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Deterritorializing the Curriculum: Poststructural Logic and Dynamic Process

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SPENCER TRACY, IN THE 1960 MOVIE "INHERIT THE WIND", challenges the articulation of religious dogma with the question, "Do you ever think about what you DO think about?" Going beyond the limits of our thinking requires both an exploration of the known as well as an exploration into the unknown. In the twentieth century, the curriculum has been a series of pendulum swings between whole-child and content-focused curricula as curricular dogma espouse solutions to society's ills and needs. Like the debates between the proponents of evolution and those of biblical creation, both during the Scopes Monkey trial depicted in the Spencer Tracy movie and today in many state houses, discussion is disconnected or at cross purposes. The incommensurability of these positions makes communication impossible. The territories are different, the logics are different, the terrains are different. There are no common grounds to be compromised.

The question of thinking about what we do think about with regards to curriculum is not how to establish new curriculum territories, per se, but how to deterritorialize the existing curricular domain, removing the boundaries, opening ourselves up to uncertainty while in the process recognizing that we may also create new terrains. The in-between spaces, where conversation can occur, like the beating of the ocean on the shore, offers an ebb-and-flow of relationship; with established boundaries blurred, there is no demarcation between earth and sea.

Breaching or rupturing the old boundaries [may] lead to a release of new intensities. This is the notion of deterritorialization in Deleuze a movement by which we leave the territory, or move away from spaces regulated by dominant systems of signification that keep us confined within old patterns, in order to make new connections. (Roy, 2003, p. 21)

This paper will explore and invite the process of deterritorialization to challenge and re-vision the curriculum. Meandering through the nomadic topos, a fluid terrain, a space of inquiry, we will offer a perspective of a poststructural approach to thinking about what we think about in curricular contexts. In conversation with phenomenology, existentialism, and critical theory, our approach is an exploration of a deterritorialized territory, the place where the land and sea merge. In creating the nomadic topos, we can begin to deterritorialize as we engage difference, embracing the conjunctive-and exploring the borders of our thinking, cuando vives en la frontera (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 216), when living in the borderlands, we come to realize the boundaries are not as firm, not as defined, not as exclusive as we once thought. Like the waves on the shore, the boundaries between ocean and beach ebb and flow, co-mingle and merge, in a dance of energy. The exchange, the coming together, the violent clash are challenges to our ideas about categories, boundaries, and difference.

Engaging Difference and the Conjunctive-And

In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche (1872/1968) describes the Dionysian life as one that is lived in the in-between spaces of conformity and creativity, society and culture, freedom and oppression. Nietzsche describes Odysseus, from the Greek tragedies, as a Dionysian character, living at the edges of civility in an uncertain world of strange new creatures and new adventures. Tied to the mast, fettered by society, Odysseus dared to pass the sirens with ears unplugged and eyes unshielded, to experience the joy of their song, the beauty of their voices, the lure of their attractions. Rather than the "either-or" of forced choices and compromise, the Dionysian spirit embraces the "and" of difference and, in so doing, challenges reification. The Dionysian spirit is the ultimate embodiment of becoming, celebrating creativity and flux as well as stability and pattern. The Dionysian spirit lives on the borders of two worlds the world of conformity and the world of anarchy. Like Odysseus, tied to the mast, tempted by the sirens, the Dionysian spirit dances in the borderlands. Engaging the conjunctive-and, the Dionysian spirit avoids the lure of dualisms, forced choices, and extinguished paths. The logic of the conjunctive-and recog-

nizes and embraces opposites and difference as togetherness rather than separateness, wholeness rather than parts, and process rather than products.

To nurture the Dionysian spirit, to embark on borderlands, to live with the conjunctive-and, to engage difference while recognizing the contexts that bind us, is to challenge existing structures and categories of reasoning; it is the process of deterritorialization. Through this process, we come to explore the nomadic topos of poststructuralism. Extending the work of Afrikan Spir (see Safranski, 2000/2003), Nietzsche developed the logic of the conjunctive-and by challenging the Principle of Identity and the Law of the Excluded Middle. The Principle of Identity states that, for all *A*, *A=A*. If we are in a world of flux, however, a world of perpetual becoming, *A* never equals *A*. By denying the Principle of Identity, Nietzsche engaged and embraced the tension between sameness and difference, flow and permanence, good and evil. If *A* never equals *A*, then the Law of the Excluded Middle (*A* is either true or false; *A* cannot be both true and false) becomes suspect as well. Rejecting the Principle of Identity and the Law of the Excluded Principle, traditional logical foundations are obliterated. A new poststructural logic is imposed.

Such a non-Aristotelian logic disrupts our territories of argumentation where we pit two opposing perspectives at opposite ends of some feigned dualism. As for Odysseus, the choice is not between blind/deaf passage or destruction on the rocks of the sirens, but is both the experience and the constraint, the witness and the conformity. Thus, engaging the conjunctive-and, embracing process, nurturing the Dionysian spirit, we begin the process of deterritorialization, escaping the reification of our own ideas, dancing at the borders, expanding our territories as we deterritorialize and learn to think about what we think about. Described as a "nomadic topos," a fluid terrain of inquiry, Roy (2003) explores how we can expand our boundaries through this process. Like nomadic wanderings, the nomadic topos engages the Dionysian spirit, opening us up to new possibilities, exploring existing territories, not from the shore, nor from the sea, but from the in-between spaces of relationship.

Roy (2003) utilizes five interrelated spatial perspectives to engage the fluid terrain of inquiry into beginning teachers' experiences: (1) Smoothness, (2) Multiplicity, (3) Rhizoidness, (4) In-Betweenness, and (5) Becoming. "Taken together, these traits open up lines of continuous variation of nomadic space that deterritorializes the categories and boundaries within which conventional approaches to curriculum operate" (Roy, 2003, p. 72). These categories of analysis will be useful as we explore a different topology and a different logic for understanding the curriculum.

Deleuzian Topological Terrains for Curricular Explorations

To deterritorialize the curriculum, we will engage the conjunctive-and through a cartology of difference. Webs of relationship, interaction among earth and sea, we hope to explore our curricular contexts as the nexus. Thus, to explore the nomadic topos of the curriculum, to extend curricular borders while challenging reified ideas about the curriculum, the tools of our map-making challenge the smooth and predictable, embrace multiplicity and the conjunctive-and, encourage the meanderings of the Rhizome, seek out the in-between, and nurture becoming as process.

Challenging Curricular Smoothness

Challenging curricular smoothness entails going beyond the traditional debates and curriculum dualisms: whole-language versus phonics, child-centered versus content driven, whole class versus individualized instruction. A cluster of second order assumptions is so deeply entrenched in our thinking about curriculum that its existence is seldom recognized and the assumptions themselves are almost never challenged (Martin, 1994). Looking beyond the taken-for-granted veneer of the curriculum, we disrupt the curricular smoothness. Jane Roland Martin (1994) describes these taken-for-granted, second order assumptions as the Two Dogmas of Curriculum: the Dogma of God-Given Subjects and the Dogma of the Immutable Basics. The dogma of most curricular discourse seek "the basics," fragment and sequence learning, and prescribe methods and goals for teaching. They also teach that the basics of education are unchanging and eternal.

Martin (1994) believes that constructing any theory of curriculum is problematic if these dogmas remain intact and unchallenged. She raises important questions and issues concerning curriculum: (1) what things can be subjects, (2) subject construction, (3) subjects and learning activities, and (4) what makes something basic. Deterritorializing the curriculum, challenging what we DO think about, Martin engages in disrupting the smoothness of the curriculum process our assumptions about curricular structures by suggesting we explore these issues as we confront curricular dogmas.

Challenging the smoothness of the curriculum, confronting the dogmas underlying our ideas about the curriculum, avoiding replacing one dogma with another, we can change our ideas about the curriculum as we come to understand ourselves and our world as multiplicitous.

Understanding Multiplicity

Multiplicity celebrates difference, embraces fluidity, and recognizes process. As explored by Deleuze, multiplicity recognizes "the impossibility of dealing with difference from the perspective of a unity . . . it is then that a resonance occurs that breaks through identitarian ways of thinking" (Roy, 2003, p. 9). Multiplicity allows us to "relocate difference within repetition, in order to loosen them . . . and release the positivity of difference" (p. 12).

Embracing difference within our own classrooms, we forget to "listen" and encourage others to listen to our students. Multiplicity of meanings, encouraging difference and perspective, celebrates creativity and novelty. Multiplicity encourages conversations in the classroom as meanings are shared and boundaries of knowing are expanded rather than territories appropriated and claimed in the name of achievement or quality or economic superiority.

In order to better explore the meaning of multiplicity, we must challenge notions of self as "substance." As one who was greatly influenced by Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger sought to transform the longstanding meaning of "the self." Heidegger challenged the traditional neo-Platonic views of selfhood by rejecting the interpretation of the Greek word "ousia" as substance and replacing it with "the dynamic absence which lets a living being manifest its appearances" (Zimmerman, 1981). Heidegger saw that "ousia" as substance reduced the meaning of self to an object, as well as reducing others to objects. The idea of self as "dynamic absence," is far removed from the static sense of substance. For example, "to know thyself" is a perpetual acceptance to deterritorialize one's self as a being made manifest through the dynamic absence.

With Heidegger's idea of self comes the possibility of understanding multiplicity in a dynamic way. It is not unlikely that such a word as multiplicity would be enshrouded by a mathematical metaphor in which one would sum the same quantity multiple times. Of course, this is not the meaning to be taken. There is a complexity in Heidegger's idea of self that would make multiplicity much more tenable as a fractal metaphor.

Though it is common to assume that the Principle of Identity holds for self—that is, that from one day to the next student A is the same—Heidegger's idea of self as "dynamic absence" makes problematic the belief that across time student A is ever the same.

Deleuze incorporated existential and phenomenological ideas when he explored "an empiricism of 'multiplicities' that says 'the abstract doesn't explain, but must itself be explained'" (Rajchman, 2000, p. 7). Moving beyond the analytic and phenomenological, neither Fregean nor hermeneutic, multiplicity implies the indefinite unfolding of "pure immanence—"It is a constructivist logic of unfinished series rather than a calculus of distinct, countable collections; and it is governed by conventions and problematizations, not axioms and fixed rules of inference" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 11).

The dance of teaching is on-going—we not only have multiple partners in the dance, but we and our partners are multiplicitous and evolving. The terrain of the complexity of multiplicities, the logic of our relationships, can be explored as the Rhizoid, metaphorically invoking images of the rhizome.

Embracing the Rhizome

It is difficult to develop metaphors that do not lend themselves to hierarchical or foundational ways of thinking. In the nomadic topos of multiplicity, however, we need to celebrate meanderings, connections, and growth. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) used the metaphor of the rhizome to describe the "construction of a terrain of multiplicities" (Roy, 2003, p. 47). Avoiding foundations, hierarchies or levels of connectivity, the rhizome embraces the complex, emergent, and interconnected organization of the nomadic topos. As described by Roy (2003):

The 'rhizome' is a lateral proliferation of connections, like the spread of moss, the sudden branching off or joining up of different intensities, flows, and densities to form new assemblies that have not fixed form or outline. A contingent mass, the rhizome can be cut up in any way and still retains operational wholeness; therefore it is highly tenacious. The rhizome is also a tuber, and unlike ordinary roots, can sprout in any direction. (p. 75)

The curriculum, as rhizome, is capable of emergent meanderings, discontinuous starts and stops, and the ebbs and flows of relationship. As the curriculum is allowed to spread through the on-going experiences of stu-

dents in the social contexts of the classroom, the web of relationships ensures viability and sustains it.

The curriculum-as-rhizome encourages pursuing "tangents," creating teachable-moments as student interests and needs co-mingle and interconnect. Driven not by standards, scope-and-sequence charts, or learner outcomes, the curriculum-as-rhizome explores the topology of the spaces it occupies and meanders according to the terrain and the conditions that sustain it. Like the root, the metaphor of the curriculum-as-rhizome also supports the idea that the spread of the root occurs as the life-sustaining forces of growth seek out the in-between, the nooks and crannies that provide sustenance.

Seeking the In-Between

The rhizome-as-curriculum embodies the dynamic curriculum. Celebrating emergence, nurturing creativity, and avoiding the dogmas of reified subject-matter knowledge and methods, the dynamic curriculum seeks to nurture the Dionysian spirit in all of our students. This puts the teacher "in the middle" acting as neither the rope that ties the Dionysian spirit to the mast, nor the Sirens, tempting and luring students with the enticements of easy knowledge. And, from the in-between, the teacher is also BOTH the ropes and the Sirens. Operating from the in-between, the teacher creates open spaces for learning to occur. As described by Roy (2003),

To take in-betweenness not as a passage to something more definite but to treat it seriously, as an open space within every process, we have to understand how the teacher can act from the middle, from the in-between spaces, neither unifying instruction nor offering discrete packets aimed at different individuals. (p. 76)

The students are also operating from the in-between as they are in a process of becoming, the process of self-renewing and growth. They are neither the land nor the sea but the illusive borders-in-the-forming.

Wind tugging at my sleeve
feet sinking into the sand
I stand at the edge where earth touches ocean
where the two overlap
a gentle coming together
at other times and places a violent clash
(Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 23)

The meanderings and unpredictability of the dynamic curriculum as rhizome create a topological field of interconnectedness: teachers to students, students to students, students to ideas, and classrooms to cultures. The focus, however, is not on the subjects but on the relationships between them, the in-between spaces that ARE the topologies of becoming. When we say A learns B, the focus shifts from A and B to the learning-relationship. Connecting experiences and ideas, challenging the smoothness of the curriculum by blurring traditional content boundaries, the classroom becomes a complex web of relationships and topologies of becoming. Like Whitehead's nexus (1929/1978), the fundamental reality of the classroom is precisely this complex web of interconnected relationship. There is no underlying curriculum, no underlying truths or structures, no subject matter knowledge, only the complex processes that are the meanderings of the rhizome. This is the notion of *currere* (Pinar & Grumet, 1976) as this dance of relation and unfolding processes.

The topology of the nexus is the in-between spaces of what we typically call the real, yet the conundrum of poststructuralism is that there is no underlying reality beyond the complex web of evolving relationships that are the nexus. The Dionysian life is one that is lived in the in-between spaces of society and culture, freedom and oppression, conformity and creativity—one that is in the topological space of the nexus. Encouraging the Dionysian spirit in classrooms is to dance in the in-between spaces and, in so doing, nurture the becoming of our students.

Nurturing Becoming

To create in our classrooms spaces for encouraging the Dionysian spirit, celebrating difference as fundamental to becoming, we need to, as did Vico in the 17th century and Goethe a century later, avoid thinking in mechanistic terms. Their more holistic perspectives have relevance today as we have come to recognize the limitations of reductionistic and fragmented ways of knowing. Embracing process, for example, Goethe explored a different kind of "analytic"—implicating a different way of seeing and thinking about the processes of nature.

To see all around us as interconnected process is to focus on relationship and develop an appreciation for the complexity of the nexus. Encouraging the Dionysian spirit is to see in our students their need to engage in process and develop complex and evolving relationships as the nexus of their own becoming. Thus, rather than looking for underlying

structure, Goethe (1996) emphasized synthesizing insight (p. 48) as important to seeing the complexity of living, organic beings in perpetual becoming. Intuitive perception (*Anschauung*) as "synthesizing insight" is required to see beyond outward form to underlying process and complex relationship.

In observing objects of nature, especially those that are alive, we often think the best way of gaining insight into the relationship between their inner nature and the effects they produce is to divide them into their constituent parts. . . . But these attempts at division also produce many adverse affects when carried to an extreme Nothing in them is permanent, nothing is at rest or defined everything is in a flux of continual motion. (pp. 49-50)

Nurturing and developing intuitive insight, Goethe embraced becoming, the living energy of creation. He explored how intuitive insight (*Verunft*) explores formation (*Bildung*) rather than form (*Gestalt*): "Hence reason (*Verunft*), in its affinity with the divine principle, is concerned with what is evolving and living, whereas the understanding (*Verstand*) deals with what has become formed and congealed" (p. 51).

When we think of the curriculum, we see it to be an exercise in the *Verstanden* or understanding of what has already become "formed or congealed." We don't engage students in the process of mathematics but teach them "the forms" of mathematics inert and disconnected from students' experiences and intuitions. We teach history "as it was" not as it became or is becoming. We fail to engage our students in intuitive perception, the formative processes of *Bildung* - of becoming. We focus our attention on the products of nature and human knowledge, the congealed forms rather than the dance of process. Emphasis on measures as indications of learning are also misplaced reason—collapsing into structures operations of learning in process. Creative unfolding of being as processes of becoming are lost when we create measures or reify structures rather than embracing process and developing intuitive perception.

Poststructural Curriculum

The challenge of the dynamic curriculum, of the curriculum as rhizome, is to develop Goethe's intuitive perception—creating spaces for the emergence of the Dionysian spirit. Focusing on process, recognizing the interconnections of the nexus, the myth of "underlying reality" or Gestalt

is exposed, allowing us to explore the in-between of relationship as perpetual becoming. “We may gain the world by renouncing it, by passively losing self in the heart of what has neither form nor dimension” (Chardin, 1957/1965, p. 21). Nurturing the becoming of our students, we come to see them and the content we teach as ever-changing and in complex relationship. We lose the illusion of any transcendent form. From this process oriented, poststructural perspective, there is “nothing transcendent, no Unity, Subject, Reason; there are only processes” (Deleuze, 1990/1995, p. 145). Deterritorializing the curriculum by engaging the conjunctive-and, we develop intuitive perception—“synthesizing insight”—that celebrates the meanderings and emergence of the Dionysian spirit.

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