Introduction: The Many Faces of Postdigital Ecopedagogies

Times of Ruptures, Times of Continuations

In 2020, the largest percentage of refugees resettling in the U.S. came from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Migration Policy Institute 2021). While living standards, violent conflict, and child and gender-based violence are often cited to account for this, the reasons that produce these realities are often ignored. As Walter Rodney (1982) noted more than 50 years ago, the reason that African nations are so poor is because they are so rich. 'From an African viewpoint', he wrote, colonialism 'amounted to consistent expatriation of surplus produced by African labor out of African resources. It meant the development of Europe as part of the same dialectical process in which Africa was underdeveloped.' (Rodney 1982: 149) The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are forced to flee because of the imperialist desire for the enormous resources of minerals, other raw materials, and labor power in the country.

This is particularly crucial in the postdigital era, as cobalt and coltan are so central to not only smart phones and computers but automobiles, sound systems, and more. Imperialist nations like the U.S.—and their proxies—will, by any means, force access to 'critical precious resources that are essential to produce its commodities, such as the cobalt and coltan from the Eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo' (Christiansen 2020: 340). The case of the Congo highlights the pressing need for reinvigorated ecopedagogical practices in the postdigital era, in which humans, machines, objects and materials, digital systems and devices, and more interact in increasingly complex ways that blur the boundaries between them.

The postdigital ecosystem of our era is, importantly, contextualized in and productive of new bioinformational reconfigurations in capitalism, imperialism, colonialism, and ontological and political hierarchies more generally (see Peters, Jandrić, and Hayes 2022). Such a revitalization of ecopedagogy is necessary in order to move beyond the tradition's general confinement to the tradition of Paulo Freire's work and the North American critical pedagogy project out of which it originally emerged. These origins were—and continue to be—radical, particularly

relative to environmental pedagogies more generally, which are 'frequently non-critical and narrow in discipline, theory, and epistemologically' (Misiaszek 2020: 29).

In *Critical Pedagogy, Ecoliteracy, and the Planetary Crisis*, Richard Kahn (2010) articulates the praxis of ecopedagogy as one organized around ecological literacy, coalition and movement building, and dialogue. This was a foundational book that connected teaching about environmental justice and its structural implications in economic, political, social, and epistemic violence. Relative to Freirean-inspired critical pedagogy, ecopedagogy supplemented the critique of dehumanization with a critique of ecological objectification and reframed the project of humanization within the ecosystems within which humanization might be possible. In other words, 'ecopedagogy widens Freire's initial notion of reading the world … to reading the Earth' (Misiaszek 2021: 1). Reading here is not merely the act of processing written content but of actively generating and participating in the construction and reconstruction of the world.

This world is now, in many ways, postdigital, in that it's no longer feasible to draw hard-and-fast lines of demarcation between the digital and analog, the virtual and material. The concept of the postdigital champions a 'holding-to-account of the digital that seeks to look beyond the promises of instrumental efficiencies, not to call for their end, but rather to establish a critical understanding of the very real influence of these technologies as they increasingly pervade social life' (Jandrić et al. 2018: 895). The digital is not located in a space separate from the analog. For example, the label of 'traditional' or 'face-to-face' classrooms are irrelevant and too simplistic in nature. Digital education is not independent of the material world, as technology and education are interdependent. It is no longer useful to distinguish between digital and nondigital frameworks of learning because technology is now a driving force behind the engagement of materials within the classroom.

As such, the complex nature of the terminology of postdigital allows for 'both a rupture in our existing theories and their continuation' (Jandrić et al. 2018: 895). 'The essence of postdigital culture', writes Angela Butler (2021: 63), 'stands not for a time after the digital but as an acknowledgement that the materiality of the digital is not reducible to the screen … It is a massively distributed reality that in turn conditions our perceptual realities.' The Earth that ecopedagogy reads is postdigital, and the literary practices and technologies we use to engage in such generative reading are implicated in new geopolitical and social realities.

These new realities are precisely what the contributions in this book investigate, and as they do so they each not only critique but, more importantly, identify and pry open opportunities for ruptures that can lead toward more egalitarian states of liberation. As contradictions confront each other, they're exposed to the intervention of humans and machines, objects and stuff. The task of postdigital ecopedagogy is precisely to inaugurate and intensify such ruptures, through postdigital dialogue, theory, and praxis (e.g., Ford 2021; Jandrić et al. 2019). And as this happens, 'as ruptures expand and catalyze others', it creates 'the possibility of complete rupture … the revolutionary overthrow and transcendence of the system as a whole' (Cleaver 2017: 77).

What's in the Book?

Part 1: The Educational and Intellectual Coordinates of Postdigital Ecopedagogies

The first part of the book explores several of the diverse theoretical faces and potential trajectories of postdigital ecopedagogies in order to map out a partial constellation of the educational and intellectual coordinates of postdigital ecopedagogies. The first chapter, Petar Jandrić and Derek R. Ford's 'Postdigital Ecopedagogies: Genealogies, Contradictions, and Possible Futures', is a reprint of book editors' 2020 paper. This chapter, which circulated along with the Call for Papers, lays out many of the theoretical trajectories of postdigital ecopedagogies, many of which are further developed in later chapters. The second chapter, Sarah Hayes' 'Postdigital Ecopedagogies of Attainment and Progress', intervenes in the struggle over conceptions of temporality by, first, articulating the assumptions of hegemonic interpretations of time as progressive, linear, and developmental. Contrasting mainstream models of progress with those of attainment, the chapter explores openings in the former and the potential effects of the postdigital ecopedagogies of the latter.

The third chapter, 'From the Knowable and Transparent Individual to The Secret Thought of Individuation: An Anti-Capitalist Postdigital Ecopedagogy', is by the book's co-editor Derek R. Ford and his two fourth-year students in Education Studies, Katie Swenson, and Megan Fosher. They articulate the contours of capitalist postdigital ecopedagogies, showing how they rest on the demand for transparency, individuality, and knowledge, before showing how the binary between the individual and collective subject-form should be understood postdigitally. Throughout, they enunciate anti-capitalist ecopedagogies that emerge from the opaque transindividual commons to produce thought. The next chapter, Richard Hall's 'Composting the Anti-Human University', moves to juxtaposing ossified, abstracted, and universalized ways of knowing that operate to reproduce capital (in terms of exploitation, expropriation, and extraction) with those of 'a fuller, human knowing of the world'.

The last chapter in this section, '*Insurrectional* and *Pandoran* Democracy, Military Perversion and The Quest for Environmental Peace: The Last Frontiers of Ecopedagogy Before Us', by Paul R. Carr, takes place at the junction of what he calls two contemporary forms of 'anti-democratic democracy'. Insurrectional democracy refers to the 06 January 2021 right-wing attempted coup in Washington, D. C. and Pandoran democracy refers to the Pandora Papers leaked and then released to the public on 03 October 2021. Insurrurectional democracy 'a metaphor of the chaos, fragility and lock-jaw, ping-pong interplay of elites exchanging positions of formal power' while Pandoran democracy refers to the overall domination of a minory of ultra-rich elites over the democratic system itself. They are both premised on militarization and violence, and Carr argues that postdigital ecopedagogies have the potential to counter both manifestations of anti-democratic democracy through the true mobilization of the masses.

Part 2: Postdigital Ecopedagogies in Global Anti-Imperialist, Anti-Colonial, and Decolonial Struggles

Chapters in the second part of the book present a wide range of anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, and decolonial praxes across the globe, from Italian Critical and Marxist Theory and Freirean pedagogies to Pan-Africanism, Communism, and Indigenous theories and practices. The opening chapter, Gregory N. Bourassa's 'Biopolitics, Postdigital Temporality and the New Chronic: Pedagogical Praxis Within, Against, and Beyond the Meantime', builds on the work of Giorgio Agamben to explore 'the transformations taking place in the name of health and biosecurity' and 'the new logic of temporality' that accompanies these transformations. The chapter develops the notion of the logic of the meantime, as a postdigital temporality in which the present and future can only be the repetition of the past 'an ideological and temporal formation of late capitalism that offers the future as nothing other than an extension of the present'. Bourassa ends supplementing Agamben's work and the educational literature on it as well as decolonial though by arguing for an *exit* from the meantime, especially through his theorization of the rhythms of exit, exopedagogy, and exopedagogy.

The next chapter, 'Ecopedagogy Disrupting Postdigital Divides of (Neo) Coloniality, (Eco)Racism, and Anthropocentricism: A Case Study' by Greg William Misiaszek, David Yisrael Epstein-HaLevi, Stephan Reindl, and Tamara Lee Jolly, discusses 'the needs, possibilities, and challenges of teaching ecopedagogical literacies reinvented from Freirean pedagogies to critically read technologies through lenses of postdigitalism, media culture theories, globalizations, (de)coloniality, (eco)racism, (eco)feminism, queer theories, and Southern/Indigenous epistemologies, among others'. Using a case study, the authors prioritize the ecopedagogical requirements, obstacles, and potentialities we have to attend to in order to interrupt and transform the divides between the social and environmental.

Next, Curry Malott's 'Pan African Socialism and Postdigital Considerations' offers a fascinating postdigital reading of some key anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, and Marxist thinkers such as Kwame Nkrumah, Amílcar Cabral, and Paulo Freire. Focusing on the postdigital and political changes in musical production, distribution, and reception throughout the twentieth century, the chapter shows how such changes both produced and reproduced forms of colonialism and created and recreated liberatory struggles against them. Hugh O. Burnam and Maureen S. Brett's 'The Postdigital Settler Spectacle' uses an autoethnographical and 'decolonized' framework to understand the authors' pedagogical practices that locate and 'attempt to move beyond the veil of the Settler-Spectacle'. To advance their own ecopedagogical practies, they turn to the theory of the *dérive* and 'mythographical' as they manifest through practices of walking during the pandemic.

The section concludes with 'A Modest Proposal for A Pedagogy of Alienation', by Sara Tolbert, Mahdis Azarmandi, and Cheryl Brown. Their narratives produce a map of the varied potentials and hurdles of postdigital ecopedagogies in the unique environment of the New Zealand university. This charting of challenge and

possibility leads to a praxis of 'venting', which in turns moves us to an inventive pedagogy of alienation. Whereas alienation is typically conceived of as a deficit to overcome, they show how the 'double alienation'—or the alienation from both the feeling of alienation and the alienation from that feeling can mobilize creativity and imagination by finding inspiration in the anger and rage of the politics of refusal immanent in alienation (in their particular context).

Part 3: The Aesthetics of Postdigital Ecopedagogies

The chapters comprising the final section of the book bring a range of aesthetic practices to bear on postdigital ecopedagogies. James Benedict Brown's 'Towards Second-Wave Architectural Ecopedagogies' explores three first-wave architectural ecopedagogies – Arcosanti, the Women's School of Planning and Architecture, and the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales – 'to speculate about the need for radical responses to the climate emergency, and about the challenges that will be faced by emergent second-wave architectural ecopedagogies'.

Carlos Escaño and Julia Mañero's chapter, 'Postdigital Intercreative Pedagogies: Ecopedagogical Practices for the Commons', explores intercreativity as a concept and pedagogical strategy in relation to collective knowledge production on two case studies: the MOOC 'Free Culture from Education' and the collective audiovisual reflection project 'Quadraginta'. Ripple Effects: New Frameworks for Learning in Postcommodity's Sound Art' by Noni Brynjolson examines several site-specific public art projects involving sound by the art collective Postcommodity. The chapter 'highlights productive alliances between postdigital practices, ecopedagogy, and decolonial aesthetics, and invites questions about how small-scale actions ripple outwards and produce larger transformations'.

The last chapter in the book, Jesse Bazzul and Valerie Triggs' 'Malfunctioning Right in Our Backyards OR The Strangeness of Ecological Awareness', explores 'the aesthetic dimension of ecological awareness and environments by looking at how things in our world are constantly malfunctioning, as well as how our understanding of this aesthetic dimension, and how we use this understanding for learning and teaching, can begin right in our backyards'. The chapter closes the book with the important conclusion that 'ecological awareness is strange and pleasurable, and so are the pedagogical practices and elements that come from such awareness'.

The Many Faces of Postdigital Ecopedagogies

Postdigital ecopedagogies have many faces. These faces sometimes align with each other, sometimes fulfil and expand each other, and sometimes present straightforward Janus-like contradictions. This multifacetedness is one of the key difficulties in working with postdigital ecopedagogies, and also one of their biggest advantages

over more coherent theories. In the words of the Rastafarian movement, postdigital ecopedagogies are not aimed at replacing our rigid capitalist Babylon with another, perhaps more left-oriented but nevertheless just as constrictive Babylon. This book clearly shows that we need to challenge the very concept of the Babylon and allow, in words of Chairman Mao Zedong, 'a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend'.

This richness and diversity are further exacerbated by the fact that decolonial theories have started to connect with ecopedagogical ideas only in late twentieth century (Jandrić and Ford 2020), while postdigital theory, with its first mention in 2000 (Cascone and Jandrić 2021), is the child of the twenty-first century. As the first book on postdigital ecopedagogies, and hopefully a signpost for further research, *Postdigital Ecopedagogies: Genealogies, Contradictions, and Possible Futures* shares the fate of early research efforts in any field: uncertainty, non-predictability, and rapid changes. This, in our opinion, brings about certain lightness and speed of (theoretical and practical) movement which provides postdigital ecopedagogies with the agility, and flexibility, necessary for grappling with challenges of today's postdigital world.

Hopeful about potentials of postdigital ecopedagogies for social and environmental change, and convinced in human ability to make the world a more just and sustainable place, we offer *Postdigital Ecopedagogies: Genealogies, Contradictions, and Possible Futures* as a proud overview of latest research, a humble recognition of limits of our theories, and an invitation to join us in further explorations of ecopedagogies in and for our postdigital world.

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