Love Pedagogy and the Unmaking of the NCLB Generation

A Dissertation

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BY

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It is only by finishing this dissertation that I now understand why some people write acknowledgements that are as long as a chapter: it is because this thing ain't no joke. The acknowledgement of how much life history passes and is made and all who have supported one in getting to the place of completion leaves one, leaves me in a deep state of reflection, appreciation, and so I must honor, I must *acknowledge* what and who helped to gently place me on the pathway to the research and to the writing and, too, what and who was lost on the journey. I raised a child while writing this dissertation. I got old and definitely got gray while writing this. I taught in university classrooms and led schools as a middle and later a high school principal while writing this. I lost my mama while writing this. I tried to fight the paralytic ache of losing her while writing this. Until this very minute, I thought finishing *this* impossible.

I begin by acknowledging David Noble, the chair of my dissertation until his death on 11 March 2018, and up until his death at age 92, just days before his birthday, this father of American Studies would send me chapters from his books on which he expected and respected my commentary. David did not believe in the notion of status. His students were, to him, his fellow scholars and rabble rousers obligated to poke holes in the arguments of the *BOO-jwah-zeee* as he would always pronounce the social class, always lingering on, emphasizing the *boo* and the *zee* with great sardonicism. David, a graduate of Princeton, leaning back at our one of our monthly lunches with Gail, his wife, and Mark, my

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The texts on critical theory in which Andrew and I engaged, because, as Andrew said, "That's the way *the NCLB Generation* talks" (emphasis mine). Andrew helped me to understand young people his age, those who had been taught under NCLB all 12 years of their pre-college lives. I never could have understood his peers had we just *talked*. And now Andrew is off to earn his "union card" at University of Texas. My pride is enormous but not infantilizing. After every single class, Andrew would walk me to my car asking about this theorist and that notion. Andrew was hungry. Andrew was vulnerable, and Andrew, teaching alongside me, taught other students how to want to live defenseless against the beauty inherent in being curious, in not knowing, in wanting to know more in America.

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Alberto Alejandro Marriaga. Mi'jo. It is when I lost Momma that I knew how strong Alberto was when his mamí died the second month of his second semester of his first year in college. How does a child endure such a shock to the heart? And yet Mi'jo remains strong. My research as practice and methodology, a love pedagogy embedded inside audioethnography, is so much due to Alberto. It began that day I learned of his mamí's sudden death from an aneurism she had while watching his younger sister's swim meet. I said to Mi'jo, "Forget the final written essay! Make an audio essay instead." And suddenly, a boy who had lost his mamí just days before, was emailing me clips that would become an audioethnography entitled "Mother's Departure." The day Alberto played this in class, no one could speak. We ended the class early, everyone too shaken by Alberto's clarity of purpose, his creative ingenuity, his ability to make *his* pain ours. Class just had to end.

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[1] See *APA Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Boys and Men* (August 2018).

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degree while working two, sometimes three jobs at the same time. Dr. Wade-Lewis said, “It took me *12* years to get my PhD. You are going to get a PhD” (emphasis most certainly hers). Well, I guess we know who was right, Dr. Wade-Lewis.

Julius Lester, Nina Payne, and Gloria Joseph, lost now, but they said I had no choice but to be a woman, black, Latina, *and* a writer. Julius stayed by my side, even write to me just days before his passing in 2018. That man believed in me deeply, never forgot me. When I was 18, Julius told me I that I was so angry and the black readings I was, reading until I busted, were “coming out the sides of your head.” Then he said, “Now, what I want you to do is read Shakespeare, Lawrence, Dickens, Bronte. Know them better than you know yourself and then you will know who you are and what you are up against.”

James Baldwin: Jimmy was not just my teacher but my mentor and friend while I was a student at Hampshire College, and it was his class History of the Civil Rights Movement course taught at University of Massachusetts at Amherst that changed how I understood history. The small-group classes with him taught me not just how to love myself, but how to like myself after I, from West Harlem, spent 12 years, grades 1-12, in a predominantly white, independent school on the Upper East Side of Manhattan called The Lenox School (now Birch Wathen Lenox).[2] I remember sitting in Charles Frye’s living room on Hampshire’s

[2] To complete my undergraduate education I had to work several jobs simultaneously after being “financially withdrawn” from Hampshire College for owing approximately $2,000. I remember I sent them a bag of pennies I had been collecting since I was a

campus. Sipping Scotch, Jimmy made me a list; one that I still have. It listed for whom I must vote and who I had to read "so you can understand just who you are not only as a black woman from Harlem or New York or a student at Hampshire, but as the figment of the white imagination in America." I thank James Baldwin for, in a seemingly nonplussed manner, shifting my entire perspective in one instructive sentence and one directive: "Oh, Darling, whiteness is a state of mind. Now write."

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small child (maybe it added up to $20), and I sent them all my tips from waiting tables, but they still said I had to "pay in full" to return to complete my degree. Neither I nor my parents had that kind of money. I was heartbroken because Hampshire was my dream college to attend, and I had learned to be proud of myself as a black and brown woman on its grass lawns and within its five school consortium where I was able to take classes with Julius Lester, James Baldwin, Johnnella Butler, and Michael Thelwell and which enabled me to be a part of a small group of students who recreate, on its 2oth anniversary, the 1964 Mississippi Summer Project (also known as "Freedom Summer") by riding by bus down to Jackson from Amherst. All in all, I attended three undergraduate schools: Hampshire College, SUNY New Paltz, and SUNY Empire State College. That is what happens when your dad gets hurt on the job as a firefighter, retires from the NYC Fire Department, spends 10 years as the chauffeur for and secret-keeper of Barry Diller (the President of Paramount Pictures), and your mom, an RN, chooses to be an activist to ensure a woman's right to choose and works for Planned Parenthood for 25 years. What happens is that your parents don't have enough money to pay a private, liberal arts education and eat simultaneously. It means you have to work two and three jobs to get through your undergraduate education, and it means completing your education takes longer and feels like it takes forever.

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the drums at his funeral and Amiri took the podium at St. John the Divine. For 36 years of knowing that the price of the ticket is what I had paid since a child at Lenox amongst all those white, rich kids. Ronni helped me to make sure I spent my life getting a refund, and this dissertation is like a refund since I am now one of the little over five percent of black people who have a PhD in the United States. *Ronni* **is** my sister. Ronni has never given up on me even when I wanted to give up on me, like right after Momma, and like right before this dissertation.

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allowed me to give up. You never gave up—on me. You will me into being with your love and into all my next steps. The PhD, your gentle demand. Your love, my honor to receive. For you and for Momma, this.

Dedication

To Momma . . .

Great souls die and
our reality, bound to
them, takes leave of us.
Our souls,
dependent upon their
nurture,
now shrink, wizened.
Our minds, formed
and informed by their
radiance,
fall away.
We are not so much maddened
as reduced to the unutterable ignorance
of dark, cold
caves.

– Maya Angelou, 1990

Abstract

This dissertation analyzes the effects of two key U.S. education policies of the 21st century (No Child Left Behind Act and Renaissance 2010) on young people. The work proposes a new framework (love pedagogy) for unmaking and transforming the effects of these policies on poor rural white and black and brown students. It uses Karl Polyani's *The Great Transformation* – especially Polanyi's concept of the "fictitious commodities" of land (in the form of realty), labor (produced by the schools), and money (the capital used to produce and reproduce it all) – to examine case studies from Illinois (City as Classroom School in Chicago) and New York (State University of New York at Albany and Kite's Nest in Hudson). Employing historical analysis, social movement activist research, and audioethnography, this dissertation investigates how the practice of a love pedagogy, with roots in Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire's theory of critical pedagogy, re-centers connection, engagement, and the cultivation of genuine relationships as a transformative practice between teachers (and their schools) and students (and their families). In the same way that laws like the No Child Left Behind Act and policies like Renaissance 2010 center their practice on standardization, high-stakes testing, and profit, love pedagogy centers its practice on relationships, social connection, and love. The conclusion, written at the height of the global coronavirus pandemic, outlines two resolutions to the current shift to online learning: a retrenchment of the practices at the foundation of policies like the No Child Left Behind Act and Renaissance

2010, or the opportunity to chart the contemporary education economy onto a vastly different course that will be rooted in a love pedagogy.

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Introduction

Representations, when allied with state power, not only depict the world, they can remake it.

—*Nicholas Blomley, Unsettling the City*

What happens when schools are solely responsible for producing a service workforce for a nation? When capital and real estate are used to transform a cultural topography, dislocate black and brown people, and redistribute equity, access, and voice from those with the least to those with the most? *Love Pedagogy and the Unmaking of the NCLB Generation* is concerned with this type of culture and what kind of young people it produces; it is concerned with what these kids will be asked to do with their lives in service of this culture and which of these children will be made to tote the heaviest load; it is concerned with the education policies and schools that will unknowingly or knowingly act to burden encumbered and exploited youth.

The generation of young people who attended K-12 schools under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 are these children. I situate them within the context of a contemporary history that has shaped their life experiences. They are the NCLB generation. They are post-9/11, post-Iraq, and post-Afghanistan kids. They are post-Patriot Act, post-Katrina, post-Great Recession, post-Sandy kids. As adults, they will look back on childhoods produced in the wake of the Persian Gulf War and during the US War on Terrorism. The larger international world sees and understands that America's kids are shaped by US foreign invasions,

devastating global effects of climate change of which the US is one of the greatest contributors, and a 2007 global financial crisis produced by the parents of the wealthiest members of this generation. The NCLB generation has a national and global identity: white wealthy kids who understand themselves to be global saviors and black, brown kids, and poor rural white kids who do not understand themselves in this way at all.

The NCLB generation kids were raised in the wake and during a long list of military operations veiled in a nomenclature of virtue, morality, and liberty–Operation Desert Storm in Iraq, Operation Hope in Somalia, Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti, Operation Deliberate Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The NCLB generation is a culture of young people who entered college in 2013 after spending their entire school lives under this education policy. These kids were schooled on a diet of worksheets, standardized multiple choice tests, and accountability measures. These measures were based in the interest of ensuring the redistribution of resources and wealth upward as the nation moved from a manufacturing-based economy to a service economy. Without the right kinds of schools, the goals of these redistributions would be unattainable.

I argue in this dissertation that the essential areas that governments must control in order to maintain the service industry and ensure the reproduction of wealth for the few are education, real estate, and finance, or as the historian of economics, Karl Polanyi called them, the “fictitious commodities” of land, money,

and labor.[3] Governments and businesses in the global north recognized in the 1980s that when these three areas worked as a coalition, a neoliberal global social transformation was possible. This transformation would create a contemporary education economy and workers to service it. It would be a reversal of more Keynesian government expenditures of the 1970s. This redistribution would sustain and advance not just the economy but national interests and the expansion of global capital.

Federal acts like No Child Left Behind (NCLB) passed in 2011 by President George W. Bush and Every Student Succeeds (ESSA), passed under President Obama in 2015, provide a federal framework for standardized education and systematized education practices for the neoliberal economy. The policies generated by NCLB hold schools accountable for meeting standards that would ensure the production of a service industry workforce; the policies do not create schools that ask kids to question, challenge, or create new ideas and new ways of being. The Common Core State Standards Initiative, adopted by 41 states, explicitly communicates that "the standards define the knowledge and skills students should gain throughout their K-12 education in order to graduate high school prepared to succeed in *entry-level careers*, introductory academic college courses, and *workforce training programs*" (emphasis mine).[4] The

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[3] Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), 76.
[4] "About the Standards," Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center), Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020, http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/.

contemporary education economy, in the end, represents an integration and a formal coalition of different kinds of power relations: land (in the form of realty), labor (produced by the schools), and money (the capital used to produce and reproduce it all).

Social Movement Activist Research and Audioethnography

In addition to archival research and historical analysis, I engage and critique the transformations in the contemporary education economy through two additional methodologies: social movement activist research and audioethnography. Proponents of social movement activist research point to Charles Hale's anthology *Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods,* originally published in 2008, as a central text of this methodology. In his foreword to the anthology, Craig Calhoun, a sociologist at the University of Arizona, traces the long yet relatively unknown history of the methodology: "Activist scholarship is as old as Machiavelli and Marx or indeed Aristotle. . . Yet activist scholarship often seems an unusual if surprising idea."[5] Calhoun traces other precursors in the use of this methodology to such fields as the efforts of classical political economists in the repeal of the Corn Laws and the role of Hull House sociologists who not only fought for legislative and administrative changes but also engaged in direct action.

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[5] See Craig Calhoun's Foreword in Charles R. Hale, ed. *Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), xiii.

In the introduction to *Engaging Contradictions*, Hale defines the methodology: ". . . activist scholarship embodies a responsibility for results that 'allies' can recognize as their own, value in their own terms, and use as they see fit. In this way, activist scholarship redefines and arguably raised the stakes for, what counts as high-quality research outcomes; this, in turn, gives it the potential to yield knowledge, analysis, and theoretical understanding that would otherwise be impossible to achieve."[6] For Hale, social movement activist research is a space of dialogue, analysis, reframing, questioning, creating, and transforming.

Ruth Wilson Gilmore, in her essay in Hale's collection, "Forgotten Places and the Seeds of Grassroots Planning," speaks to the role of social movement activist research in spaces and geographies that neoliberal capitalism seeks to dismantle. "Forgotten places are not outside history," Gilmore asserts. "Rather, they are places that have experienced the abandonment characteristic of contemporary capitalist and neoliberal state reorganization."[7] My use of social movement activist research examines and participates in just these kinds of "forgotten spaces" within the contemporary education economy: the "forgotten spaces" of a shuttered charter school in Chicago, the abandoned utopias of first-year college students who were part of the NCLB generation at a state university in New York's capital city; a center for liberatory education in a gentrifying former

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[6] Hale, *Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship*, 4.

[7] Ruth Wilson Gilmore, "Forgotten Places and the Seeds of Grassroots Planning," in *Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship*, ed. Charles R. Hale (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 31.

fishing village on the Hudson River in upstate New York and how three black kids occupied the center for their own innovative educational needs.

My use of social movement activist research in the field of education owes much to the work of Pauline Lipman. In their essay "Toward Social Movement Activist Research," Lipman and co-author Rhoda Rae Gutierrez write that their goal is to "work from a position of solidarity. . . We are primarily qualitative researchers, and use qualitative methods to foreground experiences of parents, teachers, and students."[8] Gutierrez and Lipman believe the contemporary moment displays "an urgent need and fresh opportunity for researchers to join their expertise with collective social struggle." And, as they conclude (citing indigenous scholar Andrea Smith), ". . . why should academics be any less responsible for taking part in activist work than florists, garbage collectors, or beekeepers."[9] I wholeheartedly agree.

I hope that my use of social movement activist research might draw attention to the need to develop new spaces of academic dialogues on the methodology. As Stéphane Couture, a professor of communications at York University, argues in the *Canadian Journal of Communication*, "We need more research and collaborations and publications. . . to reflect on theories, methodologies, and challenges of activist research."[10] Couture continues, "This

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[8] Rhoda Rae Gutierrez and Pauline Lipman, "Toward Social Movement Activist Research," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 29, no. 10 (2016), 1243.
[9] Lipman, "Toward Social Movement Activist Research," 1252.
[10] Stéphane Couture, "Activist Scholarship: The Complicated Entanglements of Activism and Research Work," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 42 (2017), 145.

could be done within academic settings, but also within activist spaces, for instance by organizing workshops during activist conferences to discuss the challenges – ethical, methodological, but also epistemological – raised by the entanglements of activist and scholarly research." Although *Love Pedagogy* does not reflect directly on these needs, I hope that my attention to social movement activist research, particularly in chapters two, three, and four, speaks to the need to continue to open dialogues about this practice in public spaces, academic-activist collaborative projects, new spaces of conversation between, as Marx famously classified them, those who seek to interpret the world and those who seek to change it.

Audioethnography

Audioethnography, by contrast, is a qualitative methodology I designed to document not just my own social movement activist research but to help my students document their research in authentic, personal ways that might create greater social inquiry, deepen compassion, and inspire social change. Audioethnography is rooted in the best practices of oral history, which guide the methods for recording and preserving oral narratives.[11] Significantly, as a qualitative methodology, audioethnography is committed to the integrity of oral history conventions; it adheres to the principles and practices of oral history. As

of 1 May 2016, the Oral History Association website stated this as a part of its general principles and practices:

> Oral historians respect the narrators as well as the integrity of the research. Interviewers are obliged to ask historically significant questions, reflecting careful preparation for the interview and understanding of the issues to be addressed. Interviewers must also respect the narrators' equal authority in the interviews and honor their right to respond to questions in their own style and language. In the use of interviews, oral historians strive for intellectual honesty and the best application of the skills of their discipline, while avoiding stereotypes, misrepresentations, or manipulations of the narrators' words.
>
> Because of the importance of context and identity in shaping the content of an oral history narrative, it is the practice in oral history for narrators to be identified by name. There may be some exceptional circumstances when anonymity is appropriate, and this should be negotiated in advance with the narrator as part of the informed consent process.[12]

Audioethnography allows audioethnographers, their narrators, and their audiences to listen across difference and place listeners inside other people's

[12] Oral History Association, "Principles and Best Practices," October 2009, last modified 2016, https://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices-revised-2009/.

words. Audioethnographies capture various cultural practices and the dominant values, beliefs, and social norms that these practices can produce.

Aligning strongly with oral history principles and practices, audioethnography is an amalgam of oral history and multiple qualitative inquiry methods: *auto*ethnography, developed by sociologists Carolyn Ellis, Arthur Bochner, and Tony Adams, which "is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience";[13] portraiture, developed by Harvard sociologist Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, which blends art and science to capture "the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience and organizational life";[14] and audio documentary, which documentary filmmaker John Grierson called in 1926, "the creative treatment of actuality."[15]

In addition to oral history, Lawrence-Lightfoot's portraiture methodology might be one of the most influential elements that ground audioethnography in a sound and necessary educational practice for students from kindergarten to graduate school. In *The Art and Science of Portraiture*, Lawrence-Lightfoot argues assiduously that "relationship building," which my research shows is at the center of a love pedagogy, is also "at the center of portraiture."[16] She

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[13] Carolyn Ellis, et al, "Autoethnography: An Overview," *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung,* 36, no. 4 (2011): 273..
[14] "Portraiture," Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, accessed 2 August 2017, http://www.saralawrencelightfoot.com/portraiture1.html.
[15] John Grierson, "The Documentary Producer," *Cinema Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (1933), 8.
[16] Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot and Jessica Hoffmann Davis, *The Art and Science of Portraiture* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 158.

describes the way in which portraiture generates relationship and how relationship is necessary for a real portraiture's possibility: "It is a complex, subtle, dynamic process of navigating the boundaries between self and other, distance and intimacy, acceptance and skepticism, receptivity and challenge," and, so important in the audioethnographic process that I teach students is that with which Lawrence-Lightfoot ends her summary on relationship and navigating boundaries in the portraiture approach: "silence and talk."[17]

For Lawrence-Lightfoot, as it is for young and new audioethnographers, it is in "developing relationships, the portraitist searches for what is good, for what works, for what is of value—looking for strength, resilience, and creativity in the people, cultures, and institutions she is documenting." To look for what is good and of value in one's narrator (Lawrence-Lightfoot refers to narrator's as *actors*) is to, indeed, fall in love with the humanity of your narrator. In the act of audioethnography, one must, in a sense, genuinely dig deep to love one's narrator no matter who they might be or what they represent.

Conservative Americans today tend to believe in a segregation of the self from the classroom. They are mistaken; yet it is just this sort of thinking that both undergirds our individualist economy using the school as its factory for such a citizenry. They overlook just what my research shows: that the best possibilities for humanity involve a bringing together, in awkward, surprising ways, ourselves

[17] Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, *The Art and Science of Portraiture*, 158.

with those whom we expect (and may even at moments in the interview) to loathe or feel prejudice.

An example: Charlotte,[18] a young, working-class white student at University at Albany, State University at New York (UAlbany), chose to interview a correctional officer who was also her friend, Larry Hotmer. The assignment was to produce, in this first interview with a narrator, a life history by asking one simple question, "Can you tell me about where you come from?" Notice the question is not a directive, but instead asks and respects permission while simultaneously providing an open invitation for the narrator to begin wherever they choose — for the narrator, indeed, to direct.

Charlotte's objective was to find a way to prove not the humanity of her friend, the correctional officer, but instead to make explicit a claim frequently invoked by political conservatives. She said she wanted to prove that "Blue Lives Matter," and that her friend was a victim of the black and brown men whose imprisonment he controlled. On the day Charlotte was to play her interview for the class, what happened was unexpected.

On 9 November 2016, Charlotte opens the recording by telling Larry her purpose: "I'm trying to humanize corrections. . . it's usually from the perspective of the offenders."[19] He replies, "Oh absolutely. We try to humanize the people who try to rape babies, stab people, throw acid in their face. I mean, how do you

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[18] Pseudonym.
[19] Larry Hotmer, Interview by Charlotte, *Young People's Archive*, The Ed Factory, 9 November 2016, audio.

fuckin' humanize that. You can't. I literally spent 16 years listening to the garbage of the world tell me how innocent they are. Not everybody is wrong, no. Absolutely not. . . What the fuck is the matter with you people? You rape children and you think it's okay. You demoralize women and beat the shit out of them and no, no, no . . . I don't even know how many retards we have. How do you defend this? They're idiots. No, not everybody is defendable. You can't save them. They don't want to be saved. Half of them just want to fuckin' use their drugs and go out and we come back and we save 'em, build 'em back up to a decent weight and then they go right back out and do it again."

We are only at minute 3:17 when Larry says, "I dunno. Oh God. I don't even want to deal with this. This frustrates me. I can't stand this. It's like I'm bringing out my everyday work ethic." What Larry means is he brings home the pain of what he witnesses, participates in, and experiences at work. But notice he says he is bringing it *out*. My students, who are listening to this audioethnography, have been trained how to apply what I call radical listening—to listen beneath the narrator's words and to leave disdain, disrespect, and loathing behind. To listen radically is to listen for and to look for what is good as Lawrence-Lightfoot terms it. As the interview continues, I can see 17-, 18-, and 19-year-old students leaning in to hear Larry's every word. I can see them looking for his humanity because audioethnography with the practice of love pedagogy teaches young people that it is within everyone. Larry continues:

I mean there are guys who go there [prison] every day, bust their balls, get

> punched in the face, shit on, pissed on, and everything thrown at them and then have to go home and face their wives and families with a smile on their face and try not to become the same people that we fucking cannot stand. . . . These are the fucking assholes you deal with every day, and all they want to do is take out hurt, pain, and everything on everybody around them and there's no reason to defend them because no matter what you do, they will take you down with them. Jesus Christ! You can fucking put your arm out for them and they'd lop it off and then smash you in the face with it. It's just how they are. The good people, they're the ones who have to suffer through this stuff. I mean, you got 16 hours worth of shit with people yelling at you telling you you're a piece of shit, you're an asshole, you're a scumbag. Like why? Because I have a family to take care of? Because I'm actually home to take care of my family? Is that what you people are trying to tell me? Fuck you. Ya buncha assholes.

At minute 4:38, Charlotte asks, "How do you leave that stuff at work and not go home to your family and not bring home all of this anger that you have?" A second to two passes and Larry responds:

> You close the door. You have to. You close the door and you sit in your truck for like five, 10 minutes and you just decompress. You listen to music. Fuck. You smoke a joint. You do whatever you have to do to leave it there. You can't bring it home. You bring it home, it just messes with your family. So, you find, you take an extra-long drive on the way home . . . stop

> by the bar. Have a beer. Whatever you gotta do, but don't bring that shit home *eh*-verrr. That shit'll ruin you. It took me a while not to bring it home. [Wife's name] hated that shit. I know she fuckin' chokes on that shit.

Charlotte's interview with Larry is only five minutes and twenty-two seconds. Yet in this brief span of time, Charlotte was able to not only transform the students in the class but herself. The students, a mixture of black and brown immigrant children and poor, white children of dairy farmers and correctional officers took a journey. They went from positions of historically embedded racism to a collective empathy, one in which neither blue nor black lives matter more than the other. Instead, the audioethnographic process helped to produce in them a collective recognition of a common humanity that they oddly, together, had begun to share with Charlotte's narrator. We engaged in process-based writing to explicate what we had heard beneath Larry's words. When the students read aloud statements like, "I could hear his sadness" and "at first I thought I hated him but now I can only wish for him what we get: it's not him or them, it's society; it's economics," Charlotte softened and said, "Not just blue lives matter. All lives matter. Thank you."

This is just one of over 600 audioethnographies in the Young People's Archive (YPA), which I founded in 2015 with the help of undergraduate students at UAlbany. The methods YPA uses challenge young audioethnographers and their audience. We ask participants to commit to the following philosophy of

practice: “We dare to ask questions. We are brave enough to listen. We place ourselves inside other people’s words. We listen across difference. We are connected.”[20] YPA runs a Service-Learning Collective run by what the students named “*SLiCk”* interns. The Collective “fosters mindfulness and compassion, develops social bonds, and enables young people to be creative intellectual workers dedicated to self, other, and world.” SLiCk interns are primarily undergraduates, but they can be of any age under 25. Interns train to make 1-Minute Audio Diaries, 1MADS, as we call them, and they learn to teach other young people how to make these one-minute audioethnographies. 1MADS are explained on the YPA as

> . . . creative audio essays illustrating the social, political, and economic dilemmas young people and the people closest to them experience. After conducting oral histories and focused interviews with multiple narrators, YPA youth learn to listen beneath the words people say in order to expose larger themes around gender and masculinity, race and social class, religion, sexuality, and disAbility. Through the 1-Minute Audio Diary, young people provide us a way to listen across difference to hear how we’re all trying to make sense of who we are, our place in American society, and the values, norms, and beliefs that define American culture.[21]

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[20] See “YPA,” the homepage of the Young People’s Archive, at The Ed Factory, last modified summer 2018, https://theedfactory.org/ypa.
[21] Young people’s Archive, “1-Minute Audio Diaries,” The Ed Factory, https://theedfactory.org/ypa1-minuteaudios/.

In the spring of 2018, four student interns from YPA's SLiCk (Service Learning Internship Collective) and my daughter, now YPA's archive manager, raised $10,000 so that YPA could travel to St. Paul, Minnesota to teach 50 students at South High School – in three, full school days – to become audioethnographers and to, then, share their audioethnographies with a live audience at East Side Freedom Library (ESFL) in East St. Paul. The interns who traveled to Minnesota were undergraduates from UAlbany. One intern was from Haiti; one was from St. Kitts; one was from Long Island in New York; another was from Albany by way of Pakistan, and my daughter, Betye, was from upstate New York and raised, until she was almost seven years old, in Hawassa, Ethiopia in the Great Rift Valley almost 200 miles south of the capital, Addis Ababa. All, except, Betye who was still in high school at the time, were undergraduates at University at Albany. After co-designing with me the workshop and what YPA calls a public Hearing Collective, the interns facilitated everything.

While at ESFL, the interns sat in a Highlander Folk School Rocking Chair Circle near the library's entry and beside the library's Husky dog. Nervous to present a rationale for why the library should hold, should archive YPA, the five SLiCk interns sat with the library's co-founder, Peter Rachleff, former Professor of History at Macalester College, and Steve Boland, ESFL's board chair. Together, without me saying a word, these young people, all under the age of 23, convinced ESFL to add YPA to its holdings. This is an example of why a love pedagogy demands that we listen and let kids speak and speak in their own

words, with their own velocity, with all the fortitude it takes to be young, immigrant, and working-class.

Importantly, this dissertation includes historical, audioethnographic analyses based on interviews and discussions used with written consent. Despite this, I have maintained the anonymity of students who I feel—even after they voluntarily signed a consent form—might not want their experiences historicized. When I work within audioethnography, which undergirds the teaching methodology of all my classrooms and YPA, I always pay close attention to what is beneath the words and the dispositions of my students and narrators. As you will see in chapter three, I am acutely attentive to the human experience of my students and narrators. I respect them deeply, so sometimes I make choices that I believe will honor them.

Consent for YPA audioethnographies and for the interviews included in this dissertation are and were obtained by verbally explaining the process and its intent. The intent is to offer narrators an opportunity to be heard and to reflect and to do the same for and with the public. Once explained, narrators were asked to sign a release noting that their interview, writing, or photograph might be used in publications and in my studies or in studies conducted by The Ed Factory, an educational consultancy I founded and of which YPA is a project.

In some instances, the narrators in this dissertation provide what I would call *emphatic* consent. Indeed, one can hear emphatic consent in the beginning of Larry Hotmer's interview conducted by Charlotte. In other instances, where the

reader does not see the designation “pseudonym,” narrators signed a release provided by the audioethnographer. What this means is that interviews and written reflections included in this dissertation are shared by their makers voluntarily. Narrators provided written consent, and all were over the age of 18. If an audioethnographer interviews a person who is under the age of 18, they must obtain consent from a parent or legal guardian. These sorts of interviews are few in YPA, and none are included here.

Although the University of Minnesota policy is that oral history does not necessitate IRB review, I obtained IRB approval from the University because, upon beginning the dissertation process, I did not know that my primary methodology would rely on the practices and principles of oral history or that I would, through a broadened use of ethnography, design a methodology of my own that would emerge out of oral history, autoethnography, documentary, and portraiture practices. In 2015, the National Coalition for History wrote the Department of Health and Human Services to argue for the exclusion of oral history from what was known as the “Common Rule” (rule 45 CFR 46 of the Department of Health and Human Services). The Common Rule is the 1981 regulation that dictates biomedical and behavioral human subject research.[22] In

[22] The rationale behind the establishment of IRBs is important given the infamous Tuskegee syphilis clinical study, conducted on black men beginning in 1932 (yet not exposed until 40 years later); the 1962 thalidomide study conducted on working poor women, which produced birth defects in their children; the Milgram psychological obedience study carried out in 1963 on college students at Yale University, and other abhorrent studies.

January 2017, the federal government granted the exclusion of oral history from the Common Rule, i.e., the IRB.

> The federal government issued its final rule governing Institutional Review Boards, which "explicitly removes" oral history and journalism from the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects. It was originally promulgated as the "Common Rule" in 1991. The historical community, collaborating through the National Coalition for History, has long argued that scholarly history projects should not be subject to standard IRB procedures since they are designed for the research practices of the sciences. The new IRB rule goes into effect January 19, 2018.[23]

It is the policy of Columbia University's Oral History Research Office CU OHRO, created in 1948 by historian Allan Nevins that "oral history activities conducted by CU [Columbia University] faculty and students are not required to be submitted for CU IRB review unless such activities constitute 'human subjects research' as defined by 45 CFR 46,"[24] but now 45 CFR 46 (i.e., the Common Rule or the IRB) no longer applies to oral history studies.[25]

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[23] Lee White, "Oral History Research Excluded From IRB Oversight," *Perspectives on History: The Newsmagazine of the American Historical Association*, American Historical Association, updated 2018, https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/january-2017/oral-history-research-excluded-from-irb-oversight.

[24] Columbia University, "Columbia University Institutional Review Board Policy: IRB Review of Oral History Projects" (27 December 2007), 2;3.

[25] I was trained to interview and trained in the practices and principles of oral history by Suzanne Snider, founder of the Oral History Summer School. Snider was one of the lead

Chapter Overviews

In chapter one, “Renaissance 2010 and the Coalition of Labor, Land, and Money: 2000-2005,” I examine how federal government policies and their stewards leverage what Karl Polyani called “fictitious commodities”—land, capital, and labor—to manipulate another “great transformation” in the contemporary education economy. Using the city of Chicago, I analyze how ”Renaissance 2010,” a major education policy introduced by Arne Duncan, then CEO of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), in collaboration with Fortune 500 companies and real estate developers, sought to transform the city’s public schools into training spaces for the low-wage service sector jobs that would be needed as neoliberalism and gentrification reshaped the city.

In chapter two, “In All Cities Geography Is Power,” I apply social movement activist research to document and analyze my professional and personal struggle against Chicago Public Schools. Using the historical landscape detailed in chapter one, I show how the “fictitious commodities” of land, capital, and labor leveraged power by using as a case study my own attempt to open City as Classroom School, a charter school in Chicago’s Pilsen neighborhood. Although ethnographers have often been advised in the past not to write in the second person voice, I attempt to use the second person point of view in this chapter to speak to future social movement activist researchers and progressive

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CU OHRO interviewers who interviewed New Yorkers on the World Trade Center attack and visiting lecturer at Columbia University’s Oral History Master of Arts Program. She is a member of the faculty of The New School teaching oral history and interviewing practice at The New School.

educators in a tone and point of view employed by a range of books that influenced the writing of this chapter including Jamaica Kincaid's *In a Small Place* and William Ayers *To Teach: The Journey of a Teacher.*[26]

In chapter three, "Love Pedagogy: Teaching to Disrupt," I merge social movement activist research and audioethnography to study and analyze my concept of love pedagogy. A love pedagogy is a school-based solution to the "crisis of connection" aligned with what developmental psychologist, Niobe Way, calls the science of human connection.[27] *Love Pedagogy* demonstrates how relationship is at the center of any effective and humane educational practice and that a love pedagogy is a significant educational methodology that radically resists the criminalization of poor and working-class young people within and outside of schools. The foundation of this pedagogy is connection, engagement, and the cultivation of genuine relationships between teachers and students, as well as encouraging self-reflection by both. Using my university-based classroom and the Teacher's Institute for K–12 Minneapolis Public Schools as examples, I show that relationship is at the center of any effective and humane educational practice.

As Roderick Ferguson acknowledges, "If neoliberalism suppresses knowledge of how social forces and social struggles connect to one another, then

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[26] Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988) and William Ayers, *To Teach: The Journey of a Teacher* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001).
[27] See Niobe Way*, et al.*, *The Crisis of Connection* (New York: New York University Press, 2018) as well as her unpublished Talk for the Minneapolis Teachers Institute, 27 October 2012, available by permission of Way from The Ed Factory.

challenging neoliberalism requires the continued development of political practices and frameworks that can illuminate the connections."[28] A love pedagogy is one of the frameworks and practices of which Ferguson speaks. The pedagogy necessitates teaching young people, as Ferguson once instructed during a 2007 American Studies class lecture, to "critique the place you're in." The practice requires rhetorical analysis or analyzing the symbolic artifacts of discourse, which I teach students to do using the qualitative methodology of audioethnography.

In chapter four, "Love Pedagogy: Disrupting the Contemporary Education Economy," I expand upon the definition of love pedagogy in chapter three by applying social movement activist research and audioethnography through a case study on the educational practices of Kite's Nest, a community-based organization and a "center for liberatory education in Hudson, New York."[29] In this chapter, I share the story of several boys who, unbeknownst to Kite's Nest leaders, occupy an abandoned old mill that was donated to the organization.

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[28] Roderick A. Ferguson, *We Demand: The University and Student Protests* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 76-77.

[29] "Our Work and Purpose," Kite's Nest, 2018, accessed 20 October 2018, https://www.kitesnest.org/our-work-and-purpose. Kite's Nest is a center for liberatory education in Hudson, NY. We create safe and supportive learning environments that nurture the confidence, skills, joy, and collective leadership of young people while building justice and equity in our communities. We do this by collaborating with diverse youth, families, and organizations to build local movements for social justice, food justice, and community wellness; building opportunities for learning-in-action, in which young people are creating meaningful change in their communities. We provide much-needed spaces of hope, healing, and safety for youth to engage in relevant and joyful learning. In and out of the classroom, we support young people to find their own meaningful paths forward, and to contribute to radically positive personal, social and structural transformation. Founded in 2013, Kite's Nest has worked closely with students and families to offer topical and innovative programming as well as initiated community-centered projects.

Their occupation had a purpose: to practice their own model of liberatory education. Again, as in chapter two, inspired by the objectives of social narrations of education writers like Jonathan Kozol and William Ayers, I attempt to reconfigure the standard interpretation of the boys' engagement with critical pedagogy and what Paulo Freire calls critical consciousness or *conscientization*.

Finally, in my conclusion, I felt compelled to summarize how the coronavirus has opened a space to implement the kind of education changes that Renaissance 2010 and No Child Left Behind have cleared away. I end by stating how a love pedagogy might be used as a practice of resistance against these trends or even as a practice of educating children in an entirely new and transformative way.

Chapter 1

Renaissance 2010 and the Coalition of Labor, Land, and Money: 2000-2005

In FY1999, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) began transforming the face of Chicago's public housing by implementing its ten-year Plan for Transformation (Plan), a blueprint that aims to dramatically improve living conditions for public housing residents. Approved by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in February 2000, the Plan's vision is to redevelop or rehabilitate 25,000 units of public housing, located in thriving communities that anyone would be proud to call home.[30]

—*Chicago Housing Authority, Message from the Chief Executive Officer*

The Plan for Transformation

The opening dialogue in season 3 of David Simon's *The Wire* presents a dialectical duel inside a Baltimore ghetto. One character, the young, black Bodie argues capital's premise, to create a new life in the city on the rubble of public housing, a scheme unconcerned with the needs of people. Another character, Bodie's friend and drug-dealing partner Poot, argues public housing is all about people. The third character in *The Wire* is the state, played by a mayor who claims "some of the [city's] most entrenched problems" will be rectified by demolishing Poot's home, the fictitious Franklin Terrace Towers.

The episode "Time After Time" puts three characters in conversation. The editor crosscuts between the Towers' demolition ceremony and the boys' verbal

[30] Chicago Housing Authority, "Message From the Chief Executive Officer," *FY2005 Annual Plan: Plan for Transformation Year 6*, (2004).

battle, their critical analysis about the Towers, its purpose as a home for memories and social experiences, and as a political tool in the gentrification of Baltimore. Poot laments the impending demolition whereas Bodie, a realist, argues, “They shoulda blown those muthfuckahs up a long time ago.” Bodie doesn’t argue eradication of *home* but the destruction of social and economic systems that produce places like the Towers. And he’s right. Bodie insists, the projects “ain’t nuthin but steel and concrete, steel and fuckin concrete.” Poot mourns the loss of “people, memories and shit”; he argues for place as a site of human connection. Bodie insists “that ain’t the same” because “look, they gon tear this building down, they gon build some new shit, but people? [sucking his teeth] They don’t give a fuck about people.”

Crosscut to the Mayor: “You are very soon going to see low- and moderately-priced houses built in their place.”

A round of applause follows as the camera zooms in on a young black mother yelling “Yeah!” while sitting in a lawn chair with an infant on her lap.

“Time After Time” aired in 2004. The episode made tangible the exchange of the social safety net for corporatist reform. Season 3 of *The Wire* exposed an emerging new life for the city, one in motion throughout several cities in the nation. As Poot sentimentally recalls maudlin memories of “pussy” in the Towers, Mayor Clarence V. Royce stands before a demolition plunger and a cheering crowd of black residents affirming, “Reform is not just a watchword . . . No, it’s a

philosophy."[31] Before Mayor Royce pushes down on the demolition plunger, he asks rhetorically, "Are you ready for a new Baltimore?" to which there can only be one response because by 2004 what black or brown person wouldn't want a new kind of city? As Bodie says, an appropriate response, *they shoulda blown those muthfuckahs up a long time ago.*

The demolition story of the Towers was not simply a fictional story in an acclaimed HBO series. In the fiscal year 1999, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) began transforming the face of Chicago's public housing in a similar way by implementing its ten-year Plan for Transformation (Plan). The Plan was a blueprint aimed to dramatically improve living conditions for public housing residents. Approved by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in February 2000, the Plan's vision was to redevelop or rehabilitate 25,000 units of public housing, located in "thriving communities" that, the CHA peddled but only to young white professionals as, "anyone would be proud to call home."[32] The *anyone* for whom the CHA built homes in Chicago were a small, distinct, targeted social milieu: younger whites, particularly those working in global finance who either moved to Chicago from other cities like New York or Seattle and countries like China and India or directly from Chicago's suburbs. Thriving neighborhoods? How dare they make this claim. Thriving in

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[31] *The Wire*, episode 1, "Time After Time," directed by Ed Bianchi, written by David Simon, featuring Dominic West, John Doman, and Idris Elba, aired 19 September 2004, on HBO.
[32] See "Message From the Chief Executive Officer," Chicago Housing Authority, "FY2005 Annual Plan: Plan for Transformation Year 6."

love and as much protection as aunties and uncles could provide, but not thriving in sustainability from the city.

As a part of the Plan, black and brown people were moved out of the city of Chicago to what education scholar-activist Pauline Lipman calls the "metro regions."[33] Chicago successfully accomplished, a reverse white flight. In Lipman's article, "Contesting the City," for the 14 April 2011 issue of *Discourse*, she provides a sober analysis that reveals by 2008, only seven years after NCLB was enacted, the coalition between realty, Chicago Public Schools, and global Fortune 500 companies was solidified in Chicago, and the rate of poverty rose "faster in suburbs than cities." Lipman emphasizes the "displacement of low-income people from the city to inner suburbs, in addition to other contested global processes that are reconstituting metro regions, i.e., growth of metro regions, restructuring and racialization of labor markets, immigration of low wage-earning immigrants directly to suburbs, and new patterns of racial containment and contestation."[34]

The Plan required making space for an incoming social class of professionals who required a certain service economy that both Lipman and Marxist geographer Neil Smith contend would cater to this class's professional and recreational needs as well as their need for the sense of social propriety and safety—and which would make explicit their need for socio-cultural normativity:

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[33] Pauline Lipman, "Contesting the City: Neoliberal Urbanism and the Cultural Politics of Education Reform in Chicago," *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 32, no. 2 (2011): 221.
[34] Lipman, "Contesting the City" 221.

black and brown children, disciplined in charter schools, clothed in school uniforms; recreational, entertainment complexes like gyms, live theatres and sports bars; Wi-Fi-enabled cafés; specialty launderers, au pair, dog-walking, and other services, as well as the increase of surveillance on these new streets to solidify the sense that black and brown Chicago had been eradicated and the door was open to a monitored, secured new homeland.[35]

Notions of social reform, whether local, national, or global, when produced by a coalition of power like land, money, and labor, target a process of cultural change. Reform is both a theory (a system of ideas) and a disposition (an arrangement of ideas and relations) taken by political and economic actors. In Chicago, the conjecture of reform acts as a guiding principle to displace, reconfigure, re-educate, disposes, and possess. Within the phase of neoliberalism, reform is a philosophy of cultural practices in which pedagogies of neoliberalism embed in social and economic policies that establish protocols inside cultural institutions like housing, schooling, and financing. All together, these allow for great social transformations that soon seem and then become the standard or pattern. They become what is typical and expected. Once this happens, children, the most vulnerable besides the elderly in our communities, stop asking questions, especially if trained that to inquire is a wrong answer.

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[35] See Stephen Kinzer, "Chicago Moving to 'Smart' Surveillance Cameras." *The New York Times*, 21 September 2004, https://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/21/us/chicago-moving-to-smart-surveillance-cameras.html.

Between 2000 and 2005, Global Fortune 500 companies in partnership with the City of Chicago, transformed mental conceptions of housing and education for the public. In the realm of the private, the state ensured that private education remained free of state intrusion and interference, while public schools suffered major incursions with protracted cultural effects. Public housing—and its residents—a necessary partner in neoliberal reforms, were expunged to make room for a housing market that catered to the neoliberal elite.

Pedagogies of neoliberalism are like "best practices" for the *business* of education. Best practices are those methods in classroom instruction or educational administration and supervision proven to produce the best desired results in teaching, learning, and educational administration and supervision. Pedagogies of neoliberalism are educational. They instruct and from them we learn who we are supposed to be. Those best practices are used to limit or even eliminate potential barriers to capital accumulation and circulation. The 2008-2009 crisis in property markets, as David Harvey describes them in *The Enigma of Capital*, was not atypical of a financial crisis.[36] He writes, "There is nothing unusual about its rootedness in urban development and property markets . . . There is some inherent connectivity at work."[37]

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[36] Harvey defines a *crisis* in capitalism as "a condition in which surplus production and reinvestment are blocked." Harvey goes on to argue, "Crises are, in short, as necessary to the evolution of capitalism as money, labour power and capital itself." See David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital and the Crisis of Capitalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 117.
[37] Harvey, Enigma of Capital, 10.

Again, as in teaching, there is a process of scaffolding to build the social relations, the kind of culture that will create the skills to produce an intended result for an intended purpose. What I call the contemporary education economy employs a system of methods, discursive practices, management, regulation, and surveillance in the built environment and education. The practice, deployed in earnest in 2001 once the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) education policy was enacted, promoted then cemented political and economic ideologies that produced a culture of compliant citizens. Development is differentiated by race and social class and its differentiation is required by capital to provide the social and "physical infrastructures so necessary for accumulation to occur on the ground," locally and globally.[38]

Using U.S. Census estimates from 2004, an article in *The Baltimore Sun* reported one in four people in the City of Baltimore lived in poverty.[39] The report goes on to note that the city, holding the third highest black population in the nation, had the sixth highest poverty rate. Across the U.S., at the end of President Clinton's term and throughout President George W. Bush's term, housing projects in cities large and small were razed with the concomitant promise of mixed and affordable housing replacements. This is the reason *The Wire's* mayor unabashedly offers a call to a new urbanity, one with an incontrovertible response. By the early 2000s, in cities throughout the U.S., who

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[38] Harvey, Enigma of Capital, 192.
[39] Kelly Brewington, "Baltimore Among Poorest Areas of Comparable Size, Census Shows." *The Baltimore Sun*, 31 August 2005, accessed 23 November 2005, https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-2005-08-31-0508310255-story.html.

did not want a change in the conditions of public housing, schools, and employment? While the national unemployment rate was a little over 5% in 2004, the jobless rate for black and brown people combined was 17% whereas for white people it was under 5%.

Chicago, with a population just over 2.7 million people, is smaller than New York City yet larger than Baltimore and the dwindling population of Detroit. It makes up a little over 20 percent of the total population of Illinois. Comprised of 77 community areas, Chicago, as David Stovall argues, is a "hyper-segregated city."[40] Indeed, the city is well known for its racially segregated neighborhoods on its North, South, and West sides. Brown people live on the Southwest Side, and black people are spread between the West and South Sides. Many who make up the black bourgeoisie live in Hyde Park near University of Chicago, which maintains its own security force. The oldest white wealth lives in the Gold Coast neighborhood near Lake Michigan. The far North Side of the city is home to a small population of American Indians, working class Irish, some Latin@s, and few African Americans, and this area gets more white as one moves farther north toward the suburbs of Evanston (home of Northwestern University), Winnetka, home of New Trier High School that is one of the most well-resourced public schools in the U.S., and home to a district with one of the first public school mass shootings, which occurred at Hubbard Woods School in 1988.

[40] David Stovall, Personal Conversation with author, 7 June 2016.

In 2004, white young professionals, especially those who worked in finance, required close access to Chicago's Wall Street, so condominiums and townhouses began sprouting up in the West and South Loops as well as on the North side, and later they emerged atop the cleared rubble of the city's public housing. Chicago's cultural geography is what the late economist Karl Polanyi might label the commodified *elements of industry*, a coalition of "labor, land, and money."[41] It is because of the convergence of hyper-segregation, and the coalition of the elements of industry that make Chicago an ideal case study for understanding the contemporary education economy between 2004 and 2010. For many national businesses and many city governments across the country, Chicago, served as its model for accumulation.

David Heinzmann and Rex Huppke of the *Chicago Tribune* reported in "City Murder Toll Lowest in Decades" on 19 December 2004 that Chicago "led the nation in murders in 2001 and 2003 and ranked second in 2002," but in a 2013 Working Paper for Yale University's Institution for Social and Policy Studies, public health scholar Andrew Papachristos reports that after reaching a high in 1992, the homicide (and overall crime) rate in Chicago declined between 2004 and 2013 (2013 being when the paper was published).[42] Journalist Daniel Hertz draws attention to the fact that while data show that violence and homicide rates decreased, they remained persistent in poor, African-American neighborhoods.

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[41] Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 78.
[42] Andrew V. Papachristos, "48 Years of Crime in Chicago: A Descriptive Analysis of Serious Crime Trends from 1965 to 2013" (working paper, Yale Institution for Social and Policy Studies, 2013).

Notably, the community areas whose safety increased between 1990 and 2013 were those areas that had gentrified the most.[43] A comment in response to Hertz's blog post, "We've Talked About Homicide In Chicago At Least One Million Times But I Don't Think This Has Come Up," is noteworthy. The comment not only provides a comparative historical narrative for the business of gentrification, but it also puts in relief the interlocking relationship of crime and housing as well as the effect public removal. User "Cabrini Grass is Greener" writes:

> I have lived in the almost laughably safe remains of The Cabrini Green footprint (Clybourn/Halsted) for over 10 yrs, and have seen the neighborhood stay gentrified (legitimately) with mixed housing and great results, but the "worst of the worst" of the Cabrini denizens ended up on a Trail of Tears to the West and South sides. Now they are fighting and battling over street corners and streets for their respective drug lords in these new territories in Austin and Englewood. The decrease in my near north crime and increase in "theirs" is unmistakably a result of the destruction and removal of those housing projects. I'm not sure why there are statistical arguments circling around this elephant in the room.[44]

Promulgated as an educational program, the initiative was really an attempt at a social revolution that transformed the culture and political economy of Chicago.

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[43] Daniel Kay Hertz, "We've Talked About Homicide in Chicago At Least One Million Times But I Don't Think This Has Come Up," 5 August 2013, https://danielkayhertz.com/2013/08/05/weve-talked-about-homicide-in-chicago-at-least-one-million-times-but-i-dont-think-this-has-come-up/.
[44] Hertz, 2013.

The initiative would come to serve as a model to cities nationally in the United States.

This chapter uses Chicago as an urban exemplar of a forty-year, global economic shift toward public-private partnerships. Advanced by racialized youth-development discourses in Chicago, private corporations, public education, and public housing allied to transform "the problems of urban America." A restoration narrative that tells a story in which American cities will return to places of "safety" and "progress" is compelling, especially if one of a city's goals is to remake public education for poor and working-poor youth. We might say that it serves as a meta-narrative for American progress inherent in the development discourses attached to working-class black, brown, and white young people.

Adam Goldstein, whose research at Emory University focuses on affordable housing, calls efforts like this not redevelopment but "replacement" projects. The list of such projects was short in 2004, but today the list of cities engaging the practice of replacing public housing with un-affordable housing and public schools with charters is long. For example, beginning in the early 1990s, the poor of the East Lake Meadows community outside of Atlanta, Georgia were replaced through "a redevelopment process that has presently made East Lake the home of the state's highest ranked charter school, a 50/50 market-rate and publicly assisted housing community."[45] On August 4, 2016, Katie Kull reported in

[45] Adam Goldstein, "A Purposely Built Community: Public Housing Redevelopment and Resident Replacement at East Lake Meadows," *Atlanta Studies*, 14 March 2017, accessed 2 October 2017. https://www.atlantastudies.org/a-purposely-built-community-public-housing-redevelopment-and-resident-replacement-at-east-lake-meadows/.

Chalkbeat that as "Memphis' last public housing project closes, neighborhood schools and families scramble." Kull goes on to describe the ways in which the Foote Homes in Memphis Tennessee stand in "stark contrast" to Memphis' redevelopment. The truth is that Foote Hills stood in the way of the contemporary machine of economic progress:

> In the shadow of historic Booker T. Washington High School, Foote Homes has been home to tens of thousands of students to attend downtown Memphis schools since the 1940s. But that's about to change . . . The razing of Foote Homes is part of the city's decade-long effort to redevelop its South Main Historic District, which lies about a mile away in downtown Memphis. South Main includes a mosaic of shops, restaurants and art galleries . . . Foote Homes stands in stark contrast to the tourist-friendly district area.[46]

Chicago was never alone in its quest to coalesce land (real estate developers), labor (the new poor and working poor black and brown students to be produced by the new, privatized schools), and money (multinational business). Indeed, in February of 2010, Philadelphia Public Schools called Chicago a "national laboratory for school overhauls."[47] As of the fiscal year 2011-

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[46] Katie Kull, "As Memphis' Last Public Housing Project Closes, Neighborhood Schools and Families Scramble," *Chalkbeat*, 4 August 2016, accessed 10 September 2017, https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/tn/2016/08/04/as-memphis-last-public-housing-project-closes-neighborhood-schools-and-families-scramble/.

[47] Meghan McHugh, "Chicago: A National Laboratory for School Overhauls." *Philadelphia Public School: The Notebook*, 2 February 2010. https://thenotebook.org/articles/2010/02/02/chicago-a-national-laboratory-for-school-overhauls/

2012, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) district employed close to 41,000 adults. Made up of 675 schools and a little over 404,000 students, CPS is like a small city of its own whose residents are 87 percent "low-income" and 90 percent black and brown. The district's white student population has fallen by 60 percent since 1970.[48] In 2011-2012, only a little under nine percent of CPS students were white.[49] In the 2018-2019 school year, white students comprised approximately 10 percent of the total student population.[50] Once again, one can see how this coalition was determined to produce a service labor force of black and brown people.

Chicago's coalition of labor, land, and money was responsible for the design, management, and economic benefits produced by a public education policy, which the then head of CPS and former Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, named "Renaissance 2010" (or "Ren 2010"). Everybody who had a finger in public education, from the Smalls Schools Workshop[51] to the aldermen waging territorial school wars knew that Ren 2010 was like one of those high-speed trains coming through and there was nothing they could do to stop it. Ren 2010 produced tenacious global sequels among business, public schools, and

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[48] "History of Chicago Public Schools," *The Chicago Reporter*, accessed 2 February 2010, http://www.chicagoreporter.com/cps-history/.
[49] "Stats and Facts," Chicago Public Schools, accessed 1 March 2011, http://web.archive.org/web/20120302084629/http://www.cps.edu/About_CPS/At-a-glance/Pages/Stats_and_facts.aspx.
[50] "Stats and Facts," Chicago Public Schools, accessed 1 April 2018, https://cps.edu/About_CPS/At-a-glance/Pages/Stats_and_facts.aspx.
[51] It is important to note that the founders of Small Schools Workshop, William Ayers and Michael Klonsky, fought to expose and dismantle the march toward the privatization of public education. See "{William Ayers and Michael Klonsky, 2006, #27891}

real estate developers. Pauline Lipman argues that Chicago serves as a glocality where "the dialectics of the global situation [in economics and social relations] unfold in local contexts."[52] The coalition became a persuasive monolith that galvanized the local, Chicago's public education and housing systems, in service of the more global neoliberal project of private interests and corporate expedience.

Several leaders of the Fortune Global 500 led Ren 2010's charge by privately managing some of the city's schools. Arne Duncan, CPS' former chief executive officer, and Chicago's former mayor Richard M. Daley, deemed the city to be in the "business of education."[53] This business venture, named Renaissance 2010 in the PR announcements by the Mayor's office and CPS, was really the implementation of NCLB in disguise. On 23 June 2004, the Chicago Board of Education approved Duncan's proposal, "Preliminary Plan for the Improvement of Instruction for Disadvantaged Schools in the Chicago Public Schools as Required by Section 18-8.05(H) of the Illinois School Code" and

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[52] Pauline Lipman, "Educational Ethnography and the Politics of Globalization, War, and Resistance," *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (2005): 325.

[53] From Mayor Richard M. Daley, Renaissance 2010 Announcement, 24 June 2004. No longer available on-line at Chicago Public Schools. Similar discourses connecting business to education and quotations from the announcement can be found in *The Renaissance Schools Fund* (RSF*): Investing in Educational Excellence* brochure. As of the 2007-2008 school year, the RSF, created by the Commercial Club of Chicago's Civic/Education Committee as a private partner, provided "support and accountability for 38 of the 54 Renaissance 2010 schools." See SRI International and Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute, *Renaissance Schools Fund-Supported Schools: Early Outcomes, Challenges, and Opportunities*, (Chicago: Renaissance Schools Fund, 2007-2008), v.

authorized his "Proposal Submission and Implementation of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title I, Title II, Title IV, and Title V Programs for Fiscal 2005."[54]

The city attempted to obscure the socioeconomic and political objectives of Renaissance 2010 by using a discourse of progress, reform, transformation, revitalization, rescue, and change. Like David Harvey argued in *Social Justice* and the City, thirty years before Chicago's venture, that the city's stock of multinational corporations played "location games," self-reflexively in-sourcing redevelopment by privatizing the school system in the likeness of small service economy training grounds and transforming the neighborhoods surrounding the schools.[55]

Chicago almost perfected a system of racial-class segregation in an urban context by sponsoring a concerted, planned partnership between public education and housing and neoliberal ideology. This partnership produced a discourse of progress through urban redevelopment. Conceptions of labor, land, and money coalesced in the city to form an influential, collaborative coalition of power. The public policies Chicago designed beginning in 2000 provided unequivocal evidence of the determinant force and amoral resolve of this coalition to service the needs of transnational neoliberalism. The city's public

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[54] Chicago Board of Education, Actions: June 23, 2004, " Reports from the Chief Educational Officer, "Preliminary Plan for the Improvement of Instruction for Disadvantaged Students in the Chicago Public Schools, as Required by Section 18-8.05(H) of the Illinois School Code," 04-0623-ED12; "Authorize Proposal Submission and Implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title I, Title II, Title IV, and Title V Programs for Fiscal 2005," 04-0623-ED13, https://www.cpsboe.org/meetings/board-actions/46.

[55] David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973, 74.

school district, again, led by the nation's future Secretary of Education, was set to produce the coalition's labor force under Ren '10's education policy; it proclaimed it would close sixty "low perform[ing]" schools and replacing them with one hundred "new" ones, most to be "privately managed."[56] Given such compelling rhetoric, what parent and what "responsible" government wouldn't want "low performing" schools shuttered? By 2005, the Chicago Housing Authority was well into a ten-year plan of reterritorialization, which they aptly titled "The Plan for Transformation." The Plan promised the city would "transform" the cultural topography of Chicago's public real estate, or as it professed, it would *revitalize* (eradicate) 25,000 units of its public housing for $1.5 billion.[57] The transnational corporate elite of Chicago used global capital's discursive formations to in-source urban redevelopment heralded as reinvention, renewal, and reform.

A.T. Kearney, a transnational management consulting firm, provided pro bono consulting to CPS for the design and implementation of Renaissance 2010.[58] Kearney helped to provide a rational for the then new practice of partnering real estate redevelopment with public schools: "Both CHA [Chicago Housing Authority] and CPS leaders envision a vibrant mixed-income

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[56] Chicago Public Schools. "Overview of Renaissance 2010." Accessed 6 May 2006 <http:// www.ren2010.cps.k12.il.us/overren.shtml>.
[57] Chicago Housing Authority, "FY2009 Moving to Work Annual Plan," Plan for Transformation Year 10, 23 October 2008, 11.
[58] A.T. Kearney is a "global management consulting firm." Using "[a] team of knowledgeable people who produce extraordinary results . . . Our mission is clear and unequivocal: to help the world's leading corporations gain and sustain competitive advantage, and achieve profound, tangible results . . .", accessed 6 May 2006 http://www.atkearney.com/main.taf?p=1.

neighborhood in which schools are an anchor in the community, providing activities and services that benefit everyone."[59]

Part of a "neoliberal urbanism" project is to produce the need for high-income services—leisure and personal maintenance convenience services—for the coming and later subsistence of high-income gentrification. This is not only true in redeveloped Chicago neighborhoods but also gentrified neighborhoods throughout the U.S. Such neighborhoods now have special coffees only available on-the-go at Starbucks or a specialized café like Moto in upstate New York. Moto, in Hudson, caters to New York City's wealthy hipsters who have country homes or have made the big move to "the country," but the café also sells high end motorcycle gear ($400 wallets, $500 leather motorcycle pants, motor notebooks, etc.). The only other person of color I have ever seen in Moto (and I am in Hudson a lot) is writer Malcom Gladwell, pictured below eating a salmon burger.

[59] A.T. Kearney, *Executive Agenda: Ideas and Insights for Business Leaders* (2005), 4.

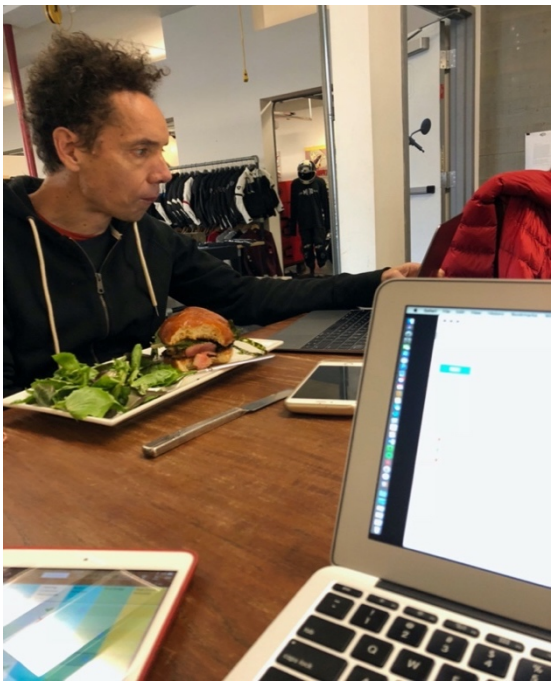

Figure 1 Malcom Gladwell, MOTO Coffee Machine café,
Hudson, New York, 3 June 2018.

Twenty years ago, Hudson has gone from being a boarded-up town in which many poor black Americans, Puerto Ricans, and whites lived in homes in need of being condemned. Then young whites began buying up Warren Street to sell antiques. People started coming from all over New York to get “great antiques.” Then the renovations of old homes into Airbnbs began, the selling of rehabbed homes starting at $750,000, the building of places like Moto, and all the while south of State Street stayed the same: poor, mainly black and busted up.

In small towns like Hudson and large global cities like Chicago we now see special combination dog-walking-house-cleaning agencies; restaurants specializing in ethnic mélanges where the elite and white can experience subaltern tastes without ever leaving the safety and reserve of their newly

rehabbed communities. It makes sense that part of the program, then, would be to ensure that some institution within the community produces a social class of people to provide these individualized services at a low wage for those with high-end needs. The options are to either to produce the labor or eradicate it by either reconfiguring the schools or allowing the schools to get so bad they implode.

Part of the Chicago corporate coalition's work was to reify the fictitious commodities of labor, land, and money. Chicago ideologically and materially tied each commodity to very real and necessary elements of subsistence in the modern lives of the city's residents.[60] A part of the logic of the project to redevelop Chicago was to objectify poor black and brown people, through where they lived—to ensure the city saw these places and their schools as property up for sale with their people to be disappeared to the suburbs. For black and brown people, the idea of a home was described as a luxury not a right, as something elusive, hard to grasp and hold on to. In contrast, the idea of a home was an entitlement for the white professionals moving into Chicago from the suburbs or from other cities and states. Why was housing an entitlement to white professionals but a privilege for people of color in the city? Because white professionals add value; white professionals are educated producers of value, independent, and self-reliant; they need no public assistance. Black and brown people were deemed unsuccessful aberrations of the market and the market, positioned as it was within a lie, this assumption was never considered wrong.

[60] Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 76.

This schema of deception served as a prop in the door of people's lives, particularly the lives of poor and working-class people of color, and poor and working-class white people. This "poor" is imagined to have little reproducible value, not just in terms of human activity (i.e., labor beyond that of low-end service labor), but also in terms of their basic humanity. Instead, people of color needed to be rescued by the development technologies of neoliberalism.

Chicago's public-private partnerships designed a discourse of progress to shape its urban replacement scheme. Together with CPS, Chicago's public housing authority was responsible for helping to transform not only Chicago's more infamous urban segregated geographic zones but also the people inside them. The city began tearing down public housing and relocating the city's public housing residents, almost all of whom were people of color. The members of the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago served as the plan's primary architects, and it is their members who benefitted most from it.

Chicago serves as an urban model of the shift from state-based management of the social safety net to state-based private management of the public welfare. This trend is not new. According to social policy researchers Demetra Nightingale and Nancy Pindus, "Privatization of government social services has, in fact, increased at major watershed points in the history of social policy (the Progressive era in the late 19th century, New Deal, Great Society, and Reagan years), both at times of expansion and during contraction of government

services."[61] Though this development is not novel, it is important to note that the current national and global tendency to merge public development and the provision of public welfare with "large private corporations" signals that governmentality in the country is in a period of political, social and economic change.

Consequently, the technologies of government have also been modified. State technology is now even more geared to corporate levels of efficiency. A most notable change in regard to market competition is the degree to which governments are now less apt to directly provide social services. Instead, they move between "open competition for all or public services, [and] government contracting for specific services."[62] Through this movement, competition has become presumed and fixed; it is a precondition for the management and care of a nation's citizenry.

Liberal democratic notions of ownership, self-management, and self-reliance underlie narratives of privatization. Our cultural understanding of corporations as private individuals is codified by law. Corporate culture has become the prototype for all public interactions and institutions. Individuals have interpellated these ideals and society appears to accept and reward with votes the private management and regulation of its capacities for social welfare and development. As Kathleen Sebelius, a Kansas Democrat, notes, "Voters are

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[61] Demetra Smith Nightingale and Nancy M. Pindus, "Privatization of Public Social Services: A Background Paper," *Urban Institute* 15 (1997), 3.
[62] Nightingale, "Privatization of Public Social Services," 8.

getting more comfortable with seeing governors as C.E.O.'s of states."[63] In a Foucauldian sense, acts of privatization fused with philosophical notions of liberalism produce convincing and influential cultural meanings. This fusion has social, political, and economic consequences. Expressed discursively, it can represent for a society an absolute definition of individual and social purpose, as well as individual and societal subject-positions.[64] Using this framework, we can understand why Americans imagine themselves as exceptional, and as the assumed universal culture. This is an American's societal, or socio-cultural subject-position; they see the world in their own reflection and only question the mirror image if it conflicts with the imagined self. I argue that this imagined self is monocultural—it is racially white; it is based in liberal "middle class" values and norms; it is bourgeois; and, it is heteronormative—engaging in gendered male - female relations that favor a perceived notion of masculinity. The argument here concentrates on the first two, though what is said about race and wealth can certainly be situated within similar arguments about heteronormativity.

The Neoliberal Brand of Education

Supported globally by the Education Services sector of the GATS (General Agreement on Trades in Services) and the World Trade Organization's Council for Trade in Services, education is "normally regarded as a 'public consumption'

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[63] Adam Nagourney, "The Patterns May Change, If." *The New York Times*, 2006.
[64] Stuart Hall, "The Work of Representation," in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage, 1997), 56.

item" and "exists as a 'private consumption' with a price determined freely by the providing institutions."[65] The purpose of a neoliberal brand of education is to produce the consumptive citizen at a psychic price.

Fundamentally, this form of educational program is about individualism and the sociopolitical rights extended by private property. Yet neoliberalism needs these individuals that form a possible public collective, as well as the public's institutions to fully engage its commodities. How best then, does this brand of neoliberalism produce such an individual in Chicago? What does it use as its main operative? CPS operates as part of a triadic centrifugal force aiding in the alteration and thus privatization of (public) state governmental intervention. Being that neoliberalism upholds a belief in an enlightened Smithian understanding of individualism, how best can the program produce Chicagoans who believe, value and continue to conceive of a socioeconomic and political ideology that protects the rights of a globalized employing class? How best can neoliberalism produce the kind of citizen who will agree in a Kantian conception of negative liberty? Of course, this negative freedom, in its rejection of state intervention, directly implies a tolerance and an acceptance of inequalities engendered by the market. So, how can neoliberalism produce such a Chicagoan, a citizen of the international free market who will endure and accept, as putative truth, her or his own inequality?

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[65] World Trade Organization, Background Note by the Secretariat, Council for Trade in Services, "Education Services," Restricted S/C/W/49, 23 September 1998.

School is the hegemonic site at which the dominant socioeconomic ideology of neoliberal principles and practices are replicated. The state acts to support this regime of neoliberalism through the institution of public education. Closing schools and replacing them with institutions whose pedagogy will be guided by the influence of private corporate management serves only an elite few. The intention of Renaissance 2010 as a neoliberal brand of education was to use the school as a tool in a globalized effort to inculcate and reproduce the ideology of neoliberalism within the future labor sector.

Joining the wave of having non-educators as urban school district leaders across the nation, Mayor Daley took over Chicago's public schools in addition to its Housing Authority. Paul Vallas, a former city budget director, was appointed chief executive officer of CPS. Vallas held this position from 1995-2001. Daley handpicked the school board, the members of which became biddable souls who would follow Vallas' orders. Sol Hurwitz notes that urban school superintendents run "a corporate board where the board supports the CEO, but it also has a kind of military characteristic."[66] Vallas organized a corporate educational regime in terms of personnel, structure, and curricular standardization that allowed for an emboldened a discourse of development.

The income differential between black and white Chicagoans in the 1990s was extremely wide, even as business proclaimed an economic boom because

[66] Sol Hurwitz, "The Outsiders: Can a New Breed of Noneducator Superintendents Transform Urban School Systems?" *American School Board Journal* 188, no. 6 (2001): 15.

they were experiencing a boom. During this period, the groundwork was laid for Renaissance 2010 and the Chicago Housing Authority's (CHA) redevelopment plan, the Plan for Transformation. Almost a decade later, CPS maintained a corporate structure—chief executive and financial officers, a market reform education policy—and a plan for the transformation of public education akin to the CHA's plan to redesign public housing. It was no coincidence that Ren 2010 intended to close sixty schools and open 100 new ones in the same neighborhoods surrounded by the public housing complexes that were the target of the CHA's Plan for Transformation. Renaissance 2010 worked in partnership with the CHA's Plan for Transformation by purportedly providing an educational "renaissance" in the neighborhoods in which mixed-income housing was planned; housing purported to transform the culture of these communities. Renaissance 2010 assisted in actualizing the mission of the coalition of land, labor, and money by making the surrounding physical, cultural and political geography better suited to the aesthetic, cultural, and practical needs of young "professionals" who would move into the city to work and raise families there.

Within this overarching mission of change is another significant element working concomitantly: Renaissance 2010 impels the city—through the school site—to develop future generations of neoliberal citizens in the bodies of poor and working-class black and brown youth. Though advocates of Renaissance 2010 argued that private management allows for innovation unfettered by state intervention, absent from the policy's model for restructuring are opportunities for

innovation that are non-corporate in structure and curricula. This corporate model of education in Chicago is equivalent to "good business," anything else is considered "lagging." If a corporate policy of neoliberalism led the charge of education, narrow was the avenue for youth to become critically literate and one day reject the very society for which they were being developed. As youth in schools followed the charge led by global elites, their innate curiosity and creativity is redirected into a liberal citizenship based on self-interest, virulent competition, and opportunism.

Renaissance 2010 followed a development narrative of neoliberal market-wave reform. The passage below contains several expressions that signal this discourse within the gloating opening of A.T. Kearney's "Executive Agenda First Quarter 2005":

> The fifth grader with an overflowing backpack on Chicago's south side could be tomorrow's next great doctor, writer or CEO. The odds depend on a solid education—a luxury many inner-city kids lack. A.T. Kearney contributed private-sector lessons that have helped good businesses become great to assist in transforming lagging school districts into models of educational excellence.[67]

The premise of A.T. Kearney's "management agenda" is to ensure that public education is a commercial industry. A.T. Kearney imagines that schools are and always have been businesses by presuming that schools, as public institutions,

[67] Kearney, 47.

have no social and cultural history. This presumption creates a socio-historical gap in the cultural memory, within which we can imagine schools, and the districts that manage them, are and always have been business corporations. The premise that the very process of public education is a commercial industry trapped inside a bad business model is made prudent for public and private imaginations.

Within A.T. Kearney's discursive tactics we can see a reliance on the original developmental purpose of American schooling, which was to prepare a U.S. citizenry who would support the philosophies of progress and national jingoism. Students were trained inside schools to uphold and do battle over American-designed tenets of individualism, private enterprise, and expansionism. These were the first U.S. town schools. During the industrial period, public schools for the poor and working class became the sites in which young people could be taught in ways that would model the factories in which they were to inevitably work. The spatialization of school began there: all desks in a row to manage and corral, school bells to teach work by the clock, and rote memorization of personally irrelevant information to ensure compliance with iterative tasks on the factory line. A.T. Kearney taps into an old notion of schooling as the space in which to teach consumptive and competitive practices to those who lack or are "lagging" in such skills. School is the site in which the skills that the free market necessitates are developed.

Without referring specifically to the public who make up Chicago's public schools (black and brown students, their families and teachers), the perspective implied in the racialized and corporative discourse of the Executive Agenda is that this public is dysfunctional and has heretofore been poorly managed. There is an allusion in the Agenda to a historic liberal romanticism of market rescue—where "private-sector lessons" are proposed as educational reclamation for "lagging" school districts and their communities. The process of transformation is regarded as sanctified, even pious, and as a righteous act to save a lost people who are yet unaware of the benefits of the private sector.

Market societies attribute to corporations the qualities, rights, and protections of private individuals.[68] Foundationally, CPS and the CHA are public institutions that seem to model private-sector business practices, but they are not solely performing as corporations. In effect, CPS and the CHA function wholly as private corporations and as such they have acquired "a privileged moral position," which allows them to stand as the "suitable authority"[69] best fit to develop, manage, surveil, discipline, and regulate public property and the public itself. It is important to note that only one segment of the public gets developed and managed, and it is not the portion imputed with the rights and protections of private property holders. Ascribed the power of the private, CPS and the CHA narrate a romantic story of progress, which make the privatization of these public

[68] Blomley, *Unsettling the City*, 6.
[69] David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (United Kingdom: Blackwell, 1993), 53.

institutions appear to be a necessary function of recovery, i.e., a re-development of the public. The development policies of CPS and the CHA are justified by discourses of development juxtaposed against discourses of underdevelopment. This appositional binary makes private management appear not just prudent, but like an act of corporate rescue deserving of the position of rational authority.

Below I have collocated underdevelopment–development discourse: on the left, a selection from a Renaissance Schools Fund brochure designed to raise $50 million in the private sector for the implementation of Renaissance 2010; and on the right, the copy used by A.T. Kearney in its Executive Agenda to describe the "operations" function of Renaissance 2010 (Figure 2).[70]

"The Renaissance Schools Fund" Brochure	**A.T. Kearney "Executive Agenda" for Chicago Public Education**
The Renaissance Schools Fund will fund school team applicants with a record of performance [and] entrepreneurial spirit [. . .] Renaissance attracts entrepreneur educators because of the freedom that these new schools provide. (Renaissance 6)	Executives know how to use strategic tools to improve efficiency and cut costs. In a multinational firm, for example, combining and standardizing back-office administrative functions such as five accounting departments into one 'shared services' center is a typical strategy for improving service and cutting costs. Transfer this approach to public schools, and the results can be just as meaningful.

Figure 2 The Renaissance Schools Fund Brochure and A.T. Kearney Executive Agenda for Chicago Public Schools

The discourses are complementary; their textual juxtaposition underscores the isomorphic structure of Chicago education reform as well as an underlying neoclassical theory of growth. Business entrepreneurialism is associated with

[70] Kearney, 50. Figure 2.

individual and market freedom, choice and opportunity. We can see here an implied claim that state intervention in the market of public education (in effect, the production center of labor) has been the cause of the education system's underdevelopment. The text of the brochure, with its emphasis on failure, degeneration and exodus, corroborates A.T. Kearney's affirmation that transformation of the condition of public schools will require executive know-how. Thus, schools need business to finance the restorative effort if schools are to return to their ostensibly natural state as a market enterprise. The Renaissance Schools Fund brochure actively seeks this investment from business. The expectation is that with private capital will come corporate expertise in cutting costs, improving service, and standardizing education.

By portraying Chicago's schools as a potential labor market afflicted by government control and inefficiency, the Mayor of Chicago authorized the participation of those who can purportedly assist Chicago's school district, a district lagging behind in American progress. In the Renaissance Schools Fund brochure, Mayor Daley states that the schools have entered "a new stage [of redevelopment]—one in which all of us have a larger role to play—not just as supporters, financial contributors or volunteers—but as active participants."[71] Business and the free market are presented as both prophylactics and curatives, "protect[ing] and improv[ing] those parts of the local environment on which

[71] In addition to Bill and Melinda Gates's other assets, the stock Bill Gates holds in Microsoft is valued at $22.65 billion. See the 2006 Fortune 500 list, Fortune 500 Snapshots," Fortune Magazine, CNN Money, 2006, accessed 6 May, 2006, http://archive.fortune.com/magazines/fortune/fortune500/snapshots/10.html.

employers depend: sound and effective local government services . . .strong education and training systems . . . and reasonable local tax and regulatory structures."[72] Mayor Daley relies on the social haphazardness of an invisible hand. He imagines Chicago business as having a natural right to reconfigure public space and institutions to benefit the growth, prosperity, and inalienability of private, transnational business. Like frontiersmen of the democracy before him, it was as though Daley is weeding an untended garden, a landscape he imagines as having fallen into the wayward hands of the very people whose economic and political rights he, in reality, has severely and purposely neglected during his time in office.

In the Renaissance Schools Fund brochure and A.T. Kearney's Executive Agenda we see the discursive union of a neoliberal coalition of public schools and global elites. CPS's public partner in the coalition, the public housing authority, plays its part. The Chicago Housing Authority conjure images of livable (re)developed land and thereby support an ideology of space necessary to actualize massive and racialized displacement of poor black and brown people from the city to the suburbs. Deregulated capital is the "third leg" of this public-private coalition and completes the transformation.[73]

The Reflexivity of Capital's Beneficent Daisy Chain

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[72] See Civic Committee, Commercial Club of Chicago, "Purpose and History," accessed 4 January 2007, http://www.commercialclubchicago.org/civiccommittee/purpose/index.html.
[73] Lori Olszewski and Carlos Sadovi, "Rebirth of Schools Set for South Side: CHA and a List of Institutions Have Big Plans," *Chicago Tribune*, 2003, 1.

The Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago is a not-for-profit organization of corporate leaders who respond to the "gradual erosion of [. . .] economic vitality" in Chicago by applying business methods.[74] For corporations, *erosion* is an invitation for corporate opportunity. To characterize Chicago as a city whose capital lifeblood is slipping away is to create a sense of corporate and public fear. What corporations hear when they hear erosion is a loss of capital's capacity to make, remake, control, and regulate all areas of public life that might stand in the way of or enhance profit. Erosion and loss offer an opportunity for businesses to rescue and transform. The Civic Committee was responsible for Renaissance 2010's design, and in 2004-2005, the academic year in which the policy was set in motion, the Committee's membership read like a Who's Who of the Fortune 500 and the Global 500.

In 2004, the Civic Committee created an affiliate, the Renaissance Schools Fund (formerly known as New Schools for Chicago), which was responsible for raising $50 million in private money to fund Renaissance 2010 schools. The multiple layers of public-private affiliation in the Civic Committee illustrate the ways in which global capital insinuated itself into local communities and highlighted, for its benefit, the socioeconomic gaps produced by a deregulated, capitalist national economy. Some donors solicited by the Renaissance Schools Fund partnered with schools directly rather than use the Fund as a conduit for their contributions. Direct partnerships with Renaissance

[74] Civic Committee, "Purpose and History."

2010 schools allowed businesses a greater say over how funds were allocated, how schools were managed and marketed, and, inevitably, what young people would know and be able to do as future workers.

Members of the Renaissance Schools Fund board, Civic Committee members, and Renaissance 2010 school partners overlapped and they initiated relationships of corporate reciprocity. In 2006, the Civic Committee's membership was led by John Rowe, the president and CEO of Exelon Corporation ($923 million in after tax company profits).[75] In 2002, Rowe, who served as the Civic Committee's chair received a corporate bonus of $1,550,000.[76] Other Committee members included Edward M. Liddy, the chairman, president and CEO of The Allstate Corporation ($1,765 million in profits).[77] Allstate partnered with American Quality Schools, a Chicago-based corporation, the Westside Ministers Coalition, and the Austin African-American Business Networking Association to open a Renaissance 2010 high school: Austin Business and Entrepreneurship

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[75] Exelon is a utility company that, in 2006, purchased 20 nuclear plants. In 2005, a "federal energy bill offer[ed] billions of dollars in subsidies, tax breaks, and incentives for new plants to help reduce long-term dependency on oil. The White House also launched the Nuclear Power 2010 Initiative, a $1.1 billion effort by government and industry to start building new plants by then. As the sole utility exec on the privately financed National Commission on Energy Policy, Rowe helped mastermind the energy bill, insiders say; that and nuclear's resurgence make him one of the most influential CEOs you've probably never heard of." See Cora Daniels and Patricia A. Neering, "Meet Mr. Nuke," *Fortune* 153, no. 9 (15 May 2006): 140.

[76] "How CEO Bonuses Compare," USA Today, 2003, accessed 5 May, 2005, https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/money/companies/management/2003-03-31-ceo-comp-chart-bonus.htm.

[77] "Allstate Corporation, "Notice of 2006 Annual Meeting: Proxy Statement, 2005 Annual Report," (2006).

Academy.[78] In 2006, the community's school, Austin High School was closed under Renaissance 2010. Miles K. White, an Austin Civic Committee member, is chairman and CEO of Abbott Laboratories,[79] which earned $3,235.9 million in net profits.[80] White's 2002 corporate bonus was $1,250,000.[81] He was quoted in an Abbott press release saying, "Abbott is pleased to provide this grant [$1 million] in support of the students who will ensure the future growth of the industry in this region [i.e., Chicago]."[82]

Noting the transnational reach of Abbott, White went on to note, "While our business is global, education is a local issue and we recognize the need to invest in communities where our employees, retirees and their families live and work." Other Civic Committee members were the Governor of Illinois and presidents of Northwestern University and University of Chicago. Notably, the state's public university, University of Illinois, was absent from the Committee's roster. Also on the Committee was Thomas J. Pritzker, chair of Global Hyatt. Hyatt acquired "the

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[78] Terry Dean, "Business Academy Looks Ahead to '06: Former State Supt. Bakalis Heads Consortium Behind New School," *Austin Weekly News*, 22 March 2006, accessed 15 May 2006, http://austinweeklynews.1upsoftware.com/main.asp?SectionID=1&SubSectionID=1$ArticleID=586&TM=1850.151.

[79] Abbott Laboratories is "a global, broad-based health care company devoted to the discovery, development, manufacture and marketing of pharmaceuticals and medical products, including nutritionals, devices and diagnostics. The company employs 60,000 people and markets its products in more than 130 countries." Abbott Laboratories website, accessed 9 May 2006, http://www.abbott.com/global/url/content/en_US/10:10/general_content /General_Content_00004.htm.

[80] Abbott Laboratories, United States Securities and Exchange Commission, Form 10-K, 2005, 27.

[81] USA Today, "How CEO Bonuses Compare."

[82] "Press Release," Abbott Laboratories, 4 June 2006, accessed 4 January 2007, http://www.csrwire.com/article.cgi/5359.

$300 million-a-year, 143-hotel AmeriSuites chain.[83] Pritzker is a member of the infamous, feuding Chicago-based Pritzker family. “The family's hotel, industrial, finance, and real estate empire, [is] said to be worth more than $15 billion.”[84] Although Civic Committee members were committed to shifting the terrain of public education, the Pritzker children attended Chicago’s Francis W. Parker School, an independent school whose junior kindergarten and high school annual tuitions were $16,524 and $21,172 respectively in 2006.[85] Civic Committee members pay for the independence of a private education for their own children while transforming public schools into charters that will produce the workforce to generate the extortionate net earnings of their businesses.

Not surprisingly, amongst the Civic Committee’s membership is the managing partner of the Midwest division of A.T. Kearney. Indeed, the chair of the Renaissance Schools Fund board, Donald G. Lubin, who “advises” Allstate, ranks among one of the Committee’s most active members.[86] Lubin is senior director of McDonald’s Corporation ($2,278.5 million in 2005 profits) and a

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[83] Joseph Weber, “Hyatt: Quite a Housecleaning Are the Pritzkers Getting Set to Take Their Sprawling Empire Public?” *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 20 December 2004, 40.
[84] Barney Gimbel, “Conquer and Divide: Suddenly Hyatt Is on a Building Spree. Why? Heirs to the $15 Billion Empire that Owns it Want Out,” CNN Money, 17 October 2005, accessed 4 January 2007, http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2005/10/17/8358075/index.htm.
[85] Francis W. Parker School (“Parker”) in Chicago is a JK-12 school for which I worked for four years. I founded the school’s Office of Public Purpose while also serving as its Director of Diversity and Service Learning as well as a history teacher. As of this writing, the annual junior kindergarten and high school tuitions respectively, including fees, are $34,470 and $39,700. See Parker Tuition and Fees https://www.fwparker.org/page/admission/tuition-and-fees.
[86] Sonnenschein, Nath and Rosenthal LLP, “Attorneys and Other Professionals,” http://www.sonnenschein.com/attorneys/index.aspx?aid=0000011.

partner in the Sonnenschein, Nath and Rosenthal law firm.[87] Sonnenschein designed and now privately operates a Renaissance 2010 elementary school, Legacy Charter School (approved by the Chicago Board of Education in 2005), through a separate not-for-profit corporation.

> The firm donated $1million for the planning and operation of Legacy Charter School. The firm's attorneys and staff will play a key role in its management in such areas as financial planning and oversight, information services and human resources. Errol Stone, Sonnenschein's former managing partner, will be chairman of Legacy's board and will be closely involved in the management of the school. Additionally, the firm will provide pro bono legal advice on an ongoing basis and regularly donate equipment, including computers, and furniture to the school.[88]

The associations between the Committee and charter school development abound. Sara Lee's corporate headquarters are in Chicago. Sara Lee had a $4.86 billion rise in sales in 2004.[89] Brenda C. Barnes was the

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[87] Sonnenschein, Nath and Rosenthal LLP merged with Denton Wilde Sapte in 2010. As of 4 January 2007: "Sonnenschein, with more than 700 attorneys and other professionals in nine U.S. cities and a global reach, serves the legal needs of many of the world's largest and best-known businesses, nonprofits and individuals." Sonnenschein website home page, accessed 4 January 2007, http://www.sonnenschein.com/.

[88] "Sonnenschein Charter School Application Approved by Chicago Board of Education," *Business Wire*, 27 January 2005, https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20050127005481/en/Sonnenschein-Charter-School-Application-Approved-Chicago-Board.

[89] Sara Lee operates in 58 countries and sells its products in 200 nations. See Tyya N. Turner and the staff of Vault, *Vault Guide to the Top Consumer Products Employers* (New York: Vault, 2005): 314.

company president and CEO in 2005 and also a Civic Committee member. Roderick Palmore, Sara Lee's senior vice president, general counsel, and secretary had seats on the board of Legacy Charter School.

Guarding the territory of prime labor, land, and money interests in Chicago, the Civic Committee collaborated with local government, the city's public education system, and public real estate developers to benefit private interests. Business, in this case, worked individually and liberally, anterior and superior to the public, collective spaces (i.e., housing, schools, and unions in charter schools) of black and brown people as well as external to sociopolitical institutions. The Civic Committee and Chicago Public Schools, for example, opposed unions. R. Eden Martin, president of the Civic Committee, wrote in a private memo to Arne Duncan, the Chief Executive Officer of Chicago Public Schools, "the school unions will not like the creation of a significant number of new schools that operate outside the union agreement—but operating outside the agreement is a key element of this strategy."[90] Community-based organizations like the Chicagoland Coalition Opposed to Militarization of Youth, Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization, Chicagoans United for Education all actively advocated for the educational rights of students and their families in schools that were to close under Ren 2010. To this day, the Chicago Teachers' Union actively contests the notion of private management of the city's schools.

[90] Sam Dillon, "Chicago Has a Nonunion Plan for Poor Schools." *The New York Times*, 2004.

But the Chicago coalition has remained firm in its opposition to these groups by justifying the market's rescue of public school and housing.

The micro-practices of neoliberalism are performed by business through Chicago's Renaissance 2010 education policy. The school district reinterprets public education's value by establishing a conglomerate of schools that not only reproduce neoliberal ideology but also instantiate and embody the neoliberal market. Using a "narrative of liberation," authored by A.T. Kearney, the city has tied the lives of young black and brown people to the hegemonic developmental needs of globalization.[91] The sixty schools closed and replaced by Renaissance 2010 are in predominantly poor, underserved black neighborhoods. By manipulating the cultural geography of poor and working-class black and brown youth, a regiment of low-wage labor is produced to accommodate the service needs of those who gentrify black and brown communities using multinational capital.

As Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the Civic Committee transform and revitalize schools in black neighborhoods, the Chicago Housing Authority's (CHA) "Plan for Transformation" works parallel to and in conjunction with Renaissance 2010 by "redeveloping" 25,000 public housing units into mixed-income communities.[92] The 10-year plan is backed by $1.5-billion from the federal

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[91] See a discussion of the "narrative of liberation" in María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas and the Age of Development* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 78.
[92] Chicago Housing Authority, *Greater Roosevelt Square Planning for the Future: Master Plan Framework Report* (March 2016): 6.

government, “but the magic comes from the billions more that follows from private investors—investors in the market-rate and affordable housing units and retail establishments, the backbone of new neighborhoods.”[93] Not surprisingly, the business requirements for the Plan are provided by the Civic Committee and Renaissance Schools Fund donors. The chain of capital imbrication is long and interconnected. CPS, as a seemingly public yet corporate-influenced organization, produces and deploys methods of subliminal racialized ideology. Chicago’s discursive regime reconfigures the thinking of the public regarding how and what kind of labor should be produced and for whom; it aims to personify the market as redeemer, deliverer, and benefactor; it configures space so that liberal ideas of ownership and who and what belong on the land are trussed.

Land and Body: Public Parts, Private Possessions

Bronzeville protesters picketing outside the Board of Education chanted, “We're not blind. Just follow the dollar sign.” In Englewood, an African-American neighborhood on the South Side, two schools are slated for closing. At a February 2005 meeting on Renaissance 2010 held in Englewood, parents, students, and teachers described the history of disinvestment in their schools and community and argued that Renaissance 2010 is driving gentrification and

[93] Marysue Barrett, “Marshaling Public Will to Transform the CHA,” *Crain’s Chicago Business* 25, no. 12 (25 March 2002): 11.

removing working poor African Americans. “We're being pushed out of the city under the guise of school reform,” one speaker said.[94]

Lipman elaborates Renaissance 2010’s element of spatialization by identifying the plan’s roots in a collaborative act of gentrification—a district education project begun seven years ago by CHA, CPS, and the local business community. Terry Mazany, the former chief operating officer of one of the city’s largest foundations, the Chicago Community Trust, and board member of the Renaissance Schools Fund, refers to schools as the “third leg” of development. The purpose of the third leg in Chicago is to [re]produce an economic tendency and social convention within future low-wage labor of color. One of the objectives is to displace the “ethnos” within the body to produce a colonized liberal citizen.[95] The narrative of gentrification positions black and brown communities, housing, people, and public schools as infamous, as the worst of their kind in the nation. In this narrative, a seraphic cartel of land, money, and labor like the Civic Committee mobilizes, it repairs, it redevelops the primary broken state apparatus that is responsible for producing labor: the public schools.

If Renaissance 2010 schools do their job correctly, black and brown youth will be transformed and subsumed into the market. This citizen now transformed, made safe and good by charter schools, can now flip the proverbial burger at McDonald’s for its attendant low-wages, or she will also serve in the military to

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[94] Pauline Lipman, “We’re Not Blind. Just Follow the Dollar Sign,” *Rethinking Schools* 19, no. 4 (Summer 2005).
[95] The idea of displacing, or “leaving behind” the ethnos, comes from Saldaña-Portillo, 7.

protect the private interests of high-income elites; he will become a pseudo entrepreneur and stock the inventory in a neighborhood specialty grocery store and, subsequently, neoliberalism will be sustained and perpetuated.

Relying on historical tropes of development and underdevelopment, the CHA discursively deploys progress to remake the ghettos of Chicago into the image of a liberal market. The stated objective of the CHA's Plan for Transformation is to "reinvent" social housing for poor black and brown families into mixed income communities. The CHA has even incorporated its acronym into the word change in its logo. Expectedly, the CHA's "From CHAos to CHAnge" public relations campaign demonstrates the multiple scales at which the micro-practices of neoliberalism operate within social housing policy discourse. Initiated in 2004, the same year as Renaissance 2010 officially commenced, this public relations campaign was authored by the global advertising firm Leo Burnett Worldwide. Yet another link in the corporate coalition's daisy chain, the firm's chair is also a member of the Civic Committee. The business heads who are members of the Civic Committee continue to unabashedly link the local and the global while riding upon a coerced fallacy of ownership that is aided by the notion that public-private market alliances are rational, immanent, and demonstrate the corporation's proper place within society as emancipator.

As the CHA declares in a 2005 video, "The era of decaying, isolated housing developments is over. We're building a new future where public housing residents live in the same neighborhoods as people of all income levels. It's a

future of new opportunity and restored hope."[96] In the context of the CHA's declarations, public housing residents—code for poor black and brown tenants–are put in contrast and opposition to people of "all income levels," which is code for white, resourced private citizens. Citizens have ownership rights, freedom of movement and exchange, all of which determine their immanent value and merit. Tenants are in need of improvement and can benefit from close but guarded proximity to citizens. The CHA's Plan for Transformation is set to "improve the appearance, quality and culture of public housing in Chicago" so that citizens can tolerate, if the proximity and eventually displace tenants (Figure 3).[97]

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[96] See Chicago Housing Authority, "The Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation: Hilliard." This pamphlet, of which I have a copy, is no longer available online. I recommend viewing on YouTube Chicago Housing Authority's three-part series, *Plan at 10: History of Chicago Public Housing* at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQXxPLt6kqM.

[97] Council of Development Finance Agencies, "Tax Increment Financing Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation Chicago, Illinois," (2009).

Figure 3 Hilliard Homes, photo by Lisa Arrastia, 1 December 2006

Transforming the culture of public housing communities is key. To make room for the new urban residents or citizens, the CHA's "relocation process" manages the movement of former public housing tenants out of areas to be redeveloped as mixed-income homes into temporary "replacement housing."[98] For example, "West End is the name of the replacement housing for the public housing development formerly known as Rockwell Gardens [. . .] When complete, Lakefront Replacement Housing will be made up of 441 public housing, 163 affordable, and 403 market-rate units [. . .] and "The rehabilitation of

[98] Chicago Housing Authority, "FY2009 Moving to Work Annual Plan," 35; 56.

Dearborn Homes will include installation of wiring to make cable ready, new elevators, new glazed tile common areas, and two air conditioners in each unit."[99]

Tenants able to afford but first navigate the strict structures of access back into what will be the same but gentrified, "mixed-income" housing will be surveilled and disciplined through drug testing, credit checks, and requirements for employment. Federally sanctioned self-sufficiency requirements support the CHA's discursive regime, and they legitimate educational practices within CPS that work to produce compliant citizens. Chicago's corporate coalition requires that public housing tenants of color leave behind their particularity to be spatially displaced and culturally dispossessed.

The CHA's Plan for Transformation was approved by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development three years before Renaissance 2010's implementation. As the Plan and Renaissance 2010 partner to target black and brown neighborhoods, conditions like occupancy and lease compliance rules act to relegate poor black Chicagoans to spaces outside the urban redevelopment zone. *Developed* capitalist economies need developed liberal subjects as-citizens, and Renaissance 2010's goal is to produce just that. Postcolonial scholar Josie Saldaña-Portillo argues that theories of human agency within revolutionary movements have followed a "mode of progressive movement" quite closely in line with models of subjectivity and

[99] Chicago Housing Authority, "FY2009 Moving to Work Annual Plan," 35; 56.

developmentalism.[100] Renaissance 2010 considers itself to be a revolutionary movement to promote the agency of neoliberals—perhaps not in the same way as the movement of guerillas across the Sierra Maestra in Cuba in 1959, but certainly a liberal progressive movement across the terrain of the city. Saldaña-Portillo notes how these modes of progressive movement correspond to essential paradigms of development, which are in intricate association with revolutionary discourse. Importantly, she contends that discourses of development and revolution are always dependent upon colonial constructions of gender and race in their embellished applied philosophies of change.

Societies of *underdeveloped* nations move through developmental stages progressing from a premodern stage of particularity into a modern stage of assumed heteronormative universality. Similar to developmental psychologist Jean Piaget's theory of child cognitive development, societies of underdeveloped nations are to evolve like children along this narrative to a point at which the particularities of gender and/or race are no longer needed, and are, in fact, neutralized and left behind.[101] Development in Chicago is positioned as social revolution, or in the language of its promoters, as a renaissance.

We can use Saldaña-Portillo's thinking as a frame within which to argue that Chicago's policy rationale engages a discourse rooted in corporate techniques of advertising, one that purports school and community failure and juxtaposes it against the language of an irresistible renaissance (a literal rebirth)

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[100] Saldaña-Portillo, 6.
[101] Saldaña-Portillo, 66.

that leaves behind self-imposed devastation and destruction. The discursive practices of the political triad (mayor, CPS, multinational business) designing and implementing Renaissance 2010 subliminally fault poor black and brown communities with the problems of under-resourced schools. In so doing, they pit brown communities against city and nation. The language surrounding public housing and education is redacted in a dialect of chaos, danger and failure: the Robert Taylor public housing project is a "national symbol of social assistance gone awry" that "cast[s] a dark shadow" over streets "scarred by gangs, racism and poverty";[102] the public schools, predominated by black and brown young people need "an overhaul," their infrastructure is "crumbling," and as premodern subjects they test in the "bottom half" of Illinois schools.[103] The discursive objective is to get "buy in." This is a phrase I heard CPS CEO Arne Duncan and other CPS officials use on numerous occasions. Ideological buy-in is a requirement to support a notion of redemption for the sins of black and brown people who ostensibly lack the sensibility and technical low-wage skills to appropriately engage the self-regulating market. The dialect of failure positions business as redeemer and rescuer; as the only entity able to properly develop new, "vibrant" neighborhoods and "high quality" schools where "knowing exactly who your customers are and how best to meet their needs is an ongoing study for business."[104] The underlying goal of Renaissance 2010 and the CHA's Plan

[102] Kearney, Executive Agenda, 3.
[103] Kearney, Executive Agenda, 4.
[104] Kearney, Executive Agenda, 5.

for Transformation is to produce the imagining that the market will solve an urban "blight."[105] Yet this can only be true if the state rejects social responsibility and provides pathways for business, through housing and schools, to intervene in the disastrous socioeconomic effects of an economy based on capitalist profit. The belief is that capital in Chicago will rescue capital's failure, a failure blamed on the subjects it created.

Subverting the Coalition

The fundamental goal of Renaissance 2010 is to turn around Chicago's most troubled elementary and high schools by creating 100 new schools in neighborhoods across the city over the next six years, providing new educational options to underserved communities, and relieving school overcrowding in communities experiencing rapid growth.[106]

Absent from Mayor Daley's initial elaboration on Renaissance 2010 is its genesis in a collaboration between CPS and the Chicago Housing Authority. The CHA's Plan for Transformation makes explicit that "community revitalization and school development" are linked.[107] Daley poses the policy as an ameliorative to the social and economic conditions of black and brown Chicagoans. Renaissance 2010 preempts the federal requirements that Chicago faces under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which was signed into law in 2001. NCLB is

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[105] John D. and Catherine T MacArthur Foundation, Case 93, "The Plan for Transformation of Public Housing in Chicago" (1999).
[106] Mayor Richard M. Daley City of Chicago, "Press Release," (2004).
[107] Olszewski, "Rebirth of Schools.

restricted to Title 1 schools (those schools educating students living below the poverty index) that are in need of federal funds. The act empowers states to design and implement methods and measurements to ensure what is called Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) of schools toward the goal of 100 percent math and reading proficiency (based on state standards) by the 2013-2014 academic year. NCLB requires intense categorization and classification using AYP and other methods with the effect of producing a hierarchy of under-resourced schools and students. In discussing the 18th-century establishment of a "hierarchy of humankind" and the "principle of gradation," David Theo Goldberg describes the kind of methodical rationalized system that is similar to the intention and implementation of NCLB:

> Once objectified, these bodies could be analyzed, categorized, classified, and ordered with the cold gaze of scientific distance. This reduction of human subjects to abstract bodies had the implication of enabling their subjection to the cold scientific stare and economic exploitation. The principle of gradation also carried a moral implication: Higher beings were extended greater worth than lower ones.[108]

Under NCLB, if a student's school consistently fails to make AYP, they may transfer to a private, charter, or better-performing school of their choice. The policy perfectly inculcates the public to a market-oriented mentality of

[108] Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning*, 50.

performance, individualism, and free market liberalism. On its face, NCLB helps the state appear as though it is students from public schools when the Act has actually has cleared the way for privatization. In its private-public pursuits, Chicago has made a choice between global capital and people. NCLB works as a federal justification to build formidable, national private-public coalitions while using a racialized discourse to legitimate its underlying purpose and effects.

Bill and Melinda Gates established a foundation that committed up to $25 million to school reform efforts in Chicago like Renaissance 2010.[109] As the policy was coming into being, the foundation's executive director for education, Tom Vander Ark, declared, "They've called it re-engineering, reconstitution, restructuring. They would change a few things, but not surprisingly, it's never worked very well. What this new plan offers schools is a complete break with the past."[110] In the global city of Chicago, a triumvirate of multinational power has coalesced to ensure community dispossession, neoliberal subject development, and private sector evasion of the public collective. Subverting this coalition requires continued exposure of its micro-practices and returning education to the public.

Nationally and globally, many public institutions have succumbed to the idea of liberal subjectivity. Many have shunned the collective to embrace

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[109] "With 1.1 billion shares of Microsoft stock, or about 10 percent of its shares outstanding, Gates' dividends during the year came to about $175.6 million." See "Gates Gets Pay Hike: World's Richest Man Gets 4% Raise, with Bigger Payout Coming From Dividend Jump," CNN Money, 21 September 2014, https://money.cnn.com/2004/09/21/technology/gates_pay/index.htm?cnn=yes.
[110] Dillon, "Chicago Has a Nonunion Plan for Poor Schools."

liberalism's conception of the presumed inalienable rights of private owners and notions of individualism. Trying to comprehend and expose the multiple scales at which labor, land, and money operate together in Chicago is not difficult. Although its trail is convoluted, the usual neoliberal attempts to mystify the process of liberalism's subjective development, its normalization of the racialization of space and speculation are not obfuscated by seemingly progressive discourse. In fact, they were very much highlighted in CPS literature. Neoliberalism in the city is prideful and in plain sight. Its words are clear and deliberate. Its unabashed belief in its assumed right to own both the space and the lives of poor and working-class people, particularly black and brown people, are clearly articulated.

I have tried in this chapter to follow a trail of connected layers, dollars, and influences that constitute the hegemonic breadth of neoliberalism. I have attempted through this process of exposition to follow the "activist-oriented research" advocated by Pauline Lipman; something I call applied cultural work, a practice I believe is essential for academics and for public universities in particular. Blurring the "borders between activism and ethnography," activist-oriented research positions itself as an active scholarship alongside community organizations.[111] This methodology is one potentially viable tool scholars can use in response to social injustices produced by neoliberalism. To rely on an adage of radicalism: the personal for me as educator and activist is in isotonic relationship

[111] Lipman, "Educational Ethnography," 325.

with the political. I once had a very deep investment in Chicago education. I was a school leader there at the height of the Renaissance 2010 juggernaut.

Chapter 2

In All Cities Geography Is Power

If women, ethnic, racial, and gay/lesbian minorities were once kept outside the sacred circle of 'the people' defined by bourgeois nationalists, they now seem to be in the process of being defined outside the current dominant political culture. According to this culture, the new world of international capitalism has given every individual the opportunity to make something of oneself. When a hierarchy emerges out of this competition, the unsuccessful individual can only blame him or herself. And if this survival of the fittest is true within the United States, it is also true among the world's nations.

—*David W. Noble, Death of a Nation*

This chapter serves as a case study of how the coalition of land, labor, and money operate in a school I founded, and eventually closed, in Chicago. I write this chapter in the second person as a way to provide an autoethnographic portrait of the political, economic, and personal effect of the contemporary education economy.

Through political and grassroots organizing, as early as 1995, members of Chicago's Southwest side Little Village community placed pressure on Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to create a high school for their neighborhood. The community is one of the youngest in the city, with approximately 4,000 children of high school age on average, and it is also one of the poorest. According to several studies, twenty-five percent of residents have incomes below $15,000. Only seventeen percent of high school residents have a high school diploma, and 5.5 percent have college degrees. Farragut Career Academy, Little Village's sole

public local high school until 2006, had a capacity for 1,800 students, a fifty-five percent graduation, and a seventeen percent dropout rate. Despite a $30 million allocation to build a new high school in Little Village, no construction took place.[112]

But school buildings were built in the city. Just not in Little Village, also known as La Villita. In 1999, a selective enrollment high school, Northside College Prep, was built on Chicago's resourced North Side. Only 28 percent of the school's student body is poor compared to Farragut's 95 percent. At Farragut, not even one percent of the students are white yet a third are at various stages of learning English.

2000: La Villita still has no new school in the works and Farragut High School's enrollment has swollen to 2,182 despite the fact that in four years Northside College Prep's will not go beyond a little over a thousand students. Yet another selective enrollment high school goes up. This time, on Chicago's near North Side.[113] Under the CHA's Plan for Transformation, the city's most infamous

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[112] This passage represents a collage of text (with permission) from an article by education scholar David Stovall (2005) and student statistics from the "Illinois Interactive Report Card." In 2011, the percentages of poor students between the schools remained dramatically disparate. Ninety-seven percent of Farragut students are poor compared to Northside's 35% and Payton's 33%. Enrollment and graduation rates remain just as widely divergent. Farragut has 697 more students than Northside College Prep and 863 more than Payton. Fifty-two percent of Farragut's students graduated in 2010 compared to 103% of Northside and 99% of Payton students. Also see Illinois State Board of Education, 2011; 2010. See David Stovall, "From Hunger Strike to High School: Youth Development, Social Justice and School Formation," *Great Cities Institute Working Paper* GCP-05-01 (2005).

[113] The enormity of displacement is certainly transformative. The Plan for Transformation is the "largest redevelopment effort of public housing in the history of the nation." Approved by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, "by the end of

housing project, Cabrini-Green, is slowly demolished and transformed into something labeled a mixed-income community. The average income increases but not for the residents displaced by the destruction of public housing. Its attendant higher rents and its condos start at $350,000. Only 37 percent of students at the near North Side's new Payton College Preparatory School are poor and 28 percent are white, but here there are no English language learners.

By 2001, Little Village is frustrated. Fourteen residents stage a hunger strike to get a good high school. They pitch themselves atop a once-promised school site renamed for their purposes Camp Cesar Chavez.[114] Nineteen days go by. Finally, CPS surrenders. La Villita acquires the most expensive high school ever built in the city: a $63 million high school complex. The campus houses small schools focusing on math, science, and technology; social justice; multicultural arts; world languages.

Little Village North Lawndale High School campus opens in 2005, but it is 2001. While La Villita and the community of North Lawndale wait for construction to begin, it rightfully refuses to pack any more students into Farragut High School. The district offers Little Village a small, innovative high school based in the pedagogy of Big Picture Learning out of Rhode Island. In Big Picture schools, there there are no grades or tests. Students learn according to their interests and

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the Plan, 25,000 units of housing will be renovated or built new . . . transforming the culture and structure of public housing." See "The Plan for Transformation," Chicago Housing Authority, 2009, http://www.thecha.org/pages/the_plan_for_transformation/22.php.

[114] Stovall, "From Hunger Strike to High School."

passions and engage in twice-weekly internships and projects relevant to their lived lives. Big Picture is a seemingly easy fix for impatient families because the school can be housed in an already-existing site within the community. As the plans begin to move forward, a child is shot in Back of the Yards.

Don't start a school after a kid gets shot in Back of the Yards, after the city then gives the neighborhood Little Village's Big Picture school in order to make up for the shooting and its decades-long neglect, after the news that there won't be a Big Picture school in Little Village comes late in the summer, and mothers of the children already enrolled tell you that some of their 13-year-old kids end up sitting at desks in the hallway of already overcrowded high schools throughout the city.

You've experienced Chicago as a senior administrator at Francis W. Parker School, but never really getting along with Chicago's quid pro quo politics. You think you know enough to start a school because you've run some really innovative programs for kids in Chicago and California, but in truth nothing has prepared you for the indomitable spirit of 10 Latinas, the needs of their children and their community, how alone you will be in the upcoming political battle to start a school, find it a home, and then sustain it without much financial and social support. Absolutely nothing in your professional career or personal life prepares you for this endeavor.

Beginning November 2003, you work collaboratively to open City as Classroom School with a formidable group of Little Village mothers whom you call Las Madres. Two years earlier, some of Las Madres were part of the hunger strike in La Villita. None of them want their children at Farragut High School.

Every mother wants a school choice for her baby. Almost all Las Madres have a rising ninth grader in their family. You become emotionally and politically committed to the mothers and their children. For the mothers, and in order to enact your own relentless belief in good teaching and using the street as a curriculum—that is, education on foot that attempts to have students recognize, record, and then respond to the economic, political, and social issues their city faces—you start the school promised to Little Village before the shooting in Back of the Yards. It is a little bit Big Picture and a lot something else.

The next thing you know it is opening day. August 2004. About 10 minutes away from Little Village in an old Catholic School building that is now your school, City as Classroom. A friend's Jarocho band plays. Black students from North Lawndale and the West Side listen beside brown students from La Villita. Some move a hip, but most know it ain't cool to look like you're into this Jarocho shit. Your mom is in the audience looking fly, as usual. Nervous and excited teachers, four of them, move in and out of their classrooms. The classrooms, four of them, hold throw rugs, beanbag chairs, Fred Hampton posters, spray paint cans, long tables for deep discussions, and copies for every student and teacher of the schools Book in Common, Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*.

Filling the school's largest classroom are your school's board members, local supportive educators, community members, families, and a newspaper reporter. One of your closest friends in Chicago, poet Kevin Coval, is in your office waiting to perform something he wrote just for City as Classroom. Two

students practice speeches in your office, which they will read after two important Little Village officials are scheduled to speak. They are two important Latinos. They are community-minded and politically minded men. You know there would be no Jarocho band, no opening day, no City as Classroom School if it had not been for these two Chi-Town warriors.

All through the months before school opens, these two political pugilists pick up the reins and give birth to City. Your father, dead now, is Cuban, and there is something familiar about these two. They tell jokes like . . . are both rough and gentle with you like . . . like Dad. So, you begin to think that a certain comfort is developing among the three of you.

The two lead you by the hand through this school startup process. One politically schools you, Chi-Town style. You learn that the whole startup process has more to do with political meetings, talks with CPS and charter school groups, than it does with finding funding, developing a board of directors, developing the curriculum, hiring teachers and an administrative staff, and enrollment.

The two recognize before you do just how much you don't know. You don't know that it is smart politics that will get your school open, not educational ideals that make up a good school. These men are beguiling and it is because of this that they have gathered so much for the 22nd ward and Latin@ community on the Southwest side of Chicago. You remain prudent and attentive to potential problems and dangers with the two while simultaneously handing them your gullibility because you want the school so badly. You just can't face Las Madres

and tell them “Sorry, still no school for your babies.” What you do to reconcile your ambivalence regarding the two is that you try never to overstep your bounds with them even when they tease you. You let them know you can take it, but you still don’t trust them.

With the help of the protest methods of Las Madres, the two partially threaten CPS with another hunger strike if City as Classroom School does not open. They make deals with other men from the district office using a political dialect with which you are unfamiliar. You are present in the meetings among all of these men, but you don’t understand that you are watching them surrender all the human elements that make a good school like teacher and student equity, interdisciplinary curricula, and a multiplicity of resources. After one of the last meetings, one of the two turns to you and says, “You got a school.” You are astonished. You didn’t even realize that the two and the men of CPS had just finalized the deal in some act of political sorcery.

Only a little while later, when you’re standing in the hall listening to negotiations with the leader of a local charter school network, that you realize what’s really happening. Chicago Public Schools makes the two—both who have never worked in a school—an offer they can’t refuse, but it is a proposition that CPS knows cannot possibly be accomplished. What you don’t realize is that’s the strategy: Make this school too difficult to ever open, or if it does open, too difficult to sustain.

The local charter school network the two connect you with is legally allowed more than one school under its charter.[115] CPS gives the two permission to open City as Classroom ("City"), but there are stipulations that could eventually shut the school down. The mandate is that City may open only if it is under the already-crowded umbrella of the local charter school network, and only if it is housed in a vital, yet overcrowded, local education and training center for Chicago's Latin@ immigrants, which is located on the far edges of the Southwest side.

The two ask the executive director of the local charter school network, *Hey, do me this favor.* The ED's eyes roll. The ED's heard these kinds of deals before. The ED says something like, *You gotta be kiddin. I'm not getting involved in this mess, but also, What's in it for me?*

Once again you are amazed at the rate of transfer and weighted elements of political exchange in this semiotics of fast bargains and covenants. You're thinking, *What have I gotten myself into and, How many of my unborn babies will these people make me sacrifice*. But you just stand there silent and let the makeshift buying and selling of pacts over schools, property, and business proceed. Occasionally, you throw in a witty comment or some assurance that the actual leading-a-school-part will be solid in your hands. The two and the ED

[115] In 1996, Illinois passed a law allowing charter schools. One of the main aspects of the law included a provision, which stated: "The number of charter schools that can be created is limited to 75 in Chicago (5 of which are dedicated to drop out recovery schools) and 45 outside of Chicago." See Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS), "Charter School Law," accessed Jan 14, 2007, http://incschools.org/charters/why_charter_schools/charter_school_law/.

know that you have no idea how to engage in business conventions of this kind, and yes, they take advantage of that. But they do have some confidence that you can lead a school, because you came to them already recognized as a good educator with some interesting educational ideas, and, most important to them (and to you), they know that you are committed to the brown and black kids who will attend City.

The Executive Director (ED) says something like, *Gurrl, you look like you're on the verge of boxer's brain. How long you been in Chicago anyway?* With nominal sympathy, she asks, *Do you know the kind of men you're dealing with?* Later the ED succumbs, *Okay, we'll sponsor the school for one year only*, but warns: *Don't let me regret this.*

Don't start a school when a wise person from a smooth-running charter school network tells you that a seemingly polite handshake could draw back a nub.

The local charter school network is helpful. Their chief of staff is brilliant. The chief of staff has written the equivalent of an NCLB encyclopedia and created a binder for the organization's principals so that they can easily navigate NCLB's convoluted, unfinanced mandates while not sacrificing the innovation and individual support that kids need. This chief of staff is also inappropriate and frightening. He speaks bluntly about political issues you will confront that visibly terrify you yet he has no filter and no sense of the effect of his words on any speaker—and he appears not to care. In the hallway, as he hands you your copy

of what one might call the *How to Get Around NCLB Binder*, he warns you not to trust the educational aims of the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago, which has a lock on new schools in the city. *They'll rape ya,* he declares. He tells you *If you shake hands with 'em, you'll draw back a nub.*

You have no idea then that his statement, albeit horrifically and offensively gendered, is accurate. In the city's larger drive toward economic and local geopolitical power, your educational objectives and your school will be treated with irreverence, your trust will be stolen, and your ambition numbed. Of course, it will be nothing like a physical rape. But there will be moments when you are petrified. You will work seven days a week on little sleep. At some point, you will be alone at City all day for three weeks with forty-five kids, some teachers out sick, some fired, and some who disappear. You will have one part-time staff person, and you will recognize no way to reverse the scarcity of services in your school. So yes, you will be traumatized, and it will take you several years to emotionally recover from the political stomping and precarious entrepreneurship you're about to experience.

NCLB-thwarting binder in your hands, you ask yourself, *What have I gone and done?* You will wonder this aloud. The chief of staff responds through a snigger, *You done started a school in Chicago.*

Don't labor on with a school if you have zero funding beyond per pupil tuition.

Being under the local charter school means great support in deciphering educational policy and negotiating its potential impact on the life of the school, but it doesn't mean the school gets any more money beyond the per pupil tuition of $5,373, which the state allots during the 2004-2005 academic year. In reality, the local charter gets a substantial cut of your tuition, which you negotiate down, but which still weakens your budget significantly. Until you win charter start-up funds, you can't enact the full City as Classroom model, you can't hire a full-time administrative anything, and you know that you can't buy all the supplies that the school needs with your personal credit card. So, City's staff will be three teachers until one wretched day they become one teacher, one principal, one quarter-time security person, and one part-time administrative assistant.

After the deals with CPS and the local charter school are done, there's one more thing to be finalized with the local Latin@ education and training center. The center needs to agree to provide you with some space to house your school. How you'll pay for this space is a whole other question with which the two and the local charter school seem unconcerned. But one of the two tells you that the school has a home, *so don't worry*.

Don't start a school if the district only consents to its opening after it has already laid out the most it's ever paid to build a high school for the very same politically active community on which the media has just focused, and that your school is intended to serve, i.e., don't start up if desire for your school is really just reluctant acquiescence to or maybe fearful anticipation of loud, publicized community pressure.

CPS is adamant that the center serves as the school's facility. Amidst the center's six or so other community education programs, it has a high school that is run by the local charter school network that will also run City as Classroom School. You visit the site and meet with the center's president who is a good person running an important community agency. But this space is almost separated from the mainland of Little Village streets. It is isolated out on a wide thoroughfare called Blue Island. The center is tiny and already overcrowded. Although it is clean, one can see the weight of the organization's programming physically straining the building.

It is hard to imagine your ninth graders traveling across a virtual highway or standing up to the center's seventeen-year-old and older, in-reform Two-Six gang members who attend its high school. You are told that it would be best if City as Classroom's teachers escort City students to the bathroom every time they have to use it to reduce the possibility of gang recruitment.

Another deal is cut and the president of the center reluctantly says, *I'll share some space*. Just as reluctantly, you accept. Then the president tells you that City's school day can't begin until after 11:00 a.m. City can't have any administrative office space at the center. City can't use the telephone and will have to rely on cellphones. City can't use the classrooms most of the day every day. City can't have lunch at a lunch hour except during breakfast time or at the end of the school day. City can't have lunch in the cafeteria but will have to eat outside—even during Chicago's infamous winters. City can't store any books or

supplies at the center. City can't use the copy machine whenever it needs to because resources are already slim and, the president says, *What if overuse breaks it*. But, there is one thing that City can have most of the day at the center, something it can call home base: An approximately 300-square-foot corner of the center's cafeteria.

And yet you don't back out, not even with all of these can'ts.

Everyone from CPS on down acts like they are doing Las Madres and you a favor. But a school can't be a favor doled out and exchanged amongst political foes and friends. Once you understand that the people who have been leading you through this start-up process are less concerned with and knowledgeable of what a school really needs—like classrooms, desks, phones, books, and safety—that is when you set out to find your school a real place home.

You look at buying in Little Village, which is too expensive. Especially because you don't have donors, and the board members you're signing on, who are genuinely committed, don't have the kind of money that will fund, in 2005, places like Legacy Charter School. You research renting in La Villita, but the real estate and land in this little village is tight. You call one of the two, let him know there is no way that you can have the school start up in the center on Blue Island. He admits, *It's not perfect*. He connects you to a man who owns a space who will rent it to you for approximately $1,500-$2,000 a month plus utilities. The space is just a little bigger than your 800-square-foot condo in the West Loop, so

you cannot imagine how you would fit even 30 kids in this space or, by 2010, the 240 students you expect to attend. The landlord tells you, *We can make it work.*

After months of searching, you surrender. You yield to the fact that Little Village is densely populated and space is scarce. What little space is available is overpriced, and there is nothing you can do about it.[116] You tell one of the two that the search is drawing up nothing. You ask them if they have any other ideas. But he does not. In fact, help from the two has been coming less and less as City's opening day approaches.

It is a month before the school is supposed to open and you still do not have a space for the school except that cafeteria corner at the center on Blue Island. Then a teacher from Francis W. Parker School on the North side where you used to work mentions City as Classroom to the second largest real estate developer in a nearby Latin@ neighborhood called Pilsen. For some reason, this developer is interested. He finds you, and he tells you to come to his office right away. Within hours, you're in his filthy office. It is a ramshackle place that has old leftover feces stains in the toilet. He takes you to see some of his properties and you realize he is a slumlord. But you are desperate. You hope that underneath

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[116] The December 2000 Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago's report, "The Homeownership and Financing Experience in Two Chicago Minority Neighborhoods," reports, "while the total housing units in Little Village have remained virtually unchanged from its 1960 level, the population has increased by 33 percent. The vacancy rate has declined from 44 percent in 1960 to 7 percent in 1990. To a major extent, new housing construction projects have been difficult to undertake because of limited geographical space available." See Sherrie L. and Maude Toussaint-Comeau Rhine, "The Homeownership and Financing Experience in Two Chicago Minority Neighborhoods," Consumer Issues Research Series/Consumer and Community Affairs Division, *Policy Studies* (December 2000): 4.

this slumlord lays a true heart, a donor, and a site for your school. He does help. He becomes chair of City's board. He gives City what you think is a $10,000 donation but actually turns out to be a loan, which you only find out once the school has to close. He finds City a building near his office and he finds furniture for the school. He even offers up his grungy little office in which you can interview prospective teachers and hold meetings until the school's site is up and ready.

He has done well. The new site is absolutely perfect, at least for a start-up high school. Twenty-eight thousand-square-feet of space. Brightly colored classrooms. Two floors for your small school that will begin with forty-five ninth graders and then expand each year. There is a bus stop around the corner, a parking lot, a playground on site, a nearby Mexican café and restaurant, and a corner store where the kids can, unfortunately, buy their daily dose of hot chips.[117] But best of all, what this place has is a lease City as Classroom School can afford. Only about $2,000 per month including utilities for the entire building and for the long term. You believe that with the potential this space offers, Las Madres will have a real school for their children. There's also room to grow in this site located in Pilsen, a different but yet still Latin@ neighborhood as is Little Village.

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[117] Part of City's philosophy was to educate the whole child and to make children aware of their hearts, minds, and bodies. The students' addiction to the MSG in hot chips sold by companies like Lays inspired a City history/theatre teacher, Idris Goodwin, to write a performance poem called "What is They Feedin Our Kids," which he later performed on Russell Simmon's *HBO Def Poetry Jam* in February 2007. See Idris Goodwin, *HBO Def Poetry Jam*, Season 6, episode 1. "What is They Feedin Our Kids," February 007, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IENR53OgcFY.

This is exactly where you went very wrong. You never really understood that in all cities geography is power, and power is in the geographies of a city. You did not heed the geography of education in Chicago and the triumvirate of land, labor, and money.

Don't start a school in a city that the 1959 Civil Rights Commission dubbed the most segregated in the nation—a city in which its own newspaper still considers it the most segregated even 49 years later.

Place matters in Chicago where there are over 200 neighborhoods. In Chicago, place and power partner in neighborhoods for the acclaim and capital that resources like schools, housing, and businesses can bring. Neighborhoods in Chicago are their own micro-nations, each with its own race—mainly white, brown, or black; each with its own ruler, or alderman; each with its individual relationship, whether good or bad, to the central authority of the city and the mayor.

Don't start a school without first knowing whether the local community organizers and officials who help you to start the school believe that all cities need good schools everywhere in the city. Before proceeding with opening day, find out if they will refuse to support your school if you move it 10 minutes outside the boundaries of their community.

All of this—your search for a reasonable place to locate the school, the covenants you saw contracted and to which you, through your silence, agreed—is like a faded history once it is opening day. August 2004, and you and City as

Classroom School are about 10 minutes away from Little Village in an old Catholic School building in a different Latin@ neighborhood, with brightly colored classrooms, your mom in the audience looking fly as usual, two students are practicing speeches that they are nervous to deliver right after the two, two of the most important Latin@ politicians in the city, two community- and politically-minded men deliver their opening day speeches. The Jarocho band is still playing and it is about 9:30 in the morning (30 minutes past opening time), but the two aren't anywhere in sight. Did they forget we moved? Did they go to the center on Blue Island by mistake?

The phone call to the two goes something like this.

"It's 9:30. Where are you?"

"I'm not coming," one of the two states.

"What do you mean you're not coming?! Are you sick?" I ask dumbfounded.

"Nah, I'm not sick. You knew the minute you moved the school out of Little Village that I couldn't support it anymore."

"No, actually, I didn't know that. That's why I'm calling to find out where you are. People are waiting . . . I can't believe you waited until opening day . . . You're scheduled to speak . . . You're just letting me know now?"

You're sweating, long peninsula-shaped pit stains are forming on your dress. There is a silent pause in your conversation. You are hoping that maybe he sees your point and will change his mind. But he says, "You could've kept the

school right here in Little Village. We found you a place at the center. But you chose to move the school. So, I'm not coming."

"We're like 10 minutes from Little Village. How can 10 minutes matter?" But in Chicago, ten minutes *does* matter. To gangs and to community leaders, geography matters.

He asks, rhetorically, "But you're *not* in Little Village, *are you*?"

"Wow! I can't believe this is happening."

"Come on, Lisa. You knew this was going to happen the minute you moved the school. Don't act like it's a surprise." But you're not acting. You are surprised.

Like a ram he jabs. "That school was supposed to be for the children of Little Village."

"The school still is for Little Village kids. All of our Latin@ students live in Little Village. You and CPS knew that the center was unmanageable."

"Yeah, but the school still would have been in Little Village."

Bouncing between supplicant and insurgent. "But what about the kids? Come on! Don't do this. Not on their first day of school." But he's adamant. "I'm not going to support the school if it's not in Little Village. Good luck," and he hangs up the phone.

I call the other one of the two. He is reading from the same script. "What should I tell the families?" I ask. He says something ridiculous like, "Move the school back, then I can support you, but where it is now, I can't."

“What do I tell the kids?

“Tell them you moved the school.”

Without your initial political base, you and the school are out there alone with a slumlord heading the board. You recruit other board members. You even find a V.P. from one of the most powerful and far reaching banks in the city and nation to be your treasurer at a charter school board-recruitment gig hosted by that education arm of the Civic Committee about which the Chief of Staff from the local charter school had warned you (remember, “you’ll draw back a nub. . . they’ll rape ya”).

Near the end of the school, City’s board treasurer develops a very close business relationship with your chair, one that appears to be outside the school context but uses the school as a business for this relationship. For now, he is very helpful because he understands money, which is the oxygen of schools in Chicago in 2004.

As the school year moves on, you are writing a charter application in September so that you can be a charter school independent of the umbrella under which City as Classroom currently is under and because the network gave you only one year before they would cut you off. But at the same time, you’re running a school on a per pupil expenditure of only $5,373. To save money, you sometimes serve as security guard and receptionist. You use your own money, what little you have, to bring snacks for the kids every day because CPS doesn’t fulfill the school’s right to breakfast and lunch by providing funded food services.

To no avail, three times a day you call food services begging for the free breakfast and lunch to which your students have a legal right. You end up spending a lot of your own money feeding kids who don't need to starve during the day when they already pretty much starve at home at night. There is one thing that you do have, though, an outstanding leadership coach from your principal training program, New Leaders for New Schools. Ellen Reiter coaches you between 4:30 and 5:30 each morning, in mid-afternoon, late at night, in person, by phone, by email. She tells you when you have made a misstep. She assures you promptly when you are right, and she throws a blanket over you when all you need is sleep. Ellen even donates $1,000 to the school because she knows how hard you are trying to keep this school afloat.

And then there is the educational coach from you have from a different principal-training program you were asked to join and did. He is also supposedly there to help you build and implement the progressive model that City plans to use, and he is, well. . .

Don't start a school with an educational coach who calls you late at night, asks What are you wearing? *and expects a serious answer before coaching can begin. Don't continue to work with the same coach then seem somewhat surprised when he comes on to your youngest female teacher, and you have to cease all relations with the coaching organization because man there believes he's doing what he's doing, and the lecher is empowered to persist.*

Yet there are good things that also begin to happen within the seeming mess that is City.

If you do start a school, always try to remember the reasons why you wanted to start a school in the first place.

One day, one of the three teachers for your 45 students comes down with laryngitis. She is your best teacher. With you and thirteen- and fourteen-year-old Latin@s and Two-Six and black Gangster Disciple gang recruits trying to earn their stripes as what the kids call "foot soldiers," your best teacher can't talk. So, you are teaching teachers how to teach students how to resolve conflicts, dismantle notions of difference, construct projects with the kids that will help them begin to see how they have been set up to ignore each other's humanity and common social conditions. Teachers teach equity, inclusivity, give the students a voice they've never had, and the kids become righteous about things like black and brown rights to a mutual sort of peace and justice.

You design City as a small school. Its program draws on already existing models like The Met in Rhode Island, The Urban School of San Francisco, Hampshire College in Massachusetts, and Colorado College in Colorado. You have intentionally designed a school where all staff are allied with City's stated aim of college preparation and admission to all students. Soon you will propose to the charter board review committee that it is this overarching objective that will enable the school to practice and use a learning and teaching methodology that not only scaffold toward but also model a liberal arts college curriculum. The school will be and is already based in habits of learning and instructional

practices that produce academic inquiry and engagement, critical thinking, a sound sense of the past, a scientific frame of mind, quantitative reasoning abilities, and ways for students to develop the ability to deal with large quantities of knowledge. And this City achieves within the context of an extreme shortfall of resources.

When you finally present your charter application to the Chicago Public Schools charter review board, you tell them that a City education is a partnership between student, school, and family. Using anecdotes, you demonstrate to them that the school's small class size and school community allow teachers to develop an individual learning plan for each student that is based on their academic and social interests. Small groups, or advisories, of 15 students work with one teacher all four years of high school. Distinguished from the traditional definition of advisory, you explain that students' time with their advisor at City serves three functions. Advisory is a permanent group of fifteen students and one advisor. It is also a place: the actual classroom where students and advisor gather for teaching and learning. Teaching during advisory is a combination of independent academic work, direct instruction, and cooperative group work. Lastly, advisory is a time when students and advisor meet every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

You have created a school where, together, teacher and student decide on a course of study, an independent learning plan that can include college classes, and independent academic projects that fulfill City's graduation requirements.

Twice weekly, students participate in real work in internships connected to their interests and passions that are located throughout the city of Chicago.

The charter proposal requires details about assessment because, of course, Chicago is concerned about testing, and NCLB, now three years old has as its core standardized testing. But City will not concede to testing and as a charter it will not have to. You explain that City students are assessed based on quarterly demonstrations of work and academic portfolios, called Exhibitions. All learning is geared toward what a student wants to know and needs to learn in order to fulfill their personal goals and dreams. City teachers (called advisors) possess a strong interest in student-centered learning and are committed to collaborative work with students, families, school staff, and you, the director.

Learning at City is not constrained by the school day or the school year. In response to adolescent brain research, City's school day begins at 10:00 a.m. Students are encouraged to pursue their interests and grow academically and given credit for activities outside of the school day and the school year. Every student's work is documented on an Independent Learning Plan, created and updated each quarter with the Learning Team comprised of the student, family, advisor, and mentor as well as the Learning Specialist if a student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The curriculum, learning environment, use of time during the school day, choice of workshops or college classes, focus and depth of investigation in City's five areas of study are all based on a student's

individual interests, talents, and needs. And students with IEPs follow the same process, also personalized to their needs.

City's five academic areas, or "Schools," provide a framework for the course of study. The Schools house the subject disciplines and provide a framework for study and discipline objectives around which the student and advisor organize the Independent Learning Plan. The Schools provide a process and a way of thinking in a particular discipline, i.e., students learn to think scientifically; become quantitative reasoners; develop their own artistic ideas; develop a sense of the past; use a target language to communicate within and beyond the classroom setting; and read and write critically, creatively, and analytically. In the process, they become bi- or multi-lingual writers, artists, historians, logicians, scientists, and critical theorists.

As City grows, the plan is to hire strategically so that by 2005-2006, it has an advisor who is an expert in each of the disciplines represented by the Five Schools. The academic schools are the School of Aesthetics, the School of Cultural and Global Studies, the School of Humanities, the School of Mathematical Sciences, which includes computer sciences, and the School of Natural Science. The School of Aesthetics focuses on artmaking. The School of Cultural and Global Studies emphasizes the critical examination of issues related to multiple perspectives, cultures, social institutions, and social change. The School of Humanities focuses on broadening the depth of a student's development and understanding of text, genre, analytical prose, and

performance writing as ways to deepen an understanding of self, other, and difference as well as literate communication across the genres. The School of Mathematical Sciences provides the education and experience necessary to learn applied, problem-based mathematics preparing students for the use of mathematics in real-world situations. The School of Natural Science is where students develop a scientific frame of mind and a way to apply a set of theories, methods, and data for understanding the world.

One of City's guiding principles is to do what is best for the kid, appropriately challenging and supporting at the right time, not dictating or punishing but problem solving and mediating. The advisor's job is to promote growth by knowing and really seeing each of their fifteen students. Students are responsible for following their interests and passions in the city and in their project work. They are also responsible for contributing and participating positively and productively to the city and the school community.

After you present your charter application, one of the charter review committee members says to the nods of others in the room, City is "the way all Chicago schools should be."

Don't believe the hype. And certainly, don't keep a school going on hype alone.

With greater financial support, your school's community certainly has the potential to be exceptionally vibrant. The school has vision, a love of learning and teaching, strong academics and arts, a sense of humor, and a love of adolescent

life. The school is committed to building community and using the city as classroom. Despite the troubles that come, students from the opposing and segregated West and South sides of Chicago make their own rules like “No Gang Banging at the Crib,” which means no gang activity in their home, which they very much consider City as Classroom School to be.

Once dumped by the two, the gracious people at Small Schools Workshop like Mike and Susan Klonsky, John Ayers from Leadership for Quality Education, and Marv Hoffman from University of Chicago and founder of North Kenwood Charter School all do their best to cast a net of support around you. But there is no one like the two who stepped in closely to guide you through Chicago’s complex and political education network. You are afloat on a raft with holes that no number of educators can plug or pull back into the political center of education in Chicago. Of course, the problems are not only the fault of the broken relationship with the two, and today you understand and know better.

Realize that your startup is a set-up, a purposeful scheme to punish not you or the kids directly but maybe just to punish, for reasons unknown, the men who negotiate hard for your school, or maybe just to push you out in order to give your facility to a different school with more political and economic backing. Who knows?

What you do know is that Chicago Public Schools’ food services is not just forgetting to give you a refrigerator, a cafeteria worker, breakfast and lunch for your students each and every morning for three months. What allows them to ignore the two messages you leave every day for three months asking *Where’s*

the morning milk? and Where's our kids' lunch? you just don't know and never will.

One day, there is a surprise visit from a CPS official who's "checking in." This is just a couple of days after your two worst teachers quit because one thought going on a week-long honeymoon during school without telling you was okay and the other thought teaching by cursing out kids was also okay.

Is it just bad luck that every CPS sub is booked and because of NCLB you can't find a "qualified" teacher to take their place? You have one teacher remaining for all 45 kids. You shuffle the CPS official from your office to the one teacher's classroom. You tell your first political fib when she asks *Where are the other teachers?* You respond, *On a field trip.*

Where's your cafeteria? You explain that until enrollment increases, the kids eat in their classrooms. She says, *No, I mean where's the food and where's the cook?* You unload and tell her about the calls to CPS' food services department, how hard it was to open City, but you do not tell her that you only have one teacher. The official says, "You're the poster child for principal endurance."

Next day. School door buzzer rings and there stands a woman dressed in cafeteria white. Next comes a refrigerator, then comes milk, then come boxes with CPS's packaged victuals. We get plasticized hot dogs, PB&J, once-grilled cheese, and very happy kids.

Don't start a school using a model that only includes three teachers if two of those teachers have never taught before and one just graduated from teacher ed. And realize there is trouble with a faculty's integrity when during the second week of school you're wondering, "Where in the world is Teacher So-and-So?" and your students, noticing everything, figure out how unenlightened you are and notify you that Teacher So-and-So is on his honeymoon.

After a week of you and your remaining teacher going it alone in the classroom with 45 kids, you look in the mirror and notice that in just a short time gray hair is popping out of your head in bunches. The sole teacher? Laryngitis. The doctor tells her "If you talk, you'll really lose your voice. So not one word."

For two weeks you end up teaching everything, running the administrative office, managing the books, and sometimes even guarding the door, and daily plunging those dang toilets in the basement. Two board members, who are like Isis and Superman, keep the school supplied with toilet paper and the disposable menstrual pads the girls can't afford to buy at home. Other board members, like Marv, donate books. And you, you give the school everything until your credit card statement balance reads $5,000.

One morning at 6:30 a.m. you call your godmother and just cry, shake from fear, scream really loud just once, because for two weeks you have run the school alone. Then you hear the kids come in and somehow you suck it all in, act like all of this is normal, and you carry on.

On 14 December 2004 the *Chicago Tribune* reports "Proposals for five new charter schools are poised to be approved at the January Chicago Board of Education." City is one of them! You get a phone call from a member of the

charter review committee. She is already helping you make plans for your bilingual students, and fellow educators are spreading rumors that City's got a charter.

Winter break arrives. With charter rumors in the air, during the break you decide to begin to move partially into the full model of City as best you can on what little money City and you have. You hire a math, Spanish, and history teacher, one new advisor, solidify the CPS special education resource person, paint the classrooms and the halls, install a makeshift computer lab, and make the security guard full time. The kids come back and the school is for the first time soaring. But something happened between 14 December and 4 January. Somebody's mind got changed. Some Chicago dynamic of power got played. You are told by a reputable source, *Somebody struck a deal. Somebody shook somebody's hand.* And now you are left with a nub.

On the dead media weekend, just before 3:00 p.m., on the Friday before the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, CPS calls: *I'm sorry, you didn't get a charter. But we expect you to stay open. They say the school should stick around, grow, and strengthen. On what?* you ask. *Air?*

Not only have you lost the charter, but you are also forced by CPS to submit a letter of withdrawal to CPS even though City has not chosen to withdraw. CPS directs that this letter is to be delivered as soon as possible. They say without it City will never be able to submit a charter application again.

Right now, the school is barely surviving on its $290,000 budget. Your contract with the local charter school ends in August and that means City will have no status—not as a charter, not as a public school. Plus, CPS and the local charter school aren't getting along and the executive director keeps intimating, *They want to shut us down.* Meaning that CPS is looking for a reason, like a failing City as Classroom School, to shut down the charter network sponsoring City. You know that without the $250,000 from the federal charter schools grant and other financing, the school is not sustainable, and the kids will suffer. And you know that, of course, CPS knows this is the case, too.

You make a plan with the Board. Even though the teachers are sorry to lose their jobs and lose the idea that is City, they know that without money the school can't win. So together you shut the school down mid-year. You use every education connection you've established in your four years in Chicago and move every kid out of City within the next two weeks. You get them into good and different schools where they will be safe. You know this is the right thing to do. Summer is a dangerous time for these kids. You don't want the students lingering for a semester in City's arms all sad and hopeless and then spend a summer with contemplations of dropping out because they have no school. Moving the kids out now allows them to acclimate to a new school during the second semester.

The situational and somewhat political acuity with which you shut down that school—how you beg, push, and fulfill the promise to get your kids into good schools in Chicago—makes you realize that Chicago has taught you a few things

after all. It took you a minute, but you are finally seeing that power is in the geography of education.

If you want to start a school in a major city in the U.S., you'll need to understand from roots to stem the city's particular politics surrounding its geography, because it's these very politics that could determine whether your school opens then closes. One of the many bottom lines in this school startup business is this: Don't start a school three years after Senator Ted Kennedy co-authors a bill for standards-based education reform and two years after it is signed into law by President George W. Bush, because this law, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or NCLB, will make markets out of school districts and buyers out of corporations, real estate developers, and families already desperate to escape under-resourced schools struggling to survive.

If you do plan to start a school, conduct research on the city in which you plan to open. If you find that it has something called a Commercial Club, don't be dewy-eyed or a dolt and think that starting a school in a city that has a Commercial Club just means you're starting a school in a city that has a commercial club, especially when that city is Chicago, a city governed by quid pro quo deals using Capone-style methods. A city where word has it that former Mayor Richard M. Daley, once the longest-running mayor, signals his approval of one's "good" intentions not with a handshake or a nod, not with a pat on the back, but with you and him in his office and the lighting of a stogie, and that's whether you smoke or not.

You still might think that none of this really matters to open your school and its ability to win a charter, because during all your feasibility studies for the school, if you did any, you probably never thought to conduct something like a corporate dominion study. *What's that?* you ask and push back, *What does it matter if the Commercial Club was "founded in 1877 by a group of 17 businessmen who believed Chicago needed a strong and cohesive civic force"?* In fact, naïve, you might think, *That sounds pretty noble.*

Of course, if you do plan to start a school in a city like Chicago where the Commercial Club has a Civic Committee, where the Civic Committee has an education initiative, and where the Education Committee of the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club has been involved in Chicago school reform "as well as the establishment of charter schools" for the last twenty years, you can venture a pretty good guess that some of the club's members will certainly see public schools as private commodities like those they buy and sell during at Abbott Laboratories, Allstate Corporation, American Airlines, Ernst & Young, Exelon, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, Kraft Foods, Hyatt Hotels, McDonald's, Motorola, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Sara Lee Corporation, United Continental Holdings, Walgreens, and about 486 other national and multi-national corporations.

In the end, the dream of a new school and the drive to risk everything for kids—the belief or fact that a particular type of process-based learning; a certain type of meaningful, differentiated instruction; the relevance of critical pedagogy to the lives of the kids and their families—do not matter because these cannot be bought or sold, traded, or used in the education market. Educational ideals like yours create interchange instead of exchange, and the kind of social interchange they make, the kind of futures they produce, the kind of benefit to a school that they construct lose out to the business exchanges required today to open and sustain a school.

The problem for you is that before you opened your school, you did not understand that starting a school is not just about ideas, innovation, imagination, and a pedagogy of love; it's not just about doing the right thing. Educational vision isn't like business vision. It isn't a substance that can produce the kinds of economic and political relationships people need to get a school started and keep it open.

In August 2004 you start a school in Chicago. In February 2005, you shut it down. So when you tell the story about starting up City as Classroom School in Chicago, two years after NCLB makes markets out of school districts, buyers out of corporations, real estate developers, and challenges families already desperate to escape under-resourced and neglected schools, do not forget to tell people how much you did not understand about the contemporary education economy or what former Mayor Daley calls the "business of education."[118] Tell them this: school for the public now pivots on the conception that public education is transactional. It involves the art and science of politics, political attitudes and positions, the complex and aggregate of relationships of power and authority. In other words, the business of education is really about the politics of education, the geography of education, the economics of education and hardly about the art of teaching and learning.

If you do start a school, and if you do have to shut down your school, make sure the last thing that you do is guarantee that all the bills are paid before you return the key.

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[118] From Mayor Richard M. Daley, Renaissance 2010 Announcement, 24 June 2004.

Finally, make sure the last installment of tuition which includes Title I and/or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds from the state goes right into the hands of the phone company and utility company and accountant and every other business with which you contracted. Because $35,000 is more than enough to pay off all the school's nominal debts. Don't turn the school's bank account over to your board chair. Don't let the chair and the treasurer assure you that they'll "take care of everything," because they mean that literally.

Be prepared. Things like that $10,000 donation your board chair made early on might just turn into an expense and to be reimbursed—to him. And months and even several years after your school closes, Chicago's utilities providers will come knocking on your door—even if you move 400 miles away—expecting you, the unemployed former principal of the school, to pay up.

Well, hindsight is 20/20, right? It is only now that you're cognizant of how politically immature you were; how hopeful and stubborn you were when City was a possibility. You ignored all the obvious alerts and obstacles. It had something to do with your connection to Las Madres; it had a lot to do with who the kids were, who they had become by the time the school closed, and who they could have become had the school gained a charter. It also had to do with who you were then, a person you barely recognize now. And if I may be blunt, I think you were also kind of stupid, just plain ig'nant as they used to say in the neighborhood in which you grew up. *Schooling is political,* says your momma when all is said and done*, Just like everything else in this country, but it can feel personal, can't it, Baby?*

This was City's mission: Representing the knowledge, ability, and imagination of urban youth, City as Classroom School's mission is to build generations of public intellectuals motivated by their own interests and creativity,

using the city of Chicago as their classroom. And for a little while, the kids, their families, the teachers, and I, we almost lived it.

Chapter 3

Love Pedagogy: Teaching to Disrupt

Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is a commitment to others. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause—the cause of liberation.

—*Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

Basketball commentators talk about the strength derived from playing inside the paint. The paint is also known as "the key" for a reason. Inside the paint both dunks and blocked shots go down. Importantly, this is the space in which players are like lattice, woven together they are connected; they are in spiritual, mental, and physical congruence. In his book *Sacred Hoop*s, Zen Buddhist and NBA coach Phil Jackson describes the symbiosis of an athletic team this way: "Basketball is a sport that involves the subtle interweaving of players at full speed to the point where they are thinking and moving as one."[119] In a classroom, to think and to move in authentic unison like this with young people is the method and practice of teaching I call "a love pedagogy". Inside a classroom, a school building, or whatever site becomes the key to teach for understanding, we're moving at full speed; we're vulnerable, and we're attentive to our individual and collective needs, hopes, and fears. In a Facebook post, my former student Yoshi Shimada, now a teacher in Japan, describes the essence of

[119] See Phil Jackson and Hugh Delehanty, *Sacred Hoops: Spiritual Lessons of a Hardwood Warrior* (New York: Hyperion, 1995): 17.

my love pedagogy. He writes, “One of my favorite teachers, Lisa Arrastia, used to tell us what she kept in mind when she entered the classroom—talking to herself she ‘loves her students’ and then opens the door. I must say, this has affected my career significantly, and it’s still deep in my heart after I became a teacher in Japan. Nowadays, every time I walk into the classroom, I remind myself that all my students have immeasurable potential and bright futures ahead of them. ‘I love my students,’ and I vow to be the best teacher for them no matter what, who truly respects them, and can bring out their own missions for them to pursue to make this world a better place.”

A love pedagogy recognizes, and uses as a part of its practice, a common humanity. The practice of love pedagogy sees this as a very intellectual and academic endeavor. Love pedagogy, then, requires presence, attention to emotional detail, and a keen focus on the twitches of intellect, the quiver of engagement, and spasms of understanding in young people. Because that is the way learning comes.

To teach inside the paint is to practice a love pedagogy; it is to be profoundly aware of all the mechanisms in the contemporary education economy that seek to divert our attention away from what every teacher I have ever coached tells me produces authentic and consequential learning: relationship. If we grade, we hide from students the process of our internal thinking, and we are not in relationship with the student. If we test or if the state tests, Narcissus appears seeking only his own reflection. If we focus solely on what we think a kid

should know and never ask them what they want or need to know, we rob them of the process of critical inquiry, of learning how to critique their own sociopolitical lives; we neglect our democratic responsibility to provide young people opportunities to think, question, and create.

So, to teach inside the paint is to be in a relationship, not just with the result of the lesson or quarter, the semester or the exam, but with the social life of the child and the curiosities she wrestles. It is to ask and to create whole units that allow young people to surface the dangers they know await them on the streets that stretch from home to school. It is to be brave enough to forgo a carefully structured lesson plan when a student seemingly moves you off course with some issue or query; it is to recognize that the issue or question raised is always already the course. If teaching and learning are to be in any way meaningful, in any way everlasting, in any way a disruption to the crisis of connection, as teachers we must be deeply affected by our students; we must feel an intense affection for them. As Maxine Greene argues in *The Dialectic of Freedom,* educators must be genuinely interested in young people.[120] To teach inside the paint is to think and to move as one with your students, to plan and let go of every lesson so that this is assured; it is, ultimately, to seek to create and then fully inhabit spaces of love; it is, then, to practice a love pedagogy. And the pedagogy is not some sentimental absurdity because love is not some

[120] See Maxine Greene, *The Dialectic of Freedom.* New York: Teachers College Press, 1988.

"emotional bosh" as Martin Luther King, Jr. once argued.[121] Within the context of the struggle against racism, gendered notions, and poverty, a pedagogy of love in the classroom is "something strong . . . that organizes itself into powerful direct action."

You might wonder what constitutes the syllabus for a love pedagogy and where you can download it. When talking with K–12 teachers and college professors about the Young People's Archive (YPA), which is like a digital representation of love pedagogy, I am often asked, "Can you email me your syllabus for how you get the kids to be so honest?" or "In what unit do you include the love part?" or "How do you scaffold the lesson to teach kids to be curious about their own lives and the lives of others? How do you get them to want to connect to themselves and others?" These are difficult questions to answer because they emerge from thinking about teaching and young people like cars in a garage awaiting repair by mechanics. No one ever likes hearing my real responses to these kinds of questions because my responses don't involve special tools or anything that can be purchased from an online curriculum company. Instead, my answers point teachers right back to themselves. To practice a love pedagogy is to be in relationship with your own fragile state on earth, your own pain, and your own suffering; it is to simultaneously be in relationship with students' pain and dissatisfaction, their innate desire to know and understand; it is to acknowledge openly to the kids not your stupidity, but

[121] Martin Luther King Jr. interviewed by Dr. Kenneth Clark, "The Negro and the American Promise," *American Experience* (PBS, 1963).

your ongoing ignorance about the human condition; it is to design content that interests you, yes, but that provides ways for students to connect to themselves and witness others as both breakable and deserving of honor; it is to recognize teaching as a transdisciplinary art of social and intellectual engagement in which students grapple with the predicament of social dislocation and social isolation as well as conscious and subliminal social detachment.

As teachers today, we must recognize that before now and after now we were and always will be the observers and the victims of a crisis of connection unlike any that humankind has experienced in education. It is a socially constructed crisis. Yet it is a crisis that teachers can deconstruct, disrupt, then dismantle. A pedagogy of love in the classroom is like a horizontal act in which you do not look up to power and request or even demand from the education system the return of your humanity and the liberation of young people. Instead, you reclaim your humanity by liberating the kids. My disruption comes in the form of curricular content that is contextual. It emerges from students' own questions about their personal struggles and often in the moment of teaching. I ask students to produce projects (audio, visual, written, performative) that compel them to humanize even those they once deemed unworthy of respect, and I ask them to show the public how both they as young people and the people around them are trying to negotiate and make sense of larger American cultural values and beliefs. Maybe the Philosophy of Practice (PoP) I teach the SLiCk youth interns of the Young People's Archive Service Learning Collective can help

provide an understanding of the basic principles of a love pedagogy. Our interns and the young people they teach learn to internalize this PoP. I think it makes sense to them on the inside. Some have said it helps them to reframe the message that young people are weak, irresponsible, distracted, and disconnected. Some have said this Philosophy of Practice gives them courage. Our PoP is that we dare to ask questions. We are brave enough to listen. We place ourselves inside other people's words. We listen across difference. We are connected.

These may not be the nuts and bolts you seek, but this is the love pedagogy I have been forging in classrooms and schools, and which I've attempted for decades to advance in organizations, programs, and even administrations. A love pedagogy sees teaching as an act of investigation, exploration, self-discovery, and creative expression by the teacher and the student. As teachers, we are not perpendicular to our students' lived experience in the classroom. Instead, the students and we are a pair of parallel, self-intersecting sides. At first, it may appear that we are opposite angles facing each other, but through a love pedagogy we can discover that in reality we are coinciding exactly when superimposed. Indeed, the teacher-student relationship is the very possibility of congruence. As should be evident, the foundation of a love pedagogy comprises social engagement, self-reflection, and relationship. One way to disrupt the crisis of connection in our contemporary education economy is to allow ourselves, and young people, to abandon and even

repudiate convention. Another way: notice what young people do, what they say, what makes them begin to question, why they feel this and not that, and when their interest is genuinely piqued. Yet another approach? Connect.

Mohamad

Figure 4 Mohamad Nasrallah, University at Albany, Albany, New York, spring 2014.

It's spring semester. I'm in my office waiting for the next fifteen-minute student conference. I usually open with, *If you had two hours to Google absolutely anything, what would you Google?* The question is my effort to get at a student's passion despite the purported majors they're forced to claim while still

in the guppy stage or risk being labeled “Undeclared.” Nearby, Bard, a private liberal arts college with an annual tuition of about $68,000, offers, in addition to divisional majors, “interdivisional concentrations” like “Experimental Humanities,” “Mind, Brain, and Behavior,” and American studies. Students at my State University of New York campus, with an annual tuition of $22,000 in 2015, overwhelmingly choose from over 90 traditional majors because, of course, there is no experimental anything at working class public universities. Students here major in bio, business, criminal justice, accounting, and as of late, homeland security. With the accounting majors, I’m always like, *For real? You’re telling me that when you were like 12 or 13, you laid up in your bed nightdreaming up into some popcorn-painted ceiling declaring Yeah, that’s definitely it. When I grow up, I wanna be an accountant!*

But when Mohammed comes in for his conference, I don’t get to ask my question. Mohammed begins with his own. It’s a test. He’s asking, *Can I trust you? Have I been bullshitted for the last 4-12 years? Do I have a voice? Is it worthy?* and *Have I ever been worthy?* Lithe, about 5’ 8,” Mohammed peeks his head in my office on time. He sits; leans forward. A chained silver scimitar falls from behind his shirt collar. He quickly grabs it, tucks it back in. Left elbow on left knee, right elbow on right knee Mohammed asks, *What do you think when a writer writes this, that, this*. *Instead of this, that, and this?* Huh? What I’m saying is do you think it’s okay not to put “and” before the last word in a list? How do you hear the words, Mohammed? *I mean, the words that don’t have an and? I don’t*

hear an and. I think they sound better without it. Then if it's your purpose, if it's purposeful, forget "and"*. I always lost points in high school whenever I purposely left out and. Even though I'd lost points, I did it anyway because it just sounds better, you know, no "and".*

One way to thwart the crisis of connection in our contemporary education economy is to allow teachers, and the kids, to abandon, even repudiate convention. Another way: notice. Yet another approach? Connect.

You hid your necklace. I think it's intricate and beautiful. *It's a scimitar. I usually keep it tucked in.* Why? *You don't mind it?* No. Why should I mind it? *Some people think it's a sign of, like, I'm a terrorist or something, you know.* Is it important to you? *Yeah.* And then comes a perfect, unpracticed flood of story and metaphor:

> My scimitar is silver. It was given to me by my brother, who got it from my grandmother in Lebanon. I used to have a gold one, which was also given to me by my older brother, but I was jumped in New York City for it when I was 16. It's called a Saif in Arabic. We both call it that when speaking in Arabic. I think he gave it to me to allow me to stay in tune with my identity in a world that was opposed to it. He must have thought it was very important, as after I was robbed for the gold one, which was originally his, he gave me the silver one, which he also took off to give me, making him bereft of the necklace.

Mohammed was a first-year college student when we met. That a conjunction could plague a kid until he got to college where he felt he could finally question it. That “and” could connect us. Mohammed has returned to the spelling of his name given at birth, Mohamad, and he’s going for an MD-PhD at University of Massachusetts at Worcester, which he began in fall 2017 (Figure 4 and 5). Mohamad is tender, he is an historian, he believes in altruism and benevolence; he’s an active and deep listener. Mohamad is Shia. Mohamad is light.

Figure 5 Mohamad Nasrallah, University at Albany,
Albany, New York, spring 2014.

Mohamad was a member of the Class of 2017. This class was the first to endure all 12 years of public schooling under the effects of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. My students describe themselves as s*o disconnected we don't know how to get back*. *Disconnection has become our social norm. . . Our*

generation isn't necessarily not social, we're just social in a different way. We're just not connected.

This is not the Millennial generation; it is the "NCLB generation," and it is my students who named themselves this (with the help of student Andrew Cutrone) in a class one day as they drew a timeline of their unconscious assimilation. Historian Jeff Kolnick describes the generation best: "Many of them would have started their academic journey in the last year of Bill Clinton's presidency and entered first grade under No Child Left Behind. They also began the first grade around the time of the Sept. 11th attacks. For this class of young people, their academic minds have been shaped by a steady diet of high-stakes standardized tests, and their civic consciousness has been molded by a nation continuously at war."[122]

This socially mediated, disconnected yet still hopeful generation did not emerge suddenly as a *generation* when President Bush signed NCLB into law in 2002. The seeds of their emergence were planted in President Reagan's attempts to dismantle the Department of Education and open markets and President Clinton's dismantling of the social safety net and success in deregulating all markets making multiple pathways into privatization. In this way, these children are not a part of an era, a period that stops in time, i.e., a generation, but instead an ongoing result, an effect of policies and practices

[122] Jeff Kolnick, "Faculty Should Show Less Caution, More Courage–More Eagerness to Face Challenges," Academe (blog), *American Association of University Professors*, 23 August 2013, https://tinyurl.com/kth2q89.

made to make them docile, service-oriented, and fixed on disconnected, mediated lives. In truth, they can be and are the only ones, with our partnership, who can turn the effects of NCLB on their head. And this “generation” already has begun to do just that. It has taken us a little over a generation to cultivate this “NCLB generation”—deep inside a contemporary education economy, which has produced a crisis of connection. And yet they will be and already are agents of their own change.

For years in school, Mohamad concerned himself with the social and political function of a conjunction while hiding a symbol of his humanity, an emblem with a story connecting him from here to Lebanon. His previous educational engagements provided no place for inquiry into something that links one idea to another. There was no time to engage in the slow process of challenging a whole system and structure of a language and no quantifiable standard that might authorize an investigation into the cognition and cultural politics of lexical and conceptual semantics. What a grammar lesson that might be.

In the time it takes to develop a generation, NCLB succeeded in producing a particular service-minded cohort for whom rapidity, checkboxes, accountability, and constant measurement are primary. A generation just signifies the passage of one period of time into another. Whether you are an elder or a young adult, if you were a teacher in this period, you are also a member of the NCLB generation. As a part of this ongoing and living history, I ask what part of our

humanity has its measures made us leave behind when we enter our classroom or faculty meeting? What have we been made to believe, and how did we get here?

NCLB is one of the largest overhauls of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Signed into law in 1965, ESEA was part of President Johnson's War on Poverty. In 2015, President Obama reauthorized ESEA under the Every Student Succeeds Act, keeping the main framework of NCLB's testing and accountability measures intact. No matter the name, the laws specifically target schools of those less powerful who traditionally live in under-resourced communities. Private schools (non-secular schools like Catholic schools) and predominantly white, elite independent schools across the country (like Harvard-Westlake in California, Trinity in New York, or Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, with annual tuitions ranging from $20,000 in more rural areas to over $50,000 in more affluent areas), remain unofficially exempt.

One original impetus for the contemporary education economy was the competition in which we engaged with the Soviets after Sputnik in 1957. At least, this is how most education historians read it. But the contemporary education economy really became a necessity in 1983 once the National Commission on Excellence (NCE) published its legendary *A Nation at Risk* at the height of deindustrialization. In sum, the report concludes that public schools suck. Its major findings were that students are nearly illiterate, which has a negative impact on business, and business needs highly skilled workers in the emerging

global service economy. NCE suggests parents just don't get it, teachers and schools must be held accountable, and students need to learn the skills necessary to operate the computers and technological equipment that will produce energy, process food, as well as build, repair, and maintain "sophisticated scientific, educational, military, and industrial equipment."[123] The report cites as a significant indicator of risk to the nation the concerns of "business and military leaders [who] complain that they are required to spend millions of dollars on costly remedial education and training programs in . . . basic skills." In other words, public school students don't need to prepare their students to inquire, explain, understand, and create. Instead, they need to prepare students to service technology and serve the needs and desires of those intended to lead the new economy. Without explicitly stating the target, it is obvious that NCE was marking public schools educating poor, working class black, brown, and white students.

After *A Nation at Risk*, the rationale was firmly in place to use public schools to produce the nation's service labor. Six years later, the National Governor's Association and business leaders met for an educational summit. The group declared performance as a national education goal to ensure an internationally competitive workforce. In fact, in President George H. Bush's Joint Statement on the summit, he used the term *competitive* five times, *workforce* four times, but *learning* only once. In 1996, another national education summit was

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[123] The National Commission on Excellence in Education, "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform" (April 1983).

held. This time it was hosted by Lou Gerstner, Jr., the chair and CEO of IBM Corporation. Forty-four governors, 50 business leaders (one from each state), and 36 "chief state school officers, educators and state legislators . . ." sit "next to one another, they deliberate together, they attend all sessions together and then when the states are asked to vote, the governor and the business leader cast one vote for their state."[124] Unanimously, they agreed "education is significant as a predominate business issue . . . we can't have a successful company in an unsuccessful community." United, they pledged to implement academic standards and "business practices" in public schools. Enthusiastically, the group agreed to hold the nation's public schools accountable by "clearly communicat[ing] to students, parents, schools, and community the types and levels of skills necessary to meet the workforce needs of the next century and implement hiring practices within one year that will require applicants to demonstrate academic achievement through school-based records." Furthermore, the group commits to "consider the quality of a state's academic standards and student achievement levels as a high-priority factor in determining business-location decisions."

The participants of the 1996 National Education Summit essentially agreed to a culture of public education engulfed in standards designed to produce allegiance to the service economy and the reproduction of service specialists, assessments to measure proficiency in the service skills global

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[124] "A New Initiative in the Battle for Standards," Sybil Eakin, *Technos Quarterly*, 5(2), 1996, http://www.ait.net/technos/tq_05/2eakin.php.

finance requires to function smoothly, and accountability measures to hold districts responsible. Essentially, performance, proficiency, and productivity become the main intent of public education.

Andrew

Andrew Cutrone, a 19-year-old undergraduate student shares a reflective piece of writing in which he describes the NCLB generation. Indeed, after several classes, in past discussions, he names himself a member of "the NCLB generation." Cutrone writes, "The way I see it (and I know you know this) is that the students won't beg for learning, because they will take what's given to them nqa (no questions asked). Not one ounce of critical sweat will be used by the students, especially when they've been taught to not read—in a world where viewing is easy, but seeing is hard; where viewing is easy, but reading is even harder." In an article published in *The Odyssey Online*, Cutrone writes:

> I'm going to tell you a story about my education. I'm going to tell you a story, perhaps, about your education, too. They may be one in the same. In my first semester of college — and all of middle school and high school — grades had their power over me like an omnipotent dictator does over his subjects. I had many sleepless nights during which I studied statistics, chemistry, biology, business law or sociology. It was not uncommon to have nervous breakdowns, quite specifically because I engaged in a process under which I would study incessantly, take the exam, then leave the exam room not remembering the test itself. What's worse, I couldn't

> even recall the information that was tested — the information I worked so hard to memorize.[125]

This is not the millennial generation Cutrone describes, it is the NCLB generation he helped to name sometime after writing this article. This generation of students and teachers embody a contemporary education economy made up of methods and modes, processes and practices that represent a powerful cultural shift away from education built upon human connection. NCLB, as a partner to gentrification, has helped to shape a historical reform movement toward individualism, instantaneity. Students have said, *It's weird when you're in public and you look like you're not doing something on your phone*. This is an economy designed to manage, discipline, and disconnect poor and working poor black, brown, and rural white kids from themselves and their teachers and their teachers also from their humanity in the classroom. In fact, at state universities, there are Test Scoring Customer Service counters at which professors drop off their students' Scantron tests from their 300-500-student lecture classes (Figure 6).

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[125] Andrew Cutrone. "How to Take the Grade's Power Away: A Researched Guide to Re-Approaching School, *The Odyssey,* 28 February 2017, https://www.theodysseyonline.com/how-to-take-the-grades-power-away.

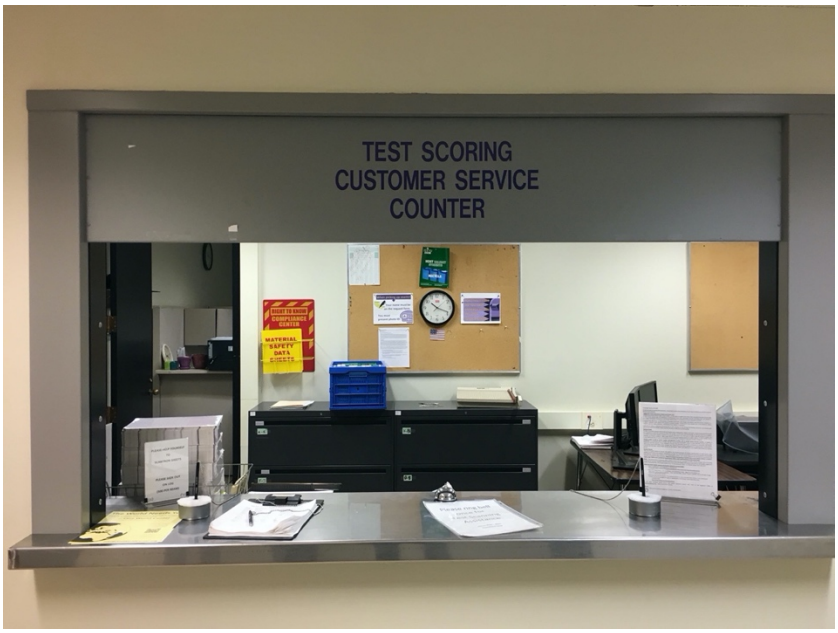

Figure 6 University of Albany, Albany, New York. Spring 2015

At Exeter, an independent school, for example, from which Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg graduated, education is “not about being right or wrong.” Instead, how students learn at Exeter is declared “a way of life,” a life in which students “explore ideas as a group, develop the courage to speak, the compassion to listen and the empathy to understand” (Figure 7). At Exeter, connection, inquiry, and the tools to engage school are an expectation.

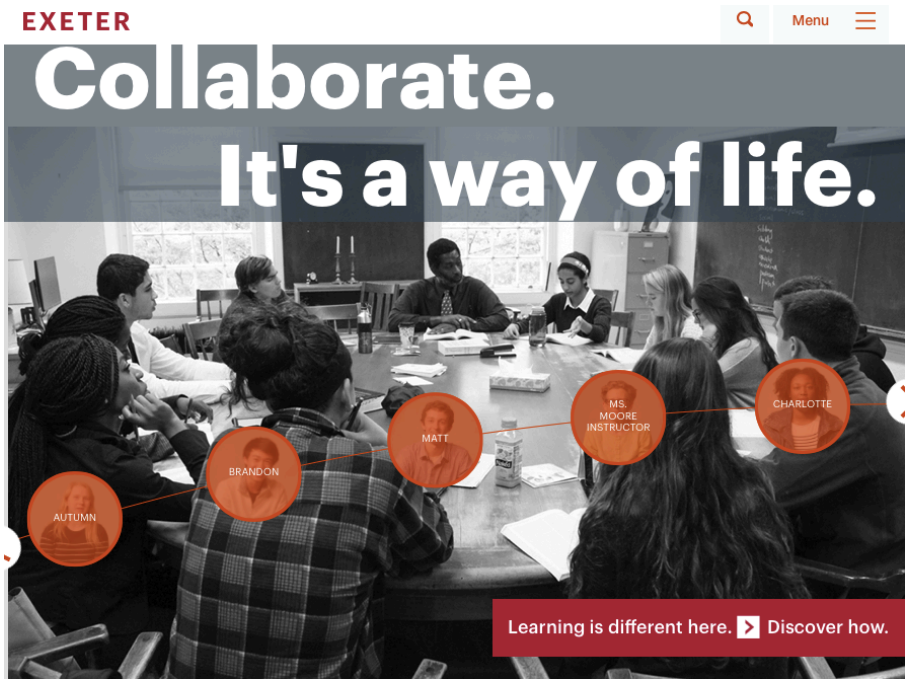

Figure 7 Homepage of Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, New Hampshire

Compare this to Bayside High School, a public school of almost 3,500 students in the borough of Queens in New York.

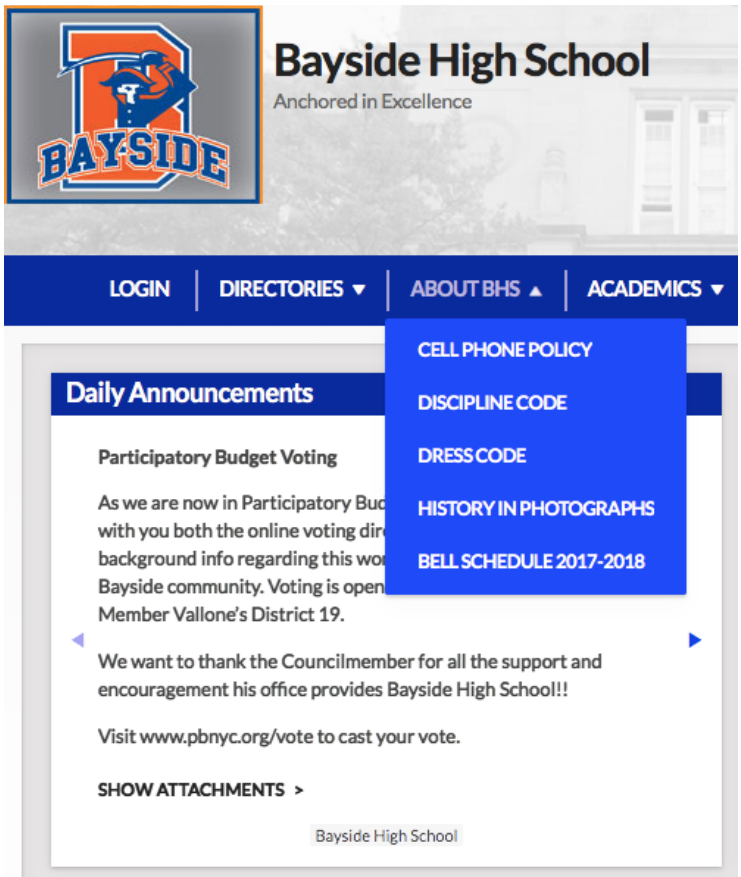

Figure 8 Homepage of Bayside High School, Bayside, New York. Spring 2017

Bayside's "About Us" menu provides a bell schedule, cell phone policy, disciplinary and dress codes. There is no learning mission to be found on the school's website (Figure 8). Much of the website is filled with regulations and meeting announcements. The first part of the mission statement at West Islip Public Schools, which Cutrone attended, focuses on a narrative of performance and progress. The schools in this district of Long Island, New York are "committed to excellence in education through the establishment of an academic, vocational and social environment in which all children can learn and succeed."

Royce

Figure 9 Royce Lobban, University at Albany, Albany, New York, 6 December 2016

Six, maybe eight students are strewn all over my tiny office. They are on the floor, on top of the radiator. They are half hanging off padded stools. They are eating bad-for-you snacks. They are talking loudly. They are laughing behind cupped hands while sharing YouTube videos. Also in the room is Royce (Figure 9). Royce is nineteen, a self-identified Afro-Caribbean computer science major in

his sophomore year. Royce is also a graduate of Hutchinson Central Technical High School in Buffalo, New York (Figures 10 and 11).

Figure 10 Hutchinson Central Technical High School, Buffalo, New York, 23 September 2017

Figure 11 Hutchinson Central Technical High School, Buffalo, New York, 23 September 2017

For me, Hutch Tech is more than just a public school. This is the school from which my father-in-law graduated more than a half a century ago. With his vocational skills in technical drawing, Harry Nowak went from Hutch Tech straight to where every poor Polish immigrant in 1950s Buffalo landed at 18 after graduation: a factory. For Harry, it was Westinghouse. Decades later, he died of a kind of lung cancer that only such a history could cough up, all while his son Mark sat beside him, honoring him by drinking Dad's favorite beer, eating Dad's favorite sub from Dagwood's until Dad's last breath.

Now Royce, he is hilarious. He is kind. He appreciates respectful razzing. He knows I love him, which means Royce knows I truly see him. Royce knows that I am interested in his way of understanding ideas, his community, his country. I am interested in what Royce has been taught to believe. I am interested in how he processes information, and I am interested in finding the most conducive learning structures and processes that work just for him. This kind of interest, this sort of desire to produce creative, individualized learning is a principle that guides a love pedagogy. Royce knows that I understand in what areas and exactly when he can use a good, but gentle push and a prod to step into an intellectual challenge. Royce is not my favorite student. I don't have favorites. What Royce intuits (and I think this is why he opens up this day) is that I abide by what artist Chris Johnson calls a zone of no consequences. In this

zone, all speech is met with interest and curiosity. The Zone is a significant facet of the love pedagogy I practice with all students, even the tough students.[126]

On this day, with the kids scattered all over the room, Royce tells me about the villain of his high school, a police officer whose beat is Hutch Tech. Incredulous, Royce says, "There's actually a cop in Buffalo named Pac-Man. That's like the name for him."

Remember the 1980s video game Pac-Man out of Japan? Pac-Man is this yellow blob with a big mouth that goes around eating up Pac-dots and dodging foes like Inky, Pinky, Blinky, and Clyde so it (you) can get to the next stage. After school at Hutch Tech, Royce says Pac-Man would "literally, like, terrorize high school students." In the actual game, Pac-Man's enemies turn blue, they reverse direction, and their movements become slower and the eyes of their enemy's remain even when eaten.

As Royce describes Pac-Man, everyone gets quiet because we all begin to understand that what Royce is describing is an intimate, daily experience of racism. The stutter in Royce's voice as he tells the story allows us to hear him make sense of something that he probably has never tried to describe before. As teachers, if we help young people access seemingly indescribable places inside their minds, we empower them to wrestle with the tangled complexities of self,

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[126] For more on the "zone of no consequences," see Chris Johnson, *The Practical Zone System for Film and Digital Photography,* 5th Edition, Burlington, MA: Focal Press, 2012. I write more on Johnson's work and life in my essay "The Bridge Back to Blackness: Chris Johnson and the Art of Social Engagement," *Exposure* 47, no. 1 (Spring 2014), 4-17.

other, and difference; we allow them to work out social dilemmas and social disconnections with the Other, which they have experienced but neither do not nor should not make any sense because racism does not make sense to a child, not when he has been raised in a country that professes that everyone is equal and presumed innocent. The dissonance Royce experienced at the hands of Pac-Man was like a short-circuiting of that message. If Royce were to hold inside this internal confusion for a lifetime, he might hold judgments about the Other, he might distance himself from the Other, he might begin to believe the messages that some white people have about black and brown people, especially black and brown boys. As teachers, we are our students' attendants. A part of the practice of love in the classroom is to remain keenly aware of the moments when a student is emotionally and mentally ready to negotiate his internalized racial conflicts by comprehending his country's social and political contradictions.

Royce continues, "Pac-Man would go around like, Oh you can't stay here . . . Oh you can't stand on, like, the street, you have to leave. You can't stay in the school. In a couple of months, they started arresting kids or detaining kids for trespassing, but, you know, if you're coming out of school, let's say at 2:30, and your parents can't pick you up until 2:50 or like 3:00, you know, where can you go? You can't stay in school anymore, so what can you do?"

When an enemy comes into direct contact with Pac-Man, he loses a life. Enemies don't lose their whole lives in the game, just a piece of their life, and then they become known as ghosts. Royce describes being apparitional, having

a criminalized young brown body that is suspended by Pac-Men between notions of youth and adulthood. In a sort of stammer, Royce explains, “They look at you, like, you’re not an adult but you’re not a kid. And, you can’t have the rights of either. You can’t have the rights as an adult, but you still can’t have the rights as a kid, like, you just in the middle, like, they don’t know what to do with you basically.”

Love pedagogues listen closely. We listen for the truths kids like Royce can speak. We listen to understand by really noticing. We are vigilant in our attention to seeking what is beneath the words our students use to describe their experiences of social injury, social loss, self-doubt, economic and political challenges, and even what they say about their achievements. The vocabulary for these experiences is not a regular part of the social lexicon, so young people, like adults, often don’t recognize Pac-Man's racism. A part of working to disrupt social disconnection in the classroom is to provide students ways to name their experiences.

For Royce, and for many of my students, racism, economic exploitation, even rape, are, as they say, “just is what it is.” Sometimes in class, when I detect a student telling a story in which they were targeted because of their gender, race, religion, or sexuality, I stop everything to ask another student to rewind and play back for the classmate what they have heard. Rarely does the student I have asked to retell the story miss the truth beneath the classmate’s words. And in these instances, meaningful connections are made between students, as well

as between the students and me. This is something we can hear in the responses shared with Charlotte after she played Hotmer's interview for her classmates which I discuss in the introduction to this dissertation.

An important structure of a love pedagogy is relationship-building across normative power relations within educational settings, especially when stories like these are shared. Often this means subverting conventional teacher-student hierarchies. In these moments, I, a black and brown woman, allow my own memories of racial or gendered injury to surface, and then in these moments the students and I share a verified, communal truth. The truth becomes more comprehensible, and we experience a sense of reciprocal recovery. A love pedagogy is not practiced just for the benefit of young people because the practice of love is not about *saving* the kids. Instead, through a practice of love, we as teachers can heal our own traumas; we can reconnect to ourselves. In so doing we reconnect to a common humanity.

In "The Site of Memory," Toni Morrison contends that truth is random and stranger than fiction because it is odd.[127] Racism is odd, and its experience can feel unaccountable because it does not seem like it is really happening or true. We know racism as a noun. As such it stands still conceptually, but racism is, indeed, active—it is when, in an instant, we become a part of some aberrant whole. We are its direct and indirect object, but never its subject. Racism is illogical and feels inexplicable because it is incompatible with our innate

[127] Toni Morrison, "The Site of Memory," in *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*, ed. William Zinsser (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 93.

hardwiring to connect, to empathize, to selflessly concern ourselves with the well-being of others.[128] Racism is like a neural short-circuiting of our inherent need to connect, and so we stumble over our words when we speak it. Within the incoherencies of racism, Royce sputters, "I just feel, like, maybe I just, like, grew up in, like, maybe like, like a semi like very, like, racist, like, police district, maybe, or like if it's just like cops in general, like I have no clue." The "They" to whom Royce implicitly refers are white people, white police. The "Us" are poor and working-class black and brown boys.

Philippe Ariès says of the medieval world, to which perhaps in some ways, we have returned, "there is no place for childhood."[129] What is particularly true is that there is no place in America for poor, working-poor, and working-class black, brown, and white childhoods. There is that space that Royce describes with a nebulous and contradictory specificity. It is the lacuna in which boys like Royce and white cops just cannot seem to meet. When Royce says police look at him like he is not an adult but not a kid, like he is just in the middle, he squarely identifies an interval in the black and brown person's development. It is a space between Royce's brown body and the police, between the police and the very fact of his humanity. This is what Michael Dumas and Joseph Nelson describe as a "liminal space," a position young black and brown bodies occupy on both sides

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[128] See Matthew D. Lieberman, *Social: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Connect* (New York: Crown, 2013); and Frans de Waal, *The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a Kinder Society* (New York: Crown, 2009).
[129] Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Knopf, 1962), 333.

of a racialized boundary: still children yet at the threshold of adulthood. Dumas and Nelson insist that this is a place in which they are "certainly not children but accorded none of the legitimacy or regard of those with adult status, only the culpability."[130]

Imagine trying to live openly while being made to feel responsible, even accountable for a mental and physical violence perpetrated against you because of how America perceives you. Young people experience this contradiction and often subsume it until, for them, "it just is what it is." Imagine this behavior involves physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill your essential self. Then you get inside the school, beyond Pac-Man, inside the classroom where something as vulnerable and fraught as learning is supposed to occur, and it's nothing but worksheets and Scantron tests with blanks you are to fill. Nowhere is there a space for you to process—to describe, explicate, inquire, and comprehend the rationale for why you are targeted. Instead you leave the school thinking it is just you. You believe that you are the crazy one, and *you* begin to take responsibility for the abuse and neglect. You take on the culpability of the abuser, which is your country.

With his permission, I made an audioethnography of Royce. I then emailed him the recording. I asked him to listen to it like he was listening to a story being told by someone he loves very much. A few days later Royce said, "I

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[130] Michael Dumas and Joseph Derrick Nelson, "(Re)imagining Black Boyhood: Toward a Critical Framework for Educational Research," *Harvard Educational Review* 86, no. 1 (2016): 38.

heard myself talking about all that stuff you have us read in class . . . about capitalism and class, about how race is in our minds but has real effects." After another few days, with the help of his own recorded words, Royce changed his final project. He focused his final audio essay on black and brown boys, on police brutality, on the need for more humanity, on the need for more justice. I think Royce began the process of healing himself. His audioethography engaged an intellectual, academic, and emotional analysis to understand the social, economic, and political complexities of racism and masculinity in the United States.

In Royce's project we can hear him realize that he is surrounded by Pac-Men in an America that doesn't think he is as beautiful and capable as white kids. We hear him attempt to grapple with the idea of how America perceives him versus how he understands himself. In the eyes of Pac-Men, Royce is inadequate; he is aberrant; he is a biotic mistake against which others must be inoculated. This malignant notion, juxtaposed with the American Horatio Alger work-hard, win-big myth that the nation still cannot seem to dispel wreaks havoc on a young, developing psyche. This lore, reinforced by the contemporary education economy, violates young people. It destabilizes their still developing belief that each one is not just a candidate for the good, but indeed *is* the good itself. It adds to the crisis of connection.[131]

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[131] For more about notions of masculinity and the crisis of connection, see Niobe Way, *Deep Secrets: Boys' Friendships and the Crisis of Connection,* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011.

When we shut up and listen to students, or when we renegotiate classroom hierarchies that are scaffolded by constant measurement, grading, and assessment, we become accountable to our students' humanity and we reclaim our own. The classroom must be a space for memory, for truth-telling, for exposing the frailty of masculinity, for exploring and struggling with the cognitive dissonance of racism. The classroom must disrupt the violence of the contemporary education economy and close the relational gap between teacher and student. In this way, a love pedagogy is an active and radical resistance to the criminalization of young bodies, particularly poor and working-poor black, brown, and white bodies. The contemporary education economy requires a radical disruption to the mechanization of teaching, the standardization of what's taught, and the dehumanization and violence of education in public schools. A part of shattering the contemporary education economy also requires that not only the humanity of the students be acknowledged and regarded, but also the rights, needs, and humanity of the teachers—the K-12 educators, the adjuncts, and the contingents. The contemporary education economy exploits us all in different ways; it attempts to disenfranchise us from the condition of being human, from our social connection with students, and from what and how to teach. Left unchallenged and unchanged, the crisis of connection will continue to reproduce itself in schools and universities.

The practice of love in the classroom involves small acts, large acts, medium acts. For example, I have taught young people in grades K–16

autoethnography. Importantly, I fuse Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner's autoethnography, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's portraiture with audio documentary. I call this qualitative research method audioethnography. This is what Royce practiced. It is an approach that can allow young people to expose and explore their experiences living inside social categories of difference. They become honest about what they feel and think, and they begin to inquire. They begin to ask about differentiated power structures, and they question why these structures exist and for whose benefit they do. Love pedagogy is fueled by these kinds of questions. And questions, as one student asserted, "inspire us to be brave."

My students at University at Albany are all working-poor and working-class. Many of them are first-generation college students who are recent or first-generation immigrants. They arrive to my college classroom thinking they have no voice; no story to tell. What that says to me is that before they got to me, the wire was pulled. They had been disconnected from the importance of their own life stories and the significant social, economic, and political conditions their lives can help the public to understand. They arrive disconnected from their own power to make social change. To unearth their stories, there is a photo essay project I designed based on the work of photographer Dawoud Bey. I call it "Outside-Inside" because the project requires students to write about how America sees them in terms of their identity and photograph a self-portrait (a selfie) of how they see their real selves. I assign Outside-Inside about four weeks after students have spent time reading and writing about the science of social

connection, watching documentaries like *The Central Park Five*, and examining and comparing independent and public school websites.

Once our Outside-Inside projects are completed, we hold a silent exhibit just for our class. During the exhibit, we quietly walk around the classroom exploring each other's work. There are no PowerPoint presentations, no fear-producing or embarrassing, memorized speeches that the students perform at the front of the class. This is not a test or quiz. Instead, we engage the power of silent and communal inquiry. After we have all taken in each other's work, no verbal words are exchanged. We immediately sit down and begin to write. The prompt that guides us is "What do you know now that you didn't understand before?" We sit. We write. Then we read, not speak, our responses aloud to the class from our seats. Then we write some more, but this time using a metacognitive approach. We reread what we last wrote and then write to describe what it was like to read our own words, hear ourselves in writing, and hear the experiences of others in the room. Through this process, we come together both intellectually and socially. The students say, "It's like we're now a family." At the end of one writing session, I asked eighteen-year-old Matt why he chose to be so honest in his photo essay. He answered me, but he looked out at his classmates, as though he wanted them all to recognize and record what he was about to say. He responded, "You've always been so honest with us, it made me want to be honest back."

Tanya and Malik, and Josh and Je'meyah

Love pedagogy is hard work. So much work that some of us who practice it sometimes sacrifice family time and time at the rally or protest because every teaching day means a night of changing things up to address the individual twenty or thirty or forty kids you have in the rooms. A kid blinks her eyes differently one morning, by afternoon you've changed up the lesson you spent all weekend planning. You've called her home with permission from her family. If you're like Tanya Hodge, a teacher at South High School in Minneapolis, you skip eating lunch to make sure you get to talk to Malik.

Tanya teaches nearly 150 kids annually. She has a strong, committed principal. Like good principals do, he gets out of the way of teacher brilliance, but not so much that he cannot actively support it with every dime and every tool he can muster. Tanya has too many kids in one room, but that does not matter to her. Tanya teaches English. She makes rooms at South High seem like protected dens of knowledge and understanding. Tanya was a fellow in my Teacher's Institute, which I designed and facilitated for Minneapolis Public Schools for four years until an interim superintendent decided *diversity* would be best served by giving the money to run the institute to the local university to prepare ethnic studies curricula. Nobody has heard or seen of this curriculum from the university yet. One year in the institute, I assigned fellows the task of choosing just one child on whom they would focus for the fellowship term. They were to focus on this child as if, as Herb Kohl once told me, she, he, or they were their own. Tanya

chose 17-year-old Malik. I told the fellows, “Ask the children you’ve chosen how they see themselves, and how they think the world sees them?” Here’s Malik’s response to Tanya:

> Well when most people see me for the first time, off back they think oh he’s probably not a good kid, A “Gangbanger”, He doesn’t do good in school, He’s trouble. I guess it’s the way I come off to people, The way I dress, walk, my facial expressions, my “lango,” it might all add up to a Gangbanger’s mentality. But the best part about that, is when these people find out I’m the exact oppose. When people actually see how talented I am and how smart I am, they can’t believe it. And I love that about myself. . . So as some people might see me as a young black delinquent male from the hood, I think of myself as a slightly hood, Handsome, Educated, Loyal, Respectful young man.

Look at Malik (Figure 12). It makes me sick to think of all the Pac-Men waiting to eat him up like some Pac-dot.

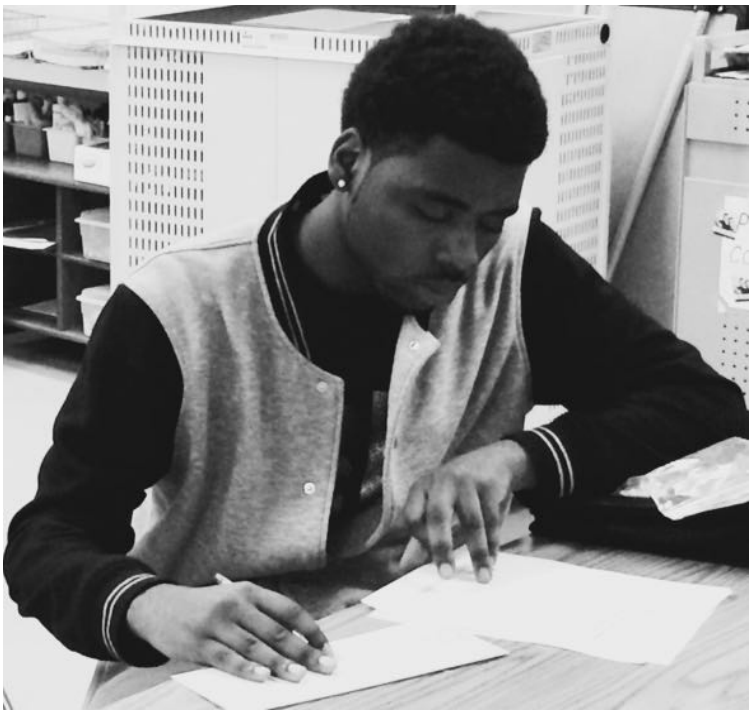

Figure 12 “Malik,” Photo by Tanya Hodge, South High School, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 19 February 2016

Within the institute, teachers worked hard to notice, to be witness to, and to listen to their child. In the process, the student as concept, as commodity evolves steadily and naturally into someone warm-blooded. Tanya began to reconnect with herself through Malik and Malik grew even closer to Tanya. He became a more curious, engaged, intellectual partner in the classroom. In the institute, fellows committed to actively defy the ways in which the state forced them to teach. They defied attempts to measure and assess and to be measured and assessed. Instead they focused on individualized instruction and the construction of classrooms of collaboration—just like they do at Phillips Exeter Academy but for about $50,000 less.

In the institute, we discussed the contemporary education economy and how it disconnects teachers from themselves, their purpose as educators, and their students, i.e., their child. Fellows wanted to abandon the notion that school is a space reserved for judgment and accountability, which are the measures that produce small, indelible unrelenting psychic violences. To address this, I invited my friend, writer Claudia Rankine, to come to the institute and assist in looking at the effects of the contemporary education economy on teachers and students; specifically, through the lens of race-based, in-school micro-aggressions. Given the opportunity, the fellows, like most teachers, wanted to find their way back to love. So, in front of Claudia, upon her forthright and loving command, on the white-boarded walls of the institute, Minneapolis public school teachers confessed to the author of *Citizen*: *An American Lyric*, the sins they had been forced to commit in school. One wrote, "I was surprised that 'Christian' scored all 4's on the FIRST unit exam. He gave me no reason to be surprised. In fact, he gave me evidence that he would do well . . ." Another asked, "Am I holding X accountable and upholding expectations and at the same time pushing him out (the school)? . . ." Yet another another admits to denial yet in so doing rejects denial: "I was in a discharge (from treatment meeting) 2 days after starting a job in North Carolina. The White counselor told the black student 'How can you be successful if you go back with your family?' I refused to accept this was about race –> It was."

Later in the year, I instructed fellows to return to their chosen child and ask: "What's one fear you have for me as your teacher?" Nico told Tanya: *I fear I will disappoint you.* Jeff said bluntly, *Burn-out.* What was the fear Tanya had for herself? "That I will, somehow, lose hope. I fear getting sucked into the vortex of negativity. The status quo of test scores, white privilege, categories of assumptions. I fear not fighting back, not disrupting at the right times." A hope Tanya has for herself? "That I can learn to be more uncomfortable. I hope to learn how to disrupt more. Question more answers than I accept."

After four years, the practices of the Teacher's Institute helped me to make an empirical discovery, something I call *the duh finding of education*: being in relationship with students improves everything. It improves a student's understanding of complex ideas; provides a willingness to work with large quantities of information; assists in the ability to inquire, analyze, synthesize; it also improves test scores (damn it!), and attendance. Most important is the fact that a love pedagogy reconnects students and teachers to their own innate ability to connect, and connection reminds us that we are not ghosts, but that we are the living.

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Josh Zoucha is the coordinator of Edison High School's SHARP program in Minneapolis. Josh describes SHARP as "a program for students who have fallen behind in credits and aren't on track to graduate. Our program allows students to stay at their current school and work to get college ready." Josh, white like Tanya, chose Je'meyah, a black child like Malik, as his child. Je'meyah

was a senior when Josh was an institute fellow, and Je'meyah was fast on her way to not graduate. Josh recorded a conversation between Je'meyah and him after he began implementing a love pedagogy. Notice that after just a few weeks engaging this practice, Je'meyah begins to call Josh "Dad."

Hi, Je'meyah. *Hi, Dad.* So, I got a question for ya. *Um-hm***.** I've been going through all these people's credits like kinda tryin to figure out where they're at, where they've gone. Last fall, you had 48 absences from school. *Oh.* And—*Just the fall?* Just the fall. And you earned only 2.75 credits, and you had seven days of suspension with four referrals. [Je'meyah kind of chortles at this point]. So, you wanna know what you have this year? *What?* This year you've earned 14.5 credits. *A miracle.* A Miracle. Guess how many referrals you had in the fall? *0?* Yeah, 0. How many days of suspension have you had? *0.* So what's the difference between last year and this year? *Different? This might be a long answer.* That's fine. *Um, it's just when you get to know people, and they make you want to come to school, and they make you wanna do right, then you start to do right, and you start to like it, and you start to enjoy comin to a place, and you don't wanna do nuthin to lose those people and make them stop liking you.*

Unfortunately, in K-12 education, the Common Core, and in colleges and universities, the offices of accountability are bent on measuring something different from what Josh measured here. Yes, he had the numbers, the measurements, so Josh retained for the state education system what it believes it needs to make success, but what the numbers here really represent is that a

practice of love—of being socially connected to and in appropriate relationship with young people—is what changes the data.

Before Josh shared with Je'meyah her record of attendance, he followed a love pedagogy as shared by the institute. First, he spent time getting to know Je'meyah as a person, not as an academic pupil. He asked her questions about what she did outside of school. That is how he found out that sometimes Je'meyah lived in a homeless shelter. Like the other fellows in the institute, Josh wrote descriptively about "his child" Je'meyah. Josh and the other fellows shared descriptions of their days noticing their children. Josh wrote about what it was like to be Je'meyah's teacher. He wrote and photographed portraits of Je'meyah, and he recorded his conversations and played them back to Je'meyah so that she could hear and write about herself and her relationship to and with Josh.

As time progressed, Josh told me, Je'meyah became less of a character in a play that is school and more of an individual deserving of respect, intellectual challenge, and love. Josh always understood that Je'meyah was human, but he never had the opportunity (or the prompting by the education system) to slow down and really see Je'meyah. What is ironic (and might sound contradictory) is that despite all my objections to formalized accountability measures like standardized high-stakes tests, Josh's experiences with Je'meyah prove that, the effect of love in a classroom can, indeed, in some ways be assessed and measured. When love is present, teachers are more committed to their practice and kids show up physically and mentally.

As Bill Ayers writes in *Teaching with Conscience in an Imperfect World,* "Every teacher must decide whether to trust students and approach the honestly as full and equal human beings with agency and capacity, with experiences and hopes and ideas that must be taken into account, or to assume that they are savages to be broken and tamed, their minds conquered and colonized."[132] The stories of Josh and Je'meyah, Tanya, Malik, and the other students are all stories of connection and love. The institute and my classrooms are sites in which it is presumed that each young person and every teacher has her own kind of good, his own kind of usefulness, their own absolute value.

[132] William Ayers, *Teaching with Conscience in an Imperfect World: An Invitation* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2016), 47.

Chapter 4

Love Pedagogy: Disrupting the Contemporary Education Economy

There is a space for liberatory education called Kite's Nest in Hudson, New York, a gentrifying town two hours north of New York City. Men are involved in Kite's Nest as guest artists, educators, and board members, but Kite's Nest was in many ways framed by three young white women. One of the women was unschooled in Cape Cod. She is fierce about the rights of kids and all people, but especially those forced to the margins. That is Kaya. Every ounce of Kaya's small frame pushes back against the walls to move margins to centers. She is the Executive Director.

Another of the women is what you might call power schooled. That is Sara. Sara focused on Latin American studies at Pomona College, but she ended up taking her learning directly to the streets and to radio. Sara is committed to returning cities back to the black and brown hands from which the white gentry has stolen them. The final woman? That is Nicole. Nicole was schooled in the Bronx, and she can cook a meal to heal the spirit. These women design classes for kids ages 8-18 that are interdisciplinary wonders of intellectual curiosity, practical academic action, and social purpose. Why do I know so much about Kite's Nest? Right now, I am fortunate enough to be its board president, and the methods and practices of Kite's Nest are deeply rooted in a love pedagogy.

In 2014, a young donor who still believes education can be critical and joyous gave us a beautiful, 19th-century, 21,000 square foot old brick mill. The warehouse sits near the projects, at the edge of the railroad tracks, overlooking the Hudson River. It neighbors the Furgary shacks, an old 1800s fishing village. Rumor has it that membership in Furgary (because, supposedly, there was no real ownership of the land) was restricted to those whose families had lived in Hudson for generations. The stewards of this part of the Hudson "worked the river for shad and other fish," and they "managed the habitats and public hunting grounds of the foreshore."[133] They "safeguarded this area for the many children and pets who are drawn to it." And Furgary folk declare that they've done it for free. In 2012, the city destructs the Furgary community. Today, all that is left are muddied *No Trespassing* signs dangling from boarded-up driftwood shacks.

We get this warehouse, and we are thinking we will rehab it. Then we can live and work together with other community-based organizations dedicated to changing today's normal. It is September. Not yet really cold, but cool enough. Kids are still running around shirtless in cut-off sweatpants. You would think the sprinklers were still on and public pools still open, but school has already started in Hudson, a town in which over 25% of the people live below the poverty line and 34% of them are under eighteen. At this time, our future home is pretty much empty except for some tools for our community garden. As a part of her weekly

[133] All information and quotations about the Furgary shacks is taken from Paul Smart, "Furgary Boat Club in Hudson faces demolition," Hudson Valley One (12 July 2012), https://hudsonvalleyone.com/2012/07/12/furgary-boat-club-in-hudson-faces-demolition/.

routine, Kaya stops by the building to check on it. This day, she notices some people got beyond our security measures.

Kaya is on the other end of my cellphone telling me, “The place actually looks like some creative geniuses have been at work.” She tells me there is some new construction erected inside and materials new and old, organized and assembled, ready for use. Who did this?

I am from West Harlem in New York City. For me, Hudson is like a Tiny Tim small town. If we were back on 157th and Riverside in New York City where I grew up, we would never find who did this, even if they were from the neighborhood. But in Hudson, a town way under 7,000, word travels fast. Plus, Kaya is connected, and Kite’s Nest has some street cred. One neighborhood lady tells Kaya, “Probably them same boys always going around here. They only about 10.”

Kaya and I get it. The boys set up shop inside a space we had claimed inside their city. But right now, they are re-claiming it. Today, inside, Kaya can see that they have constructed a world for themselves. They built a table to hold their drawings and plans to produce something. They found empty mason jars into which they disaggregated their tools to make them the most accessible. And what’d they end up constructing? Stuff. Important stuff. To them. Useful stuff for the important jobs to run the important systems of operation that the boys had structured and regulated inside what was now their space.

For a moment, Kaya and I try really hard to forego how freaked out we are by the possibility of liability. And that is what good educators, collaborating, do for and with each other. We help each other suspend the constraints that seemingly order society. We make a safe space for public imagination. For a moment, we let ourselves recognize and regard 10 young years of ingenuity, days of assertion, the boys' presumption of ownership. For a moment, we compel ourselves to take a breath and honor it all. Then we ask, How can we ensure the kids' safety, but not disrupt their motor, motivations, and already-demonstrated intellectual curiosity?

Kaya gets an open-bed pick-up. She drives around the streets of Hudson at a creep. She is a swallow-tailed kite circling low over the city, switching from straight to tight turns in an instant. She is determined to find the boys from Hudson that one city lady told another city lady who told another who told Kaya who had "done it." Then, hip-hopping down some alley, ready for anything fun, mindful, and challenging, there are our boys. Kaya rounds up the prodigious engineers, hauls them back to the warehouse, and she tells the boys, *Okay, so it looks like we're sharing this space. Rule 1 is, when you're here, I gotta be here, too. Rule 2: help keep this space and the garden around it clean. Help me keep it and you safe. Let's get to work.* Together, Kaya and the boys spend the afternoon sweeping and preparing the building for the boys' work and for an upcoming formal celebration at which we will share gratitude for the gift of this space. Kaya, Sara, and Nicole call the event Sustenance, because the event is a gift back of

nourishment to those who have helped to sustain just the kind of thing Kaya is doing right now: offering respect, freedom, guidance, and a space in which young people can create their own work on their own terms in which is very much a public space.

October comes, and the boys are present at the Sustenance. This time the air is fall-like. It is all fall wind, fall temperatures, fall change. Still summer-shirtless, sweating from sawing wood in the warehouse for some new project of their own, the boys ignore the adult donors outside swishing fresh ginger, shies, gin and honey cocktails. I yell over to one boy running back to the warehouse with a piece of wood, “Baby, where’s your coat?!?” Mid-run, he turns to me, shrugs his shoulders, keeps running away and back to the warehouse. Donors nosh on raven and boar charcuterie and mousse de foie, whatever the fuck that is. Light music trails in the background. Later, while cleaning up, Hamilton plays as white members of the host committee pick up mouth-slobbered napkins and lipstick-stained cups. The boys carried on their work diligently for hours, but went home at sunset, and it’s way past that now. Probably tired from a full day’s work at the warehouse, all the boys leave behind is a newly built wooden table and a well-organized, clean, ready-for-the-world-of-enterprise home that we now share together in this city along the Hudson.

Love pedagogy interrupts, interrogates, then disrupts the contemporary education economy. This economy is a neoliberal, hegemonic apparatus. It provides a malignant notion, juxtaposed with the American work-hard, win-big

myth the United States of America refuses to dispel; it wreaks havoc on a young, developing psyche. Love pedagogy, by contrast, is a political act of teaching and learning—in any classroom, private and public. It requires a kind of parallel learning odious to austerity technologies and all neoliberal micro-technologies to manage, discipline, and reproduce students who lack what Paulo Freire called *conscientização.*[134]

Back at our donated brick mill, black boys unseen as innovators assessed the possibilities of their environment. That is called imagining, i.e., using imagination to create new alternatives, new choices, as well as new and different ideas. These boys were resourcing. They first made a mess and then out of the chaos surveyed their environment (the warehouse), and after assessing the possibilities of what could be done in that space, they made calculated decisions about what the site needed to make concrete the abstractions in their heads. The boys raised a pivotal architectural query, which guides even architect Joan Krevlin when she designs sites like the Tribute World Trade Center 9/11. At an informal gather of our architects, Krevlin leads with, "What does the site tell us?" Cannon Design, VS Furniture, and Bruce Mau Design confirm in their collaborative book project the significance of making educational spaces by and for the people; they are adamant that space is, indeed, the third teacher.[135] Like educational engineers, our boys organized their resources so that they would be

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[134] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* trans. Myra Bergman Ramos, New York: Continuum, 1970. Freire's definition of this term can be found on pages 104-109.
[135] See OWP/P Cannon Design, *The Third Teacher: 79 Ways You Can Use Design to Transform Teaching & Learning,* Inc. (New York: Abrams, 2010).

most useful; so that they could be more efficient in their chosen labor. Later, they designed a plan for action and the implementation of their ideas, or better a strategy for making a product based on their concepts. Finally, the boys were self-inspired and self-sufficient. They created their own essential work, and they made important choices. They remained deliberately independent of any elder's authority or directions, yet they willingly connected with an adult who did not judge, reprimand, or discipline. Instead, Kaya initiated a process of reciprocity, an exchange of respect, and she provided some knowledge and know-how, which they accepted because it was something they had determined they needed, and it was offered without austerity, without assessment.

Everything the boys accomplished required applied mathematics (geometry, algebra, the abstractions of calculus); necessitated skills of argumentation and debate; the use of economics to proffer a cost/benefit analysis between getting caught and pursuing their dream. In their engagement in productivity (albeit local and not national, as macroeconomics requires) there must have been discussions among the boys that focused on specialization as well as comparative and absolute advantage.

Additionally, ultimately, the boys had to demonstrate teamwork and make collaborative conclusions (perhaps by way of consensus?) about opportunity costs, benefits to the team, management, and indicators of risk. Skills of inquiry, analysis, and informational diversity were employed. Stanford's Graduate School of Business claims this actually creates "better performance when it comes to

out-of-the-ordinary creative tasks such as product development or cracking new markets."[136] I am not making a pitch for the contemporary education economy, which has the privatization of every aspect of teaching and learning as its primary objective, but I am arguing that many of the skills the boys performed with proficiency meet the eligibility and performance criteria of leading private liberal arts colleges and even creative, successful businesses. Is not what the boys demonstrated how we got the Apple computer, the black feminist Combahee River Collective Statement in 1974, white Students for a Democratic Society's Port Huron Statement in 1962, the light bulb, the smartphone, the electric car, Google, Etsy, Occupy Wall Street, and $100 million of funding for Black Lives Matter? The boys displayed connection, spontaneity, responsibility and dedication to an idea and to the dreaming of it into reality. They demonstrated creativity, or better ingenuity, ownership, and autonomy.

In fact, right here let us use the nomenclature and the rubric for assessment in the United States of the magnum opuses of No Child Left Behind and the Common Core. Did not our boys deftly demonstrate language arts, mathematics, science, and English language proficiency? Albeit proficiency was not performed on a high-stakes, three hour-long multiple-choice Scantron exam.

In discussion about public education, we hear about the formative and summative assessments that teachers can perform, but let us flip the script and

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[136] Stanford Graduate School of Business Staff, "Diversity and Work Group Performance," *Insights* (1 November 1999), https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/diversity-work-group-performance.

talk about the formative and summative assessments kids can design and perform by themselves for their own novel innovations. The boys constructed learning objectives; they asked and answered performance-based questions but questions with genuine purpose and intrinsic significance. I am sure there had to be authentic assessments directly tied to their objectives and to the purpose of measuring their own goal-achievement and ultimate success. By planning, resourcing, constructing, and then self-assessing, our boys used a lot more intellect and academic skill than it takes to deduce whether the answer to a question is either A, B, C, D, or all of the above. Perhaps the boys first asked, For what will we use this table? Then, based on the answer, How much, how long, how wide, and how thick must the wood be to hold the weight of our ideas? I think they probably dealt with questions of scarcity like, Where will we obtain wood with no funds? They might have decided on complex adjustments to the number of nails required as well as a mutually agreed upon division of labor. I cannot even think up all the other kinds of intricate questions the boys must have asked and answered inside that warehouse. But what I do know is that I think state Offices of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness would have a really difficult time designing one of those general education assessment tables they make we educators complete, especially one that could quantify and comprehend what those boys accomplished in just a matter of weeks.

The boys give us cause to see state assessments for students and program assessments in state universities as nothing but anti-love pedagogies.

Besides keeping Scantron in business and providing jobs for state offices, I cannot see how these folks ever really get at the kind of acumen it takes to produce such transdisciplinary inventiveness. And if we are to measure and assess and assess the measure of the assessments, should we not try to get at the real learning? Should we not wonder how each individual young person understands, analyzes, and applies what they think. Or better, should we not just shut down these offices?

Let us teach the PhD-MBAs who lead the onslaught of academic assessments of state K-12 and university programs how to identify, for example, a classroom culture of reciprocity where teacher and learner / teaching and learning are interchangeable. The problem is that our contemporary education economy, based on business profiles with accountability measures and austerity methods, will not allow such observations because they're not measurable and, therefore, they are un-quantifiable. Again, learning is slippery. As it should be. The minute you try to pin it down and count the number of beans in the process is the minute you lose the kids' passion—and lose your own interest as an educator. Learning, just like teaching, is, and should always be, shifting. It is a moving target. It's multiple targets in constant motion. The assessors make learning into a moving donkey onto which they want us to pin only one tail.

The classroom experience of these policies, with their annual state multiple choice tests and continuous appraisals, measurement tools, and learning objectives that only slightly change from year to year, feel like the state

is trying to make teachers wear crampons as they climb Chomolungma. Education policies like these, like NCLB, do not come out of the good intentions of business, their federal partners, and the committees they assemble in the name of, as the White House proclaims, “Giving Every Child a Fair Shot.” In fact, when you click on the link, “White House Report: Giving Every Child a Fair Shot,” at the “White House President Donald J. Trump” page defining the Every Student Succeeds Act, you are taken to a page with the following statement: “Thank you for your interest in this subject. STAY TUNED AS WE CONTINUE TO UPDATE WHITEHOUSE.GOV.” Public education has always been a site to produce those who are meant to serve and those who are meant to own production.

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A few months later, it is the dead of winter and I get a 6:00 a.m. call from Kaya. The warehouse is engulfed in flames. It is all over the local news. There are camera people, some of whom fly drones over our heads to capture images of the flames.

The roof is the last to go in the fire. The city’s white code enforcer, who cannot imagine that my black and brown self has any reason to be asking questions, treats me like I am a piece of gum stuck to his shoe. After convincing him I am the President of the Board of Kite’s Nest, he tells me the fire is like a huge pizza oven burning between the old mill’s timber beams, 19th-century brick, and new tin roof. The amount of water used by firefighters, who come from several different towns, slows the flow of water down to a trickle for most of the

city's residents and delays the start of school. The Mayor comes, throws her arms around Kaya and says *I'm so, so sorry,* and she really is.

We are there ankle-deep in the mud, a sorry, shivering mess. Smoke embraces us. We watch the flames fan the performance of machismo that goes on in between fighting fire and resting from fighting fire. By the end of the day, what the boys had created is just a bunch of smoke and rubble. Standing there watching, Nick Zachos, the Director of the Department of Youth for the City of Hudson tells me a story about before the fire:

> One day I walk out on my street and I see the owner of Bonfiglio & Bread standing on his front porch. I approached him. Because I never see him on his front porch, never see him there. So, I ask him, *Whatcha ya doin?* He said *I'm trying to see what these kids are doing out here*. By now the kids are knocking on the door of a neighbor, and he tells me they just came asking him for money for Kite's Nest. Laughing, I said*, Really?* And he said, *Yeah*. I wait for the kids to finish with the neighbor and make their way to the next door. I ask them what they're doing. They say, *Oh, we're collecting money for Kite's Nest. We're collecting money for the new Kite's Nest building [the donated warehouse].* I tell them, *That's cool,* and I asked them, *Have you raised a lot?* They said, *Yeah, we raised a lot of money. How much?* I ask them. *$10! That's amazing,* I say! Then I ask them, *Does Kaya know you're out here?* I can't remember, but I think they said *Yeah, Kaya knows we're out here*. I told them, *Good luck, guys*. I

called Kaya, and she laughed and said *No, I didn't know they're fundraising for us. If you see them, tell them I should be there or someone from Kite's Nest has to be there.* So I see them later knocking on someone else's door and I say, *Hey, I talked to Kaya and she doesn't know you're out here, but maybe she can come along because you're obviously very good at this because, you know, Kite's nest is an organization, and they have these rules they have to abide by.* I told the boys, *I appreciate that you guys are doing this,* and I told them that I was impressed by how much they'd already accomplished. These guys are like casually listening to me while dribbling a basketball, like probably thinking *Who is this guy telling us when we can and cannot raise money for Kite's Nest.* One says something like, *You wanna go to my house?* The other says, *Yeah, I'll go to your house.* It was one of those amazing moments. Who knows? Maybe they went off to get as many bags of Cheez Doodles as they could with the $10 they raised. But it doesn't matter. They took it upon themselves, you know. They saw an opportunity and expressed their entrepreneurial skills. They were doing it.

The boys teach me that knowledge is valuable when it cannot be Googled, when it is useful, when it makes me want to understand why and how, when and where, and who is responsible. Knowledge is important when it is important to the user. Knowledge and skills in alliance with understanding and action, like the

productions of the boys, are worthy when they are good enough for and suitable to the people and the work chosen. This is the philosophy of a love pedagogy because love respects, love imagines, and love always believes in possibility.

There was no dearth of intellectual skill or capacity in the boys' projects. Certainly, there was no lack of engagement, motor, or motivation. The Common Core State Standards Initiative claims to prepare students for "entry-level careers, freshman-level college courses, and workforce training programs." Read: prepare poor and working class black, brown, and white students for low-level service jobs. Don't believe me? What's a standard? It is a measurement of quality? So, what is the Common Core's measurement of caliber? It is whether a young person is prepared to be a trainee, to assist, to coordinate, to serve. That's what entry-level jobs do. Google "entry-level jobs," and you'll see. Then you'll ask, *Why do the Common Core's goals stop at the first year of college and focus on entry-level jobs?* Why don't they want public school students to be the creators of new knowledge and ways of understanding like those in private and independent schools? Maybe then you will remember the social and economic purpose of the contemporary education economy. Maybe you will remember that few public K-12 schools and public universities are constructed to provide, as the tagline from the independent, elite secondary school Phillips Exeter Academy proclaims, a "life-changing experience." But this doesn't mean public education institutions and the teachers within them do not want to produce and make available a life-changing experience to their students. It is just that the public

does not have the endowment or alumni like Exeter—located on an idyllic 652 acres in the New England area of the U.S., Exeter has a $1.2 billion endowment.

How does hanging out in an old 21,000 square foot mill ensure the boys from Hudson will be academically proficient? How can they ever pass the annual statewide, high-stakes tests in reading/language arts, mathematics, science, and English language proficiency exams given in the U.S. and its territories? How will they master the standards? They might not.

Yet perhaps you trust these schools for other people's children, just maybe not your own. If you, like I, have the privilege to find ways to ensure your child learns outside the contemporary education economy, then the tree you need to bark up, the question you need to ask private, independent, state, and federal groups is state standards for whom? State standards why? And state standards by what means? In the meantime, love pedagogy attempts to help young people recover.

Figure 13 “Megaforce Silver” Kite’s Nest

Large and long-winged birds, kites can take flight on an updraft of air. Kite’s ascend, they soar when there is an upward current. They are raptors. They seize. They take by force. They are, after all, birds of prey, and they are beautiful and buoyant. If conditions are right, they “spend most of their days aloft . . . rarely flapping their wings,” and at times they soar so high in the sky, “almost at the limits of vision.”[137] They are free. A love pedagogy is a liberation; it lets young people fly.

[137] Read about kites at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Cornell University. http://www.birds.cornell.edu/.

Conclusion

I feel compelled to end by entering the current historic moment.

Because I, myself, somehow survived Covid-19 at the age of 54.

Because I am leading an independent high school in New York City. I try to ensure over 200 young people, within our larger student body of a little over 900 students, learn, become humans committed to equity, and are admitted into some of the top liberal arts colleges in the U.S.

Because I lead over fifty now-terrified teachers, college counselors, psychologists, and administrative assistants learning to teach remotely when they had been trained to teach in relationship.

Because a monitor prevents us from pulling Alee to the side, after she stomps out of math, again, frustrated, feeling defeated, to make her feel like math is not an enemy, that failure does not define who she is, that, indeed, she has never failed.

Because now Bo, once enamored with thwarting technological constraints now lies fidgeting staring up at his ceiling through and past his electronic device.

Because of the plan to teach the whole high school the history of hip-hop, and the novels left outside a classroom next to a Cheeto. Because we are teaching and trying to help kids learn virtually. Learn what? And some of our community are ill, and students are living like adults, waiting on long lines to shop because their mom or dad is in isolation in some room in the house or in an ICU unit. And some of us connected to our school community have died or are dying

because our spirits are dying. To teach remotely, to act as though one is learning, virtually, is a lie to the self, especially if it is not I, the child (or the teacher) who has chosen this approach.

In one of my most recent letters to students and families in the community, I wrote just why I think acknowledging the current historical losses for the Class of 2020, seven years the juniors of the NCLB generation Andrew Cutrone so aptly named years ago, are important. It is because there is such possibility in this moment in education, but only some are naming it because we cannot seem to see past all the death, all the illness; all the losing and the loss.

In part of this letter to families and students, after all the formalities independent school communications require, I felt I had to be as real as I could with the kids. They are living in a global pandemic. I felt I had to take the risk for the kids. This is what I shared with them:

> You are living a kind of life you never expected; some of you have taken on adult concerns and responsibilities that you never expected to have to hold. Some of you, I hear, are finding ways to be creative: you're exercising together—remotely; you're playing chess together—remotely; you're watching films together, eating lunch together and cooking, in this virtual world we are creating, together. I pay tribute to your ingenuity. Kids are the best idea- and change-makers.
>
> I can neither imagine having my high school experience for a semester nor my first or senior year of high school on a computer or

without the daily back and forth, whether good or challenging, with my teachers and fellow students; without the cafeteria cook's awful beef stew with soggy noodles that I couldn't eat because I was raised a vegetarian. What would it have been like without the pizza shop around the corner and sitting on Lexington Avenue stoops with friends gossiping and annoying the owners of those over-resourced homes?

What would it have been like not to be able to interact at Lenox (now Birch Wathen Lenox) by torturing Mr. LaCalle during Art History with the fact that I knew more about Dalí and the Surrealists than he ever could or wanted to; or without the affirmation of my writing in my combined Psychology-English lit class with Mr. Diner; or without the relief of going, every day after school, to my best friend Rani's Lexington Avenue, five-bedroom apartment so that I could avoid the public school kids who loathed my independent school attendance (which was never my choice) in my neighborhood in West Harlem. I wish, then, I had realized how beautiful my neighborhood and how communal it was because everyone in it, blood or not was Aunt this and Uncle that, and that neighborhood on 157th Street gave me a daily view of the Hudson River from my bedroom window?

What would it have been like to consider not having a graduation ceremony to which my abuelita and Tía Cuca could attend, let alone Momma? We didn't have proms back then. Independent schools thought

proms were of the public-school realm, and in their effort to distinguish themselves from public schools, they actually denied us some real social connection and plain ole fun by denying us a prom. We didn't have a Baccalaureate because the last thing we seniors at Lenox wanted was to share with our parents any tradition we kids owned and in which we regularly participated, but Lenox, back in the day, and we in the Upper School are different. In the Upper School, sharing traditions and community are a part of us, a part of our Quaker values.

What would my spring semester of my senior year have been without all the physical and daily Hellos from always-there Mary in the front office and the physical goodbyes at the end of every day by walking out that grades 1-12 building on 70th and Lex like my friends and I owned it? And I had been there 12 years. I was a lifer. I would have been so angry, and I'm not so sure I would have been as gracious and ingenious as all of you. You are better than I was. Youth are better than most adults in this world. Thank you for your grace, integrity, compassion, acceptance, patience, and all-enduring love. We love you, too.

I know Momma and Papí, lost to me now, are proud of who I have become and what I do as an educator . . . but I would have been different had I not had all of those high school experiences. And yet, it is all those childhood experiences—challenging, outrageous, and of our own defined

success—that make us the unique and extraordinary individual adults I am, you are becoming, we are.

The Upper School acknowledges that all of school looks and feels different, period. The same is true for you and for us. We acknowledge that more changes are to come because if we are good educators, we are flexible educators. So expect good change meant for you from the good educators who already surround you—now remotely—at Virtual School.[138] And so, with this mind, neither I nor our US Emergency Remote Learning Team are willing to give up some senior traditions, and we will let go of some traditions for all students that just are not good for you or appropriate for this historical moment.

So, now on to some responses to what I think are your questions like *Will we have prom, and if not, will we get our loot back? Will we get to graduate live, virtually, or at all? Will we ever get to see each other again? Can we hug if we do?*

Please know that I don't/we don't have all the answers because the Upper School Emergency Remote Learning Team, our teachers, leaders, and myself have never had to plan for the sharing of remote traditions, academics, and celebrations during a global pandemic. I think you already know we are doing our best. You know this because we know that *you* are doing your best.

[138] Pseudonym

I include and conclude with this very historical moment because it is also one filled with tremendous possibility. The Regents exam that every high schooler must take in New York State to graduate? Canceled. The MCAs (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments)? Canceled.[139] The ACT? Canceled. The SAT? Canceled. And, at the time of the writing of this dissertation, both may be offered at home if the coronavirus continues.[140] The fall Bar exam? Canceled. The International Baccalaureate May exam taken by approximately 200,000 students globally? Canceled. Teachers worrying about those state exams beginning in grade 3? As a sign on the FDR highway in New York City now reads, Fuhgeddaboudit!

On 4 May 2020, Morgan Fierst from Humboldt High School in Minnesota called me to tell me that her superintendent said *Yes* when she asked if she could forget about preparing the kids for the state exam and instead create a nationwide public math installation. The project will teach visual patterns and tessellations, number sense, ten frame or the base-10 number system, proportional reasoning, estimation, decomposing numbers, properties of shapes

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[139] Interestingly, it took a global pandemic for the US Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, to realize and state publicly what has been true since high stakes testing was implemented almost two decades ago. On 20 March, in a news release, DeVos unknowingly admits: "Students need to be focused on staying healthy and continuing to learn. Teachers need to be able to focus on remote learning and other adaptations. Neither students nor teachers need to be focused on high-stakes tests during this difficult time. Students are simply too unlikely to be able to perform their best in this environment." See Josh Verges, "MN Students to Skip Standardized Tests Due to Coronavirus," 30 March 2020, accessed 5 May 2020, https://www.twincities.com/2020/03/20/mn-cancel-standardized-tests-coronavirus-walz/.

[140] See Anemona Hartocollis and Dana Goldstein, "Students Might Have to Take College Admissions Tests at Home This Fall." *The New York Times*, 15 April 2020.

and lines, and, ultimately, Morgan said, this installation will "give kids the permission to develop the capacity to have a critical dialogue around mathematical ideas and thinking from home, across the nation, grades K-12." She went on to share that kids can "use rocks and bottle cans and tin can lids and cotton balls and unused Pampers and toothpicks and blades of grass because," she yelled to me over the phone, "I'm dying inside staring into that screen every day, and so are the kids. I just can't do it to them or to me anymore. Do you believe in me?" she asked. "Do you believe in this? Do you think we can do it? I needed to hear you say I wasn't crazy; that my pacing around my house dreaming this up like you taught us in the Teacher's Institute wasn't nuts; that all the Post-Its lining my walls doesn't make me mad." I told her to send me photos of the madness because to be crazy like this is to be the best kind of sane and the best kind of teacher.

Unlike the No Child Left Behind Act and Renaissance 2010 — "the great transformations" in education in the first two decades of the new millennium — the contemporary education economy's response to COVID-19 offers two distinct resolutions. In the first resolution, Polanyi's "fictitious commodities" of land, labor, and money may once again come together because, already, all the corporations created out of and to support NCLB like Houghton Mifflin Harcourt,[141] Pearson

[141] From a 1 May 2020 email to the author while serving as Head of Upper School at The School (a pseudonym): "K–12 education has changed radically in the past few weeks. For families and caregivers, this time has produced a newfound appreciation for the critical work teachers do. For educators, this new reality has sparked questions about what the future holds. This Teacher Appreciation Week, we're not only bringing you free

K12 (now Savvas Learning Company with even stronger business rhetoric to define its notion of an innovative learning company that produces tools to support the Common Core);[142] Fuel Education, LINC (the Learning Innovation Catalyst), bulb Digital Portfolio, EdTech Solutions ("Empowering Digital Education") have already absorbed remote education as an opportunity to, as happened throughout the standardization of education under neoliberalism, ensure profit is made and ensure the goal of producing a neoliberal citizen, a service worker through public education is not stopped by COVID-19. Every day, on average, I receive no less than eight emails from these companies offering new technological tools, academic modules — but only to ensure the same type of education we have been resisting since 2001. The pandemic has taken control out of these corporations' hands because it has taken the kids out of the school, i.e., the place business designed to inculcate young people.

What remains persistent is the problem of access. Some families who cannot afford the Internet for their homes are curling up on New York City streets

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resources, but also a fresh take from HMH CEO Jack Lynch on how our K–12 system will shift in the years to come."

[142] From a 5 May 2020 email to the author while serving as Head of Upper School at The School (a pseudonym): "Today we're announcing that Pearson K12 Learning is becoming Savvas Learning Company. While our name is changing, our commitment to you is stronger than ever. We'll continue to provide all the products and services you know and trust. As Savvas, we'll carry on a long tradition of innovation and leadership in K-12 education. The iconic brands Scott Foresman, Prentice Hall, and Pearson are in our DNA. Savvas is a next-generation learning company that combines new ideas, new ways of thinking, and new ways of interacting to create innovative learning solutions. We leverage advanced technology to make learning personal, customizable, and data-driven. Our high-quality content from acclaimed authors and educators delivers proven results. And, during these unprecedented times of school closures and remote learning, Savvas is committed to serve you with the resources you need to maintain learning anywhere."

next to McDonald's to gain access to free Wi-Fi so they can go to school "remotely."[143] Granted, the schools, some of which also serve as health clinics, food banks, and a source of social connection are now closed. But as Wayne Au contends, the global pandemic allows educators to "raise questions about the purpose of school."[144] He reminds us that now "we get to rethink all of that." He goes on to argue that right now, "how you [the kids] think about yourself in the world is more important than what they will lose or retain academically." Au insists that the gains of this moment are that some black and brown parents like himself are re-engaging their children in cultural practices and reconnecting to the environment; parents are taking back education, "teaching kids what they've always wanted them to know about the who they are and who they could become."

In this other resolution, also hinted at in Morgan Fierst's story, and the stories and actions of countless other K-12 educators and families across the country, a "love pedagogy" offers a chance to dismantle the contemporary education economy. In this version, "love pedagogy" is in the home where there are not tests and no punitive accountability measures. What's left to be resolved is how to continue the dismantlement of education as a business, to create the social and economic conditions so that a "love pedagogy" can continue to

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[143] Noliwe Rooks in "Remaking Schools in the Time of Coronavirus," Wayne Au Jesse Hagopian, and Noliwe Rooks, Remaking Schools in the Time of Coronavirus, 2020, accessed 22 April 2020, https://thenewpress.com/events/remaking-schools-time-of-coronavirus-with-noliwe-rooks-jesse-hagopian-wayne-au.
[144] "Remaking Schools in the Time of Coronavirus."

emerge in the homes of poor black, brown, and poor, rural-white kids and in the schools, once we return to them. The choice between these two options stands before us right now.

In "A Talk to Teachers," James Baldwin declares "one of the paradoxes of education was that precisely at the point when you begin to develop a conscience, you must find yourself at war with your society." As students and teachers during the coronavirus pandemic shift to online learning, they, too are developing this new critical consciousness and finding themselves "at war" with this remote learning period. This war takes many forms: disengagement, lack of enthusiasm, but also the use of creative projects in place of standardized tests, and so much more. As Baldwin advises teachers, "It is your responsibility to change society if you think of yourself as an educated person."

And so, we must ask ourselves, will we return to the control systems of standardized curricula and high-stakes tests or, might we, as a "love pedagogy" suggests, respond in brand new ways that truly transform and revolutionize the system? We are living, as Baldwin concludes about his own era, "at this moment, in an enormous province." In his vision, Baldwin believes that "if America is going to become a nation, she must find a way — and this child must help her find a way to use the tremendous potential and tremendous energy which this child represents."[145] If the United States of America and its contemporary education

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[145] James Baldwin, "A Talk to Teachers," in *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction, 1948-1985* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 331-332. "A Talk to Teachers" was originally published in the 21 December 1963 issue of The Saturday Review. In the

economy fails to use the energy of all its young people, he contends, “it will be destroyed by that energy.” And so will the young people of today. And so, as Bill Ayers urges, now “let’s build schools kids don’t have to recover from.”[146]

Saturday Review, one can learn something about how the piece originated, and one can only imagine what it must have been like to be a student of Jimmy’s. Indeed, I once was from 1983-1984: “About 200 New York City/ teachers are taking a special in-service course this year on ‘The Negro: His Role in the Culture and Life of the United States.’ The course meets at Public School 180 in Harlem. At the October 16 session the speaker was James Baldwin, who was horn and brought up in Harlem and at- tended Harlem schools. His topic was "The Negro Child—His Self Image." Mr. Baldwin spoke extemporaneously, and without notes, but his remarks were re- corded on tape. By special arrangement with Mr. Baldwin and the New York Board of Education, his talk to the teachers is presented herewith.

[146] William Ayers, *Teaching with Conscience in An Imperfect World: An Invitation* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2016), 79.

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