do one can ask why one does it, who benefits from it, how can it reconnect with a personal project and original thoughts." (1994, p. 83). Through these interviews with students, the complexities of their thought comes through when we take the time to meditate upon their words, to slow down, to withhold our position as experts. When we mediate past our desires to see what we want or need to see, we can better listen to what they are saying, or not saying.

In restorative justice work, one of the needs is to have people's stories heard. In mediation work, developing skills of listening are central, to allow people's perspectives, and systems of reasoning, to be heard. For many, there is a need to first feel heard before you can hear what someone else is saying.

Through ethics, we come to respect the relationships between differing contexts and social positions. In the world history classroom, there has been increased emphasis on historicizing the text. In order to really understand what Lincoln is saying, we must read all of this background information, to contextualize his words, thoughts, and actions. But as teachers, we miss so many statements, so many meanings, when we dismiss the richness of our students' contexts of their knowledge and experiences. Too many teachers, myself included, don't know how to read the context clues to understand what students say. Reading students with ethical practices means constantly questioning how we relate things students say to things we think we know, interrogating our own means of making sense of them.

Chapter Three
Being Lesser, Being a Piece of Shit:
The Negation of Being and Reason in World History

It was well understood that if by the teaching of history the white man could be further assured of his superiority and the Negro could be made to feel that he had always been a failure, and that the subjection of his will to some other race is necessary, then, he would still be a slave.
--- Carter G. Woodson, *The Miseducation of the Negro*

To him who looks upon the world rationally, the world in its turn presents a rational aspect.
--- Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*

However odd this might sound to readers of a collection on world history, millions of people still live outside "history." They do have theories of the past; they do believe that the past is important and shapes the present and the future, but they also recognize, confront, and live with a past different from that constructed by historians and historical consciousness. They even have a different way of arriving at that past
--- Ashis Nandy "History's Forgotten Doubles"

Objectives

This chapter focuses on several moments during 10th grade student interviews when students expressed forms of negation through history, and exclusion from being recognized as fully human. What are the logics of exclusion within a world history classroom, and how do these logics of exclusion reproduce themselves within student experiences of disengagement, alienation, and exclusion from the curricular narrative? What if we take their ideas that often get categorized as unreasonable and irrational as part of their own legitimate systems of logic? I employ works from critical theory, cultural studies, critical race theory, disability studies, and queer studies, to conduct a different reading of these students. These frameworks redirect our gaze to the exclusionary logics of reason, the politicized construction of history as a discipline, and the impact of distinctions between being and non-being, civilized and savage, in world history. My aim is to intervene into these moments when we as teachers dismiss what students are saying, to understand the impacts history has on how students understand themselves, how history has engaged them, and how they engage history.

Being Lesser, Being a Piece of Shit

By looking at students' relationships to world history, we can see both a certain logic of subordination, as well as a logic of exclusion. The world history classroom is a crucial site for this inquiry because of claims often made that world history is about our shared humanity. For example, the UCLA website for the National Standards for World History claims that these "standards rest on the premise that our schools must teach a comprehensive history in which all students may share. That means a history that encompasses humanity" (National Standards, n.d.). Whereas these courses often claim to serve an increasingly diverse global population, they nonetheless maintain systems of exclusive logic at the expense of marginalized communities.

When I asked Isaiah, a black and Puerto Rican male 10th grader, "Do you feel like you

have a place in world history? Do you feel like your history is represented in world history?" he replied, "No I don't really know. I guess so. Because I'm black, and slaves and stuff I guess." I asked further, "Ok, so what does that tell you about yourself?" Isaiah explained, "That they used to think of me as a lesser being."

Isaiah's reply reveals a crucial tension here. Isaiah wasn't quite sure how to answer, but ultimately did express that he felt represented. Yet, it's representation through negation. There's a sense of being included, but at the same time excluded from being fully human. It is this inclusion through negation and subordination.

Another student, Mahoganey, self-identified as Jamaican, Puerto Rican, and black, gave a related answer. When asked, "What does world history tell you about yourself and how you fit into the world?", Mahoganey replied, "Well back then, that I was a piece of shit basically. because that's all you really learn about. I really haven't studied a black person that didn't go through anything bad, I guess you could say." I followed up, asking, "How do you feel about that?" She replied, "Really crappy."

There is this interesting thing happening here, where Mahoganey states this historical understanding with "I". "that *I* was a piece of shit". She reads the past as her present. There are many directions we could go with this. Within the context of this chapter however, I'm interested in two threads. There is first a question of who gets to be human, who is a part of that story of shared humanity? Second, there is a question of what is the system of logic that has led Mahoganey to understand her relationship to history in this way?

The Ontological Question Hidden within our Shared Humanity

Through Isaiah and Mahoganey's responses, we are obliged to examine the ways that the world history curriculum hides (but articulates) an underlying ontological question. Ontology is an area of philosophy that considers the nature of being. Whereas the application of critical race theory within a US history classroom might more readily direct focused inquiry into the construction of legal citizenship and civil rights, its application to the world history curriculum unavoidably demands interrogation of the category of being human. As evidenced in the National Standards for World History from UCLA, world history state standards and textbooks often claim a presumed shared humanity, yet the normalized narratives that circulate include certain peoples, and exclude and marginalize others. What good is learning about a shared humanity if you don't get to be human? Frantz Fanon (2008) and Charles Mills (1997) expose the centrality of this obscured line distinguishing being and non-being, and the resultant politicized and unequal access to history through the historically exclusionary category of the "human".

World history has taught Isaiah that they used to think of him as a lesser being. This is the identity that school and society has taught him he fits into. In discussing Frantz Fanon's notion of the zone of non-being within the context of anti-black racism, Lewis Gordon (2006) asserted, "blacks find themselves, Fanon announces at the outset, not structurally regarded as human beings. They are problematic beings, beings locked in what he calls "a zone of nonbeing." What blacks want is not to be problematic beings, to escape from that zone. They want to be human in the face of a structure that denies their humanity" (Gordon, 2006, p. 3). These students' experiences with world history reflect deeper structures of exclusion, and the need for curricular interventions that address such exclusion.

Isaiah and Mahoganey's thoughts are not isolated. Their comments connect to a body of works that show the global process by which nonwhites become categorized as sub-human.

Charles Mills' study of *The Racial Contract* (1997) interrogated this exclusion further, locating the problem within European terms and categories of the human. Mills (1997) explained, "Thus a category crystallized over time in European thought to represent entities who are *humanoid* but not fully *human* ("savages," "barbarians") and who are identified as such by being members of the general set of nonwhite races" (p. 23). Ironically, as Mills demonstrated, it was not some vestigial bias or prejudice, but the very work of reason that articulated this "human" versus "savage" dichotomy. Mills (1997) traced this exclusion as part of an intentional system of white supremacy[15], established primarily through Enlightenment thinkers, in that "*European humanism usually meant that only Europeans were human"* (p. 27; italics in original). Just as it has become more common for curricula to address how our founding fathers' definition of citizenship excluded women and slaves, it is pertinent to address this parallel contextualization within global history in how we teach about the Enlightenment. When we talk about a history of our shared humanity, we are often only talking about certain peoples as a part of that humanity.

The very discourses developed during the Enlightenment that seem applicable to enslaved black people in the Americas, e.g., liberation and rights, are actually not about them at all. Those enslaved persons of African descent are outside of that realm. Susan Buck-Morss (2000) has argued that Hegel knew about the Haitian Revolution when developing his master-slave dialectic. Buck-Morss (2000) asserted, "we cannot think Hegel *without* Haiti" (16). Her research showed that "it is indisputable that Hegel knew about Haiti, as did indeed the entire European reading public," but she raised the question, "why is there not more explicit discussion in his texts?" (Buck-Morss 2000, p. 17). Because this implicates knowing/not-knowing as an ideological moment.

We have this Hegelian presentation of the development of Reason, presented as non-dialectical, a move which then hides the dialectical relationship between Hegel's writing and the historical context of Haiti's uprising. When the realm of being, of legitimate subjects, is inscribed as those who fit a certain definition of nation-state, civilization, or rationality, then certain groups are actively whited out of history; they disappear from view under the innocent veil of whiteness.

There is this violent irony in ignoring the co-constitutive relationship between slavery and the negation of being, alongside these values of liberty, rights, and democracy. Those who were actually enslaved in the existing material world were excluded from the theoretical discourse of freedom, slavery, and citizenship. I assert that these students' relationships to world history are a part of this lingering unaddressed weight. By not discussing the co-constitutive nature of Enlightenment ideals and the slave trade, we reproduce that violent silencing that exacerbates student experiences of negation within world history. This calls for a dialectical approach and honesty to teaching world history. There is a dialectical relationship between the establishment of the slave trade and the writing of Enlightenment reason,[16] including all of the complexities between these two, less as a rigid dichotomy, but intertwined. For example,

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[15] Granted, there have been other racialized hierarchies throughout world history besides white and black. It is important to examine these other models in world history as well. However, the reference to Mills here emphasizes the link between the Enlightenment and contemporary curriculum in the US. World history and global studies courses generally developed out of earlier incarnations as Western civilization and European history courses.

[16] This notions builds from Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (2002), which asserted that "Myth is already enlightenment, and enlightenment reverts to mythology" (xviii).

Enlightenment ideals were also crucial to the movement to abolish slavery.

I asked Mahoganey, "Do you feel like you have a place in world history? Do you feel represented in world history?" Mahoganey replied, "No. Well, besides slavery and stuff. Because I just think, world history is not mostly about black people…So I don't feel like I really have a place. Like we mostly learn about what happened to white people even though that's bad to say…We don't talk about black people very much. Because we never had a voice until someone helped us to get one. So what we did, what we went through, it kinda didn't matter." This is such a rich statement here, this phrasing that "we never had a voice until someone helped us to get one". This idea that blacks couldn't get a voice on their own speaks to this embedded understanding of the relations of the world, of being outside of world history. This idea that "world history is not mostly about black people" speaks to the ways that the realm of negation gets hidden, of how dark matter in history is made invisible, in spite of its heavy weight and gravitational impact.

Within Hegel's own writing, we have evidence of this hidden dialectic, the contradiction of how he can write about the master-slave relationship and ignore the historical context in which his writing is entrenched. His version of world history as the fulfillment of Reason becomes a teleological non-dialectical narrative, which is dependent upon yet hides that which is sublated. Adorno's negative dialectic calls attention to that hidden side. Part of the task of negative dialectics and queer reading is settling into that realm of contradiction, to accept the puzzles. The very term "contra-diction" means to speak against, and is embedded within the notion of dialectic. The fact that Charles Mills and Theodor Adorno, and myself, take so much time to critique the Enlightenment means that there is some investment in the project of the Enlightenment, not a call to abandon it. We need an ethical and a historically dialectical approach to the Enlightenment, rather than abandon the project altogether. I must also fess up to my investment in history. For as much as I might hate history for its violence and Eurocentrism, I am not willing to abandon the institutional discipline of History. I remain invested in the methods of history, to figure out what the documentation of the past can and does tell us. I see this other side of history, this potential for history to disrupt our understandings of the world, to put the status quo into question, rather than affirm a stagnant narrative.

Reason as Property

We must detach ourselves from the particular rigid and exclusionary identities attached to terms like Reason and Human, pointing to the violence that results in such investments. If some people don't get to be Human with a capital H, they don't get to have Reason with a capital R. These are "capital"-ized forms of Human and Reason. Reason becomes a property of being Human, and those who are designated as less than Human are not granted this property of Reason. Rationality and Reason are embedded within systems of power and privilege. Although it is uncouth to say that a group is subhuman today, we have a lingering sense that some societies act unreasonably and irrationally, with inhumane tendencies. Islam as a whole, for example, gets attacked by many in the West as being barbaric and backwards. The West has an investment in Humans as Reasonable, as defining what makes Humans different than (other) animals. Reason represents a zero sum game in that it requires other peoples are denied it. Under this model of Reason as property, Reason is something to be earned, developed, and obtained through school. I turn to critical disability studies, critical race studies, and queer theory to explore how Reason functions as property, embedded in coloniality and oppressive hierarchies of Reason.

A common way that teachers interpret students, particularly within urban poor

communities of color, is that these students are not developmentally ready for higher ordered thinking and certain forms of critical thinking. Black and Latino students are placed in special education at higher rates than white and Asian students (Blanchett 2006), and are often understood within a deficit model (Block, Balcazar & Keys 2001). Punishments are more suitable for those that cannot be reasoned with. Black and Latino students are suspended at a higher rate than white students (Eitle & Eitle 2004; Ganao, Silvestre & Glenn 2013), which reflects these assumptions of who is granted the property of reason and who is not.

Students' brains are doing all sorts of intellectual processes all the time. And yet, the systems of rationality and logic that are promoted in schools do not reflect the ones present and in circulation within many marginalized students' lives and communities. They are not only separate, but the logic promoted in school actively negates and belittles certain ways of thinking engaged by "other" communities and individuals. Through his work on Wittgenstein and race, African American scholar Richard Jones (2013) asserted that an African American logic is not only possible, but necessary (p. 186).

These students are seen as existing outside of reason. By that I mean it is often assumed that these students do not make sense. Over the years, I have often heard teachers in schools talking about students as being irrational and unreasonable, rather than assuming that they have a different rationality that fits their behaviors and thoughts, and putting effort into figuring out how their different system of rationality functions. Such teachers can view these students as developmentally lower or delayed. Teachers concretize their cognitive identities. Rather than assuming they are being reasonable and intellectually engaged, teachers remain confined within static notions of their intellect.

Nirmala Erevelles and Andrea Minear (2010), critical disabilities scholars, put forth the notion of ability as property. This built on the work of critical race theorist Cheryl Harris (1995) on whiteness as property. Harris argued that whiteness functions legally as a form of property, its attendant for granting privileges, protections, and access to those who fit into whiteness over those who have been excluded from whiteness. Erevelles and Minear's notion of ability as property explains people's investment in ability as a means to exclude certain bodies from citizenship and liberal rational definitions of democracy. Erevelles and Minear (2010) found evidence that the discourse around disability rights and citizenship remain tied to exclusionary humanist practices. Some scholars have moved to focus on societal structural discrimination rather than a medical model of individual defection from the norm, with the focus on material evidence provable in court. Erevelles and Minear (2010) argued that this neglects the underlying framework wherein the liberal humanist philosophy requires the embodiment of inalienable difference. This is apparent in notions of what counts as reason, which continues to exclude those with cognitive and severe disabilities from ever being able to fit into the accepted norm of rationality. They utilized a Marxist framework of ability as property, through which the capitalist system privileges certain bodies over others as the ideal productive and valued body, all others being abnormal and defective bodies of difference. Erevelles and Minear (2010) utilized Judith Butler's model for dislodging the appearance of gender as naturalized, through incessant reiterations of what the natural body is and how it is supposed to perform. They asserted that ability has similarly gained this appearance of what is natural and normal.

In the world history classroom, I find the notion of "reason as property" useful[17]. There is

[17] Additionally, this builds on Zeus Leonardo and Alicia Broderick's (2011) work on smartness as property.

a deprivation of these young people of color of their rationality and reason. During one interview, Tomcat, an African American 10th grader, expressed the fear that he did not want to be seen as another "ignorant black man". He is well aware that many will eagerly assume that he is ignorant, that his ways of making sense about the world don't add up, robbing him of the possibility of reason.

In schools, Reason is formally and reified into property through state testing. Teachers are required to teach to the test, which conveys particular interpretations of the past. Henry Giroux (1980) explained this through his use of the term ideological hegemony: "the power of a dominant class resides in its ability to impose, though not mechanistically, its own set of meanings and social practices through the selection, organization, and distribution of school knowledge and classroom social relationships" (p. 333). Rather than authentic historical inquiry, state mandated history becomes trapped along the same worn out ruts that the state requires it to follow.

Reason and critical thinking become skills acquired and measured through state testing, standards, and rubrics. The spread of the Common Core across the country has formalized the measurement of critical thinking and reasoning skills. The official Common Core website explains to parents, "The Common Core focuses on developing the critical-thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills students will need to be successful" (2010). The English Language Arts Regents exam in New York state is based on the Common Core and includes a critical lens essay. The Global History and Geography Regents and the U.S. History and Geography Regents exams both require a Document-Based Question essay and a thematic essay. In order to improve their chances of passing the state exams, students must internalize the system of reasoning that undergirds the tests. The Global History and Geography Regents exam provides teachers with possible expected analysis students might write on their essays, to help norm the grading of essays. The state relies on the power of the norm in order to grant students reasoning and critical thinking skills. The responses that deviate from the norm become at risk of being unrecognizable to teachers trained to find certain lines of logic for why the French Revolution happened, or how the geography of the Nile impacted ancient Egypt.

The solution is then not to grant students their Reason, for this reinforces Reason as property. The solution is to dismantle the system of Reason as property, to abolish this property of Reason. Reason is a tool of power over others, power over their minds. I do not have something to propose as a replacement for "Reason" and "Human". However, I do propose a constant critique of the use of these terms, and the power they wield over others. Land was just land before it was private property. There was thought that produced things long before this notion of Reason was utilized to measure and exclude others. The student does not need the teacher to finally be able to see how they are reasonable and grant them their Reason once the teacher (or the state) sees it. Reason must be understood as an innate capacity of people, as an inherent part of all of our experiences of being. This seems to be the same understanding that humanism asserted. Part of the problem is that alongside the construction within humanism that all humans have reason, there is this simultaneous categorization as some peoples being sub-human, or even prehistoric.

Outside of Reason: The White Eurocentric Rationality

This underlying system does not merely exclude these students' bodies from legitimacy as humans. In schools, where the ability to think is understood as the premium, these students' minds are often excluded from being rational and reasonable. When a world history classroom

adheres to a certain rationality, one that is complicit in obscuring this racialized world system, the thoughts of these students then lie outside of that disciplined rationality. Linking the racial contract to feminist critiques, Mills (1997) argued, "Even for Kant, who defines "persons" simply as rational beings, without any apparent restrictions of gender or race, the female body demarcates one as insufficiently rational to be politically anything more than a "passive" citizen" (p. 53). Mills, amongst many scholars associated with critical race theory, argued that bodies do matter when it comes to inclusion within reason and rationality. The ways students understand world history is the result of how their racialized bodies experience the world around them. This is a rationality that lies outside of the normalized reasoning of a standard world history narrative; it is an "other" line of thought and reason.

When I asked Angel, one of the African American students, where she would start world history, she replied,

> Me? I would start it, honestly speaking…from the civil rights movement, because I really do feel, that's when everything changed dramatically. Like all the ages and revolutions and the Renaissance, you know that's all cool and whatever, but I feel like the Civil Rights Movement had a bigger impact than anything else. Because it actually has everything to do with modern day. Like, everything from just sitting in a class with someone of a different race, to just actually being allowed in places *because* of your race. Because it wasn't like that as you know. There was segregation. If I had to start I would start with the civil rights movement and work from there. You know, slavery had a lot to do with it as well. I feel that's a major part of history that nobody really likes to cover or get into. But I feel that, I would start from the civil rights movement because, like, modern day is so immensely connected to the civil rights movement and slavery. A lot of things that are happening now, like the stop and frisk program, even technology. They're spying on people. There's racial profiling. People who might be of Arab descent, they get profiled because of what happened during 9/11. You know, I feel that those two are so closely tied together. Even though we've come a long way, we still have a long way to go. Because racism still does exist.

Later that afternoon after the interview, Angel was kicked out of her global studies class. I find her answer to be quite impressive. She acknowledged the importance of the Renaissance and various ages and revolutions, showing that she is aware of this mainstream history, and then goes on to present what she feels is important. She is able to connect slavery and the civil rights movement to the racial profiling of Arab Americans after 9-11, and stop and frisk in New York City. She states, "I feel that those two are so closely tied together." The version of schooling she has received has not given her the tools or opportunities to connect those events, and the model of world history she is arguing for does center on the task of making sense of the world in which she lives. Her argument for why one should start from the civil rights movement is because of its impact on the world she lives in. Sure, there is a danger in creating history curriculum that only speaks to the experiences of students. A major contribution of history is that it allows us to learn about the lives of others, opening our horizons to move one beyond their own place in the world. The curriculum must not remain limited to student experiences, but ought to better address the ways students are already engaged in the world and in history.

What I want to emphasize is how her reasoning for where world history begins lies outside of the logic of state standards, exams, and most textbooks. Such state standardized systems of logic might note how she has no conception of temporal scales, doesn't know the

difference between US history and world history, and really needs to learn that human civilization began in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Rather than correcting her narrative to fit with the standard Eurocentric version, what if we take this as the starting point, really listen to the line of reasoning behind what she said, and interrogate world history from the position of such students?

As a grader of the global history and geography Regents, I was trained that students could not get credit for writing about US history events in their global Regents essays. For example, in the June 2013 global Regents exam, it stated in the instructions to the Document Based Question (DBQ) essay, "Do not use a revolution from United States history in your answer" (p. 12). Over the years teaching to the New York state Regents exam, I consistently heard teachers lament that students would write about how Martin Luther King Jr. freed the slaves in their global history Regents essays. When asked when she thought world history began, another student Aphrodite said, "I think …when Martin Luther King Jr…. It started with him in my opinion. Because he basically, he gave us our freedom". I want us to think differently about these answers as being wrong. Instead of taking the state exam system of logic as the only and best way to think about history, I assert that there is often a richness and depth to answers such as these that the state mandated system of logic deems wrong. Like many institutionally validated works in history, these students in a way reject notions of American exceptionalism and see the US as part of a global history. Such reasoning, however, holds no value accorded by the New York State Board of Regents.

There is also this interesting way that if we actually engage this second answer by Aphrodite, and think about what sort of sense this answer makes, we might see that it pairs with this ontological question and fits within a Eurocentric rationality. Immanuel Kant (2007) expressed his views on history, stating, "Back beyond it, everything is *terra incognita*, and the history of nations (*Völker*) that lived outside it can be begun only from the time when they entered into it" (p. 118). Within Aphrodite's and Angel's line of logic, people of color entered world history with Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights movement, because that was when these minority groups actually began to be treated as human, became understood as human (although this in itself is another narrative disproven by recent strings of police brutality). For their lived experience, it is less about a shared humanity, and more about when they get to be human, and under what conditions.

Kant's argument reflects how history functions as a part of the colonial enterprise. The condition of this ontological inclusion into history requires Europe bringing other groups into the folds of history. It is the expansion of Europe-as-the-universal through the term "history". History expands as it swallows peoples up under history. Johannes Fabian (2000) argued that this specific rationality functions within Western presentations of history: "Even if we can point to deception, misrepresentation, and perhaps blindness in these encounters of exploration, conquest, and exploitation, that is not likely to shake in any fundamental way the belief in the basic rationality, and hence necessity, of Western expansion. A truly radical critique needs to address the very concept of rationality, especially the built-in tendency of that concept to present itself as outside and above historical contexts" (p. 4). Kant's expression of history, paired with Hegel's fulfillment of the World Spirit as teleological Reason[18], necessitates a narrow rationality that

[18] There are many other historians that do not follow this single teleology of Hegel. For example, Herder and Ranke asserted the predominance of cultural specificity, and the different trajectories of peoples. Ernst Troeltsch asserted a Europeanism that isolated Europe's particular role and position, allowing for a certain cultural pluralism in world history. However, as noted in chapter

ignores and negates the logic from the other side of being, from the realm of “being other-wise”.

Hence, it is not merely an ontological question, but an ontology grounded in the condition of being colonized. You become “being” when you enter history, which is the universal as Europe. Carter G. Woodson (1933/2013) articulated a similar critique of Kant in his approach to African American education: "Negroes do not need someone to guide them to what persons of another race have developed. They must be taught to think and develop something for themselves" (p. 108). We begin to see these lines drawn between a certain form of being, reason, and history, and those on the other side of that line.

Based on Angel’s and her family’s experiences, and the discourses utilized to make sense of those experiences, she articulates here that for her, world history begins with the civil rights movement. She points to the civil rights movement as an ontological turning point, a crucial moment when African Americans are allowed to join the ranks of humanity. It makes me think about when I teach different calendar systems around the world, that different cultures, peoples, and religions mark their beginning of measuring time at particularly relevant moments to that culture, people, or religion. For Angel, the civil rights movement represents a turning point for people of color (specifically black people) when they become recognized as being human.

The legitimacy of their reasoning is marked racially, and marked as outside of the standardized logic of the history discipline, as articulated by state standards, exams, and textbooks. Scholars associated with critical race studies, and other fields arising from spaces of marginalization, provide frameworks that compliment and offer extensions to these students’ reasoning.

Anibal Quijano’s (2000) explanation of the relationship between Eurocentrism and coloniality is useful here: "One of the fundamental axes of this model of power [coloniality] is the social classification of the world’s population around the idea of race, a mental construction that expresses the basic experience of colonial domination and pervades the more important dimensions of global power, including its specific rationality: Eurocentrism" (p. 533). These students’ answers point to the power of race in shaping the world in which they live, purposefully obscured by the dominant rationality of Eurocentrism. Angel is aware of that dominant Eurocentric narrative, as all of those “ages and revolutions and the Renaissance”, yet identifies the construction of race as the focal point for the history of the world she lives in. What if, instead of having our shared humanity as that thread between different curricular units, we apply Quijano’s understanding of coloniality and Eurocentrism as useful curricular frameworks for recognizing global systems and phenomena that reflect these students’ preexisting rationalities?

This does not imply letting go of the idea of a shared humanity. Rather, it is about complicating that notion, and that this idea of a shared humanity has not been a natural given, but

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two, world history textbooks and curricula tend to create more of this pseudo-Hegelian teleology of progress. I have seen world history textbooks that follow an area studies curriculum emphasizing the historical trajectory of particular regions distinct from others, but on an observational basis from my work in New York City and Bay Area schools, along with the National Standards for World History cited earlier, I have predominantly seen this standard progressive narrative of river valley civilizations to ancient golden ages to the fall of Rome and the Middle Ages to the Age of Revolutions and into the 20th century. Hence, I focus on the influence of Hegel and Kant, because of their influence over these courses in American high school world history courses.

has been contested. Quijano's emphasis on coloniality requires that curricula complicate and contest the notion of a shared humanity, rather than merely celebrate it.

Wrong Answers and Double Consciousness

Students such as Angel express an awareness of the difference between how she understands the world, and what is presented to her in school through dominant narratives in society. Angel well understood the global aspect of my question, and that her answer was not the one she was supposed to say. Her initial response (before I asked where *she* would start it) was, "as far as world history goes, I feel like they start from Christopher Columbus. I feel like that's a basic starting point for most history classes." She is aware of two systems of logic at play.

W.E.B. DuBois' term double-consciousness names what these students already know and do. DuBois clarified:

> "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness – and American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder." (1903/1965, p. 215)

Mahoganey provides another example of how this double-consciousness functions in student thinking about world history. After Mahoganey said that she felt crappy about world history telling her that she's a piece of shit, I asked her, "Do you think that's true?" She replied, "Kind of. Ok. It's not true about the whole entire world but it's true what we learn about the whole entire world. It's like they only limit us to what we learn". Mahoganey makes this distinction between the world, and what they *learn* about the world in school. She can see that there is a difference there, and has a sense that there is a way of understanding the world that is not taught in schools. She expresses a suspicion that some force is actively limiting what they learn in school.

She has internalized this sense that there are ways she should not talk in school, which might be different from what she actually thinks. She has learned to censor her expression of thought. Mahoganey stated in the earlier quote, "Like we mostly learn about what happened to white people even though that's bad to say". She is aware not only of this difference between the way the world is and what is taught in schools, but has learned that certain things she is not supposed to say in school. She has learned that there are bad things that she is not supposed to bring up.

A part of this double consciousness is having this system of reasoning that often lies outside of that Eurocentric rationality. During these interviews, there were moments where my initial reaction as a history teacher was that their knowledge of history is wrong. As a researcher, I'm trying to put that reaction on hold, and consider the other systems of logic represented in their supposed wrong answers.

> Tadashi: "What kind of role has Africa played in world history?"
>
> Mahoganey: "A big one, because they didn't like them because they were black. So it affected every race that looked dark, you know what I'm trying to say? Because some people look dark but they're not black. They would be like Spanish or something…Because if you were dark…they'll still say you're black, and you'll still get

mistreated like everybody else, just because of your skin color."

Tadashi: "What about Europe? What's your impression of Europe?"

Mahoganey: "I don't think a big one... because it's just… Like it affected them because it was their government. But it was only for them, it wasn't for everybody. That's why I see Africa as being different, because that affected everybody who was dark. You get what I'm trying to say? It affected whoever was dark and they thought was black. But their government [Europe's] only affected them because it was only for people who lived there."

Given the standard narrative of world history in textbooks and state exams, I expected her to have internalized that Africa has played a very small role, and that Europe has impacted most of the world, through Christianity spreading, and imperialism, capitalism, technology, constitutional governments, etcetera. That would even seem to align with her previous statements. She previously expressed an awareness that history in schools seems mostly to focus on white people. Yet she's articulating something else here, again, outside of the expected and dominant system of logic. Her experiences of race and history have led her to this particular understanding, regardless of what she's supposed to think. The relevance of racial experience has had an impact on her, to the point where Africa's role in those central categories in her life is more important than any sense of Europe impacting her experiences directly.

In her response about Africa, she expresses that people don't like people from Africa because they are black, and that this impacted anyone who was dark, because they would get that same negative treatment because they appeared black or close to being black. For Mahoganey, this means that Africa had a big impact in world history.

My years of teaching to the test create this reaction in me that wants to correct her narrative, to explain how Europe has actually had a huge impact on her life, to explain all of those details. But this corrective reaction in me negates and dismisses her ways of making sense of the world she lives in. By labeling her thinking as wrong, again, I am turning her capacity to think into a lack of Reason, and into property, which is always already a form of theft. Instead, is it possible to acknowledge her reason as part of the commons of being human, and not something she must acquire and earn? What if I assume her innate capacity to reason, and aim to understand her line of reasoning? From there, I can push against her reasoning, pushing her to examine the evidence closely, and have the capacity to cite evidence and sources that support her line of thinking if that's where the evidence leads her argument. I can push her to develop her logic, asking, for instance, what makes something bad to say? Rather than give into the temptation to lecture her in the correct historical narrative, by recognizing her innate capacity to reason, I can better help her hone her historical thinking skills to seek out evidence, question that evidence, and build an evidence-based historical argument to support her conclusions.

We begin to see these overlaps in reason, being, and negation. When our reading of students functions on a narrow definition of Reason as property, we negate all these possibilities of reason. The negation of her particular line of reason is based in her negation as a black woman, hence, the possibility of her reason is linked to her racialized body. José Muñoz (2000) explained Norma Alarcón's notion of identity-in-difference: "To be cognizant of one's status as an identity-in-difference is to know that one falls off majoritarian maps of the public sphere, that one is exiled from paradigms of communicative reason and a larger culture of consent. This exile

is more like a displacement, the origin of which is a historically specific and culturally situated bias that blocks the Latina/o citizen-subject's trajectory to 'official' citizenship-subject political ontology" (p. 68). These black and Latinx students' being and capacities for reason are negated because of their identities-in-difference. Their being and reason lie outside of such majoritarian maps and paradigms. They are aware of this difference, and learn to hold these two systems of logic simultaneously.

This reminds me of using Julius Lester's *To Be a Slave* (1968/2000) in the history classroom. I have used excerpts from this text to show how slaves resisted through their own interpretation of religion and morality. Within the slave-owners' Christian logic, the slaves were the ones going to hell. Lester reveals how the slaves understood the teachings of Christianity as implicating the slave-owners for their sins. Such a text is an accessible example for students to consider systems of reasoning and logic from a position of marginalization that resist the dominant system of logic, showing historical examples of this double consciousness.

Being Bad: Ascribed Identities of Being

Julius Lester's text, and others, expose this internalizing of how the dominant class understands black people, and wants black people to understand themselves. Such double-consciousness is necessary in light of a disciplined and relentless negation. Walking over to the room to have our interview, Alex, an African American 10th grader, told me that he's bad. We started off the interview with this topic.

Tadashi: What's this thing about you being bad?
Alex: It's who I am.
Tadashi: What do you mean it's who you are?
Alex: It's just… me.
Tadashi: Is that a good thing?
Alex: Yeah.
Tadashi: Why?
Alex: Um. It represents who I am.
Tadashi: Is it good to be good?
Alex: I don't know. It's just good.
Tadashi: Why is it good to be bad?
Alex: Cuz it's fun.
Tadashi: Is it ever bad to be bad?
Alex. No. Really. I get in trouble and I don't care. They see me in the hallway. They know that if I'm a bad kid, that I'm never in class, and they see me in the hallway so they know.
Tadashi: So they know that you're bad? So you want people to think that you're bad?
Alex: (nods).
Tadashi: Why?
Alex: I don't know.
Tadashi: What do you think about this argument: You like being bad because it's exciting and that being good is boring.
Alex: Nah, sometimes. It's half and half. Half the time I be good, half the time I be bad. It's equal. I walk out when I want and do whatever I want when I want to, and then half of the other time I do my work.

Later in the interview, I asked Alex, "Do you think inequalities you see in the world today, is it more about race or is it more about class?" Alex replied: "Race… Because, when I go to the fuckin 99 cent store, the fuckin, they always fucking watching me, they have one person walkin around watching me and shit, what the fuck? It's none of their fuckin business." When I asked, "And you feel like that's because of your race?", Alex nodded yes.

Alex understands himself as bad (at least half the time). He presents himself as bad. He knows that others see him as bad. He wanted to make sure that I knew this. Alex is fully aware that society has dismissed him from being an equal participant and member of society. He is watched with suspicion in the corner store. It is fully reasonable for him to hate schooling and reflect back what society has told him about himself.

He can articulate these things, but what I'm interested in is to develop pedagogical tools that build on these experiences and this sense of his relation to society. In a Hegelian world, Alex represents the negation of the Enlightenment; he understands he is on the other side of goodness, and he is placed on the other side of reason. A Hegelian negation of the negation would sublate his experience of negation to result in a positive teleological thread of Reason and the Spirit of History, a pedagogical path that would get him to see the benefits of learning history, and what it has to offer. Such a pedogogy often presents an apolitical or depoliticized approach to history, for the sake of history in its objective goodness; but that ignores how these students' bodies and minds are always already politicized, and how the history discipline has negated and excluded and erased the value of bodies and minds that resemble these students throughout history. There is a rupture there between students and the dominant forms of meaning-making, and we must begin history pedagogy from that rupture. Adorno's negative dialectics emphasizes the non-identity, that realm of negation.

In these interview responses, students articulate this intertwined system of morality and aesthetics and reason, and that these students understand themselves as being placed on the bad side of morality, of civilization and world history, and of reasonable behavior. It is not just an invisibility. As evidenced in Mahoganey and Isaiah's responses that began this chapter, it is being included in the discourse through negation. Being on the other side of the good. There is this double-consciousness because the underclass (black and brown people), in order to survive, must develop an alternative sense of the world other than the one of negation they are expected and taught to internalize by the dominant class.

In order to understand these connections, it seems important to turn back to Kant, and the ways his writings intertwine morality, aesthetics, and reason. Kant presented reason as a property of humans. Given Charles Mill's claim cited earlier, Kant did not believe everyone had equal rationality. Kant viewed women as insufficiently rational to fully participate politically in society (Mills 1997, p. 53). Philip Shaw (2006) argued, "With respect to reason as a whole, Kant regards epistemology as subordinate to ethics. The aim of a philosophy of knowledge, in other words, is to provide a foundation for a philosophy of the Good. Our freedom, with respect to the contents of our experience, is thus a mere condition for the exercise of moral behavior" (p. 75). In spite of talking about MLK giving black people freedom, these students express ways that they are not free, and moments when they are judged as wrong, as bad, as lesser beings. Part of the double-consciousness here is their awareness that they are supposedly free, this appearance of freedom, but in daily experiences, that freedom is not always granted. There is no freedom there, no reason as property, only an assumption and suspicion of stealing. Alex is made bad because he is black, because his body is deemed as a bad body. He is understood as being unreasonable, irrational, because of the connections between his body and reason. He is followed in the 99 cent

store because he is understood as bad, as immoral, that he will steal.

In this exclusion of certain bodies from humanity, those individuals are robbed of their property of reason. As educators, we must look at the ethics of knowledge, and knowledge production. The content we teach is not only political, it carries ethical weight, and ontological weight. What are the judgments of good and bad going on here?

Nietzsche's (1885/1887/2014) writings *On the Genealogy of Morality* and *Beyond Good and Evil* aid in this intervention. Nietzsche historicized morality, and its relationship to social class positions. Nietzschean scholar R. Kevin Hill (2003) explained, "The sense of 'good' varied, depending upon which class perceived it. For the dominant class, or 'masters', the primary sense of what is good is the self and that which resembles the self. By contrast, the socially subordinated, the 'slaves', behave in very different ways, which the master designates as 'bad', ignoble, or base. However, from the slave perspective, what the master calls 'good' causes the slave's suffering and subordination. Thus, he designates the master as 'evil' or wicked. The slave then invents the fiction of free will. The master is free not to behave in a wicked way, and the slave is equally free to begin to do so. The slave then constructs a moral scheme according to which his own passivity makes him morally superior to the master and therefore 'good'" (p. 206). The ruling class determines what counts as the good. But then the subjugated class has the will to understand themselves in their own right. The sheep know the eagles are bad because they eat them. Nietzsche presented a socially constructed body, or rather, a historically afflicted subject, requiring us to account for social position within historical thinking. This then returns us to Charles Mills' argument, that white supremacy undergirds the Enlightenment, that underneath Kant's wishful thinking of a morality free of investments, there is a ruling white supremacy.

Troubling Troubled Disciplinary Spaces

In trying to loosen the identity categories of failure and trouble-maker associated with some of these students, I do not mean to reinscribe them into new identity categories. I mean to question how teachers make sense of such students and their theories of the world. If I were a student in a history classroom, and I was constantly hearing the message through that class that I am a piece of shit, if I had a consciousness of these underlying systems, then it would be unreasonable to go along with such a system. The actions that seem unreasonable and irrational within a standardized world history space of disciplined knowledge suddenly appear rational and reasonable when we account for white supremacy and Eurocentrism.

After Isaiah told me that world history tells him that he's a lesser being, I asked him, "What do you think about that? That people used to think about you as a lesser being?" Isaiah replied, "I honestly don't really care about it because it's in the past, and I just think about the future and the present. So, that's one reason I don't like global history, because I hate even thinking about the past. It happened already, you can't change it. So there's no purpose."

A turn to recent works in queer theory helps carve out space for this comment about hating thinking about the past. History, and education, need not always be redemptive and about feeling good. My goal is not to necessarily make students feel good about history, to love history, to embrace it. I'm not explicitly saying that classrooms need to get them to hate it, or that their disdain for school or history need be valorized. I'm just saying that there's something there, that teachers who care about history and students can be quick to have this ultimate end-goal of getting kids to love history and to succeed according to certain norms and logics of what history is. I'm saying that there's something to be said against those norms and logics, and that sometimes these students are saying things that profoundly push against those norms and logics

that we think are for the common good.

If learning history tells Isaiah that he's a lesser being, why would Isaiah want to learn history? Carter G. Woodson (1933/2013) stated, "It was well understood that if by the teaching of history the white man could be further assured of his superiority and the Negro could be made to feel that he had always been a failure, and that the subjection of his will to some other race is necessary, then, he would still be a slave" (p. 61). If the state can properly discipline the mind, then the body is easily disciplined as well. Schooling then seems to either lead to imprisonment of the mind, or for those who rebel against schooling, imprisonment of the truant body on the streets.

Research by Penelope Eckert (1995) and Paul Willis (1977) direct attention to the ways that those students traditionally deemed as failures, "burnouts", "lads", as the underclass of schooling, have a different system of logic based in their social class position. In Eckert and Willis' works, however, they note how these groups' awareness of their different system of logic reinscribes these groups in their subordination. I attempt to take this line of research a step further, to interrogate these spaces of disciplined knowledge, and students' reasoning in relation to those spaces of disciplinary knowledge, spaces which intentionally include them through negation.

For Isaiah, there is this refusal to be hailed even as he acknowledges the interpellation. We broach this theme of marronage (Roberts, 2015) here, this walking away from the dominant narrative, this refusal to participate, as a form of freedom. How do we take an awareness of subordination, and make it liberatory, not a means of reproducing subordination? The previous chapter on queer reading emphasized this technology of the refusal, against recognition. Isaiah refuses to participate in his subjugation, his negation. Sara Ahmed's (2006) work examined the idea of orientation in phenomenology, and that decision to turn and orient oneself towards an object, to allow oneself to be interpellated[19]. Students use one of the most powerful tools they have in the classroom, the power to refuse to turn around, to refuse their gaze, to refuse to orientate towards the object of study. When the promise of studying is a rejection of being, why would Isaiah turn, orient himself towards such an object? Why engage when the engagement exiles you to the other side of being and reason? As teachers, we enact violence when we force students to look at the history we provide them that negates and erases them.

Implications

The responses of these students demand space in the curriculum to examine questions regarding at what point, if at all, marginalized populations have entered the realm of "being human." Rather than flatly presuming a common relation to an inclusive humanity, these students' thoughts guide world history curricula to become more relevant to the complex and varied prior relationships students have to world history, and the notion of being human. In this manner, these students identified as the most disengaged and disruptive in school move from a position of marginalization, to a position of troubling the anti-intellectual traditional narrative of world history.

It's not that these students are disengaged. It is rather that they are actively and purposefully engaged in this system, and which actively negates them. Taking a dialectical approach to their negation, and the negation of various peoples throughout world history,

[19] "We could recall here that Judith Butler, following Louis Althusser, makes "turning" crucial to subject formation" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 15).

engages the problems to which these student thoughts point. In this sense, it is not about taking where students are at and including these topics in the existing curriculum. We need to disrupt the relations of knowledge production, both address how historical knowledge is produced, and how knowledge is produced and circulated in the classroom.

One implication for curricular change would be to use Charles Mills' *The Racial Contract* (1997) and Susan Buck Morss' "Hegel and Haiti" (2000) as a curricular guide for teaching a unit on the Enlightenment, a standard unit topic for world history courses. Rather than focusing on the development of Reason through the exceptionality of these European thinkers, the establishment of universal human rights, and the spread of Enlightenment ideals of freedom and representation in government, one could teach a unit that contextualizes the Enlightenment within a Europe that was actively engaging in colonization and slavery at the moment when Europeans were writing about freedom, equality, and representation. In a curricular unit that addresses the Enlightenment and slavery dialectically, the Haitian Revolution becomes this rich site of overlaps and contradictions. Based on primary documents as evidence, students might then inquire whether this is a contradiction, or if it fits within an underlying system of reason and exclusion.

Buck-Morss' historiography serves as a model for how historical work can disrupt, rather than merely reproduce, the status quo of historical knowledge. Buck-Morss addressed Hegel, but inverted his notion of Absolute Spirit, opening up the dialectic to these realms of difference and non-identity. "If the historical facts about freedom can be ripped out of the narratives told by the victors and salvaged for our own time, then the project of universal freedom does not need to be discarded but, rather, redeemed and reconstituted on a different basis. Hegel's moment of clarity of thought would need to be juxtaposed to that of others at the time…For all his brutality and revenge against whites, Dessalines saw the realities of European racism most clearly…. What if every time that the consciousness of individuals surpassed the confines of present constellations of power in perceiving the concrete meaning of freedom, this were valued as a moment, however transitory, of the realization of absolute spirit?" (Buck-Morss, p. 865). Here, Dessalines is not one who adopted and applied European Enlightenment thought, but holds this consciousness and Enlightenment through his experiences of exploitation by white Europeans.

This approach diverges from traditional textbook learning, to one based more in historical thinking and close readings of documents, to allow historical texts to surprise us, to listen closely to what they say against what conventional wisdom tells us we might find. It is the raising of these questions that I find important, as something not usually considered. Rather than silencing these critiques of students, what if the world history classroom attended to these, and encouraged rich inquiry into their implications?

Chapter Four
Were the ancient Egyptians black?
Racial Identities and Historical Thinking

Introduction

In the 1970's, Sun Ra and his Arkestra created music, imagery, and worlds that were the beginnings of Afrofuturism. In this imagery, motifs of ancient Egypt become transcribed into a futuristic realm of the possibilities of blackness. Afrofuturism in part is an act of imagining otherwise. So what does history have to do with racial identities in the present? This chapter interrogates those spaces where racial identities and historical thinking intersect. During the interviews with students, I asked, "Were the ancient Egyptians black? How do you know?" I chose this question in order to expose the boundaries of traditional history pedagogy, and how students of color's intuitive knowledge, skepticism, and beliefs might reveal spaces that lie beyond those boundaries. What are the particular types of thinking that these students rely upon to approximate historical thinking and address historical questions?

The Problem-Space

What is the work that is done when we ask, "Were the ancient Egyptians black?" What underlying assumptions does it reveal? What investments are at stake in its asking? This question causes all sorts of trouble. It troubles boundaries of historical thinking, of disciplinary boundaries, of science and objectivity, of the relation between present and past.

Utilizing anthropologist David Scott's notion of a "problem-space", this chapter does not aim to present the correct learning trajectory for teaching students how to answer this question, but rather focuses on the work that this question does, and how it opens up disciplinary space for inquiry. In *Conscripts of Modernity* (2004), Scott explained, "A problem-space, in other words, is an ensemble of questions and answers around which a horizon of identifiable stakes (conceptual as well as ideological-political stakes) hangs. That is to say, what defines this discursive context are not only the particular problems that get posed as problems as such (the problem of "race," say) but the particular questions that seem worth asking and the kinds of answers that seem worth having" (p. 4). Whereas this explanation of a problem-space is not so far from how perhaps the majority of historians think about their work, this broader form of disciplinary inquiry is much less prevalent within k-12 history pedagogy. The difficulty of mapping out this problem-space is that it involves not only the past historical moment alongside historians in the present, but contextualizes students learning history in the present as well. For example, one of the most interesting answers from 10th graders was that of one student who refused to answer the question. What is at stake in his refusal?

It is tempting to desire a concrete pedagogical path here, to present a single best disciplinary answer, yet this cuts off the innumerable approaches to this question. At the same time, acknowledging the validity of multiple answers can result in a muddled swamp of post-modern relativism. David Scott's articulation of the problem-space and Fredric Jameson's concept of the political unconscious emphasize the political relations of the various answers and tensions exposed by such questions. David Scott, in *Refashioning Futures* (1999), explained, "what interests me is what I might call the political unconscious of the problem-space in which these interpretive apparatuses operate/operated. The question for me is not who got it right but what cognitive-political demand set the discursive conditions in which the interpretive questions

as such were formulated, and whether this demand continues to exercise a legitimate claim on us" (p. 78). In other words, how do social/political hierarchies and systems determine the questions and answers we find worth discussing? Scott referenced Fredric Jameson's book *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (1981) here, which attempted to account for the political investments and relations in the present, and acknowledged the messiness of readings and mis-readings embedded within social structures.

One part of the problem-space surrounding the question, "Were the ancient Egyptians black?" addresses contemporary history education, and the confines of historical thinking work. Eric Freedman's (2015) article on "critical historical reasoning" asserted that the historian's perspective/ideology shapes the nature of their questions and their underlying beliefs in how people operate. Freedman referenced E.H. Carr's claim that history is a continuous interaction between the historian and facts, between past and present (2015, p. 357). This links to Jameson's efforts to contextualize the historian in the present and their operating ideologies. How do these questions operate in the present and what do they reveal about our present social hierarchies and structures? Asking "were the ancient Egyptians black?" reveals racial tensions and investments in history particular to American society.

A second part of the problem-space addresses other ways of looking at historical thinking/history education, ways that take into account both critical perspectives and students' intuitive thinking (or, what I refer to in the methods section as "naturalized axioms"). In addition, traditional historical thinking/literacy does not emphasize cultural differences in students' understandings. In this chapter, I assert that an awareness of students' intuitive thinking (naturalized axioms) accounts for not only students' ideology, but the range of socio-cultural impacts on their thinking about history.

What Rifts this Question Reveals

Asking the question "Were the ancient Egyptians black?" reveals this intersection between the political layers of history and what counts as sound historical methods. Before digging into how students answered this question, let's examine some of the stakes involved for historians and scholars in addressing this question, and the ways that politics shapes of the field.

This question exposes two distinct rifts in the problem-space. The first addresses what counts as a good historical question. What questions can we ask of the past and why? The second addresses the ways history is always already political, embedded in changing rifts within the history discipline and history pedagogy. This question reveals investments in righting the wrongs of history, of the abuses of history. This second rift also addresses the ways historians have actually tried to answer this question historically.

The History discipline has taught me that this question is a bad question, because the Egyptians did not have the modern construct of race in their culture, and the question is therefore anachronistic. I have been taught that we cannot ask if they were black because the Egyptians did not think in terms of modern race, in white and black. As the student answers will demonstrate, some students understand the ahistorical aspect of this question.

Saying this is a bad question ignores the ways that history is a very present-moment endeavor[20], resulting from present conditions that create the possibility of particular questions being asked today. What are the questions we are allowed to ask, that teachers deem legitimate in

[20] Of course, saying that history is a present-day endeavor has been contested within the discipline ever since Croce (1921) claimed that "all history is contemporary history."

the history classroom? In my American context, it is obvious that at least some of them were black, in terms of being African and having phenotypes of many African Americans today, and the breadth of what blackness in America is (for example, the prevalence of the one drop rule within both legal and social definitions of blackness throughout the United States during the 19th and 20th centuries).

For people of color in American society, this is an important question because of the ways history has been abused to subordinate populations, deeming certain groups without history. My contention is with these abuses of history, but I also remain attentive to the danger of abusing history right back in rebuttal. I remain invested in history's potential to liberate, to disrupt static ways of thinking, through rigorous historiographic methods. Just as history can subordinate populations, it can be used to critique prior prejudices, and to recover stories and ways of being from oblivion.

The question perhaps ought to be less, "were the ancient Egyptians black?" but rather, "what is the work that has been done to make the ancient Egyptians white?" What were the prior abuses of history that have created the stakes requiring the answer that the ancient Egyptians were black? Through the Roman, Napoleonic, and British empire conquests of Egypt, Europe "inherited" the splendors of Egypt. Their relics have been incorporated into the European landscape. I grew up and continue to see around me images of Egyptians as white. Most recently, movies such as *Gods of Egypt* (2016) and *Exodus: Gods and Kings* (2014) have cast predominantly white actors to play ancient Egyptians (always the good and central ones), reproducing an established lineage of portraying Egyptians as white. Making the ancient Egyptians white is a form of robbing blackness of reason, and the capacity for creating an intelligent civilization. Evidenced by TV shows such as "Ancient Aliens" (2010-2015), it is easier for some people to believe that the ancient Egyptians were aliens rather than accept that black people, or Africans, could have created a complex and sophisticated civilization. Saying that this is a bad question ignores the contemporary conditions that make asking certain questions not only askable, but important questions.

This leads to a second disciplinary rift, between how history is always already political, versus a dismissal of or inability to see the political layers underlying much of the history discipline. We come to a series of debates around the integrity of the discipline, and what counts as good history, against bad history which threatens the legitimacy of the discipline. Contextualized within the 1968 student movements, the Civil Rights movement, and the rise of new academic spaces such as ethnic studies that resisted disciplinary rigidity and institutionalization, there have been many recent challenges to History as a rigid and exclusionary discipline. Institutional History with a capital H has had to face questions of how to write histories of subcultures, of women, of minorities, of working class peoples, in spite of the constructed exclusionary archive. The old traditional history was critiqued as bad history, and as racist history.

Many of these debates have been about scientific methods and the goals of the history discipline. Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob's *Telling the Truth About History* (1994) demonstrated that historiography has been shaped from generation to generation based on who sits at the table, impacting what questions are asked and researched. For example, Karl Popper (1957) addressed the issue of historicism (within the works of philosophers like Marx and Hegel, and not historians, however), which viewed history as a predictive science. Popper's work was in response to Carl Hempel's (1942) assertion that the task of history is to uncover general laws in history, to better guide society and civilization. Hempel represented this earlier goal of

grounding the discipline of history as a science, similar to the natural sciences. Although the field of history today generally would not claim access to a complete objective past, scholars such as Mark Bevir (1994) have aimed for a version of objectivity, based on corroboration through the documents to which we do have access. Others, such as Wendy Brown (2001), have emphasized the method of genealogy, focused on the conditions of possibility and contingencies of an event, over the inevitable teleology of the World Spirit as history. These debates in historiography are about History as a formal discipline institutionalized within universities and professional organizations, and history-in-use, contextualized socially and culturally within communities of practice. History has been used by various groups, including professional historians, for the sake of political/ideological projects. These ideological projects have included those both aiming to maintain the status quo, as well as those projects to disrupt and challenge the status quo. Although I admit to a politics aimed at disrupting the status quo, and therefore the danger of a history overly committed to a political project, I also remain committed to the value of historiographic methods, and an ethical approach to what the documentation of the past tells us, in spite of what we might want it to. I expand on this ethics in the conclusion.

Using "science" to prove that Egyptians were white has been a part of a political/social project to prove white supremacy. One of the first scholars to argue that the Egyptians were white was Samuel Morton, in his *Crania Aegyptiaca* (1844). As the father of "American school" ethnography and craniometry (which led to scientific racism), he examined many skulls of ancient Egypt, and concluded that the ancient Egyptians were in fact Caucasian and not African. This has been supported through the narrative emplotment within Western Civilization courses, which present a continuous thread of civilization from Mesopotamia and Egypt to ancient Greece and Rome into the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment.

The push for Afrocentric history that developed primarily in the 1970's responded to this narrative of the Egyptians as white. Historians such as Cheik Anta Diop and Chancellor Williams, along with scholars like Molefi Kete Asante and educational theorist Asa Hillard, were major proponents of teaching Afrocentric history. Asante (1998) explained his position on Afrocentricity "as a moral as well as an intellectual location that posits Africans as subjects rather than as objects of human history and that establishes a perfectly valid and scientific basis for the explanation of African historical experiences" (xii). Afrocentrism was a direct response to Eurocentric history, which places Europe at the center, and negates all others as having secondary importance. However, critics such as Kwame Anthony Appiah (1997) argued that a number of Afrocentric works have relied on a nationalistic and Romantic framing of Africa that reproduces many of the problems of Eurocentric versions of history.

Many new social histories have been critiqued as bad history, for revising history based on political motivations instead of scientific historical methods. This critique asserted that twisting the evidence to make it reveal what your political grudge wants it to is bad history, an expression of reason clouded by emotion. Historian David Lowenthal (1998) framed this as a question of heritage over history. Lowenthal warned against getting caught up in unhistorical accounts of mythic lineages. This frames many of these movements and challenges to traditional history as an affront to the disciplined nature of the field. But this can unfortunately lead to a false dichotomy of bad methods based in political motivations, versus the goal of history as a more pure, apolitical and objective science.

In spite of the anachronistic nature of this question, there are scholars who have used historical evidence to debate the origins and influences of ancient Egypt. Although not directly an answer to this question of whether the ancient Egyptians were black, Martin Bernal's book

Black Athena (1987) asserted that the roots of classical Greek civilization lie within Egyptian and Phoenician civilization. The title and content of the book imply that the ancient Egyptians were black, being from Africa. Bernal's research relied on linguistic, archeological, and documentary evidence. This book sparked a direct response by Mary Lefkowitz, in her book *Not Out of Africa: How Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History* (1997). This title clearly positioned Afrocentrism as an attack on the integrity of History. Her approach implied that much historical work from the margins of society and the archives would be politically motivated, and that this motivation often works against the integrity of the History discipline. Lefkowitz critiqued Bernal for his poor historical methods and irrelevant academic training as a scholar of Chinese history.

The rigor of historiographic methods is important. I want to make clear my investment in developing historical methods for what the documentation of the past can and cannot tell us, regardless of our desires, intentions, and political projects. My aim is to highlight the political layers of history that always underlie historical work, within projects for and against the status quo. Lefkowitz failed to acknowledge that the discipline of history is not a clean, pure, objective science free of politics, but that it has been painted white to appear pure. When whiteness is the norm, the power of whiteness within the political unconscious remains invisible, and readily ignored. Charles Mills' *The Racial Contract* (1997) argued that there are layers of politics that go into preserving the appearance of objectivity.

For example, let us consider the difference between asking the following lines of questioning: Were the ancient Greeks white? Are they today? Are the ancient Greeks a part of whiteness today? Were the ancient Egyptians black? Are they today? Are the ancient Egyptians a part of blackness today? The ancient Greeks remain the unquestioned root of Western Civilization, and hence, of whiteness. These parallel sets of questions point to the power of Mills' racial contract of white supremacy, the power of whiteness to disappear into the background, for history as a discipline to appear without a politics of racial hierarchy, and to point to any minoritarian political investments as soiling the discipline.

The investment in protecting the integrity of the history discipline can dismiss the capacity of something like Afrocentrism to exist "legitimately" within the History discipline, let alone legitimately and fruitfully push the boundaries of the History discipline. There is a politics to positioning Afrocentrism as a whole as an affront to History. There are Eurocentric historical works that have both good and bad methods. There are also Afrocentric historical works that have good and bad methods. The fact of a political project does create a danger of the political ideal clouding what the evidence reveals, but this simply means the historical work must be done with great attention towards that danger. There are powerful investments that motivate discrediting certain areas of history and historical scholarship.

History is always already political, so given this, one can accept the political nature of the discipline and remain committed to historical accuracy. A constant critique and evaluation of disciplinary methods is important. There have been many African American historians, such as W.E.B. duBois, and Carter G. Woodson, who have written historical works accepted and lauded within the discipline, doing work fully within the dominant methodological boundaries of the discipline[21]. The point is that we must consistently be honest about the influence of human

[21] Additionally, I often turn to works within cultural studies, and subaltern studies, for historical work that is accepted within the discipline, while simultaneously critiquing how institutionalized History has worked to exclude populations.

interest on knowledge (Habermas 1968). John Ernest's *Liberation Historiography: African American Writers and the Challenge of History, 1794-1861* (2004) examined the demands of developing new modes of historical writing and historical reading in light of the limits of exclusionary archives. Works within cultural studies, subaltern studies, and feminist and queer theory approach history from the margins of the archives, reconsidering what counts as historical text, and how we can conduct readings of historical texts.

The history discipline is messy, and it also must aim to develop rigorous methods. There are investments in historical debates around the scientific methods and integrity for conducting history research, and around the political forces that structure violence in the discipline. Pedagogy that remains tied to a set course of reason misses the richness in students' messy and confusing thoughts. There are a range of means to figure out history, and that messy process is the magic of the discipline, which will eventually lead to established theories and knowledge. But as students learn the discipline of history, there is a messiness in their thought that ought to be appreciated. The various and strange approaches that students might have to historical questions deserve to be sat with, and looked at. Through proper historical methods, such as Sam Wineburg's heuristics of historical thinking, we can then move students to look at the mess of documentation and interpretations, and make their own sense of it.

Methods

I developed this question, "Were the ancient Egyptians black?", as a discrete thinking task, in hopes of exposing some of that messiness in their thinking and in the discipline[22]. Sam Wineburg's (1991) set of heuristics model how historians approach historical documents through corroboration, sourcing, and contextualization. His research acknowledged the relationship between the history field and the learning process. Yet in practice, his set of heuristics can readily become understood as black boxes (Latour, 1987) of the history discipline, locking historical thinking into something stable and concrete. Keith Barton and Linda Levstik's (1998) work showed that students interpret historical events and their significance in different ways, partially influenced by their racial/ethnic background. Terrie Epstein's (2000) work suggested that students of color enter the classroom with more complex established understandings of how racial groups fit into US history than their white counterparts, which are frequently overlooked in the classroom. This research addresses that tension between much historical thinking research and research around the impact of race and identities on student learning. While acknowledging the importance of Wineburg's heuristics in history pedagogy, this research adds emphasis to contextualizing student thought and the history discipline within students' socio-political worlds.

Fundamental to both Piagetian and Vygotskean traditions is a question of how individuals process new and different information in relation to the identity of pre-existing narratives and knowledge frameworks (diSessa, 1988, 2004). Andrea diSessa's work on design study placed the focus of research on students' thinking about subject area concepts. His notion of ontological innovation was his term for the original student theorizing and their capacity to make new categories for explaining how things work, rather than fitting student data into pre-existing categories and frameworks. diSessa urged an openness to the data, and a caution for putting what students say into preconceived boxes. My methods aim to be careful about equating what

[22] In addition to this task, students were given several images and documents to interpret as well, but have not included those results here.

students say with what "experts in the field" say, and to allow student understanding and knowledge to sit on its own.

The data required some framework that would allow me to both acknowledge student answers as wrong, but to focus on the parts of their answers that revealed something else, aspects of the non-identity, outside of being wrong answers. I turned to diSessa's concept of "knowledge in pieces" (diSessa, 1988), to focus on the smaller parts of student responses that reveal the conceptual building blocks of their historical understandings. diSessa's work also identified the idea of p-prims. He describes these phenomenological primitives, or p-prims, as "relatively minimal abstractions of common events that serve as essentially self-explanatory analyses in thinking about the physical world. These are little scenarios that happen, in the eyes of the naive physicist, simply because "that's the way the world works." Thus, they are the intuitive equivalent of physical laws" (diSessa, 1985, p. 99)[23]. This notion of p-prims is important, because instead of simply understanding certain answers as definitively wrong and trying to build new knowledge from scratch, we can mine those answers for bits of intuitive knowledge that can be built upon.

In physics, p-prims might be things like "Things move in the direction you push them"; "a force that encounters resistance results in reduced effect"; "motion dies away"; "pushing an object off center spins it"; "immobile objects block (stop or deflect) mobile ones" (diSessa, 1985, p. 99). The equivalent of p-prims in history and social science could be statements such as "Africans are black," "race exists physically," or "the way people look is based on where they live." Another one comes out of 19th century nationalism and Romanticism (and Herder's (1787/1966) idea of a "Volk"), in that a nation is made up of a unified people, and those people are rooted in a geographic location; Germans come from Germany; Nigerians come from Nigeria. In history and social science, some of these are correct, some are oversimplifications, and some are wrong. These become more rules that are learned through society without question or explanation, rather than intuitive "laws." But they act like intuitive reactions to situations. David Philips (2011) referred to these social concepts as "naturalized axioms", social constructions that circulate and are adopted as natural[24]. I rely on Philips' term because often it is unclear how directly determined student explanations are based on things they have heard from others rather than their own observations of the world. Additionally, students reference a range of sources that I did not have access to. For example, specific pieces of art, such as a tombstone. As such, the focus is on their impressions and interpretations.

Part of the work I hope to achieve here is to get students to react to these naturalized axioms in their minds, and question where those "intuitive" notions or conclusions are coming from, and question their validity. Even wrong answers can be useful in this method, not to be dismissed. Another goal of this work is to get teachers to acknowledge the complexities of naturalized axioms that go into student attempts to problem-solve historical tasks, even if their answers appear wrong. In the example of invented spelling, the wrong applications of rules can and often do reveal correct learned concepts. For example, a child who writes "selled" instead of "sold" shows that they have learned that to make a word past-tense, you must add "-ed" at the

[23] diSessa's p-prims also relate to Jerome Bruner's notion of "folk pedagogy". This also relates to what Gadamer referred to as "prejudices" (2012, p. 9).

[24] This research is also highly influenced by Bakhtin, Vygotsky (2012), and Wertsch (2002), all of whom emphasize the social dynamism of thought and language.

end. Simply marking the answer as wrong does not acknowledge that the student has learned and followed that grammar rule as they thought appropriate.

A number of student responses included a wavering between ideas, eventually settling on one conclusion. Another pair of concepts from diSessa's work that are useful here are the ideas of "cuing priority" and "reliability priority." diSessa defined *cuing priority* as, "how quickly or directly a knowledge element is evoked in a given context" (diSessa, 1985, p. 99), and *reliability priority* as "how resistant to being superseded or rejected an element is once activated" (diSessa, 1985, p. 99). The central question posed to interviewees cued different concepts initially for different individuals, which I will get into later in the analysis.

My methods are also influenced by Geoffrey Saxe's (2004) work, which added the level of sociogenetic processes to Vygotsky's microgenetic and ontogenetic processes in tracing how people learn. Microgenetic processes refer to the cognitive processes that occur within that moment, what concepts are called upon to make sense of a text or an event. Ontogenetic refers to how the processing of an event or text fits into an individual's lifelong development and processing patterns. Sociogenetic refers to how the event or text is made sense of within a larger social framework, be it within the whole classroom community, or on a national or international level. Saxe focused on how these three processes are intertwined and overlap. I aim to trace student concept development along all three tracks, to gain an understanding of how the identity and difference of historical events and texts interact with student identities, and narrative formation. These terms help to differentiate between the concepts that students draw upon to make sense of this task. In this chapter, I do not sort student data according to these categories, and focus more on the disciplinary debates related to student responses; however, these terms point to the various influences that shape how students make sense of history questions. What sort of connections will people make when confronted with a question they normally do not encounter, but which allows them to draw on subject matter with which they are readily familiar? How will participants evaluate evidence and concepts they have been exposed to in their lives?

These concepts expressed by students intertwine with narratives in fascinating and confusing ways. Jameson focused on the layers of interpretation that are present as we read a text. "Rather, texts come before us as the always-already-read; we apprehend them through sedimented layers of previous interpretations, or—if the text is brand-new—through the sedimented reading habits and categories developed by those inherited interpretive traditions" (1981, p. 9). Whereas I support the argument that the political unconscious is always already present within our reading and within the texts, Jameson seems to present an ideal subject within a particular cultural frame. I question whether the multiplicity of backgrounds of students within a public school classroom have equal access to those sedimented layers. Jameson further stated, "such master narratives have inscribed themselves in the texts as well as in our thinking about them; such allegorical narrative signifieds are a persistent dimension of literary and cultural texts precisely because they reflect a fundamental dimension of our collective thinking and our collective fantasies about history and reality" (1981, p. 34). I suggest that beyond master narratives are minoritarian narratives, narratives that circulate within minority communities and might not be readily recognizable by the dominant community[25].

[25] This assertion aligns with Peter Seixas' (1993) work, who found that family sources and experiences influenced student perceptions of history, and stressed the importance of recognizing these influences in historical understandings. James Wertsch's (2002) research on collective

This is where Wineburg comes in. His heuristics offer the means for allowing the past to disrupt and surprise us. Historical thinking encourages us to question our initial interpretations, and contextualize historical documents within that moment and against other documentation from that moment. My aim in focusing on the sociogenetic aspects in student thinking is an attempt to account for the experiences and realities of students that shape the ways they are engaged in disciplinary learning, particularly when that engagement is through confrontation or rejection or negation. Isaiah's refusal to answer the question is perhaps the most important in here, for all of the layers I could not access that have possibly shaped his rejection of disciplinary learning.

Findings

Data were collected from thirteen 10th grade global studies students who identify as African American, black, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Panamanian, Trinidadian, Mexican, Guatemalan, or Jamaican.

Generally, students provided a range of conflicting explanations as they thought through the problem, deciding on which concepts seemed to help them most in answering the question. Out of thirteen students, one student argued that the ancient Egyptians were African American, not black; one said they were light-skinned; six decided they were black; one said they were white; two said they were mixed, black and white; one said they were sort of black; and one student would not answer because he didn't trust the evidence. They had varying degrees in how confidently they expressed their answers. I have organized my analysis according to naturalized axioms I recognized amongst student responses.

The first naturalized axiom is that race is contextualized socially and historically. This relates to Wineburg's (2001) heuristic of contextualization, as a thinking skill applied by historians. But specifically in answering this question, I want to emphasize the concept of race as contextualized, as a social construct rather than a universal and natural construct across space and time. This came up in different ways by students. Angel, a self-identified African American student, stated that the ancient Egyptians were not black, but African American.

> Angel: I wouldn't say black per se, because that's like, I wouldn't necessarily say it's an insult, but it's like a stereotype. But I wouldn't say black. That's almost like categorizing. As far as a word, I don't think there was a word for it. They were just on the darker side of the color spectrum I guess. I wouldn't say they were black. When you categorize somebody as just being black, there's a history behind being black. When you say that you're black, it comes from a place of being proud. Because of all of the stuff that your ancestors went through. I feel like the ancient Egyptians were… I would say they were African American. I wouldn't say they were black.
>
> Tadashi: What's the difference there?
>
> Angel: Well, when you're African American, that's like, natural race. Black is a stigma.

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memory suggested that how we understand the past is a mediated action, utilizing cultural tools that are socioculturally situated in one's community surroundings.

Angel starts out with this notion that categorizing someone as black is like an insult, or like a stereotype. She is thinking through her definition of what it means to be black, and whether the ancient Egyptians could fit into that category. She also holds this idea of blackness as being proud, alongside this idea of blackness as stigma. There is a history to being black, a narrative to race as contextualized construct.

Angel applies this concept of race as a contextualized construct. She has this awareness that there wasn't a word for it. Her use of the past tense here recognizes that terms are contextualized across space and time, that the words we use today might not apply to a group in the past, and that they had their own systems and terms for making sense of the world. The reason expressed for why "black" does not apply to Egyptians in the past is because the ancient Egyptians do not share that same narrative that comes with being black. Her response is based in the present, and her understandings of what blackness is today. Blackness invokes a certain history that the Egyptians did not share. They did not share that context that comes with being black.

To describe the Egyptians in the past, Angel does not ask how they understood themselves, but turns to a term that for her is more descriptive of nature. Angel applies the term African American as a natural race, across time. Blackness is contextualized for her in her own time, attached to a particular historical narrative. She knows the narrative attached to the term black for her today, but does not seem to know how the ancient Egyptians' skin tones fit into their own narratives of identity. Angel starts to move towards recognizing that these categories are historical and change over time, but she ultimately returns to the frame she knows best. Angel simultaneously expresses race as natural, in her reference to African American as natural race, and blackness as socially constructed and temporally contextualized based on shared history and experiences.

In her book *Physics of Blackness* (2015), Michelle Wright asserted the limits of an understanding of blackness primarily based on the Middle Passage epistemology: "As the linear spacetime that dominates the academic canon on black diasporic identities, the Middle Passage epistemology is a commanding one: it negotiates the complexity of the origins of Blackness in the West by stressing the process of being ripped from one existence and brutally thrust into another; it forces us to question the very heart and intention of white Western democratic discourse by presenting centuries of the moral and ethical corruption of chattel slavery and the equally corrupt logic that attended its constant justification; it belies those anti-Black discourses of African inferiority" (p. 14). Angel's logic reflects this origin of blackness within the Atlantic slave trade, and the resulting shared narrative. We hear the complications of this Middle Passage epistemology in how she says that blackness is both stigma, and how it is about having pride in what black people have overcome.

Sasha, self-identified as black American, also contextualized her understanding of being black against the milieu of the ancient Egyptians, emphasizing how they saw themselves in that moment, rather than how we see them in our current moment.

Tadashi: How would we know if they were black?

Sasha: I guess based on their skin color. But I feel like back then people didn't talk about race like that. I just think, like I said, everybody's just different people. So, I mean, I guess you just identify as a light skin or dark skin? Or where you come from? So you

may not say white or black. You might just say Egyptian. Or maybe if you live in a part of Egypt you might call yourself that.

Tadashi: That's interesting that they wouldn't identify as white or black but maybe from part of Egypt or light skin or dark skin?

Sasha: Yeah. Because I just don't think that back then it was about race. It was more about religion in my opinion. So, they probably just, like, for example, I'm from New York. So I would just say I'm from Brooklyn, or I'm Brooklyner, or something like that. So instead of just saying white or black. Or what religion they're from. I guess. I'm not sure.

Sasha similarly applies this concept of race as a contextualized construct to answering this question. She says, "I just don't think that back then it was about race." Race becomes an identity category prioritized today, but is not universal. She suggests that back then, other identity categories probably were prioritized. She gives guesses to what those might have been, but recognizes that she doesn't know for sure what identity categories they prioritized. Although her response seems related to Angel's response, Angel emphasized the meaning of blackness today as a contemporary narrative that the ancient Egyptians could not have been a part of, whereas Sasha emphasized the context of that past historical moment and how they must have understood themselves under different terms.

Tim, self-identified as Panamanian, black, and white, relied on the naturalized axiom that race is defined geographically. It is a spatial, not a temporal construct. Tim replied, "Yes they were. I do think they were black. Because Egypt is in Africa. It's the core of Africa. It's the heart of Africa." This idea of Egypt being "the core" or "the heart" of Africa is intriguing given its location on the margin of the physical continent. Black is associated with Africa, so if Egypt is the heart of Africa, then they must have been black. There is no reference to blackness being contextualized in time; blackness is associated through spatial location. He expressed this confidently, so this appears to be a reliable concept for Tim. Of course, "Africa" is not a real space, but something created through history. Egypt is African because of how our modern framework has created the notion of Africa.

Lee, who identifies as Dominican, similarly relied on the naturalized axiom that race is defined geographically, but came to an opposing conclusion. Lee asked for a map to draw the physical geographic boundaries of whiteness.

Tadashi: Last question. Were the ancient Egyptians black?

Lee: Is there a map of the world? I'm going to get to you right now….

Tadashi: You know, I have one with me. (I pull out the photocopy of the map and hand it to him. He then draws the line on the map shown below).

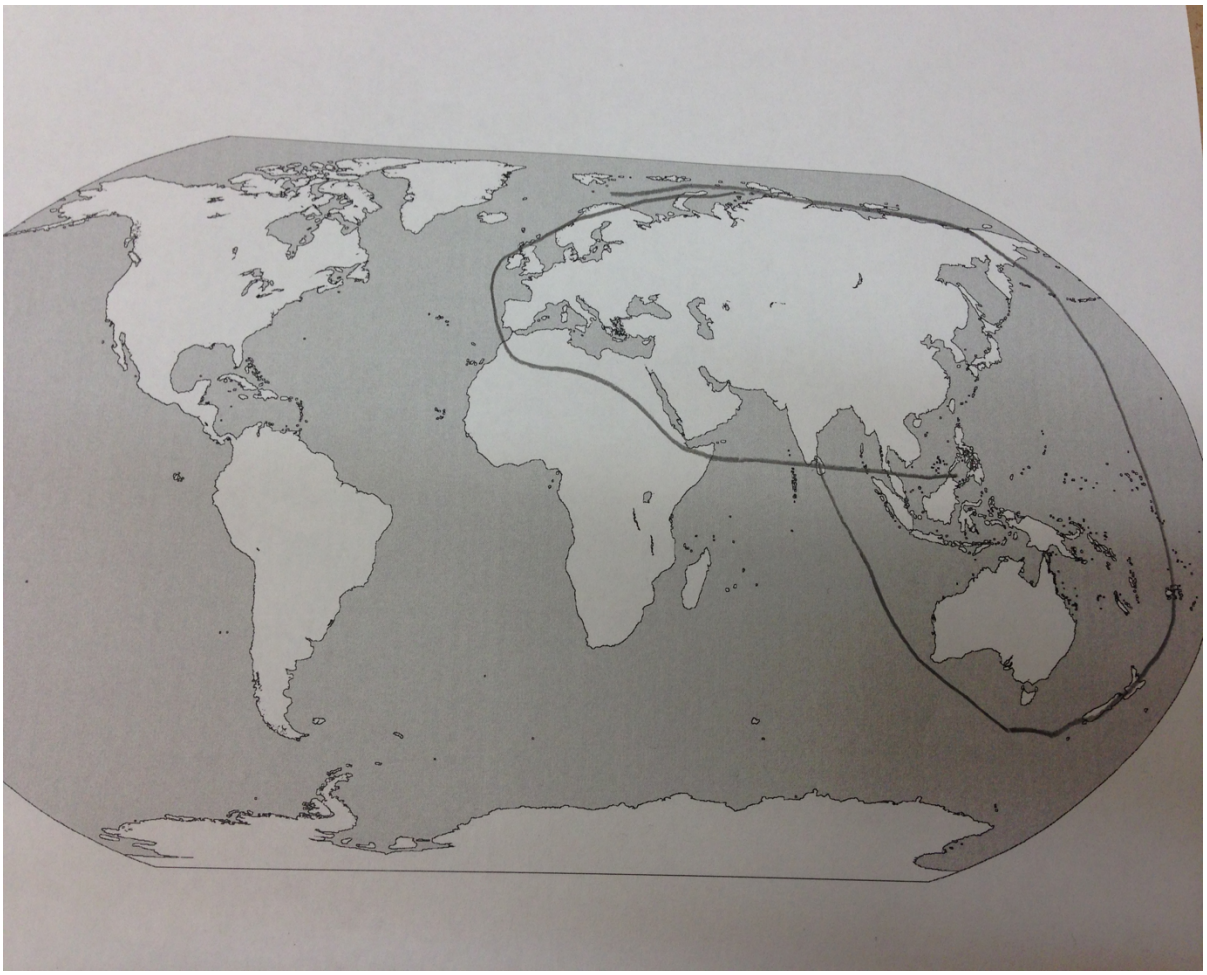


Figure 1

Lee: Ok. Egypt is like right here, right?

Tadashi: Yeah.

Lee: No. I say no because… literally, this is all like, (begins drawing on the map the encircled area) literally everybody here is white. Caucasian. Or caucazoid. That's what I heard today.

Tadashi: Where did you hear that?

Lee: It was some guy, he was here in school…And also because, look! This is Asia.

Tadashi: But technically it is in Africa.

Lee: Yeah but… I mean. That is kind of true…. I don't know. They probably are… Ah. You got me thinking...And! Present day they are not white white.. but they're not dark dark. So, yeah… I say they *are* white…

Lee defined the area he circled on the map by saying "literally everybody here is white". His reference to the term caucazoid implies that someone had told him about the racial framework of caucazoid (and negroid and mongoloid). It is noteworthy that he does not provide a space for the term mongoloid, which is often placed in relation to caucazoid and negroid. But according to the lines he drew on the map, everybody in Asia is white. He took this set of terminology (which is usually the three caucazoid, mongoloid, and negroid) and then placed them into a black-white racial binary. There was a moment when he was challenged by my comment about it being technically in Africa. He then turned to rely on what he thinks Egyptians look like today, to confirm his answer that the Egyptians were white. By relying on his impression of what Egyptians look like today, he relied on a naturalized axiom of race as remaining the same across time within a geographic space. Egyptians today must be the same or at least very similar to how they were long ago. In spite of the wide variation in what Egyptians look like today, Lee also seems to rely on a naturalized axiom of a unified national racial identity, rooted in 19th century Romanticism and nationalism. He relied on the naturalized axiom that race is determined by geographic location, but had learned different boundaries for how those racial categories fit within geographic spaces, and came to the opposite conclusion as Tim.

I was curious about his response, since he said he had just learned it that day. I followed up with him about this interview the following school year, and Lee did not recall this answer. In my follow-up, Lee said they were Middle Eastern people, not black and not white. Nonetheless, in that moment, he called upon this naturalized axiom that race is determined by geography. It had high cuing priority in that moment, but ultimately did not have reliability priority in the long run.

A related naturalized axiom is that blackness is determined by climate. By this concept, blackness is a matter of skin tone, determined by evolution and mutations. This has both temporal and spatial components. Tomcat (African American) explained how the Egyptians were black because of the climate in Egypt:

> Well, Egypt was hot back then, right? Even now. And they said being white skin color, or Caucasian, was a mutation because people moved to the north where it was really cold, and they couldn't have, their skin couldn't get enough heat. So that mutation took 500 years to happen, for their skin to turn a melanie that could take enough heat for them to survive. See? It's all science. And science don't' tell lies. So, if science say that it was a mutation, so we started out black, and Egypt was hot. We need to be black to withstand the sun anyways. So I don't think there was white in Egypt. There was black people.

Tomcat cues this concept of skin tone being determined by climate. The Egyptians were black because they needed to be black to survive the sun, the heat. He then inserts himself into this explanation, stating "We need to be black to withstand the sun anyways." The reasons why he is black are the same reasons the Egyptians are black, as a scientific response to climate regardless of time. Race then is biological, and has something to do with melanin. He expresses this confidently, expressing the strong reliability of scientific explanation.

Tomcat also expresses this narrative of skin color over human history. He stated, "so we started out black", and earlier stated, "they said being white skin color, or Caucasian, was a mutation because people moved to the north". This reference to "they" implies he was taught this, and has absorbed this from other sources. But he is not necessarily directly repeating what he has been taught; he is taking the building blocks he has absorbed, and perhaps is doing

something else with it. People started out black, and white skin developed as a mutation due to climate. Black is the origin, and white is a mutation of black skin.

Mahoganey's answer similarly mixes narrative with a reliance on the naturalized axiom that race is determined by genetics and evolves over generations. Mahoganey identifies as Jamaican, Puerto Rican, and black.

> Mahoganey: "it was near Africa, well in Africa, and Africans are black. But they weren't always black. So, I don't know.
>
> Tadashi: What do you mean they weren't always black?
>
> Mahoganey: Ok so, I don't know if I'm wrong, but I heard they were actually white. But they had sex, and stuff like that, and made black, and after that they was all black. I don't know if that's true. But it sound kind of right, because, if I was white and I have sex with a black man, I think maybe it'd come out dark. If the child had sex with a black boy or girl or whatever, he would be black, and it would just go like that. Until people from different cultures interacted with each other, then you make other colors."

It seems that Mahoganey is expressing here pieces of ideas she has heard elsewhere, and explaining them through her own lens. When I heard her say this, I thought she might have at some point heard someone talk about melanin theory, but from her responses, it is unclear what has shaped her thinking on this[26]. She starts with this geographic connection, similar to Tim, that Egypt is in Africa, and Africans are black, so therefore Egyptians were black. But then she moves into this genetic evolution narrative. They started out as white, and through generations of sex, they made black. Again, we see both spatial and temporal aspects in her thinking.

Another thread that arose in several student responses is the sentiment that we cannot rely on the historical evidence. Both at the beginning and at the end of her interview, Mahoganey emphasized that we cannot really know.

> Tadashi: Were the ancient Egyptians black?
>
> Mahoganey: "I don't know. They look black on the tombstone. But then again what if they couldn't make white? I don't know. We can't really know. That's one thing that I don't feel is a fact. That's ok. Unless you were there, unless they wrote down "we were black", we don't really know. That coulda been how they viewed each other."

Mahoganey expressed a skepticism about what we can know about history. Even when we have historical evidence that might seem to tell us they were black based on their paintings, she asks the question, "what if they couldn't make white?" She emphasized at the end this idea

[26] Melanin theory developed as a sort of Afrocentric "science", primarily by Frances Cress Welsing (Austin 2006, p. 119). In this theory, whiteness is a result of melanin deficiency. Melanin is dominant, and has a civilizing effect on individuals. This might possibly explain how people went from white to being black and other races within Mahoganey's narrative, but again, it is impossible to say from the interviews what has influenced her thinking.

of fact, and what it takes to really know something. She also applies the p-prim mentioned earlier about historical context, emphasizing "how they viewed each other". This is similar to how Sasha emphasized that we do not know how they saw themselves, but it probably was not around being black.

Isaiah's answer seems rooted in a deeper distrust of schooling, and particularly of history as a discipline. I discuss his broader distrust towards schooling, history, and the government in other chapters. He doesn't settle on a stance, but focuses on our inability to answer the question. Isaiah identifies as black and Puerto Rican.

Tadashi: Were the ancient Egyptians black?

Isaiah: Were they? I don't' know. They were? I don't know. How would you know? You wouldn't. Unless somebody… I don't' know. That's another thing about history I don't understand. As all these facts and here, and I don't know. Somebody could have wrote all this but it all could be a big lie. You wasn't there to witness it.

Tadashi: So do you trust history?

Isaiah: Somewhat.

Tadashi: But not always?

Isaiah: Yeah not always. I can understand recent stuff like 1800's, but all that before Christ and after death shit. I don't believe in that.
Why?

Isaiah: Cuz it's too long ago to even have, cuz honestly if they did have books back then, if you was to keep a book for 2,000 years, that book is not existent anymore. Like, the book is dead.

Tadashi: What sort of evidence do historians use? Can historians use?

Isaiah: Like now? Like now we got phones and computers so if they just save some, and they got video evidence. Like, after they made the camera I can understand all the history stuff. But before the camera you have no physical evidence that this person did this or this actually happened. Like with dinosaurs and stuff, I can understand a fossil and stuff, but you have no evidence a meteor landed on the planet and wiped them out.

Tadashi: So, how do you decide what to believe in history or not?

Isaiah: By the facts. If there's a certain amount of facts, and it actually sounds legit, then yeah.

Isaiah expresses this skepticism for what we can know. He understands that people can create false history, they can write it and it might be a big lie. He draws a line between history from around the 1800's on, and earlier history. He cites books as being credible sources, and

emphasized how evidence today is stronger with the invention of the camera. Yet Isaiah doesn't seem to know how knowledge in history is produced. His response prompted me to ask him further questions about the history discipline, about evidence, reliability and believability in history. School or history classes do not seem to have provided him a way out of these questions he has about historical evidence and reliability. Isaiah seems to hold a very either truth or fiction outlook on evidence and proof. He lands in a position that the history discipline is unable to answer such questions, that it is unreliable. This mirrors Lee and Shemilt's (2004) findings that in order to develop lasting changes in students' historical understandings, their prior conceptions and relationships to history must be addressed and engaged. He holds a healthy skepticism, if oversimplified in some regards.

These student responses reflect the aforementioned mix of microgenetic, ontogenetic, and sociogenetic processes. They express their versions of ideas, these naturalized axioms, that circulate more broadly within society and their communities. And yet, their explanations remain their own, reflecting microgenetic and ontogenetic processes. The following section examines the rifts within the History discipline exposed by this question, and how student responses relate to these rifts. While focusing on the formal academic disciplinary space, I remain cognizant of students' originality of thought.

Knowledge in Pieces and the Disciplinary Problem-Space

Over the past 30 years, there has been a shift towards getting students to think like experts in the field. This emphasizes the appearance of a stable disciplinary field. Students are taught the set ways for exactly how historians approach historical documents. This is a great starting point for how historians approach historical documents, but that ought to be just a part of the beginning scaffolds to thinking historically. As Bruno Latour's (1987) work showed, the work of science is messy. Before scientific theories get written in coherent clear form in science textbooks, there is a lot of murky and cloudy thought that is the heart of the scientific method. This question "Were the ancient Egyptians black?" reveals both the range of concepts students rely upon to answer this question, and the rifts within the discipline about what history is and how we do history.

This question reveals the range of naturalized axioms that students rely upon to answer this question. Jameson's phrase, "Always historicize!" demands that we constantly acknowledge the presence of the political unconscious, and the work that a text does within its various and specific relational contexts. The task of historicizing, however, is neither simple nor obvious. "Croce's great dictum that 'all history is contemporary history' does not mean that all history is *our* contemporary history; and the problems begin when your epistemological break begins to displace itself in time according to your own current interests…only a genuine philosophy of history is capable of respecting the specificity and radical difference of the social and cultural past while disclosing the solidarity of its polemics and passions, its forms, structures, experiences, and struggles, with those of the present day" (Jameson, 1981, p. 18). Jameson demands that we not only historicize the past, but contextualize and historicize the historian or student in the present. We cannot be rid of our own contemporary interests. The work of history is to attend to the radical difference of the past, and in light of what it can and cannot do in solidarity with our contemporary interests, and expose the radical difference of our present condition. One might find it comical that Angel stated that the Egyptians were not black, but

African American, because African American is natural race. But that misses the richness of the historicizing she is doing, and the role of narrative in her thought.

Later on in the interview, I asked Angel about the image of Africa in her head:

> Angel: My image of Africa is the motherland, where everybody comes from. I think of it as, you know, a place where my roots are connected to, like my roots trace back to Africa and I'm pretty sure a lot of other people's roots trace back to Africa as well. Africa's just so rich in history. I see it as a very big place. It's a very large continent if I'm not mistaken. So then it's like, like they hunt in Africa, lions and cheetahs and stuff. And like they, like they take advantage of things that are given to them. They take advantage of education. So they're very strong-willed. When I think about Africa, I think about a lot of strong-willed individuals.
>
> Tadashi: And so what sort of role, if any, does African history play for you in like kind of, is it important to you?
>
> Angel: Yes, absolutely, it's most definitely important to me. It defines who I am. When people try and tell me that I'm a minority or I'm beneath another person or I'm of lesser value than the next person simply because of the color of my skin, I fail to believe that. Like I'm a human being just like you are and you know, my people have went through a lot. Like they're currently enduring poverty, hunger. There is a lot of problems over there, a lot of floods. And we continue to be strong. It's just embedded in the fabric of the people. Like you're always strong. And we're going to continue to be strong. And that serves as a reminder for me. And I see it as motivation, well definitely motivation. You know, always remind me of where I came from.

Here we find a rich expression of pride, which seems to counter-balance that narrative of stigma for what it means for her to be black. Her sense of Africa counters what she has been told about herself as a minority, how she fails to believe she's of lesser value and beneath others. The importance of this narrative inflects her readings in history, and how she relates to the past. It is a narrative that has evolved through her own microgenetic, ontogenetic, and sociogenetic processes. When we hear and read student answers, and judge them as wrong, as historically inaccurate, what are our investments, the narratives we have internalized, that shape our readings of their answers? How do our investments shape the answers we direct students toward? Conversely, how can our emotional investments in student learning lead to reading into student answers ideas that may not be there? In my desire to see the brilliance in each of my students, I risk false readings, seeing what I want to see.

Joan Scott cautioned against relying on experience as evidence of difference, because it reifies difference into stable identities. "The evidence of experience then becomes evidence for the fact of difference, rather than a way of exploring how difference is established, how it operates, how and in what ways it constitutes subjects who see and act in the world" (Scott, 1991, p.777). The point of this work is not to emphasize the importance of understanding the ancient Egyptians as black in our contemporary context. This sort of question ought to promote the sort of historical inquiry into more of a Foucauldian genealogy. Genealogy focuses on contingencies of history, the meanderings, including the dead ends, instead of searching for a single-track Hegelian forward-moving trajectory of Reason in History. Fredric Jameson and

David Scott redirect the attention to what the asking and answering of questions reveals about the process of constructing historical knowledge, and the limits on possibilities for what that knowledge looks like.

What I find just as important as determining whether or not students' answers are correct is understanding the stakes at play in their answers. These stakes reveal students' own investments and relationships, and following them allows inquiry along their own paths, rather than focus on the teacher's desired answers and logic. This relates to the previous chapters on queer reading practices and the negation of being and reason. Student answers might be wrong, but there is so much more in the non-identity of the answers than just being wrong. Isaiah's refusal to answer reflects his relationships to the history discipline and what school could possibly teach him. He has what I consider to be a healthy rejection of the limits of the discipline, something not to be corrected or fixed, but to be attended and fostered. In other moments during his interviews, he expressed, "everything about reading I hate," and ""I honestly don't really care about it because it's in the past, and I just think about the future and the present. So, that's one reason I don't like global history, because I hate even thinking about the past." He spoke of conspiracy theories around 9-11 and a distrust of the government in general. Isaiah's naturalized axioms, and his sociogenetic processes, must not then be mined as valuable resources to be overtaken and used by teacher-directed knowledge production. Isaiah must be allowed to pursue his inquiries in his own right, and have them be challenged. His wrong answers must be engaged as contra-diction, in conversation with other ideas, not validated as true nor ignored as false.

Conclusions

This study argues that the history discipline is an in-process space of contested knowledge production, rather than a space of simply contested knowledge. By broadening the scope of historical thinking, and acknowledging the impact of student experiences, this research aims to shift the relationships between students, teachers, and historical documents, encouraging teachers to allow different and perhaps unexpected lines of inquiry. Accounting for the sociogenetic influences in learning, and the range of naturalized axioms students access in answering historical questions, racialized logics of students arguably creates a more rigorous academic environment, pushing questions of what role differences in personal experience play in historical thinking. This can only become more rigorous by challenging and debating student assumptions, not simply listening to them and validating their thought. Fostering a form of inquiry that addresses historical questions as problem-spaces, and a more genealogical approach to the work that history does, we broaden student access to historical thinking, and might better account for the sociogenetic layers in their learning and thinking. But part of looking at the sociogenetic layers is accounting for the political unconscious, the ways that the sociogenetic is always already political, and how each student is enmeshed in hierarchies and webs of power.

Rather than dismiss these student responses as wrong, what else do their responses tell us? What is the knowledge in pieces that they use to make sense of this question? How can those bits of knowledge be challenged for what they are worth, rather than dismissed as worthless and wrong, as failed thinking? Historical thinking as pedagogy has been praised for its move against a flat fact memorization pedagogy. But in thinking about queer reading practices from Chapter Two, how can we listen better to those ways of thinking, in particular from students who seem to fail at school and in history class? By owning up to the messiness of the history field, as a

discipline in process, we might also be able to listen more closely to student thought that lies outside of our expectations.

I have stressed that the point is not simply whether they are right or wrong. Sometimes they are wrong, and this is important. But even in their wrong answers, it is important to figure out where those wrong answers come from, and what pieces of knowledge, whether true or not, students rely upon to think about historical problems. Given the boundaries of whiteness that Lee drew on the map, it is both important to consider how he solved the problem based on how he links a people, their race, and geographic location, and then to challenge those links against scholarly work on race and geography, to move him beyond his current understanding. It is a commonplace in constructivist educational theory that one should build on what students know. As I have demonstrated throughout this study, these students consistently engaged some of the deepest structures of the American and global social order is subtle ways. And yet, rather than building on that, we teachers typically see only the falseness of their perspectives.

The desire to simply correct anachronisms within Lee's answer dismisses the roles historical narratives play in students' logic. Jameson's political unconscious focuses on a history that owns up to the political investments today, as well as owning up to what the texts from the past can really tell us within their own historicized context.

There is a reparative aspect in educators acknowledging African American ownership of their own narratives. But reparative justice, transformative justice, also means pushing the historical work beyond simplified positive narrative creation. Just as Sasha and Mahoganey conjectured, we do not really know how they thought of themselves. We can guess, we can imagine. Herein lies some of the potential of history: this allowance to imagine the world otherwise, to imagine a world beyond and outside of the racial traumas of today's society. This does not mean we should create a fictional past, but rather allow the vast difference of the past to disrupt our adherence to and investment in seemingly naturalized and universal categories, especially those we cling to.

Turning to historians from positions of marginalization allows a more dynamic consideration of what historical thinking might look like in the classroom. How can the history classroom become a space of true inquiry, into the contestations of the history field? What can we really know and what can we not know? What are the politics and investments, and what are the repercussions of those politics and investments in historical study?

Within each of these student answers, there are pieces of knowledge to be pursued, to be challenged, but all worthy of further inquiry. Even Isaiah's disavowal to answer holds many paths to pursue further, in his mistrust of history before certain forms of record-keeping, and calculated faith in different forms of evidence. He understood that sometimes even when historians say things are true, they could easily lie about them.

Historical thinking work emphasizes how we cannot always know what happened in the past; as educators we cannot always know how and what students think. There is an importance to this illegibility. Just as historical thinking encourages a letting go of assuming we can know the past, educators must also let go in some ways this notion that they can know what students know and think. This has the potential to open up more room for inquiry. When we allow ourselves to sit with this notion of illegibility, of not knowing, we allow other questions to seep in, other lines and modes of inquiry to register.

Chapter Five
Reading the World with Suspicion:
Between Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading,
Conspiracy Theory and Critical Theory

Those in power deploy terms like "reasonable" and "rational" -- Jodi Dean (1998) (p. 9)

But I go out of my way to find those evidence, because I don't want to sound like an ignorant black man just speaking out of my ass, sayin they're trying to get us, not knowing – Tomcat, 10th grade student

"*OBEY*" – *They Live* (1988)

Objectives

In this chapter, I interrogate the vast realms of student thinking that remain untapped, ignored, and negated. In particular, I address how some students of color turn to what are popularly called conspiracy theories. What do conspiracy theories offer them? What might their interest in conspiracy theories be evidence of? This chapter builds off of Chapter Two's queer reading methods, and the refusal to accept the hegemonic ways of making sense of the world. Chapter Three examined evidence for how students' ways of thinking get dismissed as unreasonable, and the racial dynamics aligned with reason as a form of property. Having established that students rely on naturalized axioms to make sense of the world in Chapter Four, this chapter looks to the larger narratives and theoretical frameworks that students develop and turn to. In this chapter, I examine evidence that: 1) these students engage in paranoid readings of the world; 2) students turn to conspiracy theories as theoretical frameworks that help them make sense of the world; 3) for marginalized populations, paranoid reading is a form of counter-intelligence; 4) and I assert that the push towards historical thinking in schools values a sort of suspicion of historical knowledge, skills which can build off of these critiques students already possess.

What Tomcat said

Consider these responses from Tomcat, a 10th grade student, during an interview.

Tadashi: What do you think about the government?

Tomcat: Well I think the government is all lies. And I don't think we're really free. We're just as free as they want us to be. If they don't want us to be free, we can just be struck down. I also think that no one owns the government. The government… wait. There's a higher power that runs the government. Beyond the government itself. Like, someone that can afford the government. When I say afford, I actually mean afford a government. Someone that's so rich, they call the shots in the government, not the government itself. I think it's a rich guy. I think it's a rich… like… Not organization but, more like family. Not a society, but family… a group that owns everything. And we just chillin, until they want us to be like tamed or controlled. That's it. I heard about the government being bad from one of my uncles. He aint explain everything. He just said…They speak about it. My mom don't see that. She thinks I'm just lost. But I do think we're tame though. I do think we're under control. Not under control but we're not truly free.

Tadashi: What makes you think that?

Tomcat: Well, you buy a house, right? And, you can't pay for a house. You sell it to a bank. They own it. Everything is owned by government, or government companies. Unless you're rich already. But like, everything is owned by the government, so they can take us out of anything if they want. And you're not going to be able to do nothing about it.

Tadashi: Where do you hear about this stuff? Do you know this stuff from people at home or internet or the news?

Tomcat: Ah. Let's see. On the internet. Not mostly the internet because you can't rely on all the sources off the internet. The internet do tell lies. Um. From like old family members. I read a book. I forgot the name of it, but I read something, and it was talking about something called a Rothschild. That's a family name or something. Like, how they own most of the world. That surprised me. Like, this family owns most of the world, and owns most of our government. Probably the whole government by now. Like, it's like a scary thing. How that one guy, or family, owns all these things. It was in a book too. It's not like I read it on the internet. Then **I** looked him up on the internet, and I saw that they was very rich or something. Like, yeah. So like, you know. What's his name? The other guy that's rich. That's it.
It was named after the guy that. See it's been a while since I looked at it on the internet, so it's just clicking in my head right now. Alright, but some scientist made something that will make people.. like, messes up their system. And that same scientist that made it got it. I forgot what his name was. I'm gonna look it up tonight. Alright. And they said, the H, what's it called, the AIDS, it started out as a science experiment. And like I saw different ways, like how they made it, like people can make AIDS. Yeah. So I'm sayin. Different stuff they do to break people down. Or better yet, to break, to kill off, I'll say minorities. Yeah.

Tadashi: So, what are your personal experiences that this, like a lot of this stuff fits with the world that you live in?

Tomcat: Ok. Um. There was this interview, right? With someone who worked for the government. 1960's, it was, 50's, 60's. She said her job was to bring drugs into like, where minorities lived, to bring drugs there. That was her job. For them to sell it. Ok? So I'm saying. And she worked for the government. They were interviewing her. She's the one who did it, it was a lady that brought drugs into the hood, the ghetto or whatever.

Tadashi: She brought drugs into the hood?

Tomcat: Or the ghetto, I don't know what it's called! But yeah. Where the poor people live. You could say that. That's what the hood means right? Um. Like. Then they start selling. Start dealing. People start taking. And what happens is, one guy comes out on top and the rest falls. All them peep--minorities fall. Drug addicts. Um. All that. I'm not blaming it mostly on the government, cuz I'll say, people are lazy as well. They don't want to do nothing. I believe there are times I don't want to do anything, but. I do say, they, in a way they trying to break us. They trying to finish us off, to me.

Tadashi: Ok. Are there things in your own life that--

Tomcat: Of course! I live in the you know, the hood. Where poor people live and stuff. I wouldn't say—yeah poor. I see it happens every day. Everybody selling. A couple of guys come out on top. Everybody else falls. Like, my friend, I'm not gonna say his name but, my friend's brother is wasting his life right now. He says he doesn't want to go to college. He said, all these fees you got to pay for college. They can't get an education because they can't afford it, because they going through hard times. So people can't afford college, just don't go to college. People who can't go to college is the minorities that can't afford it. Everything is set out. Like, let's see. Like. Um. You know crack? You get more years in jail for crack than you get for cocaine. But who can afford cocaine is the rich white girls. And who can afford crack is the black people, the minorities, or the Mexicans, or anybody of the minorities, period.
So when they buy the crack, they get all them years, and when them white girls sniff up cocaine, they just get a couple years. That kills me. Like. I don't like that.
They out to get us, I swear to God they out to get us. That's it. And that's actually true. You can look it up.

Tadashi: Where did you learn about that?

Tomcat: Well, I keep telling you. My family, they not like everybody else. They don't look at things and just live life and say hey everything's dandy. They all see things differently. They see peaks and crises in the government and how they trying to get us. And like, people always say they after us but they never have proof. They never have like, brick evidence. But I go out of my way to find those evidence, because I don't' want to sound like an ignorant black man just speaking out of my ass, sayin they're trying to get us, not knowing. Cuz that's what they want! They want us to not be smart, to not know stuff. So I go out and know stuff. Yeah.

My Reading Needs Mediation

After reading over this interview transcript, I caught myself reacting to sections in ways that felt uncomfortable. I do not expect each reader to react in the same way as me, but I would like to interrogate some of my initial reactions. Mostly, I agree with what he is saying, impressed with his knowledge and understanding of how the world works (there are, however, moments that make me cringe, like his anti-Semitic reference to the Rothschilds). But when I reach the end, I catch myself having a moment of thinking it's ironic that he says he doesn't want to be an ignorant black man, because he sounds like a version of that "ignorant black man" that he fears. It is embarrassing for me to admit that that is what goes through my head. But I say that in order to own up to my own judgments and biases.

In addition to the various cultural studies and queer studies methods I employ in my analysis throughout this dissertation, the methods in this chapter also utilize creative analytic process ethnographic (Richardson, 2000) and auto-ethnographic (Ellis 2002) methods, which involve self-reflexive analysis based on my own thinking as evidence. As I began to work through my analysis of the transcriptions, I realized that one of the best ways to convey my analysis in this chapter was to write reflexively about my own process to mediate my reading of Tomcat's response. I couldn't help but catch judgments I was making about things he said. It is important for us as teachers to have the capacity to catch ourselves, and mediate our own reading

practices. As a teacher who is not black and has not grown up in the same contexts as my students, I must be able to own my judgments, especially when embarrassing. I must position my judgments, to locate where I am coming from.

This chapter begins in response to Tomcat's thinking about the world and the government. These references to conspiracy theories puzzled me. As part of the process to unravel these responses, I mediate my own reading of Tomcat, to slow down how I make sense of things, and the questions I ask along the way. I don't want to view Tomcat as irrational. But something makes me react in that way. How do I mediate these judgments that dismiss his knowledge and experience? Some things he says are also false. How do I both push back against the falsities and anti-Semitism in his statement while pushing myself to understand underlying logics that shape his rationality? Ultimately, I arrive at a sense of how conspiracy theories and paranoid thinking might impact history classroom practices.

I turn to Eve Sedgwick's work on paranoid reading and reparative reading to help think through these reading practices. This pair of terms helps to account for the critical thinking that students use to make sense of the world, and challenges teachers like myself to mediate our own readings of students. What are things that our students are thinking that we miss, and how do we listen to and make sense of that thinking? How do teachers like myself get out of violent forms of thinking that rob students of their reason? How might teachers like myself develop pedagogies that listen to and then challenge the rich thinking that students are doing, that adults all too often dismiss?

Sedgwick offers a pair of terms, two positions to vacillate between, that aids in developing such pedagogies. Eve Sedgwick's article on paranoid reading takes seriously "paranoid" thinking from a position of marginalization. When people are marginalized by society, it can lead to a paranoia about the world, that there are forces in the world out to get you. Reparative reading pushes us to sit more, to listen more, allowing us to be surprised by what we might not have noticed immediately, rather than look for evidence to prove what we already think we know. Reparative reading encourages second and third glances to notice the non-identity beyond what we initially see. In some instances, for both teachers and students, one might turn to paranoid reading, and other instances might call for reparative reading.

Eve Sedgwick's Paranoid Reading

So, what is paranoid reading? Paranoid reading is when you read the world with suspicion, when you see things going on in the world that nobody seems to be talking about, that the majority of society seems unwilling or unable to see. One perceives that there are forces in the world that are out to get you. Sedgwick articulated this idea of paranoid reading, along with critiques of its limitations, in ways that are helpful to thinking about how students read the world. Paranoid reading helps to understand how and why students of color turn to conspiracy theories to explain the world and their experiences of marginalization. Paranoid reading is not the same as conspiracy theories, as conspiracy theories generally presume that there is a specific group of people that is intentionally out to get people. Conspiracy theory is a particular form of thought that paranoid reading can lead to.

According to Sedgwick, "Paranoia is *anticipatory.* Paranoia is *reflexive* and *mimetic.* Paranoia is *a strong theory.* Paranoia is a theory of *negative affects.* Paranoia places its faith in *exposure"* (2003, p. 130). Her explanation of paranoid reading builds off of Paul Ricoeur's "hermeneutics of suspicion to describe the position of Marx, Nietzsche, Freud" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 124).

Paranoia is anticipatory in that there is this constant fear or awareness of judgment. When Tomcat says he doesn't want to be seen as an ignorant black man, he expresses anticipation that others will understand him in this way. When my goal is to prove that Tomcat is actually rational, I expose my anticipation that others will see him as irrational. When one consistently has been shoved to the margins, the fighting gloves slip on quite easily.

For Foucault, this anticipation leads to a particular ethical approach in life. "My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism" (Foucault, 1984, p. 343). In the conclusion, I'll return to Foucault's ethics, in an attempt to develop a practice that oscillates between paranoid and reparative readings.[27]

Paranoia is reflexive and mimetic because "Paranoia proposes both *Anything you can do (to me) I can do worse,* and *Anything you can do (to me) I can do first*--to myself" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 131). This aspect of paranoia reflects almost a psychologically abusive quality, which seems apt in considering the psychologically abusive nature of oppression, evident in Frantz Fanon's works. The easiest way for me to understand this aspect of paranoia is to think about students I have had over the years that seem to preemptively fail. This is linked to anticipation. When someone is told repeatedly that they fail at things, they might choose to fail before someone else can tell them they are failing. Throughout my teaching, I have frequently heard teachers label some students as having self-destructive behavior. Some students put their heads down when a test is given out and refuse to try or write anything.

Paranoid readings of the world can get to the point that we internalize our fears so much that we let them devour us. Sedgwick used Foucault's tracing genealogies of institutional systems to explain this reflexive and mimetic aspect of paranoia: "The gorgeous narrative work done by the Foucauldian paranoid, transforming the simultaneous chaoses of institutions into a consecutive, drop-dead-elegant diagram of spiralling escapes and recaptures, is also the paranoid subject's proffer of himself and his cognitive talent, now ready for anything it can present in the way of blandishment or violence, to an order-of-things *morcele* that had until then lacked *only* narratibility, a body, cognition" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 132). Such paranoid readings of the world expose the irrationality and violence of the larger oppressive society. But in doing this tracing, one can be left with an overwhelming sense of the inevitability of these systems. Foucault's earlier works can be critiqued for portraying the individual without agency in the face of the overwhelming dominance of these systems over our lives. This aspect of paranoia can limit one's openness when one is always on the defensive. Although less prevalent in Tomcat's response above, this aspect of paranoia is evident in Isaiah's responses, when he says that he hates reading and thinking about the past. Isaiah sees these forces working against him and disregards them. Our awareness of our oppression can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Paranoia is a strong theory in that it is all-encompassing and almost aggressively reifying. "An affect theory is, among other things, a mode of *selective* scanning and amplification; for this reason, any affect theory risks being somewhat tautological, but because of its wide reach and rigorous exclusiveness, a strong theory risks being strongly tautological" (Sedgwick, 2003, p.

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[27] This constant anticipation can also lead to a certain exhaustion prevalent within the queer and trans people of color organizing spaces with which I am familiar. Xandra Ibarra's *Inventory of Exhaustion* (2016) exhibit (at Black and White Projects in San Francisco, CA) explored the role of exhaustion within her larger body of work of queer women of color.

135). I picture paranoia as this science fiction watchtower with a spotlight scanning the terrain, devouring all evidence of that negative affect. Sedgwick explained this snowball effect of paranoia: "As it orders more and more remote phenomena to a single formulation, its power grows.... A humiliation theory is strong to the extent to which it enables more and more experiences to be accounted for as instances of humiliating experiences" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 134). This fear of being seen as an ignorant black man becomes a certain motivation for Tomcat. Paranoia leads one to continuously see more and more examples of those forces working against us, to the point where it can almost consume us[28].

Understanding paranoid reading as a strong theory helps to explain why these negative internalized narratives can be so hard to counteract. When we expect to see patterns of negation in world history, we notice and amplify the importance of those examples that fit that strong theory we have developed. Our paranoia at being negated and excluded pushes us to see those instances. Part of what led me to do this research was how, as a teacher, my students still felt excluded from and negated by the curriculum, even though I was trying hard to create a classroom that was more global, empowering for students of color, and less Eurocentric. We create these narratives that connect moments of evidence together, and those narratives become stronger as we encounter more evidence, to make the picture clearer. I thought I was presenting a counter-narrative, but I realized how strong that base narrative is, how it creates these traumatic ruts, ruts that over time are hard to get out of. I am interested in what it takes to intervene into the reification of these negating narratives. Sedgwick's reparative reading, which we shall come to shortly, offers a counter-weight to the exhaustion of paranoia.

Paranoia is a theory of negative affects. Heather Love (2010) expressed how paranoia functions as a wounded animal on the defensive, to protect oneself from negative feelings. Love summarized, "the image of the paranoid person is both aggressive and wounded, knowing better but feeling worse, lashing out from a position of weakness" (Love, 2010, p. 237). When one has become accustomed to society's abuse and neglect, and the false smile of good intentions, one does not need a teacher telling them to love history. A major component of negative dialectics and queer reading is learning to sit within spaces of negation. There is so much there in those spaces of negation, so much to attend to. The goal isn't and can't always be to get kids to love history. Expecting such students to love history merely participates in reproducing the abuse of an oppressive society. Throughout his interviews, Isaiah expressed that he hates even thinking about the past, and hates everything about reading. If you have been marginalized by society and by the History discipline, then hating history is a perfect place to be.

Seeing the Disorder of Society

In their daily lives, students are often very aware of how government actions impact their lives. I started asking students, "what do you think about the government?", because I noticed that they had a lot of strong feelings about the government in their answers. This is because they have a strong awareness, through their experiences, of various systems that seem to work against them in their lives. Angel expressed this sense that the government is not always looking out for their best interests:

[28] Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson's (1995) concept of the "stereotype threat" is related to this aspect of paranoia in how students are perceived, however the concept of stereotype threat does not cover all of the aspects of paranoid reading.

> Hunger is a major issue because there's a lot of budget cuts. A lot of benefits got cut. EBT got cut. Unemployment. A lot of people aren't receiving unemployment anymore. And it's hard! What makes it crazy, is you know, people are standing in pantry lines. Lines wrapped around the block for soup kitchens. But yet we keep giving to third world countries. I understand that they are in need. But we have to make ourselves strong as a whole before we can do something for another country. So I would say that the government is a little backwards. But I don't know if there's going to be anything done to stop it. But if there isn't anything done to stop the government, they're just going to take over.

Angel lives with her father. She has been in and out of shelters over the years. She is absent a lot. She eventually left the school the following year. Angel's experiences reflect her capacity to see the disorder of society. What she says reflects a very real history of undercover targeting of communities (Massey & Denton, 1993; Sugrue, 1996), and the institutional silence around these. There are racialized experiences, but our epistemologies are also racialized, under a white dominant system of reason (Mills, 1997). If you are on the side of benefiting from white supremacy, then the government in general serves your interests. From certain positions, Angel's statement that the government is just going to take over might sound paranoid.

From another vantage point, much of her statement can also sound similar to statements made by Tea Party supporters. These students see the disorder in society, the injustice, and invoke right-wing logics. Why are some of these students drawn to logics that overlap with those on the far right? It could perhaps be symptomatic of the conservative right's ability to create a hegemonic historic bloc (Gramsci, 1948/1971, p. 168-169), to engage critique from both the far left and far right towards the status quo. There is this power of the hegemonic ideology, even amidst the critique. In many ways, their paranoia is emblematic of the forces of their oppression, even amidst the critique.

Students take their experiences and evidence from the world in which they live, and they make sense of this world. My students regularly tell me stories about how they are followed and watched every time they go into the corner stores by school, and experience the heavy policing of their neighborhoods and communities. These students are reading the world from a position of marginalization. Some might deem their statements as paranoid. If some of them claim they are being watched, I trust that it is because they do actively experience being watched. Over ten years of teaching in New York City public schools, I have witnessed the way many store clerks watch over my students, telling some students to leave the store if the clerks are suspicious of these students. As black and brown youth in this country, they are targets of surveillance, and schools usually do not help students make sense of those experiences. Rather, schools are central to that surveillance system. Victor Rios' (2011) documentation of the school-to-prison pipeline exposes how the school as surveillance system is both a part of the Ideological State Apparatus (Althusser, 1971, p. 143), as well as the Repressive State Apparatus (Althusser, 1971, p. 145) through cooperation with the police and prison system.

As evident in Tomcat's response, students reference conspiracy theories about the illuminati, 9-11, the Rothschilds, conspiracies around drugs in the ghetto, and AIDS as a manmade disease. They see disorder in society, they see these systems in their lives. They make sense of them.

This is where Chapter Four's discussion of "knowledge in pieces" and "naturalized axioms" becomes important. I do not mean to say that everything Tomcat and other students say is valid and true. My point is that a full dismissal of what he says misses those pieces of

knowledge, perception, and analysis. My point is to slow down our readings of such student thought, to respectfully engage the various pieces that they perhaps get right, and address what they get wrong.

The conclusion to this dissertation articulates a practice of ethics. This ethical approach must not be about higher moral authority, shaming them against discriminatory anti-Semitism, but must approach the thinking and evidence with the aim of working against oppressive forces of power. An ethical reading of Tomcat's reference to the Rothschilds does not only lead to a history lesson on the roots of anti-Semitism, but to inquire where that sentiment comes from, and why the conspiracy theory around the Rothschilds sounds like a plausible explanation. Such an ethical reading contextualizes what role anti-Semitism plays within the African American community in New York City where Tomcat lives, and the schools and neighborhoods. A teacher at the school expressed their concern as a Jewish person about various students' expressions of anti-Semitism that would pop up in class discussions. An ethical practice must also address how the Rothschilds fits into a broader anti-Semitic literature. The reference to the Rothschilds is embedded within a paranoid reading of the world which works against communities of color, and is embedded within a long history of anti-Semitism. A practice of ethics here requires engaging the intersection of these oppressive power matrices and narratives.

Several students expressed suspicion about the US government. When asked if he trusted the government, Flyguy said, "I kind of do but at the same time I feel like they hiding stuff. Stuff that they don't want us to know. 9-11. What really happened? The illuminati." Another student, Lee, expressed a similar sense of the illuminati:

> Lee: Like, I don't know. There's a group of people called the illuminati. And they're going to take over the world one day. But first they teach us in schools that we got to follow this system. And if we follow this system it's going to lead into that same thing… I really do think that something like that is going to happen one day. They controlling us.
>
> Tadashi: Do you trust school?
>
> Lee: I mean, I trust this school because it's different.
>
> Tadashi: But other schools?
>
> Lee: It's like a system. Facts. They just want you to, if you're poor, they want you to stay poor. But then you don't know that. It's all run by a certain group of people. I don't know who those people are, but, I mean, it's weird.

Lee expressed how the illuminati explains his experience with schools, and the larger reproduction of the status quo in society. He knows that poor people continue to stay poor. He believes that they're being controlled. The theory that explains his experiences, that helps him make sense of the world, is the idea that there is a group of people called the illuminati, who make these decisions and make these things happen. I asked him if he trusts school. He understands schools to be a part of the illuminati's plan. School and social reproduction of the status quo can be explained by the illuminati. It makes sense that schools do not provide a way to understand this social reproduction, because they are a part of that system. He sees this system in place that works against him and how he understands the world. He has learned a name, a new

vocabulary term to explain that system, which is the illuminati. Hearing him say illuminati might cause teachers to disregard the analysis behind his use of the term.

Students also expressed a general distrust of schooling as a system. For example, Tomcat expressed a feeling that schools are hiding something from them. I asked Tomcat, "Do schools take into account your experiences, where you're coming from?"

Tomcat replied:

> They don't at all. They teach what they get from the, what's it called? The D-O… DOE, yeah. Department of Education. What they want us to learn, the DOE tells us what we learn. The teachers don't tell us what we learn. Cuz I had a teacher in 8th grade. She was teaching us about some serious stuff that was going on, which was about taxes. She was telling me about taxes. She was like, we should learn taxes at this age. I was like, why? She was like, because it's very important in life, but schools can't teach us that. I was like, why they can't teach us that? She said, we teach what we get. We can't teach what we want to teach. Cuz she was kind of like me. She said, If we could teach what we want to teach, you all would be better for the future. We can't teach what we want to teach. We teach all this trigonometry and stuff. That's not going to help us in life in the future. I don't know when I'm gonna use trigonometry for anything.

For Tomcat, there's a difference between some of his teachers and the DOE. His teacher said it would be better for their future if she could teach what she wanted. He has learned to trust his teacher and what she says, and she tells him that the DOE is not looking out for his interests. He feels an affinity for this teacher, that she is kind of like him. They both see how the school system is not always working in these students' favor. He tells this response within a larger narrative of paranoia about the government. His teacher confirms that strong theory of paranoia towards the government, and she adds more evidence of how the government, through the DOE, is not working in his interests.

Respectable Forms of Paranoia

Eve Sedgwick and Michel Foucault can express paranoia in ways that many scholars respect and value. However, talk about alien abductions, UFO's, and the illuminati are often seen as crackpot thinking. There are these lines that get drawn between respectable forms of paranoid thinking and those that get labeled irrational and crazy. Jodi Dean's (1998) work on *Aliens in America* exposed this line between irrational conspiracy theory believers, and those deemed to have power and authority over knowledge, the "scientists". Dean stated, "conspiracy theory, far from a label dismissively attached to the lunatic fringe, may well be an appropriate vehicle for political contestation" (1998, p. 8). Conspiracy theory allows us to explore how these lines get drawn around legitimate reason and theory[29]. "It is not that UFO believers are irrational. Rather, being unable to judge their rationality points to the lack of widespread criteria for judgments about what is reasonable and what is not: ufological discourse upholds the very criteria for scientific rationality that mainstream science uses to dismiss it. 'Scientists' are the ones who have problems with the 'rationality' of those in the UFO community" (Dean, 1998, p. 9).

[29] The film *They Live!* (1988) is a great conspiracy theory film commenting on capitalism. The film uses an alien conspiracy as the basis of the hidden system behind capitalism. The aliens have placed subliminal messages behind all advertisements that really say "OBEY," of which everyday people are unaware.

Teachers, in teaching students critical thinking, are the ones who grant themselves the capacity to declare certain forms of critical thinking as unreasonable and invalid.

If you're going to be paranoid, do it like Marx, Nietzsche, or Freud. Their writings are understood as possessing important forms of paranoid thinking. Paul Ricoeur grouped the paranoid thinking of these three under the term, *hermeneutics of suspicion* (1970, p. 32).

But not all bodies get granted such a noble form of paranoid thinking. Sianne Ngai (2005) discussed how certain ways of being paranoid are linked to legitimate epistemology and theorizing. For certain bodies and cases, paranoia is dismissed as overly emotional reactions, whereas for others, it feeds into fruitful cognitive capacities, validated by the academy. "The disposition to theorize thus finds itself aligned with paranoia, defined here not as mental illness but as a species of fear based on the dysphoric apprehension of a holistic and all-encompassing system" (Ngai, 2005, p. 299). The paranoia and conspiracy theory presented by these students is linked to their capacity to see evidence of and their experiences with larger systems at play. Such experiences and evidence remain not only absent from talk in schools, but are shamed out of discussion.

As Tomcat said, "You know crack? You get more years in jail for crack than you get for cocaine. But who can afford cocaine is the rich white girls. And who can afford crack is the black people, the minorities, or the Mexicans, or anybody of the minorities, period." There's this similar divide around respectable forms of paranoia. If you talk about it in acceptable ways, you get off the hook. You know who talks about capitalism? Lefty academic white people. You know who talks about the illuminati? Uneducated and unreasonable paranoiacs. If you talk about the illuminati, you get your reason as property taken away. As explained by Ngai, "paranoia can be denied the status of epistemology when claimed by some subjects, while valorized for precisely that status when claimed by others. In the former case, a mode of knowledge structured by an affective orientation already involving the cognition that power operates systemically will be reduced to its subjective implications alone (an ignoble "emotionalism"); in the latter, paranoia's cognitive dimensions will be emphasized as an enabling condition for knowledge" (2005, p. 302). The body that serves as a vessel for the thought matters; the racialized body helps determine the value of that thought.

When paranoia is discussed within the ivory tower, we can call it neoliberalism, capitalism, patriarchy, homonationalism, etc. We have theorists that legitimize paths of reasoning, valid citations, complex vocabularies to validate what we want to say. Ngai asserted, "the effort to claim paranoia for feminist thought and cultural production does not really seem outlandish in a world where any analysis of power at the transindividual level increasingly requires a language capable of dealing with "the system" as an abstract and holistic entity, as the word "patriarchy" has done in feminist writing for several decades" (2005, p. 301). When black and brown young adults express paranoia, they are often deemed irrational and unreasonable. When I listen to what these young adults are saying, often I find what they say as fully reasonable, acceptable, and sophisticated, if only they replaced "the illuminati" or "the Rothschilds" with "capitalism". I seem unwilling to see the reasoning unless it is under my own terms. I allow that to cloud my ability to listen to what they are saying. I miss the critique because it is under a set of terms I have learned to judge and dismiss. If we listen to what they are saying, if we take note of their articulation of the disorder they see within society, we might better take their experiences and worldviews as the starting point for curricula. Again, I am not arguing for the full validation of these ideas as truth. Rather, I am arguing against a complete disregard of their thought. I want their thought to be challenged as flawed reason, to challenge

their evidence and sources for the conspiratorial actions of Rothschilds and illuminati, rather than dismiss their thought as crazy and irrational. Their turn to the Rothschilds and illuminai can still be engaged as wrong, but by building their understanding of where those conspiracy theories spur from, and engaging evidence and other theoretical frameworks for explaining things they see in the world.

The reasons some gain the status of epistemology while others are deemed "emotionalism" has everything to do with the larger social hierarchies. Jose Muñoz, in discussing ethnicity and affect, contended "that this 'official' national affect, a mode of being in the world primarily associated with white middle-class subjectivity, reads most ethnic affect as inappropriate" (2000, p. 69). Ethnic paranoia is deemed emotionally inappropriate rather than a form of legitimate sense and reason. The brown body as vessel of thought matters.

These elements of raced bodies, emotions, and reason clash at the heart of knowledge production, in the school classroom. Jose Muñoz developed a minoritarian theory of affect (which built off of Raymond Williams' concept of "structure of feeling"), focused on the relational aspects of emotion, contextualized socio-politically. Muñoz's minoritarian theory of affect "refuses the individualistic bent of Freudian psychoanalysis and attempts to describe emotions as emotions, the active negotiations of people within their social and historical matrix" (2000, p. 71). Thus, paranoia moves from a thing that can be universally understood across bodies through psychoanalysis. Instead, paranoia must be understood as a reflection of systemic relations, embedded within social hierarchies. The paranoia expressed by these individual students speaks more to their locations within social hierarchies than individuals with mental problems. The reason some expressions of paranoia get understood as valid intellectual inquiry and others are deemed emotionalism is in part directly linked to the locations of those bodies within social relations. This is not to ignore the content of the paranoia, but to account for structures of power and subordination.

Double Consciousness and Shaming

Gabriel expressed how school does not help explain his life experiences. I asked Gabriel, who had recently moved from out West, to tell me about the world that he lives in.

> Tadashi: what's the world that you live in today?
>
> Gabriel: I don't know. It's crazy. Just a lot of people being shot and killed, I guess. A lot of people my age, my ethnicity, you know. A lot of people my age, boys being killed. That's the reason why I say it's crazy, it's dangerous out here.
>
> Tadashi: How do you make sense of that?
>
> Gabriel: Well, the only reason I know is 'cause somebody I knew, a friend of mine, a friend of my friends, he got shot. He was shot five times. It was crazy. He died after that. And like there was a kid, 13, he got killed at a party.
>
> Tadashi: So how do you explain that? How do you make sense--, I mean I think it's interesting you say it's crazy, like this world is crazy 'cause it's…okay so what do you do about it?

Gabriel: I don't know. I really don't show emotion anymore. When you show emotion, it basically shows your weakness there. If you're fighting somebody, they will stop fighting you because you're crying or something. Show no weakness.

Tadashi: Like does school make sense of all of that at all?

Gabriel: Not really. As far as school, school is here for my education… Wherever you go, there's gonna be violence around you, wherever you go. There is some good in parts but me, I've seen so many bad things that all I really see is bad. I mean school-wise, I go to school. That's the good. But I don't really mess with no people because I don't know people. Then when I do get to know them, I really have bad trust issues. I mean there's good in New York but I've rarely found it.

School does not really help Gabriel understand the world he lives in. He doesn't see it as the purpose of school to do so. He does associate school as a good thing, but school doesn't seem to be a place he expects would help him explain the violence he describes. He says several times about the world being crazy. He doesn't seem to have ways of making full sense of the violence he knows exists in the world around him. School fails to provide the means for explaining such phenomena.

Schools become spaces where this intellectual engagement with conspiracy theory is not appropriate, where students learn to not talk in such ways. I want to return to the discussion of double-consciousness, discussed in Chapter Two on being and reason, on how students have this understanding that their way of thinking about the world and history is different than the one taught in school. Students have this awareness of an underlying system that is not talked about, and also learn to not talk about it. The illuminati provides a way to understand and explain those systems.

I assert that schools make a particular kind of sense, and that this particular sense is exclusionary and negating. Students often go through the school day experiencing a system that does not always seem to make sense for them. They are taught to reproduce particular legitimate forms of sense, and they are shamed from expressing certain forms of sense-making that do not fit with school's status quo agenda.

During several interviews, students seemed embarrassed by what they said, initially telling me to not write it down, but then surprised that I thought what they had said was worth writing down. This reveals a symptom of their double-consciousness, of knowing that there are ideas you are allowed to express in school, and ideas about schools and these systems that you are supposed to hide from teachers and school.

Tadashi: What areas of the world do you think get focused on the most in world history?

Lee: America. The main ones, you know like England. India. Africa. China. Yeah yeah, that's pretty much it. (*at this time, they had just covered imperialism in Africa and India).*

Tadashi: Why do you think that is?

Lee: Because the world is set up like that. That's how they want to do it.

Tadashi: What do you mean the world is set up like that?

Lee: I don't know. There's like these guys in the government. No, don't write that, don't write that.

Tadashi: Why?

Lee: For real? Alright, fuck it. There's these people in the government. They control everything. They control what we learn. What we do. And they're always watching us.

Lee has learned not to say these things. He tells me to not write that down. He has learned it is an inappropriate form of thinking for schools. It is not merely that school has not provided a place for these ways of thinking. These students have learned to hide such thinking from schools. There is this fount of critical thinking that they are doing that they know to keep outside of school.

Another student, Aphrodite, similarly felt embarrassed to share her thinking. I asked her: What do you think about the government?

Aphrodite: I think…illuminati.

Tadashi: ok

Aphrodite: (Chuckles) No I'm lying, I'm lying, I'm lying.

Tadashi: Do you?

Aphrodite: I kind of do believe it but then I don't. Do you know what that is?

Tadashi: Uh huh.

Through this shaming and teaching students that there are some things you don't talk about in school, schools reinforce a certain aesthetics of intelligence. We reinforce that there are certain ways of talking right, certain forms of thought that are valued by school. Some forms of talk are deemed more valuable than others, are granted power, and reason. This is related to the value of cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). A key problem with the notion of cultural capital is that this term can presumes an equal exchange rate, that one culture's capital is just as valuable as another. These racialized lines of reason are not equally valued forms of cultural capital. This aesthetics of intelligence leads to how terms like "articulate" become really loaded terms when used to describe black people. When people find it noteworthy to call black people articulate, it reveals that they do not expect black people to sound articulate. Sounding articulate is raced then, alongside intelligence. There is an aesthetic element, as value, to reason, intelligence, and bodies.

Paranoia as Black Disorder/Pathology, Paranoia as Counter-Intelligence

Paranoia is a legitimate expression of those who experience marginalization, and unremarked systems of oppression. But the term paranoia is also racialized, as a means of

subordination, misapplied and misused. Harriet Washington's *Medical Apartheid* (2008) addressed the historical relationship of the term "paranoid" with the black community, regarding the historic distrust of the medical system. "Thus, although the heightened African American wariness of medical research and institutions reflects a situational hypervigilance, it is neither a baseless fear of harm nor a fear of imaginary harms. A "paranoid" label is often affixed to blacks who are wary of participating in medical research. However, not only is paranoid a misnomer but it is also symbolic of a dangerous misunderstanding" (Harriet Washington, 2008, p. 21). Deeming black and brown people as paranoid carries with it this weight of irrationality, of being outside of reason, as mentally ill. Tomcat stated, "I go out of my way to find those evidence, because I don't want to sound like an ignorant black man just speaking out of my ass, sayin they're trying to get us, not knowing. Cuz that's what they want! They want us to not be smart, to not know stuff. So I go out and know stuff." Bodies are racialized, dividing sound from unsound bodies and minds. Reason is ascribed to certain bodies, and paranoia and irrationality fits onto other bodies. These bodies are pathologized as paranoid, as outside of reason.

When Eve Sedgwick discussed paranoia, race was absent. Eve Sedgwick could say that she was doing a paranoid reading of the world, but perhaps her whiteness allowed her to use this term in a way less complicated for her than if she were black. She is a woman of course, and women's relationship to rationality has also been positioned outside of reason and on the side of emotion (Gray, 1992). The gendered correspondent of this racialized paranoia Washington discussed is women being hysterical (Foucault, 1978). Nonetheless, Sedgwick presented the term paranoia from a position of marginalization, yet uncomplicated by race.

There is this circular logic of race, this sort of Foucaldian inevitability, trapped within this Fanonian zone of non-being. No matter how much Tomcat tries to find that evidence, to be smart, his evidence gets seen as unreasonable, irrational, as long as it lies outside of dominant ways of knowing, the dominant system of reason. His reason is a black reason, an invalid and illegal tender.

So when I link what Tomcat says to paranoia, I understand that some might see this as reproducing the violence I claim to critique.

And yet, much of the conspiracy theory and paranoia literature out there comes from a mostly white cultural space, often with little racialized nuance. They generally focus on a broader American phenomenon, coming out of a majority white perspective. Richard Hofstadter's essay *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (1965), originally published in 1964, has been foundational to discussions of paranoia in the American public sphere. This essay brought the psychiatric term paranoid to the political sphere, highlighting fears of political conspiracies to take over the government (including the Freemasons and the illuminati), and fears of the government being infiltrated (such as the paranoia promoted by McCarthyism).

Some of the things Tomcat mentions are ideas discussed within this body of literature. These conspiracy theories are not created by students, but come out of existing literature. Students turn to these works to make sense of their experiences and the world around them, and these texts offer a sense that schooling does not provide.

There are these odd overlaps between paranoia literature that circulates and comes out of almost more of a white rural/suburban population, and the literature that circulates within more of a black and Latino urban population. Particularly within the African American community, however, there is a related and overlapping set of literature that circulates. These texts are circulated within communities. A number of things Tomcat referred to can be traced back to these texts. *Behold a Pale Horse* (Cooper, 1991), for example, was written by a white man, and

implicated the power of the Illuminati, the Rothschilds, the Elders of Zion (which he suggested was actually about the Illuminati), and AIDS/HIV as a government project against black people.

Many of these things often get dismissed as invalid, as silly, as unreasonable and wrong. But if you've seen on a daily basis the ways the system is set up against you, if you see how the government, the police, the hospitals, the corporations, the news, the schools treat your people, there is nothing silly about seeking explanations of the ways the system is actively working against you and trying to hide it from you. The point is that the paranoia expressed by these students is both reproductive as well as counter-hegemonic. In light of their experiences of oppression, many ironically turn to theories that are reproductive of hegemony rather than working against it. The particular falsities and biases of these theories must be confronted and challenged. I do not condone the threads of anti-Semitism linked within many of the conspiracy theories, such as theories of the Rothschilds, and the Elders of Zion. What I want to validate is that these students are seeing and hearing about phenomena that classroom content does not help to explain. I want to validate the problem-spaces that students are engaging, but not the solutions or particular models that student turn to. I mean to emphasize that there is a need for explanations for how the world functions as experienced by students, and these conspiracy theories provide ways of making sense of the world that schools do not provide. It is the task of teachers to allow classrooms to engage the problem-spaces as defined by students and their lives, and to challenge those particular falsities, to teach students how to question and confirm sources of evidence.

Bruno Latour argued that the presence of conspiracy theories represents how critical theory has trickled into the masses. "Of course, we in the academy like to use more elevated causes—society, discourse, knowledge-slash-power, fields of forces, empires, capitalism—while conspiracists like to portray a miserable bunch of greedy people with dark intents, but I find something troublingly similar in the structure of the explanation, in the first movement of disbelief and, then, in the wheeling of causal explanations coming out of the deep dark below" (Latour, 2004, p. 29). Latour may be right, but these students' experiences speak to their own reasons for developing explanations of why the system seems to work against them. The turn to conspiracy theory for many marginalized groups can be understood by the evidence that the government has functionally created white supremacist policies that actually do exclude black people and other people of color, from citizenship, from owning and buying property, to forced migrations, and so forth. There are actual institutional structures of negation that lead to these feelings.

Just as Harriet Washington pointed to how paranoia is a misnomer for the distrust within the African American community of medical research, there is plenty of evidence exposing how the government has in fact worked against people of color organizations. Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall (1990) collected COINTELPRO documents together, exposing the surveillance of the Young Lords, the Black Panthers, the Nation of Islam, amongst many other subversive groups.

COINTELPRO stands for the FBI's COunter-INTELligence PROgram. Counterintelligence is the gathering of information to protect against sabotage of the government or state. This ontological divide between white and black, between being and non-being, results in an epistemological divide, of ways of knowing that are valuable and legitimate, versus those that are not. The things that Tomcat brings up, these are legal tender currency depending on how you experience the world. They circulate along currents of experiences, they hold value, weight. And yet, within a white realm of legitimized thinking, this is counterfeit logic, counterfeit

currency, currents to be dammed.

There are specific ways that this sort of paranoid thinking develops out of the experiences of being black and Latino in this country. If paranoia is ungrounded worrying, what do we call it when it is actually reasonable? When in fact the systems in place are working against their communities' interests? It is called reason. It is called critique, pointing to the critical state of emergency (Lowey, 2005).

Let's call this counter-intelligence, when your intelligence is deemed counter to the status quo. It is counter-intelligence when your being is counter to legitimized white being. It is counter-intelligence when your forms of reason are deemed as always already outside of the status quo reasoning.

Paranoid Reading as Queer Reading

Queer theory and queer reading help me think about this move, from paranoia as black pathology, to paranoia as black counter-intelligence. One of the central moves within disability studies and queer studies is to invert the relationship between the good society and the ill individual. Paranoia reveals the pathology of society, not of the individual. Robert McRuer's *Crip Theory* (McRuer 2006), amongst other texts and scholars (such as Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's (2015) poetry), reinforce the overlaps between queer studies and disability studies. Those we label as "disordered" expose the larger disorder and disarray of society. Canguilhem questioned the idea of health and disease is less about biology and more about biological value. "Disease is behavior of negative value for a concrete individual living being in a relation of polarized activity with his environment" (Canguilhem, 2007, p. 223).

Sedgwick's paranoid reading here opens up the possibility of exposing the systems that create the paranoia, the underlying logics. In writing about queer paranoia, Sedgwick asserted, "If paranoia reflects the *repression* of same sex desire, Hocquenghem reasoned, then paranoia is a uniquely privileged site for illuminating not homosexuality itself, as in the Freudian tradition, but rather precisely the mechanisms of homophobic and heterosexist enforcement against it. What is illuminated by an understanding of paranoia is not how homosexuality works, but how homophobia and heterosexism work--in short, if one understands these oppressions to be systemic, how the world works" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 126). This passage summarizes this queer move in thinking, to invert how we make sense of and read the world. What one might initially dismiss as paranoia in these students' thinking does not show how these students are mentally ill. Instead, it exposes the problems of our society and education system. Teachers can easily disregard these student references to conspiracy theory; by doing so, they miss the rich critical thinking that often underlies these comments. Tomcat expresses paranoia that he will be understood as an ignorant black man. That paranoia exposes the disorder of a society that views black men as ignorant, not the disordered thinking and reasoning of young black men like Tomcat.

I start with the critique of my reading of what Tomcat says because I am the one conducting a paranoid reading of him, I am conducting a sort of clinical evaluation of him, participating in colonial acts of violence through reason and knowledge. My tendency to read him as paranoid, as irrational, reveals the ways I have internalized systems of rationality that exclude him. I silence certain forms of critique because I don't know how to listen to them, I cannot hear the questions and curiosity underlying their statements, or I don't want to because they threaten the status quo and our positions within it. Conspiracy theory remains trapped in my mind as a signifier of bad thinking and reason. Rather than read disorder and illness on the

student, to fit what I hear into what I might already understand and think about people who talk about conspiracy theories, teachers like myself might do better to listen closely to such student thought, and how it exposes the disorder of society at large.

But in the paranoid reading of students, there is this desire to then in-corporate what student knowledge into the curriculum, and dismiss student theorizing. Beginning from student thought and knowledge is very different from beginning from student theorizing, from their reasoning and understanding how their social positions shape their reasoning. There is a temptation to return to this pluralistic multiculturalism, of adding in more unit topics into the preexisting structures. Queerness is multifaceted, but one thing that queerness points to is a constant interrogation of violence. There is violence in the smiling white teacher approaching the angry brown student with good white intentions to get that student to love history like they do. There is violence in being down with the students of color, incorporating their stories and ideas into the lesson plan, but maintaining the commitment to a Hegelian teleology of Reason, sailing onward to conquer the horizon of Reason and Civilization. There is this cannibalistic violence in this in-corporating student thought into the status quo vehicle of the teacher's or the state's curriculum. These student interviews necessitate shifting the problem-space around knowledge production, to allow students, from their particular social positions, to more democratically participate in the production of their knowledge, rather than forced consumption of the teacher's and the state's knowledge.

Forced Interpellation and Emotive Regimes: When Workers of the State Force the Angel of History to Look Back at the Wreckage

Of course, when you come from marginalized communities, there is no moral imperative to talk and theorize about your experiences of oppression if you don't want to. "What is the basis for assuming that it will surprise or disturb, never mind motivate, anyone to learn that a given social manifestation is artificial, self-contradictory, imitative, phantasmatic, or even violent?" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 141). Just because some marginalized students do this form of critical thinking does not mean that is what they need all the time. In discussing an assignment to write to his adult mentor, Isaiah told me, "but Tad they be writing whole life stories, like they writing full pages, and they be mad when I send them a paragraph. I'm not going to tell you my whole life's story. What the hell I look like? I don't even know you, but." This also made me recall a moment in teaching when I had students read a primary document from Melville Herskovits' *Myth of the Negro Past* (1958). One African American student got very upset, saying that she didn't want to think about these negative stereotypes and assumptions about black people. Students in schools are made to face emotionally disturbing texts and events, and are graded on their participation in emotional experiences and expressions.

There can be a violence to how we as teachers force students to turn their heads to the past, to look at how black people have been exploited over and over again. There's this interpellation by teachers. We are the police officers of history's truants. You can't escape. We interpellate them in the classroom and force them to look back at the wreckage of history. Sedgwick explained how paranoid reading is not always the healthiest path for marginalized peoples. "Only the exclusiveness of paranoia's faith in demystifying exposure: only its cruel contemptuous assumption that the one thing lacking for global revolution, explosion of gender roles, or whatever, is people's (that is, other people's) having the painful effects of their oppression, poverty, or deludedness sufficiently exacerbated to make the pain conscious (as if otherwise it wouldn't have been) and intolerable (as if intolerable situations were famous for

generating excellent solutions)" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 142). Mahoganey stated that she had never learned anything positive about black people. The point is not to inundate students with lessons of their oppressions, something they know much better than many of their teachers who nevertheless hold tightly their authority over such knowledge. The conclusion to this is not that we must avoid teaching about the oppression of marginalized groups, but rather to do so with much care.

Sedgwick posed a form of inquiry that I find instructive for teachers, especially when considering the experiences of students, wherein we "open a space for moving from the rather fixated question Is a particular piece of knowledge true, and how can we know? to the further questions: What does knowledge *do*-the pursuit of it, the having and exposing of it, the receiving again of knowledge of what one already knows? *How,* in short, is knowledge performative, and how best does one move among its causes and effects?" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 124). When talking about oppression in history, knowledge can be simultaneously empowering, and disempowering and debilitating. The task is to understand this last question, "how best does one move among its causes and effects?"

It is important for teachers to understand some of the reading practices and theorizing that students do about the world around them. Yet, that does not mean that this is the healthiest way to read the world. Sedgwick suggests a turn to reparative readings. "it is sometimes the most paranoid-tending people who are able to, and need to, develop and disseminate the richest reparative practices" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 146).

Sometimes Reparative Reading Instead of Paranoid Reading: Mediation, Meditation

Sedgwick challenges that there might be other ways of reading the world. "I am saying that the main reasons for questioning paranoid practices are other than the possibility that their suspicions can be delusional or simply wrong. Concomitantly, some of the main reasons for practicing paranoid strategies may be other than the possibility that they offer unique access to true knowledge. They represent *a* way, among other ways, of seeking, finding, and organizing knowledge. Paranoia knows some things well and others poorly" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 130). I think it is both necessary to engage the sorts of "paranoid" reading our students practice, and to push them to try other ways of thinking as well.

A focus on paranoid reading can occlude other reading practices. "Another, perhaps more nearly accurate way of describing the present paranoid consensus, however, is that rather than entirely displacing, it may simply have required a certain disarticulation, disavowal, and misrecognition of other ways of knowing, ways less oriented around suspicion, that are actually being practiced, often by the same theorists and as part of the same project" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 142). This pedagogy is not about teaching teachers and students new ways to read and think, but rather to cultivate those ways of reading that we already practice, but remain hidden. Sometimes the paranoid reading ought to be met and pushed further, but other times, less anxiety-ridden reading practices might be of better service.

Sedgwick proposed reparative reading as a sometimes healthier path to take over paranoid reading. Whereas paranoid reading is more about an anxiety to label, to speak for, reparative reading is more about listening. Paranoid reading might be more associated with the preposition "but", whereas reparative reading is more about "and", and "beside." "Reparation in the essay is on the side of multiplicity, surprise, rich divergence, consolation, creativity, and love. If reparative reading is better at the level of ethics and affect—and there is really no doubt that it is—it also looks better at the level of epistemology and knowledge. Even though paranoid

or, in terms borrowed from Silvan Tomkins, strong theory can organize vast amounts of territory and tell big truths, it misses the descriptive richness of weak theory." (Love, 2010, p. 237). Paranoid reading is more vertical hierarchy, and reparative reading is more horizontal, more of an unordered list. Paranoid reading is a strong theory that builds a stronger case for the all-encompassing power of oppressive forces. Reparative reading allows things to side beside one another.

Juxtaposing quotes by students and academics can be interpreted as saying, "look, these kids are capable of the thinking that these fancy high theorists can do". I want to push the mediation of thought to be a more reparative one, to more just let these quotes sit beside one another, to see what they do to each other, to let them speak to each other and pay attention to how they might interact in different ways, rather than wanting to just order them as quickly as possible and move on. Reparative reading is about taking time to listen to the text, rather than wanting to speak for the text, to say your analysis as quickly as possible. Reparative reading, in the transformative justice sense, also requires looking at the harm that is done. What harm is done by Tomcat's references to the Rothchilds, and implications towards the protocols of Zion?

But alongside mediation, there is also this term meditation. Sedgwick explicitly turned to Buddhist pedagogy in her work (and yet, there seems to be a discomfort with this almost Orientalizing use of Buddhism by her, as it has largely been ignored as an important element of her thinking about reparative reading). Within Buddhist practices, there is this notion of clearing away the temptations, of the distractions. Reparative reading reflects this practice of sitting with a text, of listening, sitting with one's emotional immediate reactions, a mediation through meditation. Less trying to make statements about things, and more about listening to the text for what it says in its own right.

This is both what I see as an important form of mediating thought for teachers as they listen to students, and for students to engage as they read historical texts. So when we confront a violent and politicized history discipline, there are moments for both positions. "Yet, just as allowing for good surprises means risking bad surprises, practicing reparative reading means leaving the door open to paranoid reading" (Love, 2010, p. 239). A paranoid reading points to the counter-intelligence, responding to being on the bad side of epistemology and ontology, on the wrong side of the dialectic. Reparative reading is more aligned with Enrique Dussel's (1985) conception of analectics, as a focus on alterity, on difference not as difference but rather something that stands on its own. Reparative reading requires listening for all of the non-identity, beyond a particular relational identity we tend to see. Reading student assertions of the illuminati as non-identity is to see their attempt to make sense of what is otherwise not discussed or remarked upon within society, to notice the non-identity of how the world works. To read these student references as non-identity is also to see beyond their desire to see the illuminati at work as an explanation of the world, to see how such a reading can be both reproductive of hegemony, and counter-hegemonic, both, simultaneously in contradiction.

Revisiting my Reading

In my reading of Tomcat's response, there are various moments of paranoia. Ultimately, oscillating between paranaoid and reparative readings can intervene into the relations of knowledge production in the classroom, to allow students who feel alienated from learning to be engaged in ways that benefit them.

To begin with, I must let go of paranoia over my authority of knowledge. As a PhD candidate, I supposedly have earned the right to be seen as more knowledgeable than many

people. I position myself with more authority over knowledge than Tomcat. There is this constant negotiation of power between teacher and student, adult and youth, and of course knowledge and reason are intertwined with power. There are ways that I as a teacher use my authoritative position to dismiss, to disregard, what students say, especially when student thought threatens my teacher authority over knowledge over the discipline in the room. In Ranciere's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991), he responds to the tendency for adults to become so invested in their position of authority over knowledge, in their self-importance and their need to always be right. Ranciere posits a practice in humility, a practice of ignorance as a method to engage the world, to slow down and listen. In my eagerness to feel the comfort of knowing, to make sense of him, I take away his sense, his reason, as property. Reason is not property, however. It is not something one owns nor acquires vast amounts of over time. In judging his ways of understanding the world, I am also judging his kin, his networks and communities that think these things too.

My reading also becomes this colonial moment of disregard. There is this positioning of knowing better, of being in possession of reason and being able to judge whether others have it or not. I am Japanese American. My ancestors come from a "legitimate and powerful civilization", and my teachers always assumed I was good at math. In the colonial order of things, the natives and darker peoples do not possess proper technologies. They waste things. We (the Japanese tried to become like the West by joining into imperialism) must teach them to do things how we do them, because we know how to make things work. They don't have anything to build on, so we enlighten them. When I as a teacher dismiss their thought as irrational, I participate in reproducing this colonial act, this coloniality of power.

My reading is also layered by the intersection of varying identities. I am a gay Japanese American cis male, having grown up with the internment camps as the origin story of my people, all within an upper-middle class household. Alongside my class privilege, my life and work are shaped by my sense of alienation, of not fitting in, of being on the margins, which shapes my commitments to marginalized communities. I am not black. I did not grow up nor live daily with those experiences.

As teachers within the current education system, we are made to be paranoid about our job security, our tenure, our productivity, our data collection on student performance, and measures of student learning. We are made to instantly categorize, prioritize, fit things into boxes and hierarchies in order to make sense of them. There is this hyper-productivity within the current neoliberal milieu. We are expected to know what is going on with our students, how to diagnose them, to collect data and say what they need.

This chapter is about reading practices, both ours as educators and researchers in traditional positions of authority over knowledge, and the reading practices that our students engage in to read the world and classroom texts. This chapter is about realizing that so much of student thought that I might easily dismiss, I actually fully agree with, I might be challenged and surprised by. But more importantly, my disregard is a form of violence in the classroom. In an attempt to acknowledge the ways my own analysis is engrossed in my capacities and failures to read these students, and the relations between our contingent social positions, this chapter asserts that teachers engage a similar practice of self-reflexive analysis.

I am aware of how my own paranoia plays out in writing this. In my own version of paranoia, I desire to legitimize Tomcat, and other students. This is a concern of too much investment on the part of the researcher, the goal-oriented politics clouding "objectivity" (Habermas, 1968). I do this from a paranoid position, trying to preempt others calling students

irrational. In order to prevent student thoughts from being called irrational, I try to first show how their thoughts resemble other examples of rationality, as evidence that they fit that category. As discussed in Chapter Two, I am tempted to prove how their thinking is actually high theory and valuable. But doing so locates these students' thoughts as a lower-order form of high academic thought. This flattens and dulls the expression of their individual thought. It subsumes what Tomcat said under someone else's terms, into someone else's system of legitimacy. There is a tension here between my desire to legitimize student thought by showing how it resembles high theory by respected, published, and oft cited academics, and respecting the integrity, difference, uniqueness of their thoughts and contexts. Sedgwick's reparative reading would have me listen to him, sit with his words, let his words sit beside, not under, the ideas of others.

Rather than subsume student thoughts under legitimizing terms, I aim to put these ideas in the ring together, that their thoughts are worthy of mental sparring, to be challenged, matched. And often that means student thought will get knocked out because their arguments lack solid evidence and interrogation of sources, and that's ok. I assert that these students are engaging thought that attempts to make sense of the world, and that all too often the teaching that goes on in classrooms does not help students to understand the problem-spaces they address in their lives. However inaccurate, sources outside of school provide more ways of understanding their world than school does, because they directly speak to their experiences.

I want a model of pedagogy that does not directly take what students say as truth and fact and knowledge, nor dismiss what they say as irrational or illegitimate. I seek a pedagogy that allows movement between these, that helps mediate educational experiences, that pushes and challenges thought. I want to be able to recognize things that I agree with in what Tomcat said, and present him with counter-arguments and counter-evidence, but to approach his thought as always already rational. I can then disagree with his reasoning, seek understanding for where his reasoning is coming from, and push his reasoning further. And I can push against his evidence. For example, I will not accept his claims of the Rothschilds as fact, but I also won't dismiss what led him to that as simply irrational and unfounded. Rather, I must engage genealogically what has led him to that location of reason, and challenge the evidence and sources leading to his conclusion that the Rothschilds might be responsible. But I must never rob him of, nor grant him, his reason as property. I must never follow the temptation to disregard his rationality.

Historical Thinking, Critical Thinking

Besides intervening into how teachers read students, the second goal of this chapter is to highlight ways that these student thoughts, linked with paranoid reading and reparative reading, might influence the history classroom.

First off, reading students reparatively might allow teachers to listen better to the generative thinking that students already practice. Their critiques of society and their hermeneutics of suspicion are practices that link directly with historical thinking. Students are already asking and engaged in really important and complicated questions, and we as educators need to acknowledge these as legitimate intellectual inquiries. What students consider critical is often different from what teachers think they know is critical for students' lives.

The second is in how student reading practices can be engaged in the history classroom. This turn to and reliance on conspiracy theory means that these students and communities do not get the tools from school for making sense of the worlds in which they live, and find these frameworks elsewhere. I do not mean that schools ought to correct this "false" turn to conspiracy theory. Rather, schools ought to provide frameworks that do explain phenomena students know

about and experience, and provide the tools of historiography and critical thinking to question and interrogate evidence and sources for themselves.

The third aspect of how this work influences the classroom is in how teachers develop curriculum. When I started teaching world history, I approached it from a strictly paranoid position. I intentionally did not spend my time learning about European history, because I figured that anyone living in American society received much more European history through osmosis than Latin American, Caribbean, African, Asian, or Oceania history. My goal was to create a world history curriculum that empowered my students. As a Japanese American whose family was interned during WWII, I grew up angry with history classes, internalizing the narrative that if you're brown, in the history of the world, you were born to lose, and your narrative doesn't count. So I sought to construct a curricular narrative that counteracted this internalized racist narrative. And yet, this politically motivated paranoid approach to history is exactly what David Lowenthal would critique as the search for heritage over history. This represents the concern of identity attachments that Wendy Brown critiques, and our wounded attachments. Why want to be a part of a club that didn't want you to be a member in the first place?

But history is not without investments. It is not separate from heritage. One's social location does structure affective regimes, emotional responses. As a teacher creating curriculum, I approached it from a paranoid position, on the defensive of people of color in world history. I constantly sought to teach a counter-narrative to the standard Western civilization. When planning to teach about imperialism, I wanted to focus on the Ottoman Empire and the Japanese Empire as non-European counter-examples of imperialism. And yet, the goal should not be to then show how great and grand these empires were. A people of color imperialism is merely an imperial horse of a different color. I caught myself wanting to create images of strong non-white peoples for students, but allowed this to come at the expense of complexity.

I constantly return to Walter Benjamin's statement that every documentation of culture is a documentation of barbarism. This invokes a call to read history reparatively, to allow the culture and barbarism to sit side by side within the historical object or text. In this dissertation, I argue not that all elite culture is also barbarism, but rather that all low barbarism is also culture. And barbarism, even from below, is also an expression of barbarism. A central aspect of historical thinking is to let the past speak for itself. Heather Love emphasized that what Eve Sedgwick called for was not that reparative reading replace paranoid reading. Rather, we must remain open to both, to appreciate the time and place for each reading practice, and what they do for us.

There are many examples of marginalized groups whose turn to history has been politically motivated, who have grappled with both paranoid reading and reparative reading. For example, in *Tender Violence* (2000), Laura Wexler looked at women photographers during the early developments of photography. She went in with a certain purpose, hoping to see these strong women photographers, women who sought to establish women in their rightful place in a male-dominated field. But she had to be honest about what she found. One can begin with a political motivation, but one must also allow an openness to the past. Doing history from a position of marginalization begins from a paranoid position, knowing we have been seen and misunderstood as not legitimate. Yet we need to employ reparative reading strategies. That descriptive element and tendency within history. To let the evidence sit beside one another, to let those contradictions speak for themselves.

I am tempted to argue that, in this historical pedagogy work, paranoid reading serves

more as an outward strategy, in the struggle for recognition, to be seen, to counteract the dominant narratives. But this work is also exhausting. Reparative reading seems more of an inward strategy, an internal healing strategy. It is true in so many ways that the system is out to get us, that marginalized populations are counter-intelligence. But it is exhausting. We cannot keep up this way. They'll kill us through paranoia. We need reparative reading to rejuvenate, to sit, to let go, to breathe, to listen.

Let's Read that Again

Ultimately, the irony is on me. In my paranoid reading of Tomcat, I want him to be legitimate. I want him to be seen as reasonable. So in my paranoid reading, I write Sedgwick onto him. I say what I think needs to be said about him and about her, instead of really listening to what he is saying. I agree with Love. I think we need both. I think it is ok that I want to find some sort of redemption for him, to pull him out of that ignorant black man category. But then I must read him reparatively, to let go of my desire to make him what I want him to be. What is it that he is really saying here, outside of what I want to hear him saying?

Me: What do you think about the government?

Tomcat: Well I think the government is all lies. And I don't think we're really free. We're just as free as they want us to be. If they don't want us to be free, we can just be struck down. I also think that no one owns the government. The government… wait. There's a higher power that runs the government. Beyond the government itself. Like, someone that can afford the government. When I say afford, I actually mean afford a government. Someone that's so rich, they call the shots in the government, not the government itself. I think it's a rich guy. I think it's a rich… like… Not organization but. More like family. Not a society, but family… a group that owns everything. And we just chillin, until they want us to be like tamed or controlled. That's it. I heard about the government being bad from one of my uncles. He aint explain everything. He just said…They speak about it. My mom don't see that. She thinks I'm just lost. But I do think we're tame though. I do think we're under control. Not under control but we're not truly free.

Me: What makes you think that?

Tomcat: Well, you buy a house, right? And, you can't pay for a house. You sell it to a bank. They own it. Everything is owned by government, or government companies. Unless you're rich already. But like, everything is owned by the government, so they can take us out of anything if they want. And you're not going to be able to do nothing about it.

Me: Where do you hear about this stuff? Do you know this stuff from people at home or internet or the news?

Tomcat: Ah. Let's see. On the internet. Not mostly the internet because you can't rely on all the sources off the internet. The internet do tell lies. Um. From like old family members. I read a book. I forgot the name of it, but I read something, and it was talking about something called a Rothschild. That's a family name or something. Like, how they own most of the world. That surprised me. Like, this family owns most of the world, and owns most of our government. Probably the whole government by now. Like, it's like a scary thing. How that one guy, or

family, owns all these things. It was in a book too. It's not like I read it on the internet. Then **I** looked him up on the internet, and I saw that they was very rich or something. Like, yeah. So like, you know. What's his name? The other guy that's rich. That's it.
It was named after the guy that. See it's been a while since I looked at it on the internet, so it's just clicking in my head right now. Alright, but some scientist made something that will make people.. like, messes up their system. And that same scientist that made it got it. I forgot what his name was. I'm gonna look it up tonight. Alright. And they said, the H, what's it called, the AIDS, it started out as a science experiment. And like I saw different ways, like how they made it, like people can make AIDS. Yeah. So I'm sayin. Different stuff they do to break people down. Or better yet, to break, to kill off, I'll say minorities. Yeah.

Me: So, what are your personal experiences that this, like a lot of this stuff fits with the world that you live in?

Tomcat: Ok. Um. There was this interview, right? With someone who worked for the government. 1960's, it was, 50's, 60's. She said her job was to bring drugs into like, where minorities lived, to bring drugs there. That was her job. For them to sell it. Ok? So I'm saying. And she worked for the government. They were interviewing her. She's the one who did it, it was a lady that brought drugs into the hood, the ghetto or whatever.

Me: She brought drugs into the hood?

Tomcat: Or the ghetto, I don't know what it's called! But yeah. Where the poor people live. You could say that. That's what the hood means right? Um. Like. Then they start selling. Start dealing. People start taking. And what happens is, one guy comes out on top and the rest falls. All them peep--minorities fall. Drug addicts. Um. All that. I'm not blaming it mostly on the government, cuz I'll say, people are lazy as well. They don't want to do nothing. I believe there are times I don't want to do anything, but. I do say, they, in a way they trying to break us. They trying to finish us off, to me.

Me: Ok. Are there things in your own life that--

Tomcat: Of course! I live in the you know, the hood. Where poor people live and stuff. I wouldn't say—yeah poor. I see it happens every day. Everybody selling. A couple of guys come out on top. Everybody else falls. Like, my friend, I'm not gonna say his name but, my friend's brother is wasting his life right now. He says he doesn't want to go to college. He said, all these fees you got to pay for college. They can't get an education because they can't afford it, because they going through hard times. So people can't afford college, just don't go to college. People who can't go to college is the minorities that can't afford it. Everything is set out. Like, let's see. Like. Um. You know crack? You get more years in jail for crack than you get for cocaine. But who can afford cocaine is the rich white girls. And who can afford crack is the black people, the minorities, or the Mexicans, or anybody of the minorities, period.
So when they buy the crack, they get all them years, and when them white girls sniff up cocaine, they just get a couple years. That kills me. Like. I don't like that.
They out to get us, I swear to God they out to get us. That's it. And that's actually true. You can look it up.

Me: Where did you learn about that?

Tomcat: Well, I keep telling you. My family, they not like everybody else. They don't look at things and just live life and say hey everything's dandy. They all see things differently. They see peaks and crises in the government and how they trying to get us. And like, people always say they after us but they never have proof. They never have like, brick evidence. But I go out of my way to find those evidence, because I don't' want to sound like an ignorant black man just speaking out of my ass, sayin they're trying to get us, not knowing. Cuz that's what they want! They want us to not be smart, to not know stuff. So I go out and know stuff. Yeah.

Chapter Six: Conclusion
A History Pedagogy of Ethics

> I honestly don't really care about [global history] because it's in the past, and I just think about the future and the present. So, that's one reason I don't like global history, because I hate even thinking about the past. It happened already, you can't change it. So there's no purpose. –Isaiah

> Armed with the knowledge of our past, we can with confidence charter a course for our future. –Malcolm X

> To propose a kind of ethics *after* idealism is thus not to confirm the attainment of an entirely independent critical direction, but rather to put into practice a supplementing imperative—to follow, to supplement idealism doggedly with non-benevolent readings, in all the dangers that supplementarity entails. –Rey Chow, *Ethics After Idealism*, (p. xxii).

Where do we go from here? As discussed in the introduction, it's a discipline problem. If it is a discipline problem, is the discipline redeemable, or do we abandon it? This conclusion is an oscillation between these three epigraphs above. Isaiah expresses a pessimism about history, that history is not redeemable, that we ought to just walk away from a bad thing rather than try to recover it. There's no purpose, he says. Taking cues from Isaiah, one might say the discipline is corrupted, and we must abandon it. I appreciate his critique, his capacity to see the failure of history, and the willingness to disregard it. Malcolm X here suggests that we need history to move forward, to have agency over our future. He expresses an investment in history, at least in some version of history. Most certainly not in history with a capital "H," but nonetheless he expresses an investment. In this sense, history is redeemable in some form. What I take from Malcom X's quote is that, in spite of the traumas of History with a capital H, there is still room to be invested in what history might do for marginalized people.

This conclusion moves from a regime of dominant morality toward a pedagogical practice based in ethics. I turn to ethics because ethics can both allow us to own up to our investments, while remaining critical of those investments.

At the end of the day, I must be clear that I am invested in history. I am not willing to abandon history, as Isaiah suggests. This conclusion clarifies a history pedagogy based in ethics in its approach towards students and historical texts. This necessitates a letting go of attachments to heritage and redemption.

Ultimately, I assert here a history pedagogy that moves from alienating the individual outside of history, to a history pedagogy that estranges us from our current world order that we accept as natural, stable, and timeless. How do we use history to disrupt our sense of the world? Recent research in historical thinking pedagogy emphasizes students contextualizing the past, but rarely are teachers encouraged to contextualize the present relations of power and oppression that shape students' readings and relationships to the past.

A Turn to Ethics

Isaiah and Malcolm X are both responding to the hegemonic power of history, and the ways history is used against peoples. Recall Nietzsche's story of the lambs and birds of prey in

his *Genealogy of Morality* (1887/2014). The lambs know that the birds of prey are evil because they eat the lambs, and the lambs know they are good. One's sense of good and evil are dependent on one's contextualized position within social hierarchies. The lambs' version of morality is a response and in contradiction to the dominant ideology's version of morality, which is hegemonic.

Schooling enforces the morality codified by the state, as an ideological state apparatus. Schools reinforce what and who counts as right and wrong. These moral codes are linked to reason, to how we make sense of and categorize the world around us. As suggested in Chapter Three, reason is used as a tool of power over others. Reason becomes a form of property, a property whose access is regulated by whiteness. Many black and brown youth are relegated to the other side of reason and being, aligned with the racial contract (Mills, 1997).

Ethics, on the other hand, can be understood as a tool of power over oneself. Ethics can lie outside of disciplinary structures and institutions (Foucault, 1984, p. 348). Morality becomes codified. The state defines and enforces what is right and wrong. The state exams in school determine right from wrong. This carries over into truth, which also overlaps into experience. Ethics can lie outside of the state, outside of disciplinary structure, based within the individual. Rather than morality, Foucault stressed "the kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself, *rapport a soi,* which I call ethics, and which determines how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions" (1984, p. 352).

In Chapter Five, I addressed Foucault's hyper-pessimism which leads to his activism, as a function of his ethics. Ethics is about training one to speak against power, to question how systems of power are reproduced daily, through reinforcement of a dominant morality. Foucault asserted that "the ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger" (1984, p. 343). Isaiah's hatred of thinking about the past and hatred of reading is a reaction to a dominant morality and system that has placed him on the bad side. Isaiah's response to reject this makes sense. However, through ethics, I assert that Isaiah might be better served to engage that negation head-on. He might not be. I'm not saying there's a guaranteed benefit there. Instead of seeing history and reading as bad, what if Isaiah approaches the danger and violence in how schooling enforces certain histories and readings? I want Isaiah to be allowed to hate history in the history classroom, and for the classroom to provide paths for Isaiah to engage history from that position.

I assert a history pedagogy based in a practice of ethics, because this danger is contextual, and must be addressed in each specific event. How one is orientated within this world shapes how one reads[30]. Our relationships and investments become manifest in our readings. Developing ethical practices in reading and doing history is about nurturing the capacity to see those moments when your investments become the danger in your reading, or the moments when the dominant narrative becomes the danger in your reading. Ethics becomes this constant attention to the danger in each situation, and the capacities to address that danger in how we construct knowledge in the classroom.

At various moments in this dissertation, I acknowledge that it sounds like I aim to put full faith in what students say as truth, and value difference as pure good. That is not my intention. This dissertation is full of my own paranoias, my desires, my commitments and my investments. Those desires, investments, and commitments are dangerous. Rey Chow's *Ethics After Idealism*

[30] This is influenced by feminist standpoint theory (Harding, 1991), and applying it to history pedagogy.

(1998) addressed this danger. Chow warned, "the most important sentiment involved in fascism is not a negative but a positive one: rather than hatefulness or destructiveness, fascism is about love and idealism. Most of all it is a search for an idealized self-image through a heartfelt surrender to something higher and more beautiful" (1998, p. 16). I recall being at an exhibit of 1920's and 30's fascism posters at the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid, and being surprised at how utopian many of the posters appeared. The imagery promised a bright future. There is an aspect of fascism in the way teachers become fixated on students needing to love history (as well as in Isaiah's hostility towards history). History too often becomes a tool of redemption and affirmation of identities. Instead, the focus ought to be on using history as a tool to speak against the violence of power.

The Global Dangers of Disciplinary Incarceration

History, and specifically world history, can be dangerous because of desires and investments in affirming identities. As a beginning teacher developing world history from scratch, I recall a sense of being overwhelmed by how vast and unwieldy world history can be. Teaching to the state test pushed me to put world history events under the terms of the thematic essay, to develop categories to organize history into something visible, tangible, digestible. The challenge is how to recognize those threads, while maintaining the complexity, the rich specificity in difference. To approach world history with an ethics is to acknowledge the non-identity present when we force vast global difference into these categories for the sake of a bounded comprehension.

When asked whether the Greeks offered an attractive and plausible alternative to today in their approach to ethics, Foucault replied that the point of turning to history is not to find alternative solutions, but rather to allow the problem-spaces of other times and places to put into question our own sense of how things are (1984, p. 343). Doing history has the potential to disrupt, rather than reify static categories.

Work in the history discipline unfortunately often reifies identities, and reifies a global colonial hegemonic order. Concepts such as "coloniality of power" (Quijano, 2000) and "colonial difference" (Mignolo, 2000) highlight the political forces that put forth certain categories for understanding over others. Part of the ethics of world history pedagogy is to embrace what Mignolo called "border thinking," defined as "the moments in which the imaginary of the modern world system cracks. "Border thinking" is still within the imaginary of the modern world system, but repressed by the dominance of hermeneutics and epistemology as keywords controlling the conceptualization of knowledge" (2000, p. 23). Applying ethics at the world history level involves attention to that colonial difference, and to encounter border thinking at odds with those agents of border control.

There is this danger of allowing difference to become entrapped within Eurocentrism. But even attempts to respect and appreciate difference become their own incarceration. As Denise Ferreira da Silva stated, "the cultural still authorizes (re)writings of the others of Europe, but now as incarcerated subjects of cultural difference" (Ferreia da Silva, p. xxxiv-xxxv). Tracing racial oppression bounds our readings within our contemporary contexts and dilemmas, further entrapping our capacities to understand the past. da Silva stated further, "rendering the racial as a sociohistorical category reproduces the erasures that (trans)formed racial difference into a signifier of cultural difference: it (re)produces non -Europeans as others and (re)identifies the (instinctual, cultural, ideological) exclusionary strategies their presence evokes as extraneous to post -Enlightenment, modern, social (moral) configurations" (Ferreia da Silva, 2007, p.

xxxvi). I cited earlier Foucault's paranoid reading of the world through his ethics, in how everything is dangerous. There is always already differánce (Derrida, 1997), there is always already non-identity, the limitations of our attempts to understand marginalized peoples in history.

Towards a History of Contradiction: Identity and Non-identity

The thing about Isaiah's response in the epigraph to this chapter is that he turns away from history. He turns away and refuses to look back at the wreckage of history. I assert that Isaiah's commitment to his morality has positioned him to a commitment against history, and against schooling. He doesn't trust history and schooling. His refusal to engage schooling, to engage history, has shut him off from any potentialities that history and schooling might offer.

This is where I find ethics more compelling, in its flexibility, in its layers of both paranoid and reparative readings. Responding to the danger one senses through paranoia requires a slowing down at the reparative pace. For marginalized populations, that "paranoid reading" is merely the capacity to recognize the ways in which society marginalizes them. The task is to move into the reparative mode through ethics. For Rey Chow, this involves an ethics after idealism. "To propose a kind of ethics *after* idealism is thus not to confirm the attainment of an entirely independent critical direction, but rather to put into practice a supplementing imperative—to follow, to supplement idealism doggedly with non-benevolent readings, in all the dangers that supplementarity entails" (Chow, 1998, p. xxii). There is an acknowledgement of the desire to construct a positive knowledge of the other, or the marginalized, but there is this fascistic danger in idealism.

Foucault's approach to ethics wherein everything is dangerous implies that even in our moves to work against the dangers of power, there is danger. When we attempt to work against damaging dominant narratives by attending to counter-narratives, we risk a new danger of simply switching one right answer for another. In our attempts to work against a dominant idealism, we risk putting forth our own ideal. What ethics requires is an honesty to our own version of idealism, and to work against the danger of our own idealism. To teach, one needs idealism, and its negation.

As a teacher, I have this desire for my students to understand that the narratives they have learned about Africans always being enslaved and poor are wrong. I want them to know that there is so much richness and there are many examples of great sophisticated civilizations in Africa. But this betrays my idealistic desire. Indeed, "idealism operates as the tendency to idealize—to relate to alterity through mythification; to imagine "the other," no matter how prosaic or impoverished, as essentially different, good, kind, enveloped in a halo, and beyond the contradictions that constitute our own historical place" (Chow, 1998, p. xx). We want that positive image in response to the violence of the negation. We want students to feel good, instead of feeling bad.

But such idealized constructions of the past swing the pendulum in the opposite direction, ignoring the dynamism of history's contradictions. "Often, in the valorization of non-Western "others," we witness a kind of tendency to see all such "others" as equivalent, as a mere positive, positivist idea devoid of material embeddedness and contradiction" (Chow, 1998, p. xxi). I can't help but constantly return to Walter Benjamin's statement about how within every documentation of culture is the documentation of barbarism (Benjamin, 2002, p. 392). Ethics requires this sort of honesty, this acknowledgement that there is a step after our idealistic desires, this honesty towards the complexity and contradictions.

And yes, there is so much risk there, that we might find things in those documents that are unbecoming. But as Benjamin stated, we must expect that negatively associated barbarism alongside the positively constructed "culture." The redemption is not in the positive flimsy construction of the ideal, but rather in the honesty of ethics. This sort of ethics is central weapon against the fascistic dangers of idealism. For Rey Chow, "such a reading practice must carry with it a willingness to take risks, a willingness to destroy the submission to widely accepted, predictable, and safe conclusions. This risk-taking, destructive process is what I associate with *ethics*, a term I use in contrast to *mores* and its cognates *morality* and *moralism"* (1998, p. xxii). Moving beyond the limits of morality involves this risk. I want Isaiah to be able to hate history, to be pissed off at history, and to then approach history with an ethics, to find ways to do history differently. Not that history will and should feel good. But that there is a redemption in that honesty towards the barbarism and culture of the past.

I want to take a second to consider Angel's response to my question about which region of the world has been most important for world history. Angel replied:

> Ok. Um. Hmmmm… Africa! Because that is where slavery originated. And, you know, slavery played a big part in world history. Like, our ancestors were slaves. You know. It was battles for freedom. Escape attempts. You have Harriet Tubman. You know. Then you have a lot of African Americans that invented things. Like George Washington Carver. So I would definitely say that Africa definitely is the most focused region in world history, because it played a *huge* part in world history. Then that eventually led to segregation and the civil rights movement. And a lot of African American activists were once slaves, so I would definitely say Africa.

Her answer is similar to Mahoganey's answer discussed in Chapter Three. I was not expecting her to say Africa. I was expecting her to give an answer that reflected the Eurocentric curriculum. I expected her to say that Europe has been the most important. But she said Africa. And I understand why she said Africa. And I want her to be able to say Africa. I want that to be important. But I also want there to be room to challenge that response. This is where the ethics comes in. Angel's response is different than expected. As a teacher, I must learn to read her response differently, to position her as always already reasonable. I see the importance of constructing a narrative of Africa's importance. But within her response is this positive ideal.

I often turn to Susan Buck-Morss for a model of history that matches this sense of ethics after idealism. "It insists that facts are important not as data with fixed meanings, but as connective pathways that can continue to surprise us. Facts should inspire imagination rather than tying it down. The less they are subsumed under the fiction of secure knowledge, marshaled as proof of a predetermined and authoritative thesis, the more truth they are capable of revealing. Instead of defending a notion of intellectual turf, the point of scholarly debate should be to extend the horizon of historical imagination" (Buck-Morss, 2000, p. 13). History unfortunately has been a method of alienating many, including these students, from being fully human, from feeling like they have a place in history. Buck-Morss emphasizes, alongside scholars like Sam Wineburg, the potential for history to alienate us from our world today. History offers all of these past ways of existing that put our own mores into question.

Utopia Means Nowhere: The Tiger's Leap into the Beyond

The point is not to have an ideal endpoint we are working towards. There is this anxiety in not knowing where we are headed. It is ok to be unsettled, to feel anxious, to feel disappointed, at the lack of direction and solution offered.

The notion of imagining otherwise is an on-going potential and process. Part of that potential is within what I do not see, what I do not understand. Within Isaiah's refusals, his illegibility, there is so much there that I will never understand. Returning to the notion of marronage is key here. Maroon societies often get left out of the dominant narrative, because they often do not have a major impact on that dominant narrative. Maroon societies are those that exit the narrative. Within world history, and within the history classroom, there is a great amount of dark matter, the weight of that which will remain unseen, at least to me. Just because we don't have the documentation of various civilizations does not mean they do not matter. Just because we cannot read those who have made themselves illegible does not mean it doesn't exist. The most profound in this dissertation perhaps are those who refused to be interviewed, refused to attend school.

As teachers, we ought to develop these ethical practices, to notice the danger in our pedagogical goals and methods. We ought to practice forms of reparative reading towards our students. Not frantically produce meaning out of them, in paranoid acts of knowledge production. Let's allow space for students to keep causing trouble, pushing against boundaries, expanding what we think we know, inverting and subverting.

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