

POSTHUMAN PROFESSIONAL

Transsubjective Matrixial Literacies and Assemblages of
Whiteness

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my children, Tia and Brandon- my forever co-researchers, my babies, my greatest teachers, and the ones who have given my life meaning.

You are extraordinarily brave and remarkably strong, you radiate integrity and kindness that brighten the world, and you possess a grace under immense pressure that should never have been tested as it was. Your lives, your voices, your experiences compelled me to act, influencing my work and my understanding of what it means to pursue justice through academic inquiry.

In every way that matters, you are the reason this research exists and the reason I had the resilience to persevere. You taught me that research is not an abstract exercise- it is a moral commitment to truth-telling, to bearing witness, to challenging power, and to creating a world more worthy of young people like you.

Thank you for allowing me to walk alongside you as you navigate a world that does not always see your brilliance, your humanity, or your birthright to justice, dignity, and safety.

None of this would have happened without you. All of this is for you.

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Let me begin by thanking my haters, because “none of this research would have been possible without all the bitter professional vendettas that kept me going” (Kenseth Lars, 2021). In all seriousness, while adversity may fuel determination, it is the network of mentors, colleagues, and organisations acknowledged here whose generosity, expertise, and encouragement have shaped every stage of this journey.

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I would like to acknowledge and thank my supervisor, Professor Gary Husband, for creating conditions conducive to independent thought and the development of my confidence as a researcher.

And finally, to Tyson, my French Bulldog: through long writing sessions, you remained by my side with remarkable patience, even as the laptop claimed your preferred spot.

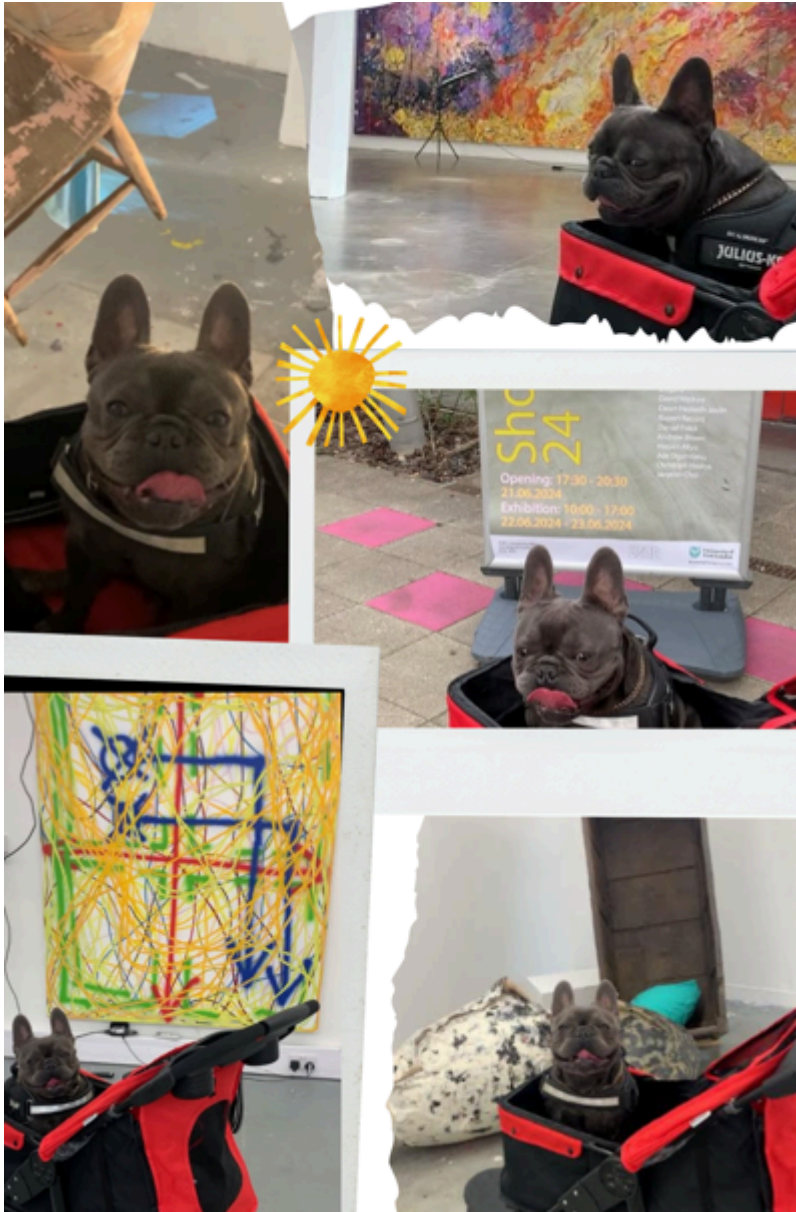


Image 1: Tyson, my French Bulldog

ABSTRACT

Importance

The intensifying pressures of neoliberal governance- characterised by the prioritisation of market-oriented principles, standardised outcomes, and competition within the Further Education (FE) sector in England- restrict autonomy and relational pedagogy, which emphasises relationships, reciprocity, and collaborative learning between educators and students. These pressures create fragmentation, surveillance, and deficit discourses that systematically disadvantage multilingual educators and students. Understanding how migrant educators navigate these contested institutional spaces is vital for developing equitable educational practices that support professional identity formation and institutional transformation.

Research Gap

Yet research remains limited on how migrant educators' lived experiences illuminate the intersection of power, identity, and pedagogy within neoliberal educational contexts, particularly pertaining to the relational emergence of professional identity and resistance practices.

Objective

This autoethnographic study examines how a Central and Eastern European (CEE) migrant lecturer, positioned as "white but not quite," navigates contested institutional spaces and develops professional identity through literacy practices that both reproduce and resist neoliberal governance structures.

Methodology

Data were generated through autoethnographic inquiry and analysed using Karen Barad's agential realism (which views individuals, objects, and knowledge as interrelated and co-constituted through interactions) and Bracha Ettinger's matrixial theory (which emphasises the shared, relational aspects of subjectivity). The study introduces the concept of 'matrixial literacies,' referring to literacy practices that emerge from relational, co-creative processes rather than individual skill development. This approach examines how professional identity emerges through relationships and interactions, as opposed to individualised skill acquisition.

Key Findings

The analysis revealed that practices ostensibly framed as neutral- academic integrity policies, quality assurance systems, and classroom materials- operate as "racialising technologies" that function as boundary-making practices privileging dominant linguistic norms. Post-Brexit conditions intensify these exclusionary mechanisms, creating new vulnerabilities for migrant educators. Simultaneously, the study identified "counter-apparatuses": collective literacy practices that resist dominant discourses and open possibilities for institutional transformation.

Implications

The findings suggest that educators and institutions should adopt a politically engaged and historically informed approach to literacy and professional development that acknowledges education's entanglement with coloniality and neoliberalism. The study proposes 'PhEmaterialist matrixial pedagogy' as an alternative educational framework; this approach integrates feminist, materialist, and matrixial theories to privilege vulnerability, co-emergence, and ethical transformation over standardisation and competitive individualism, thus creating space for emancipatory practices centred on relationality, criticality, and social justice.

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Context and Motivation

This research project investigates the social construction of professional identity through literacy practices, specifically exploring how everyday and institutional literacy practices challenge neoliberal governance in England's Further Education (FE) system. This study employs autoethnographic inquiry to investigate how a Central and Eastern European (CEE) migrant lecturer navigates contested institutional spaces. It illustrates how literacy simultaneously functions as a mechanism of control, enforcing norms and boundaries, and as a site of resistance. Autoethnography is the primary methodology, and diverse analytical approaches, such as discourse analysis and critical theory, are used to examine the researcher's multiple positionalities as an education practitioner. Employing an anti-colonial perspective, which recognises the importance of addressing Whiteness and the coloniality of power (Mignolo, 2009) in contemporary literacy and education issues, the project aims to uncover the impacts of various literacy practices on the researcher's identity and subjectivity. This chapter establishes the research context,

presents the central research question, outlines the study's aims and objectives, and provides a framework for the thesis structure.

The motivation for this study is my assumption that an ethical understanding of the Other characterises education. (Wiercinski, 2011: 119) argues that education involves embracing diversity, including the strange and the negative, and transforming our lives by exercising openness towards the unknown. Yet, modern nation-states have historically used exclusion, assimilation, and inclusion strategies to negotiate socio-demographic differences in the design, implementation, and evaluation of educational institutions and programs (Kalantzis & Cope, 2016; Shahjahan, 2013). Neoliberalism amplifies the value of business-like standardisation while limiting a relational perspective that encourages intellectual participation, privileging individual achievement and competition over practitioner-student collaboration. Expanding teachers' professional autonomy requires research beyond classroom practices and teaching skills to encompass broader social, political, and cultural contexts and promotes collaborative discussion within the teaching profession. An autoethnographic methodology will inform my critical inquiry into the historically constituted subjectivities, cultural meanings, social dynamics, and discourses that have ultimately shaped my teaching identity to 'develop a new understanding of Self/Other and the world to bring about change - to our research practice, our pedagogy, and hopefully society' (Kress, 2011: 140). Global colonialism persists as a neoliberal agenda, perpetuated by modern epistemology that delocalizes and detaches its concepts (objectivity, logic) from local histories, presenting them as universally applicable (Connell 2007; Mignolo 2005; Smith 1999 in Shahjahan, 2013), thus marginalising knowers and knowledge situated locally. Therefore, considering subjectivity through a coloniality lens requires situated knowledge or feminist objectivity, i.e., situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988), acknowledging the partiality and limitations of knowledge.

I employ feminist objectivity premised on the assumption that our subjectivity is shaped by our encounters with others. This notion can be explored within the framework of feminist research practices and feminist ethics. The notions of feminist objectivity, feminist research principles and feminist ethics are intrinsically linked within feminist epistemology and methodology. They challenge traditional

approaches to knowledge production and emphasise the importance of subjectivity, multiple perspectives, and ethical considerations in research and understanding the world. Their collective aim is to interrogate dominant research paradigms, which often neglect marginalised communities. Feminist ethics encompass the ethics of care, a theoretical framework that emphasises human relationships when making moral decisions (Tong, 1993). This perspective critiques conventional principle-based decision-making approaches and the morally neutral, epistemologically objective presuppositions of traditional scientific scholarship.

(Kakos & Fritzsche, 2017b) examine a critical, systematic approach to the meta-ethnography of autoethnographies and offers a worked example of the method using educational studies. (Kakos & Fritzsche, 2017b) engage in synthesis as translation through reciprocal analogy, and how it can be applied to produce deeper insights than primary studies may yield when interpreted in isolation. In centring the self, autoethnography serves both as a critique of the colonial origins of ethnography (and its objectification of the other while hiding the subjectivity of the colonial author) and as an assertion of relational knowing. For education, the meta-ethnography of autoethnographies offers a way to preserve a high level of attention to the particularities of living in educational scenes and to see these personal accounts in relation to other personal accounts. This perspective might allow education better access to subjectivities, when so much of education recognises teachers, students, parents and others as objects of policy and practice.

1.2 Research Question

This study aims to address an ontological question with epistemological elements. My question's dual focus explores identity and power within educational and institutional frameworks.

How do my everyday literacy practices within educational spaces reflect and shape my professional identity as a migrant educator in inner London, and how can these practices reveal and challenge dominant discourses and institutional power dynamics to empower others?

This research examines how educational professionals, particularly (racialised) migrant educators, navigate multiple literacy practices and identity borderspaces within institutional contexts. Through the lens of matrixial theory, I investigate how these practices reveal and challenge dominant discourses and power dynamics, offering possibilities for individual and collective empowerment. My question focuses on being and identity-how my literacy practices both reflect and shape my professional identity as a racialised migrant educator. It addresses the nature of my existence within educational spaces and how my actions (literacy practices) interact with and influence the dominant discourses and power structures around me. Exploring how these practices can empower others suggests an inquiry into the relational aspects of being and how my identity interacts with and impacts others in the institutional context. The epistemological aspects include examining how my literacy practices function as a way of knowing and understanding the world. By reflecting on and challenging dominant discourses and institutional power dynamics, I explore the processes of knowledge creation and diffusion within these contexts. While the ontological inquiry is central (focusing on identity, existence, and relationality), the epistemological dimension underpins it by examining how my practices generate knowledge and meaning.

I am the researcher and the subject. I am an insider to the research, neither impartial nor objective, nor a fixed observer of facts and happenings. However, I can identify themes and patterns in my narratives from an emic position, then return to the stories from an etic perspective to develop themes. I am a literacy lecturer in Further Education (FE) in the UK, specialising in teaching literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). I have a background in English Language and Literature and a Master's in Applied Linguistics and Education. The participant/researcher and the specific research sites will be described at a later stage, preceded by a historical context of FE. As a migrant teacher in the UK, examining my context demands a complex analysis of the historical context of Further Education (FE) and the history of literacy and radical thought in the UK. This historical perspective is central to my research project, which examines how various political, economic, and social movements, including Chartism, have profoundly influenced the evolution of FE and literacy in the UK. Chartists, with their emphasis

on 'Really Useful Knowledge', challenged the educational system of their time, initiating a more inclusive and empowering approach to education. Comprehending these historical events and their educational impact provides vital insights into the contemporary educational landscape and the challenges encountered by migrant teachers. It also elucidates the implications of historical tensions and reforms for present policies and practices, shaping today's perceptions and the implementation of literacy and education. It provides a strategic plan for transformations in our existing policies and practices.

My research project employs a nonlinear approach to the historical context, enabling a complex analysis of pedagogic knowledge circulation within the imperial social formation and its actors, free from the constraints of a simplistic chronological framework. My approach acknowledges history as a dynamic process marked by flows of power of contending classes over periods. It enables a more comprehensive analysis of the historical context and the non-linear advancements in Further Education (FE) and literacy in the UK, including current challenges and opportunities in the education sector, particularly for migrant teachers like me. Comprehending the historical context of FE and literacy helps address enduring educational challenges, dichotomies, the conflict between vocational and academic education, and the role of education in advancing social justice and equality. By situating my experiences within this historical framework, I may better understand the underlying dynamics and devise strategies to navigate and potentially transform my teaching practice in the UK.

1.3 Research Aims and Objectives

My primary aim is to examine how everyday literacy practices within educational spaces reflect and actively constitute professional identity as a migrant educator while revealing and challenging dominant discourses and institutional power dynamics to create transformative possibilities for marginalised communities. I will explore the transformational potential of literacy practices for identity negotiation and transformation, and for constructing, challenging, and resisting whiteness in relation to identity and the neoliberal ideal (Hunter, 2015).

My objectives are to trace the temporal development of professional identity and to examine how discourses and literacy practices enable transformation and negotiation across different positionalities. Second, I aim to analyse how literacy practices function as interventions that reproduce and resist institutional racism and deficit ideologies in further education contexts. Third, to examine "institutional whiteness" operations through a critical analysis of policies, pedagogical materials, and quality assurance systems that appear neutral while reproducing racial hierarchies. Fourth, to demonstrate how autoethnographic methodology becomes a literacy practice that challenges extractive research traditions and creates space for marginalised voices and experiences, thus refusing conventional academic boundaries and developing innovative methodological approaches that honour complexity, affect, and relationality. Autoethnography is used as a form of resistance to neoliberal governance by exploring its effects on individual academic and personal lives and enriching an anti-colonialist critique of the dominant social order (Bagley and Castro-Salazar, 2012, in Moriarty, 2019: 239). Fifth, to theorise pedagogies that support educators and students in understanding how subjectivities, knowledge, and institutions are co-constituted through relational encounters while providing concrete tools for navigating and dismantling oppressive institutional structures. The historicising of literacy practices exposes gendered and racialised discourses, challenging power dynamics and silencing marginalised voices. In contrast, collaborative efforts through diverse literacy practices resist institutionalised neoliberal ideals of individualism and competition, promoting collective action and social justice. Autoethnography is a critical counter-narrative that connects the individual and the social by examining institutional processes, allowing individuals to deconstruct assumptions about Whiteness and empowering marginalised identities, enabling identity transformation.

1.4 Thesis Structure and Overview

My research examines my 24-year career from 1999 across 11 UK sites. My professional knowledge was formed in multiple landscapes where my roles were contingent on multiple positionings. My typical context is an urban, multilingual classroom in inner London, where prevalent deficit ideologies and reductive cultural notions prevail. Learners are constructed as objects needing control and

remediation, and deficit, classist and racist explanations of their underachievement are employed. My professional trajectory has been defined not only by my educational and career progress but also by the complex personal challenges I have navigated alongside it. These experiences have impacted my understanding of structural inequalities and informed my methodology as a critical practitioner-researcher. They position me to interrogate deficit discourses and racialised power relations in education with professional insight and lived experience, enabling me to analyse in detail the interdependencies among biography, pedagogy, and institutional practice. I am a migrant in the “First World”, female and racialised as white. I migrated from the “Second-world” Central Europe, erroneously included in Eastern Europe. The uncritical merging of Central and Eastern Europe is an example of “Eastern Europeanism” (Kalmar, 2023). I occupy a marginal, non-Western whiteness, a “white but not quite” positionality, as described by Kalmar (2023). The “not quite” is a form of relationality, as Boatcă (2023) noted. My contradictory history and relationship with global colonialism as a “Second World” migrant in the “First World” produced a tension of “in-betweenness” or a semi-periphery of the core. I occupy the position of “frustrated Whiteness”, negotiating my position in a racialised world as a citizen of “white Europe” while being “not-quite-white”. I have varying degrees of systemic access depending on location and circumstances, and my claims to the full privileges of Whiteness conferred in the “First world” are contested. I may be aligned with a larger racialised group or use others to define and realign with my Whiteness.

My positionality acknowledges the complexity of self and knowledge, rejecting a singular identity to embrace multiple truths and the unknown and emphasising the navigation of complex experiences and subjectivities (Haraway, 1988; Anzaldúa, 1987). Informed by the situated knowledge of indeterminacy and interdependence of exchangeable position, I highlight the role of Whiteness in redefining positionality (Barad, 2007; Ahmed, 2007). I am compelled to advocate for intellectual self-trust, emphasising the influence of embodied knowledge and affective alignment on relational subjectivity (Lorde, 1984). Recognising the interrelatedness of individuals and contexts, educators can prioritise relational dynamics and adopt an inclusive, intersectional approach to professional identity formation (Crenshaw, 1991).

1.4.1 Thesis Roadmap

My thesis begins with a critical observation that everyday literacy practices in Further Education are not neutral; they enforce a 'hidden referent': the racialised, classed, and gendered norms presented as universal educational standards. But literacy practices can also be leveraged to resist institutional whiteness and transform educational spaces. I noticed contradictions in my professional life, moments where institutional responses to critical incidents or differences felt inadequate and where my own identity felt fragmented. To understand, I traced these moments back through history, uncovering the hidden histories beneath seemingly ordinary educational spaces and excavating sedimented layers of policy and practice. I uncovered how literacy in FE has always been a site of tension and developed the concept of 'matrixial literacies': a new, relational, and embodied way of understanding literacy that transforms both educators and institutions. The following chapters trace the journey from my opening problem and my research question to a set of theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions to knowledge.

Chapter 2 establishes the historical context of FE, tracing literacy as a political tool and demonstrating that the hidden referent is not a novel phenomenon. Historically, literacy in FE has always been a double-edged sword: a site of both social control and resistance. Across its historical trajectory, from medieval ecclesiastical control, through industrialisation and monitorial schooling, to neoliberal governance and Chartist radical legacy and Mechanics' Institutes, literacy has never been politically neutral and has been used as a mechanism for demarcating and policing the boundaries between the "civilised" and the "savage," the "moral" and the "immoral." Literacy, in this sense, is not just a skill but a weapon for oppression or emancipation. I argue that literacy's emancipatory legacy lives on in action research and co-created knowledge, providing the historical foundation for my theoretical framework.

The chapter introduces the ongoing tension between the autonomous model of literacy, which views literacy as a neutral, technical skill, measurable and standardised, and the ideological model, which views literacy as a social practice that is always situated, always political, and always contested; this tension, as Chapter 3 will demonstrate, is structurally mirrored in Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between the arborescent, hierarchical model of knowledge (evident in

state control and bureaucracy) and the smooth, linear, rhizomatic model of creativity and relational becoming, revealing that the autonomous model is not neutral but is itself an arborescent technology of governance. Section 2.5 then demonstrates how neoliberal governance and affective control represent the contemporary evolution of these historical mechanisms, establishing the historical foundation upon which the theoretical framework of Chapter 3 is built.

Chapter 3 develops the literature review and theoretical framework for analysing the historical patterns established in Chapter 2. Building on the history of literacy as a technology of governance, the chapter theorises how the mechanisms of control did not disappear but transformed-evolving from the overt physical coercion and panoptic surveillance of colonial "civilising missions" into a modern digital panopticon where control is psychologically internalised through affective management and the constant self-surveillance demanded by neoliberal performativity, producing institutional pathologies and fragmented professional subjectivities (theorised in section 3.2.2): fabrications, values schizophrenia, narcissism, toxic literacies, psychosis of whiteness, hyperreflexivity, and paranoia that, in today's context of intensified civic and ethno-nationalism, take on new urgency, and against which the Grammar of Affect and matrixial literacies, developed in section 3.3, offer a relational and ethical alternative.

Section 3.2 traces how the transformation of mechanisms of control operated primarily through linguistic authority: as standardised English became institutionalised, it established the hidden referent of the white bourgeois male as the invisible norm against which all others are measured and found lacking. Through Cohen's three grammars, section 3.2.1 demonstrates how the historical shift from the "grammar of things" to the "grammar of mind" naturalised a normative subjectivity grounded in whiteness, rationality, and individualism. This hidden referent operates not merely through language but as a multimodal assemblage, functioning visually, auditorily, affectively, materially, and temporally, actively policing language, enforcing conformity, and maintaining racial hierarchies under the guise of objectivity, so that seemingly neutral practices like academic integrity policies function as racialising technologies that privilege dominant norms and produce the institutional pathologies and fragmented professional subjectivities theorised in section 3.2.2.

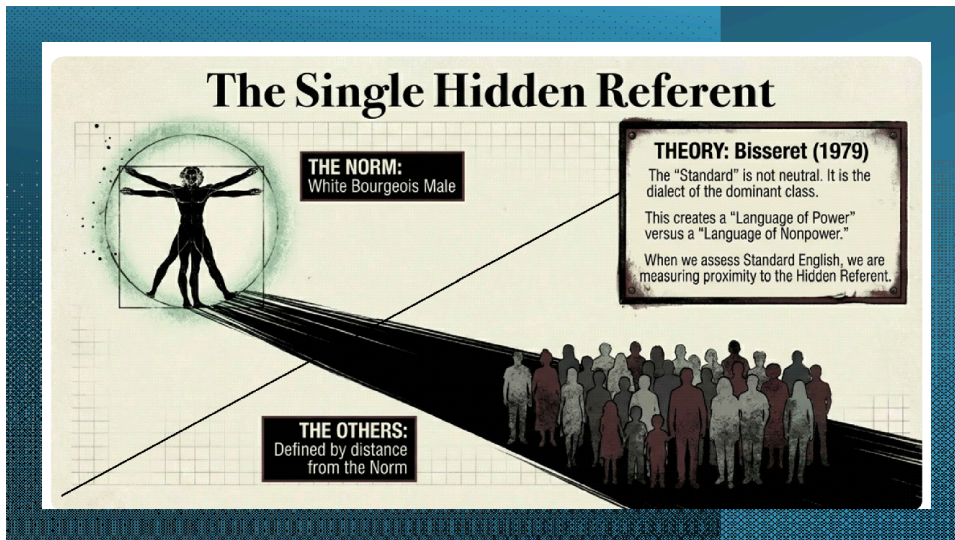


Figure 1: The Hidden referent

This image represents the grammar of the hidden referent. The grammatical positions of I/You & It dictate who is allowed to be a subject, with agency, and who is reduced to an object, as a unit of data or labour, within the institution.

- The 'I' on the left is reserved for the dominant subject; their "I" (who they feel they are) matches their social "Me" (how society treats them)
- The 'Other' experiences a psychic split—a fragmentation between their "imaginary I" and their "social me." To become a professional or a "valid" subject, one must create a split or distance between the "I" (rational/white/professional) and the devalued Other (the racialised, the feminine, the emotional) to align with the "hidden referent" of power.
- I challenge this subject position with a relational, co-emergent model: subjectivity is always in-between, always becoming.

To understand how these multimodal assemblages of whiteness form, operate, and can be resisted, section 3.3 shifts the ontological lens through the Liquid Epistemology framework, theorising literacy as a living, relational, and transformative force. Like a river, literacy flows in two modes: laminar, as smooth and routine, and turbulent, as chaotic critical episodes, and in turbulent moments produces laminated assemblages (section 3.3.2): layers of history, policy, bodies, and affects converging in a single event, simultaneously revealing how the hidden referent operates through everyday literacy practices and opening spaces for resistance.



Figure 2: Liquid Epistemology

Liquid Epistemology then provides the conceptual foundation for matrixial literacies—the original theoretical contribution of this thesis—which emerge in the in-between liminal spaces of the matrixial borderspace (section 3.3.3), where the educator (“I”) and the student (“Non-I”) co-emerge through shared vulnerability and wit(h)nessing, practising self-fragilisation as openness to difference, where subjectivity is shared, relational, and emergent, and where literacy is something we become with rather than acquire alone. This move from the pathological fragmentation produced by institutional whiteness to the ethical co-emergence of matrixial literacies is the chapter’s central theoretical trajectory.

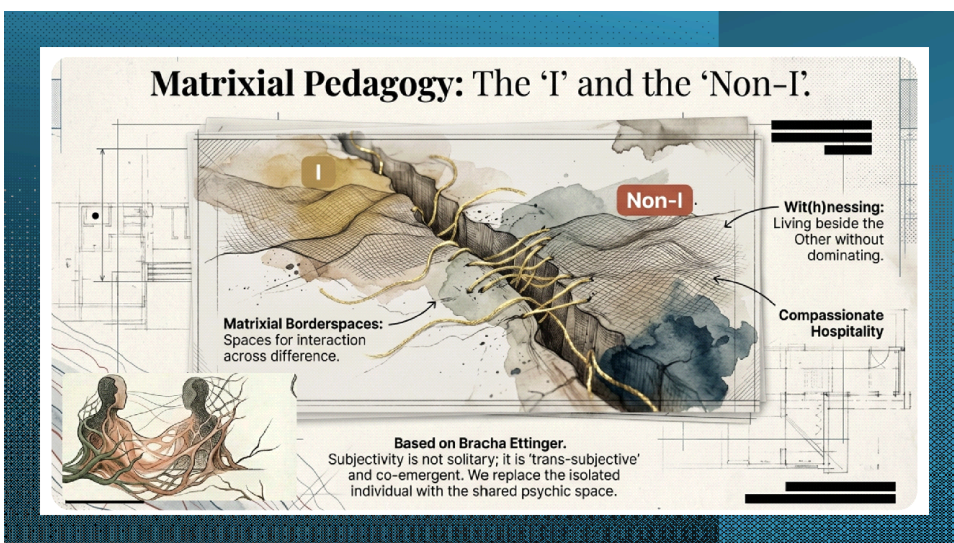


Figure 3: Matrixial Borderspace

To sustain this trajectory analytically, I develop a multi-layered, performative framework that synthesises five theoretical traditions: Barad's agential realism, which conceptualises reality as co-created through practice and provides the onto-epistemological foundation for understanding how racialising technologies enact rather than merely represent racial hierarchies; Ettinger's matrixial theory, which conceptualises subjectivity as relational and co-emergent, offering an ethical alternative to the narcissistic and paranoid subjectivities produced by institutional whiteness; Vygotsky's concepts of *perezhivanie* and sense which validate lived experience as generative knowledge; Critical Whiteness Studies, which expose the hidden referent and make visible the structural operations of whiteness as a multimodal assemblage; and Spinoza's distinction between *potestas* and *potentia*, which moves us from power-over to collective capacity to act. Together, these frameworks establish that individual experience, institutional structures, and material reality are inseparable, producing knowledge that is both critical and transformative, thereby establishing the theoretical foundation for the methodology, findings, and pedagogical proposals of the subsequent chapters.

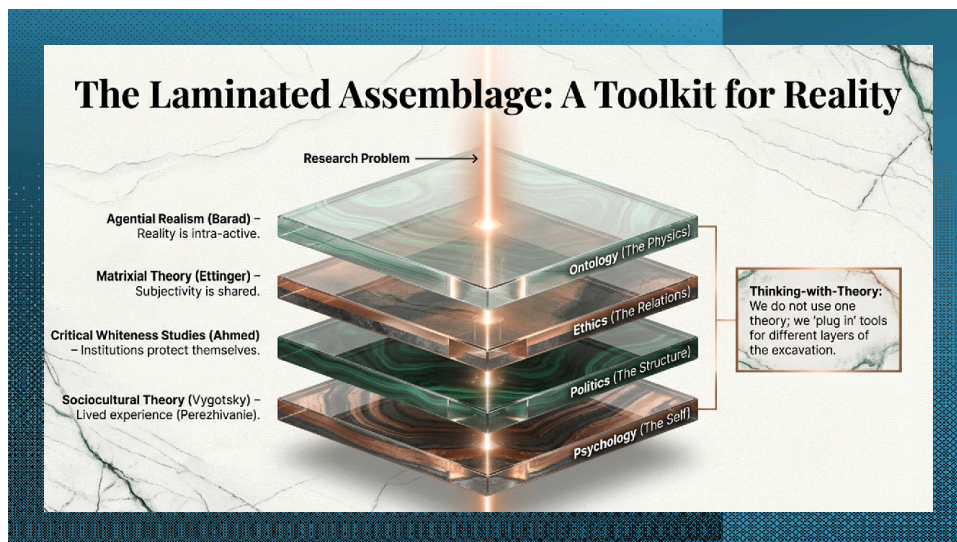


Figure 4: Multi-layered, Performative Theoretical Framework

Chapter 4 presents the methodology through which this theoretical framework is enacted. Section 4.2 introduces my methodological innovation of *autopraxis*, which combines critical autoethnography (section 4.2.2) -excavating sedimented memories

and artefacts-with action research (section 4.2.3), cyclical interventions aimed at changing the system. Section 4.7 introduces legal fiction as a creative, ethical tool to safely expose how racism operates through relational, trans-subjective, material-discursive practices, situating "Mother v The Matrixial" as a creative expression of matrixial positionality rather than a case study. This approach enables the study of complex professional subjectivity and the implementation of systemic transformation, situating the researcher as both insider and subject, navigating the grammatical positions of I, You, and It that dictate who is allowed to be a subject with agency and who is reduced to an object within the institution, and challenges this through a relational, co-emergent model in which subjectivity is always in-between, always becoming. The methodological contributions are discussed in relation to the feminist posthumanist and new materialist research traditions that underpin the study.

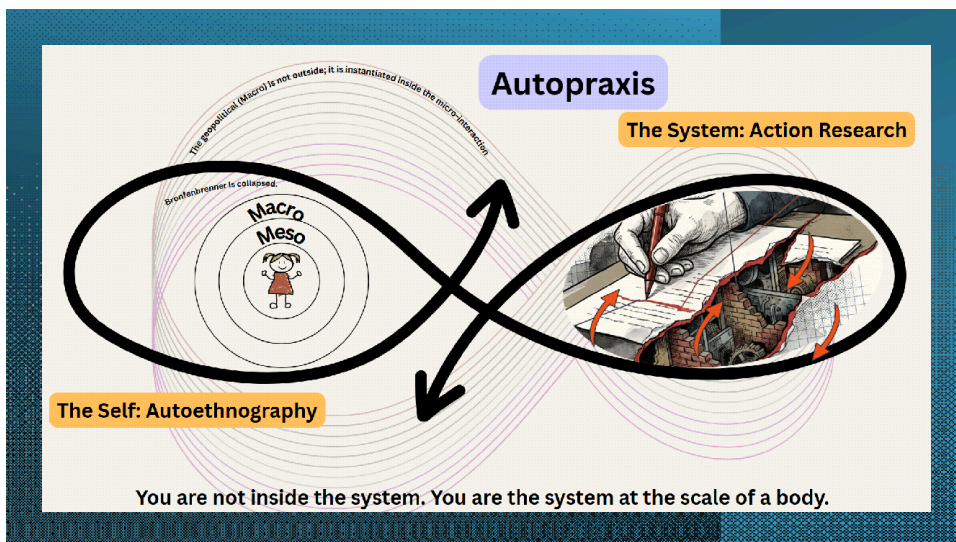


Figure 5: Autopraxis

Chapter 5 presents the findings and discussion across four interconnected themes, each organised around a specific dimension of how everyday literacy practices operate as sites of both subjugation and resistance.

First, Section 5.2 (Multimodal Assemblages of Power: Reading Whiteness) demonstrates that institutional practices are not neutral; they are racialising technologies that privilege the hidden referent and reinforce racial and linguistic hierarchies-through an analysis of Quality Assurance systems as racialising technologies (5.2.1), academic integrity policies and linguistic hierarchies (5.2.2),

and material-discursive encounters in educational spaces (5.2.3), collectively showing how professional identity is co-constituted through institutional power.

Second, Section 5.3 (Agential Cuts: Co-Constituting Racialised Subjects) demonstrates how everyday literacy events co-constitute racialised subjects through three interconnected case studies: The Crystal Ball Worksheet (5.3.1), Holocaust Denial and Historical Erasure (5.3.2), and Roma Identity Disclosure and Passing (5.3.3)-revealing how professional identity is emergent, relational, and shaped by ongoing negotiation with institutional power, with the practitioner as the embodied site where abstract policy condenses into material reality.

Third, Section 5.4 (Peripheral Whiteness and Professional Becoming) examines how geopolitical forces condense into everyday educational encounters through the Zero to Brexit Hero phenomenon (5.4.1), Post-Brexit Vulnerabilities (5.4.2), Institutional Responses and Nonperformatives (5.4.3), and Hierarchies of Whiteness (5.4.4), demonstrating how literacy practices in FE are deeply political, distributing agency, meaning, and power across human and non-human actors in the educational assemblage.

Fourth, Section 5.5 (Serendipity: From Potestas to Potentia) demonstrates that resistance requires collective, systemic action through Action Research Cycles and Institutional Change (5.5.1), Randomised Corridor Trials and Affective Leadership (5.5.2), and Rhizomatic Thinking and Educational Assessment (5.5.3).

Counter-apparatuses redistribute power from potestas to potentia, create third spaces that challenge institutional hierarchies, and reclaim professional identity from the terrors of performativity. The chapter demonstrates that matrixial pedagogy-the deliberate practice of creating and sustaining spaces for shared vulnerability and transformative learning-offers practical tools, including assessment based on relationality rather than distance from a norm, and design principles embracing liminality, ethical materiality, and collective empowerment.

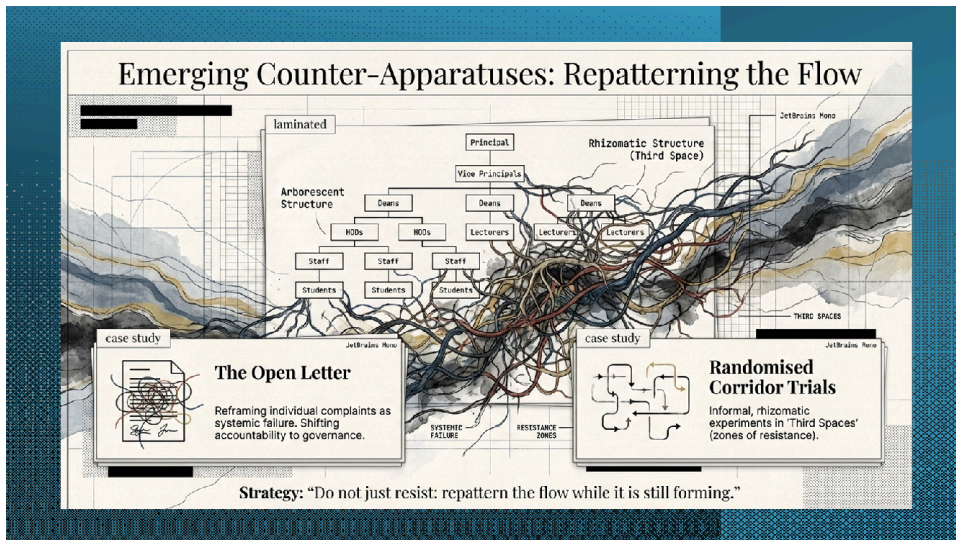


Figure 6: Counter-apparatuses as structural interventions to enact matrixial pedagogy at scale

Chapter 6 synthesises my three key contributions to knowledge: the development of Whiteness as a Multimodal Assemblage, demonstrating how institutional whiteness operates through everyday practices rather than just policy; the introduction of Matrixial Literacies as a new, relational, embodied framework for literacy; and the proposal of PhEmaterialist Matrixial Pedagogy as a practical roadmap for moving from compliance to collective empowerment (section 6.3). I reflect on the study's limitations (section 6.4) and identify next steps through collaborative research, practical resources, and policy engagement (section 6.5). I conclude that educators and institutions should adopt historically informed, politically engaged approaches to literacy and professional development, acknowledging education's entanglement with coloniality and neoliberalism, and creating space for emancipatory, relational, and critical practices.

1.5 Glossary



Academic Integrity

A code of conduct in higher education emphasising honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. In this thesis, it is analysed as a racialising technology that positions multilingual students as inherently deficient while appearing neutral.

Affect

Not individual emotion, but a collective "capacity to affect and to be affected" (Goodchild, 1996). Refers to pre-cognitive forces that move bodies and create possibilities for action. Distinguished from emotions, which are named feelings that emerge from affects. See also Joyful Affects, Sad Affects.

Agential Cuts

(Barad, 2007) The boundary-making practices through which phenomena emerge. Not pre-existing divisions but enacted separations that simultaneously connect and separate different elements. For example, assessment practices make "agential cuts" that separate "competent" from "struggling" students.

Agential Realism

(Karen Barad, 2007) A theoretical framework proposing that reality emerges through relationships rather than existing as separate entities that subsequently interact. Challenges the subject/object distinction by showing how boundaries are enacted through intra-activity.

Apparatus

(Barad, 2007) Material arrangements through which boundaries are enacted, and phenomena emerge. Not neutral tools but boundary-making practices that are formative of matter and meaning. Educational policies, assessment rubrics, and classroom materials function as apparatuses.

Assemblage

(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) A heterogeneous collection of elements (human, non-human, material, discursive) that come together to produce effects. A performed organisation of language and matter (material) that are always in motion. Language becomes just one line. The relation between language and matter is one of the social forces of affect. The framework of assemblages offers the rhizomatic mapping of affect.

Autoethnography

A research methodology that uses personal experience as data to understand cultural phenomena. Interpreting (graphy) the personal (auto) to illuminate the cultural (ethno) and examine how individual experiences connect to broader social patterns. Used here as resistance to extractive research practices.

Autonomous Model of Literacy

(Street, 1984) The dominant view of literacy as a neutral, technical skill that can be measured and taught universally. Contrasted with the ideological model, which recognises literacy as culturally situated and politically charged.



Becoming

(Deleuze & Guattari) A process of transformation that is non-linear and open-ended. Distinguished from "being" (fixed states) by emphasising continuous change and the emergence of new possibilities. Professional identity is understood as "becoming" rather than a fixed achievement.

Borderspace

See Matrixial Borderspace.



Chronotopic

Relating to the intersection of time and space in meaning-making and identity formation.

Co-emergence

(Ettinger, 2006) The process by which subjectivities emerge together through encounter rather than existing as separate entities that subsequently interact. Central to matrixial theory's understanding of ethical relationality.

Coloniality of Power

(Quijano, 2000) The enduring influence of colonial-era systems of power, control, and hegemony on contemporary social, economic, and political structures. Distinguished from colonialism as a historical period by emphasising ongoing effects.

Counter-apparatus

Forms of practice that interrupt dominant logics and create possibilities for transformation. Collective literacy practices that resist institutional racism and create alternative possibilities for meaning-making.



Diffractive Analysis

(Barad, 2007) An analytical approach that examines how different phenomena interfere with and transform each other, like light waves creating interference patterns. Contrasted with reflective analysis that seeks to mirror reality.



Embodied Semiotic Becoming

(Prior & Olinger, 2019) The process by which identity transforms through engagement with signs and meaning-making practices. Emphasises that identity formation is embodied, historical, and distributed rather than purely cognitive.

Epistemic Injustice

(Fricker, 2007) The wrong done to someone in their capacity as a knower. Includes testimonial injustice (not being believed due to prejudice) and hermeneutical injustice (lacking interpretive resources to understand social experiences).



Fabrication

(Ball, 2003) A constructed representation of oneself designed to meet external evaluation criteria. Creates "opacity rather than transparency" by prioritising the appearance of success over authentic practice.



Grammar of Affect

(Melville, 2025) An extension of Cohen's "three grammars" that recognises how meaning-making operates through affective, embodied, and unconscious dimensions beyond linguistic representation.

Grammar of Mind

(Cohen, 1977) The Enlightenment-era shift to understanding language as an expression of human cognition rather than divine order. Established anthropocentric epistemology positioning rational subjects as meaning-makers.

Grammar of Things

(Cohen, 1977) Pre-modern understanding of language as mirroring divine and natural order. Reflected an essentialist worldview that excluded material and affective dimensions from meaning-making.



Hidden Referent

(Bisseret, 1979) The unmarked norm (typically white, bourgeois, male) against which all others are measured and found lacking. Operates invisibly to maintain hierarchies while appearing neutral.

Hyperreflexivity

(Hunter, 2015) A condition "which knows all, but which is coupled with an ever-increasing sense of demoralisation because, in spite of an overall intensification of problem-solving activity, nothing changes."



Ideological Model of Literacy

(Street, 1984) Understanding of literacy as culturally situated practices that vary across contexts and serve particular interests. Contrasted with the autonomous model that treats literacy as a neutral skill.

Institutional Whiteness

(Ahmed, 2006) The structural embedding of white norms and values within organisational practices, policies, and cultures. Operates through seemingly neutral procedures that consistently advantage white subjects.

Intra-activity

(Barad, 2007) Barad's neologism signifying the mutual constitution of entangled agencies, where agency is an enactment and matter of possibilities for reconfiguring entanglements. Differs from interaction, which assumes pre-existing separate entities.



Joyful Affects

(Spinoza, via Munro & Thanem, 2018) Affects that increase collective capacity for

action (potentia). Contrasted with sad affects that diminish capacity. Central to affective leadership approaches.



Laminated Assemblages

(Prior & Olinger, 2019) Temporal and spatial configurations where multiple histories, practices, and meanings layer together in literacy events. Like geological lamination, these create complex, stratified meaning-making encounters.

Lines of Flight

(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) Movements that escape dominant structures and create new possibilities. In education, practices that break free from institutional constraints to enable transformation.



Material-Discursive Practices

(Barad, 2007) Practices that recognise the inseparability of material and discursive dimensions. Language and matter are understood as mutually constitutive rather than separate domains.

Matrixial Borderspace

(Ettinger, 2006) A psychic space where boundaries between self and other become permeable without collapsing entirely. Enables ethical encounter with difference through shared vulnerability and co-emergence.

Matrixial Literacies

(Melville, 2025) A framework synthesising laminated assemblages, embodied semiotic becoming, and matrixial theory. Conceptualises literacy as posthuman-affective, layered, embodied, and relational becoming.

Matrixial Theory

(Bracha Ettinger, 2006) Feminist psychoanalytic theory proposing an alternative to separation-based models of subjectivity. Emphasises co-emergence, shared vulnerability, and ethical encounter in matrixial borderspaces.

Metramorphic

(Ettinger, 2006) Fundamental shifts in the borderlines between being/absence, self/other. Creative dimension in human unconscious relating to trans-subjective co-emergence with the m/Other.

Monitorial Schools

Early 19th-century educational system using student monitors to teach other students. Originated in colonial contexts and imported surveillance techniques for domestic class control. Precursor to modern educational surveillance systems.

Multimodality

A domain of social semiotics that extends understanding of meaning-making beyond language to include multiple modes (visual, spatial, gestural, etc.) working together.



Nonperformatives

(Ahmed, 2021) Institutional speech acts (policies, procedures) that do not bring into effect what they name. For example, diversity policies that name equality while failing to address systemic inequalities.



Onto-epistemology

(Barad, 2007) The inseparable connection between ontology (being) and epistemology (knowing). Challenges traditional separation by showing how what we know and how we exist are mutually constitutive.



Perezhivanie

(Vygotsky, 1934) Russian term meaning "lived experience" - the intersection of sociocultural history and individual development, synthesising affective and cognitive experiences within historical contexts.

Performativity

(Ball, 2003) A system of governance that shapes behaviour through continuous monitoring, evaluation, and comparison. Creates "fabrications" and "values schizophrenia" by demanding alignment with external measures.

PhEmaterialist

(Ringrose, Warfield & Zarabadi, 2019) An educational approach that integrates feminist posthumanist and new materialist theories to reimagine learning as processes of doing and becoming, grounded in matter, multiplicity, and relationality.

Phenomena

(Barad, 2007) The primary ontological units in agential realism. Not objects or subjects but "the ontological inseparability/entanglement of intra-acting agencies." A performed organisation of language. Language is an apparatus that is productive of and part of phenomena.

Posthumanism

A paradigm shift proposing an ethico-onto-epistemological approach that challenges human/non-human, subject/object, and nature/culture binaries

Potentia

(Spinoza, via Munro & Thanem, 2018) Collective power that emerges through shared reasoning and ethical action. Contrasted with potestas (power over others). Enhanced by joyful affects.

Potestas

(Spinoza, via Munro & Thanem, 2018) Power of authority, command, and control exerted by leaders. Contrasted with potentia (collective empowerment).



Racialising Technologies

(Melville, 20025, building on Foucault) Seemingly neutral practices, policies, and procedures that actively produce and maintain racial categories and hierarchies. Include assessment systems, quality assurance frameworks, and academic integrity policies.

Really Useful Knowledge (RUK)

(Chartist movement, 1830s-1840s) Educational approach emphasising critical understanding of social conditions and power relations. Contrasted with "useful knowledge" designed to produce compliant workers.

Response-ability

(Barad, 2007) Ethical obligation to be accountable for how our practices participate in the world's ongoing reconfiguration. Emphasises collective responsibility rather than individual accountability.

Rhizoanalysis

A method of analysis based on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizome concept, mapping connections and movements rather than hierarchical structures.

Rhizomatic

(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) Non-hierarchical, interconnected growth pattern that can spread in multiple directions. Used metaphorically for thinking and organising that resists tree-like (hierarchical) structures.



Sad Affects

(Spinoza, via Munro & Thanem, 2018) Affects like fear, shame, or despair that diminish collective capacity for action. Contrasted with joyful affects that enhance potentia.

Self-fragilisation

(Ettinger, 2006) Ethical practice of making oneself vulnerable to transformation through encounter with otherness. Central to matrixial pedagogy and wit(h)nessing practices.

Semiotic Becoming

(Prior & Olinger, 2019) Identity transformation through engagement with signs and meaning-making practices. Emphasises the embodied, historical, and distributed nature of identity formation.

Spacetimemattering

(Barad, 2007) The ongoing reconfiguration of space, time, and matter through intra-activity. Challenges linear temporality by showing how the past, present, and future are mutually constitutive.

Spacetimeunconscious(ing)

(Secor, 2023) Extension of spacetimemattering that includes unconscious dimensions. The unconscious as "always already unfolding with spacetime-mattering" rather than internal to subjects.

Syncretic Literacy

(Gregory et al. 2007) A creative process where people reinvent culture by drawing on diverse literacy resources, both familiar and new.



Third Space

Gutiérrez's (2008) construct describing spaces that reorganise everyday concepts

into scientific ones, sharing characteristics with affinity spaces and communities of practice.

Trans-subjectivity

(Ettinger, 2006) Subjectivity that is co-constituted and shared rather than individually contained. Challenges bounded notions of selfhood by emphasising mutual constitution through encounter.

Translanguaging

(García & Wei, 2014) A pedagogical approach that recognises multilingual speakers' full linguistic repertoires as resources rather than treating languages as separate systems. Challenges monolingual ideologies.

Transmediation

The process of translating meaning from one semiotic mode to another (e.g., from books to visual art).



Values Schizophrenia

(Ball, 2003) The psychological split experienced by educators between authentic ethical commitments and institutional demands for performativity. Creates internal fragmentation and professional alienation.



White Mainstream English (WME)

(Baker-Bell, 2020) The term emphasises that "standard English" is actually racialised as white. Makes visible how minoritised speakers are stigmatised even when using language considered "standard" when produced by white speakers.

Whiteness

A system of power and privilege that positions white experiences, values, and ways of being as universal norms. Operates through institutional whiteness and racialising technologies while maintaining invisibility.

Wit(h)nessing

(Ettinger, 2006) Ethical attention to otherness that involves witnessing while simultaneously being with others in their experience. Requires self-fragilisation and compassionate hospitality without appropriation.



Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

(Vygotsky, 1978) The space between what a learner can do independently and what they can accomplish with guidance. Extended to include matrixial borderspaces where co-emergence occurs.



Chapter 2: HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF FURTHER EDUCATION

2.1 Introduction

I present the conflict over what is now known as adult education, further education, post-compulsory education or the lifelong learning sector from the late 18th century to the present. The emphasis is on post-16 education and adult education in the Further Education sector, particularly literacy. I explore the historical and sociological aspects of literacy, education, and political ideology in England during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I examine the impact of increased literacy levels and the emergence of radical political discourse in England in the late 18th and early 19th centuries on significant cultural and political movements and discuss the importance of language and literacy in forming cultural hegemony. Literacy historically functioned as a double-edged sword: a tool of hegemonic control and an emancipatory force. By examining literacy's historical development in the UK, I will demonstrate how contemporary policies that ignore this dual nature perpetuate literacy's legitimising function concealed behind the appearance of neutral skill development. This historical context outlines the evolution of FE and literacy in the UK. Understanding the legacy of the historical struggle for practical and politically

emancipatory education elucidates current curriculum debates and the enduring educational conflicts and divisions.

2.2 The Origins of Literacy as a Political Concept

In the UK, the term 'literacy' was coined late in the nineteenth century as an ideological response to maintain social, economic and political hierarchy through the creation of cultural hegemony promoted by compulsory schooling (Donald, 1983). The political utilisation of literacy as a mechanism of social control has extensive historical origins, demonstrating persistent patterns of dominance and exclusion. This section analyses the evolution of literacy into a political tool, tracing its progression from mediaeval church control through Enlightenment rationalism to industrial-era social governance. The analysis demonstrates that ostensibly objective educational standards have persistently perpetuated existing power relations while posing as universal benefits.

2.2.1 Medieval Church Control to the Industrial Revolution

From the 7th century until the Reformation, the English Church dominated formal education (Orme, 1973), establishing the foundational framework for literacy as a means of political control. Educational resources were concentrated in religious centres, and a Latin-only curriculum reinforced ecclesiastical and social hierarchies (Barrow, 2002). This exclusionary system restricted access to elite training for the clergy or royal service (Clanchy, 2013), maintaining the Church's authority (Clanchy, 2013) via controlled access to literacy. Even after monastic schools declined in the later Middle Ages, these exclusionary structures and cultural norms persisted into the post-Reformation era (Bowker, 1997), establishing a precedent for using literacy access as a mechanism of social stratification.

Expanding on these traditions, the Industrial Revolution, beginning in the mid-18th century, transformed English society in ways that significantly impacted literacy's political function. This period led to substantial demographic and social changes in England, exacerbating social issues such as low wages, slum housing, child labour, high mortality rates and inadequate sanitation, contributing to a fragmented society (Benn and Chitty 1996:2 in Gillard, 2018) with education inaccessible to many,

particularly the poor (Lawson and Silver 1973:227 in Gillard, 2018). While literacy rates gradually increased throughout the century, combining existing literacy with rapid urbanisation, advanced printing techniques, and radical political discourse, literacy was transformed into a perceived threat to social order, leading to changes in how the ruling classes perceived and utilised literacy, transitioning from repression to embracing more sophisticated ideological strategies of hegemonic control through the implementation of popular education programmes.

At the beginning of the 18th century, there was a dominant view in British society that literacy among people with low incomes, particularly the class of wage workers, was problematic, as it enabled them to access 'vicious' ideas promulgated by Thomas Paine or Mary Wollstonecraft. Tom Paine's "Rights of Man" in the late 18th century viewed education as an integral component in the fight for human rights and a just social order (Gillard, 2018), exemplifying how literacy was employed to advance radical political objectives that challenged the established order. It also indicates that the capacity to read and write was already commonly valued as essential for full participation in popular culture (Laqueur's 1976 in Donald, 1983). The primary concern with popular literacy at the end of the eighteenth century was not the increase in literacy proficiency among the working class but the perception of literacy (Donald, 1983). The English ruling class initially reacted to working-class political movements with suppression, but during the nineteenth century, they increasingly recognised the benefits of universal literacy, which enabled the general population to be 'influenced' by civilised ideas (Donald, 1983). This led to more sophisticated ideological strategies of hegemonic control through the implementation of popular education programmes.

2.2.2 The White Bourgeois Male as Norm

The attempts to exert moral and intellectual leadership over the subordinate classes involved devising institutions and techniques to produce new forms of consciousness for the working class, reflecting the tension between coercive and hegemonic governance strategies (Donald, 1983). The campaign of Hannah More, set in the context of late 18th-century Evangelism, exemplifies this approach. Her work embodied a new conception of the state's power by controlling the transmission of literacy to configure working-class consciousness without empowering them to

produce their texts (Richardson, 1994). This signifies a critical transition from medieval exclusion to modern inclusion with control, establishing the framework for contemporary educational governance.

Simultaneously, institutional debates about educational purpose intensified. The Church of England and nonconformist churches attempted to provide education, yet struggled to adapt to the growing urban populations (Lawson and Silver 1973:227 in Gillard, 2018). By the mid-19th century, a significant debate emerged about the purpose of education involving public educators, industrial trainers, and old humanists (Williams 1961:140 in Gillard, 2018), leading to a curricular compromise predominantly influenced by industrial trainers. This emphasis on social class and relegating trade and industry to lower classes adversely affected England's general and vocational education (Williams 1961:140 in Gillard, 2018), demonstrating how literacy education was explicitly designed to reproduce class hierarchies.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the monitorial system's principles of controlled knowledge transmission and class-differentiated education had become institutionalised in state policy, codifying the link between literacy provision and social control. The 1861 Newcastle Report's recommendations influenced elementary education policy and exposed assumptions about class and social mobility. Fraser's utilitarian approach to working-class education was designed to provide minimal competency levels. Fraser asserted that by age ten, a working-class child should acquire basic literacy skills adequate to "spell correctly the words that he will ordinarily have to use", "read a common narrative" (Newcastle Report, 1861: 46), or compose a letter home, thus aligning with perceived economic utility. The Report also emphasised religious instruction as a means of social discipline, catechetical teaching reinforcing duty, obedience, industrial discipline, and acceptance of social position. Fraser's claim that "we must make up our minds to see the last of him, as far as the day school is concerned, at 10 or 11" (Newcastle Report, 1861: 46) reflected a fatalistic view of children and working-class education: children were perceived as inherently incapable of extended education, intellectually limited and destined to leave school early. Fraser's explicit statement that he had "no brighter view of the future or the possibilities of an English elementary education" (Newcastle Report, 1861: 46) illustrates policymakers' limited vision, the institutionalisation of low

expectations, and the creation of educational structures that prevented social mobility. Fraser also delineated knowledge boundaries, warning against "the regions of English grammar, or English history, or physical science" unless basic skills were secured, thus reserving higher learning for the upper classes (Newcastle Report, 1861: 46). These philosophical assumptions reflected ruling-class anxieties about maintaining social control while serving industrial needs, imprinting class-based distinctions in English schooling and reinforcing the "classification" of knowledge by social position (Bernstein, 1975). The report reveals how ostensibly progressive educational reforms function conservatively, a dynamic pertinent to contemporary debates about educational equity and social equity.

The 1870 Education Act marked a transition from church to state authority in literacy education (Gillard, 2018). It "introduced compulsory universal education for children aged 5-13 but left enforcement of attendance to school boards" (Gillard, 2018: 18). The Act recognised literacy's industrial and imperial utility while maintaining social divisions through a dual system continuing into the 1880s: elementary schools for the working classes and grammar schools for the middle classes, perpetuating the pattern of using literacy access to reproduce medieval social stratification. The 1880 Elementary Education Act "obliged local authorities to make by-laws requiring school attendance" (Gillard, 2018: 20). Government inspection systems introduced during this period created the first systematic mechanisms for standardising literacy instruction and established precedents for the performativity culture in contemporary education. Inspections ensured that working-class literacy remained functional, teaching reading and writing skills while discouraging critical political consciousness: a more sophisticated version of Hannah More's controlled transmission approach. Following the two world wars, the 1944 Education Act (the Butler Act) "set the structure of the post-war system of state education" and established the tripartite system (Gillard, 2018: 34). The act expanded FE provision, representing apparent democratisation, yet systematised class divisions via different educational tracks (Gillard, 2018). Technical colleges expanded, but focused on industrial skills rather than critical literacy, continuing the historical pattern of functional literacy over political consciousness. The 1973 Russell Report represented liberal educational ideals, recommending comprehensive and flexible adult education and aiming to double participation (Gillard, 2018: 47). Yet the same year's Employment and

Training Act created the Manpower Services Commission (Gillard, 2018:47), moving toward market-driven training approaches. This tension between emancipatory potential and hegemonic control preserved social stratification through the vocational and non-vocational binaries.

The Thatcher era redefined literacy as a tool for political control, moving from welfare state paternalism to market governance. The 1988 Education Reform Act was "arguably the most important education act since 1944" and introduced the National Curriculum, local management of schools and city technology colleges (CTCs) among other reforms (Gillard, 2018: 56). The 1992 Further and Higher Education Act "removed further education and sixth form colleges from LEA control and established Further Education Funding Councils (FEFCs); allowed polytechnics to apply for university status; unified the funding of higher education under the Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFCs); introduced competition for funding between institutions" (Gillard, 2018: 58). The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 eliminated the binary divide between universities and polytechnics (UK Parliament (1992), appearing to democratise higher education but subjecting institutions to market logic and performance metrics. New Labour extended neoliberal approaches: the 1998 Teaching and Higher Education Act regulated teacher training and higher education funding, while the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act promoted selection by specialisation (Gillard, 2018: 62). The 1999 Moser Report framed literacy as neutral skills development, yet its emphasis on "basic skills" and "employability" echoed competency-based models anchored in Victorian functionalism (Gillard, 2018).

The historical trajectory reveals how medieval mechanisms of control adapted across governance regimes: from medieval church dominance to Victorian state systematisation, welfare expansion, neoliberal marketisation, and contemporary managerialism. At each stage, literacy has never been politically neutral; it has been a technology of governance, reproducing social hierarchies while adapting to new political and economic contexts. The historical developments also align with Gramsci's theoretical insights about language and power. Language and literacy are vital in how the state operates ideologically to secure the consent of the governed (Donald, 1983) by establishing cultural hegemony, 'the project of bringing class fractions into a political alliance (Donald, 1983: 35). The centrality of language and

literacy in this endeavour is indicated by Gramsci's observation that the emergence of linguistic concerns is indicative of the emergence of more significant issues, such as the formation and expansion of the ruling class and the necessity of establishing closer relationships between rulers and the masses, ultimately reorganising cultural hegemony (Gramsci, 1975).

Gramsci's insight reveals literary education's historical operation as a tool of hegemonic control, challenging the myth of literacy as inherently emancipatory and exposing how contemporary policies that ignore this history perpetuate its legitimising function under the guise of neutral skill development. Bisseret and Balibar provide additional empirical evidence for this perspective, revealing how dominant language practices, codified through class struggle and institutionalised via education, have historically functioned to serve economic and political ends: standardising thought, enabling commodity circulation, and reinforcing ruling-class ideology. This arrangement is perpetuated today through standardised literacy assessments that privilege dominant linguistic norms while marginalising others (Bisseret, 1979; Balibar & Laporte, 1974 in Donald, 1992).

This theoretical framework elucidates competing contemporary models of literacy. Street (2008) distinguished between 'autonomous models of literacy', which refer to decontextualised skills and a monolithic set of psychological processes, and the 'ideological' literacy model, which views literacy as part of human experience that shifts based on contexts (Street, 1984; Pahl & Rowsell, 2011). The autonomous model, while asserting neutrality, perpetuates the hegemonic functions identified in historical analysis. As a contemporary example, the 1999 Moser Report on adult literacy and numeracy evidences that the Blair government's emphasis on literacy may have been an attempt to fortify unity between social groups and enhance social cohesion; a political project disguised as neutral skill development (Moser, 1999), paralleling historical uses of literacy education for social control.

The historical patterns of literacy as a means of political control persist today through ostensibly neutral educational policies and practices, although their mechanisms have evolved to match contemporary governance structures. Today, we are confronted with unprecedented times characterised by ecologies of violence (the

genocide-ecocide nexus and large-scale acts of violence against humanity), systemic inequality, the COVID-19 post-pandemic, and the prevalence of online networks of misinformation and disinformation. These contemporary challenges reveal how literacy continues to operate as a contested political terrain.

While 'our world is plagued by innumerable problems for which we do not yet have answers' (Snaza et al. 2014: 45), the further education sector contends with managerialism (Ball, 2003), representing the reconfiguration of teaching through market-driven logics, performance metrics, and managerial control, positioning educators as deliverers of outcomes and not autonomous professionals. This approach continues the historical pattern of utilising literacy education for economic and political objectives, now framed through market logic instead of explicit class control. Managerialism standardises educational processes and outcomes, privileging dominant cultural norms and marginalising alternative knowledge and learning approaches.

Ball's concept of performativity (Ball, 2003) represents a contemporary evolution of the surveillance and control mechanisms evident in Hannah More's campaign. Modern educational institutions monitor and shape teacher and student behaviour through data collection, standardised assessments, and continuous evaluation, creating what Ball terms the 'terrors' of the teacher's soul (Ball, 2003). The Ofsted inspection regime exemplifies this approach, operating as a contemporary mechanism for ensuring educational practices align with dominant ideological frameworks while presenting this control as quality assurance.

The digital divide creates novel forms of literacy-based exclusion that mirror historical patterns of access control. Those without digital literacy skills or technological access encounter barriers to social participation, while digital literacy education often reproduces prevailing cultural norms and economic interests, and does not promote critical digital citizenship. Continual Professional Development requirements operate as contemporary mechanisms for shaping educator consciousness, similar to historical efforts to influence working-class thinking. These programmes often promote particular pedagogical approaches and ideological frameworks while presenting themselves as neutral professional development. The

mental health crisis and economic precarity impacting educators and students exemplify the human costs of these control mechanisms. The pressure of constant surveillance, performance evaluation, and employment instability creates an environment that undermines critical thinking and creative practice that could contest dominant educational approaches.

The historical evidence presented, from medieval Church control to responses to working-class literacy during the Industrial Revolution and contemporary managerial approaches, reveals a consistent pattern: literacy has never been politically neutral. Each era demonstrates how those in power have shaped literacy practices to maintain social hierarchies while presenting these interventions as natural or beneficial skill development. The mechanisms have evolved, but their core objective has not. Coercion and hegemonic strategies continue to compel minoritised groups to adhere to the social norms set out by the dominant group and govern their behaviour accordingly (Snell & Cushing, 2021). This system is perpetuated today via standardised literacy assessments that privilege dominant linguistic norms while marginalising others, continuing the historical pattern identified by Bissleret and Balibar. The challenge for contemporary English education policy is to understand the medieval origins of educational inequalities, recognise historical continuities and subvert normative hierarchies through equitable and conscious action.

2.2.3 Professional Development

The evolution of education policy from 1979 onwards demonstrates a transformation in governance structures and ideological frameworks. Thatcher's government subjected education to market forces and centralised control mechanisms (Gillard, 2018), creating a system of performativity (Ball, 2023) that "infringe[s] on the expansive and networked potential of continual professional development (CPD) for teachers as a way of understanding, self-critiquing, evaluating and re-framing their practice in a way that leads to genuine learning" (Hyde et al., 2025: 2). This transformation materialised through the 1988 Education Reform Act (Education Reform Act, 1988), the introduction of the National Curriculum, local management of schools, grant-maintained schools, and restructuring of education governance. The creation of Ofsted in 1992 (Education (Schools) Act, 1992) and the emergence of academies and free schools in the 2000s and 2010s (Learning and Skills Act, 2000;

Academies Act, 2010) eroded local authority control and embedded the hegemonic spectre of 'best practice' (Coffield, 2008: 16 in Hyde et al., 2025: 2) that systematically constrained teacher professionalism and subordinated educational expertise to external control.

Post-1979 reforms have framed education in economic terms: students as "customers" and education as a commodity or "investment" (with student loans in 1990 (Education (Student Loans) Act, 1990), top-up fees in 2004 (Higher Education Act, 2004), and the trebling of tuition fees in 2010 (Browne, 2010)) while a fixation on performance measures (from the Revised Code's "payment by results" system of 1862 (Gillard, 2018) to modern SATs and league tables, the 1974 establishment of The Assessment of Performance Unit (Gillard, 2018), the 1988 introduction of National Curriculum assessments (Black, 1988) and Ofsted's grades (Education (Schools) Act, 1992)) has entrenched a culture where what is measured becomes what matters. Re-emerging attempts to address vocational education (the 1889 Technical Instruction Act (Technical Instruction Act, 1889), TVEIs (Department of Education and Science, 1986), NVQs and GNVQs (Department for Education and Employment, 1995; Department for Education and Skills, 2004), BTECs (DfE, 2016) and T Levels (DfE, 2016) have highlighted persistent challenges in achieving parity of vocational and academic pathways while interventions from the 1870 Elementary Education Act (Elementary Education Act, 1870) to modern pupil premium policies have failed to alter the stratification of education by class, with grammar schools, public schools, and selection mechanisms persisting as social division markers. The cyclical nature of the reforms and the enduring inequality in public education over 150 years suggest systemic issues that transcend individual policies, prompting questions about the role of education in social reproduction versus transformation. Hyde et al. (2025: 11) propose that practitioner research as CPD may address some of these issues by "setting the creativity and problem-solving innate to industry and academic research as performance indicators thus not fragmenting subjectivity but multiplying it". This approach challenges the role of education in social reproduction by positioning teachers as active agents of transformation rather than passive implementers of policy.

Randle and Brady's (1997) "Cinderella Service" analysed the tension between professionalism and managerialism in FE- tensions that persist in contemporary CPD approaches. The emergence of managerialism in the 1980s eroded professional autonomy through market-driven approaches and performance management. This transformation created a paradigmatic conflict between managerial efficiency and professional values. Hyde et al. (2025: 2) identify a critical need for alternative CPD models: "In response to these issues [managerialism], in recent years there has been an increasing understanding, and appetite for the adoption of, practitioner research as a viable form of CPD for teachers in the FE sector". The new managerialism emphasised the three 'Es' (economy, efficiency, and effectiveness), prioritising quantitative metrics over educational quality and redefining lecturer-student relationships as customer-supplier interactions, and generating conflicting paradigms between managerialism and professionalism. New managers prioritised resource management and financial sustainability: balancing budgets, increasing student numbers, and satisfying quality specifications. Conversely, lecturers maintained commitment to a "democratic ideology underpinned by a student-centred pedagogic culture" (Elliott, 1996 in Randle & Brady, 1997). Randle and Brady identified two opposing conceptions of quality: the managerialist perspective as "conformance to requirements", directly contradicting the professional understanding of quality as "superior" and of high standard. Randle and Brady (1997) contended that deskilling processes undermined professional autonomy via 'ideological proletarianisation', since external agencies and managers displaced lecturers' professional choices over educational design, leading to the proletarianisation of academic labour and transformation in FE professional practice. Education policy, as a site of ideological struggle, created enduring tensions between professional values and market demands, marginalising educators and centring market models. As Hyde et al. (2025: 3) observe, the managerialist approach contrasts with practitioner research, which "provides a framework for understanding the intricate links between individuals and multiple contextual, environmental, and systemic factors to explore novel avenues of understanding education". Practitioner research decentres managerialism-imposed external standards and enables autonomy: "a self-sufficing work conducted without the interference of another" and "a drive from within that impels us to work in an expressive way, by ourselves" (Sennett, 2009: 54, 65 in Hyde et al., 2025: 3).

Professionalism, traditionally associated with elite fields of medicine and law, is defined by theoretical knowledge, formal training, codes of conduct, and professional communities (Millerson, 1964; O'Houle, 1980; Tummons, 2007; Hughes, 2000; Craig and Fieschi, 2007 in Wilson, 2009); nevertheless, Fox (1992) notes that professionalism "means different things to different people". This highlights its contested nature, and in FE, this ambiguity is compounded by the sector's unique context and evolving regulatory framework. As an activity, teaching has its own body of expert knowledge involving the nature of teaching and learning. This knowledge is enshrined in the professional standards for teachers introduced by the LLUK in 2007 (Craig and Fieschi 2007:2 in Wilson, 2009). FE professional identity and teacher training post-1990s have evolved under convergent influences of professionalism, managerialism, and neoliberalism, with formal qualifications and various initiatives (the apprenticeship pupil-teacher system of 1846 (Gillard, 2018), Teach First in 2002, and troops-to-teachers initiatives in 2011 (DfE, 2011)) enhancing recognition. Simultaneously, managerialist and neoliberal imperatives constrained teacher autonomy. Moreover, in 2001, regulations were introduced to require all FE lecturers to hold a nationally recognised teaching qualification. Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) introduced occupational standards for FE lecturers. Before the late 1990s, FE teacher training was predominantly unregulated, reflecting the sector's marginal policy role; nevertheless, the introduction of mandatory teaching qualifications in 2001 and FENTO's occupational standards signified the first systemic professionalisation efforts. Ofsted's 2003 critique of these standards led to further reforms, including the introduction of the Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills award in 2004, enhancing professional recognition. Additionally, the 2006 mandate for compulsory annual registration and 30 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) demonstrated governmental commitment to professional standards; yet, the closure of IfL in 2014 and the transfer of its responsibilities to the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) illustrate persistent volatility within professional regulatory systems. The 2012 Lingfield Report (Lingfield, 2012) (implemented in 2013) recommended deregulation and transferred responsibility for professional standards from the government to the sector. This move toward self-regulation may seem empowering, but it also reflects neoliberal trends of reduced state oversight and increased market accountability. Hyde et al. (2025: 4)

argue that top-down approaches often fail to address the real challenges teachers face: "Tradition dictates that CPD activities should be designed to transmit good practice to teachers with the intention of giving them strategies that they can then replicate in their practice". The authors identify critical limitations of transmission models: they assume practices are replicable across different contexts, dilute the essence of what is being shared, and view teachers as passive consumers rather than active constructors of learning (Hyde et al., 2025: 4). This critique resonates with the 2012 Lingfield Report's recommendation for deregulation, but Hyde et al. (2025) offer a more nuanced solution through practitioner research as CPD.

The ETF's Professional Standards, introduced in 2014 and updated in 2022, address the dual complexity of professionalism through twenty standards across three domains: values and attributes, knowledge and understanding, and skills. The dual professionalism concept is central to FE professional identity, recognising practitioners as simultaneous vocational specialists and pedagogical experts, and requiring the balancing of subject expertise with pedagogic competence. The evolution of FE professionalism reveals a paradox: regulatory frameworks that promote standards and market-driven policies erode professional autonomy. The 2013 deregulation of teaching qualifications, following decades of professionalisation, imposes accountability demands and simultaneously constrains professional judgment with externally imposed parameters. Nevertheless, professional values within FE persist, indicating resilience in professional identity. Therefore, the ongoing challenge for FE professionals is to construct professional identities responsive to contemporary circumstances, anchored in educational values that prioritise student learning over narrow performance indicators. A counterbalance to technicist pedagogic methodologies is offered by Dewey (1916) and Schön (1983) in the notion of reflective practice. Dewey's definition of reflective thought, as "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds which support it" (Dewey, 1916 in Gillies, 2016), emphasises the intellectual rigour required for professional practice. Hyde et al. (2025) present practitioner research as a model that addresses this challenge by providing teachers with autonomy in their professional development. As Hyde et al. (2025) conclude: "We advocate for teachers to have what Stenhouse observes to be 'the capacity for autonomous professional self-development through systematic self-study, through

the study of the work of other teachers and through the testing of ideas by classroom research procedures" (Stenhouse 1975: 144 in Hyde et al., 2025: 16). The implications of practitioner research for professional practice, as demonstrated by Hyde et al. (2025), are explored in Chapter 5.5, where the connection between reflection, autonomy, and institutional transformation is examined via action research.

2.3 Monitorial Schools: Colonial Origins of Educational Control

The historical context reveals a connection between colonial governance and domestic class management, demonstrating how professional identities have been consistently formed through technologies of power that simultaneously offer limited empowerment while subjecting educators and learners to sophisticated governance systems. By examining the historical development of monitorial schools, I trace how educational control mechanisms evolved from colonial contexts to domestic settings and continue to influence contemporary educational practices. The monitorial school, also known as the Lancasterian or Madras system, was an early nineteenth-century method of mass education developed by Andrew Bell in India and Joseph Lancaster in England with a single teacher instructing large groups of pupils with the assistance of "monitors", providing a cost-effective approach of basic literacy and numeracy delivery for the poor but criticised for its reliance on rote learning and limited individual attention (Landahl, 2019). This analysis proceeds through four key areas: the colonial origins of monitorial schools, their mechanisms of control and surveillance, resistance to these systems, and their contemporary implications.

2.3.1 Colonial Origins and Global Transmission

Patrick Colquhoun, a magistrate and early architect of preventive policing, exemplified the ruling class perspective by perceiving literacy as a dual force of a threat and a tool for shaping working-class consciousness. Colquhoun viewed education as a means for social control, advocating for a system that moulded working class minds to align with their designated societal roles, claiming that "The prosperity of every state depends on the good habits and the religious and moral instruction of the labouring people" (Donald, 1983: 41). Colquhoun was a proponent of the dissemination of useful knowledge via the monitorial system as a means for social reform and civilising the population (Donald, 1983). The monitorial system-

promoted by Colquhoun- emerged directly from colonial experiments. The system's colonial origins challenge the notion of separation of British educational history from imperial history. In 1789, Andrew Bell, a clergyman stationed in India, established an educational institution for the illegitimate children of European military personnel to safeguard them from the 'corrupting' influence of their Indian mothers and to 'render' them 'useful' members of the (European) community (Tschurenev 2008: 247). Joseph Lancaster opened his first monitorial school for poor children at Borough Road in 1798 (Gillard, 2018) with classroom arrangements closely mirroring Bell's. This historical correlation reveals how imperial governance and control practices were adapted to manage the domestic "lower orders of society" viewed as a "rude, unprincipled, semi-barbarous populace" (Foster, 1820). Monitorial schools were introduced as a technology with civilising powers to empower and simultaneously subject children to continuous surveillance and control with methods primarily derived from colonial experience. This colonial experiment profoundly impacted the evolution of educational practices in Britain.

The global transmission of the monitorial system emphasises its entanglement with imperial control and colonial agendas. The system's emphasis on efficiency, discipline, and scalability propelled its diffusion, rendering it attractive to other countries tasked with educating large populations with limited resources, including Russia, the Ottoman Empire, the United States, Spanish America, West Africa, and India (Tschurenev, 2008). Importantly, the system itself was a product of colonial hybridity as Andrew Bell integrated elements from local Hindu schools to create monitorial schools, attesting to the hybridisation and transformation of the pedagogical knowledge (Tschurenev 2008).

2.3.2 Mechanisms of Control and Surveillance

The monitorial system functioned as an elaborate control mechanism through several observable patterns: hierarchical observation, competitive individualism, and the mechanisation of learning. The monitorial system intended to govern lower-class and colonial subjects into predetermined social roles while providing opportunities for personal advancement within those boundaries. This duality of empowerment and control illustrates a diverse conception of professionalism intertwined with colonial and social reform aspirations. Bell (1805) explicitly articulated the system's

class-maintenance function to "maintain the welfare of the society" that "hinges on the distinction of ranks and classes of society", warning against "elevating, by an indiscriminate education, the minds of those doomed to the drudgery of daily labour, above their condition, and thereby rendering them discontented and unhappy in their lot.." (Bell, 1805 in Tschurenev, 2008). Bell's open acknowledgement of education's role in preserving social hierarchy exposes the misconception that educational systems primarily serve meritocratic functions—a tension that remains unresolved in contemporary education systems that simultaneously promise opportunity while reproducing inequality.

The physical organisation of monitorial schools embodied surveillance principles that would later be theorised by Foucault as a "panopticon" (Foucault, 1995). In monitorial schools, the teacher's role was limited to managing the 'machinery' of instruction while the pupils, the monitors, conducted the majority of the teaching. The monitorial system's mechanistic approach, with its panoptic surveillance, mutual control, and emphasis on emulation, embodied emerging industrial capitalism's values. The system created a complex hierarchy among the students: it engaged students' agency by 'downward filtering' knowledge, teaching only a subset of an extensive cohort and relying on them to transmit the knowledge (Tschurenev, 2008). Monitorial schools encouraged competitiveness among monitors, with ranks and offices continuously rotating to promote dedication and discipline (Tschurenev, 2008), as emphasis was put on individual competition as the main incentive for work, which was "symptomatic of the capitalist epoch" (Simon 1974:81 in Gillard, 2018). Bell's characterisation of monitorial schools as "moral and intellectual machines" highlights education's role in producing compliant workers through constant surveillance and enforced competitive individualism. These practices embodied Smith's laissez-faire economics and Bentham's utilitarianism, demonstrating how educational systems reproduce prevailing economic ideologies.

The monitorial system was intricately woven into utilitarian philosophy and class-based educational distinctions. Utilitarians rejected outsourcing education to philanthropy, recognising education as vital for the efficient functioning of a factory-based economy, which influenced approaches to mass education and educators' professional roles (Gillard, 2018). The utilitarian vision of enabling "the

poor to work intelligently and the middle classes to govern intelligently" (Lawson and Silver 1973:231 in Gillard, 2008) advocated for monitorial schools for the poor, secondary education reform, a middle-class university for London, mechanics' institutes, and cheap informative literature. This bifurcated approach continues to influence our education system today: the National Curriculum, introduced in 1988 and repeatedly revised, reflects a utilitarian focus on standardised education for economic rather than individual or intellectual aims (Ball, 2008). The introduction of tuition fees and the marketisation of higher education since the 1990s treat education as a commodity, reinforcing class distinctions by making choices contingent on economic resources and perceived returns on investment (Brown & Carasso, 2013). In line with these trends, the government's promotion of STEM education and digital skills prioritises economic needs over other educational aims (Royal Society, 2014). The differentiation is also seen in how private schools continue to deliver a liberal, leadership-oriented curriculum for the higher classes, while state schools increasingly emphasise practical education for the working classes (Green et al., 2018).

Proponents of the monitorial system debated the concept of useful knowledge, expressing divergent views on the curriculum and intent of education. Some prioritised the transmission of extensive knowledge, while others emphasised maintaining social stratification and instilling obedience in the lower classes. The creation of monitorial schools as discipline technologies in the 19th century could be interpreted as an attempt by the emergent middle class to affirm its identity while performing a dual civilising mission domestically and in the colonies (Hall, 2002 in Tschurennev, 2008: 253). Establishing reciprocal legitimacy, internally, this mission targeted the urban poor, compared to those of 'savages'. Externally, it was intertwined with empire-building and the evangelical desire to civilise the overseas territories 'heathen populations' (Hall, 2002 in Tschurennev, 2008: 253).

2.3.3 Resistance and Decline

Building on this historical analysis, the next section explores the emergence of resistance movements that challenged dominant educational approaches. The monitorial system ultimately declined for several reasons. Critics of monitorial schools argued that the monitorial method prioritised rote memorisation over

comprehension, with pupils “trained to cooperate with existing institutions in forming passive habits of blind obedience’ (Simon 1974:207 in Gillard, 2018). The system also neglected to consider the extant educational culture of the subordinate classes or the successful direction from within. Monitorial schools failed due to a lack of political imagination (Donald, 1983). The monitorial education model encountered resistance from 'native' teachers and disinterest from students at the micro-level, highlighting the limitations of controlling educational outcomes and the complexities of social engineering (Tschurenev, 2008). Figures such as William Cobbett rejected the institutions as the antithesis of authentic learning (Donald, 1983).

The decline of the monitorial system in the late 1830s prompted a new approach to teacher training, improving educational quality (Lawson and Silver 1973:246 in Gillard, 2018). The pedagogic shift from utilitarian and positivist methods was eventually replaced by a teacher-led instruction, leading to a more structured learning environment (Landahl, 2019). A new model of structure for social control of school heterogeneity had to be developed to enable novice teachers to manage simultaneous rather than monitorial mutual instruction.

The transition from monitorial to teacher-led instruction represented not an abandonment of control but its reconfiguration. Landahl (2019) contended that silence acquired enhanced significance as students were required to listen to the teacher actively. The teacher-led lessons visually integrated a new synoptical relation between pupils and instructors into the existing panoptical space. The synopticon enabled student-teacher interactions that transcended the automatic surveillance emphasised by the panopticon, as it allowed for visibility of the teacher's displayed emotional qualities, impacting student participation and responses in the educational environment and highlighting the complexities of power relations in the classroom (Landahl, 2019). This historical shift in educational philosophy was an attempt to balance the control of educational outcomes, social engineering and authority with visibility and emotional engagement. The conversion of lessons into pedagogic texts, characterised by structured, prescribed, and repetitive formats, was a novel approach to instruction. The examination system solidified this approach, as the teacher adopted the lead role in managing the classroom through predetermined recitations, while the children were passive listeners and responders (Linne, 2001).

The new educational trend reorganised teachers' and students' consciousness, which emphasised classroom talk as human relations (Alexander, 2008). The repetitive IRF model, or "recitation script," exemplifies the teacher-led approach by structuring classroom exchanges in which the teacher initiates knowledge-testing dialogue and students respond and receive feedback. This facilitates classroom management but reinforces teacher dominance and mirrors the limitations of the monitoring system by constraining dialogue and restricting critical engagement. Alexander (2008) advocates for dialogic teaching, which reconfigures classroom talk to encourage collaborative meaning-making through reciprocal, open-ended interactions, challenging traditional power dynamics and promoting participatory learning. However, its implementation is constrained by entrenched structures prioritising control and efficiency over student agency and critical engagement.

The standardisation of educational delivery continued through new mechanisms. The conversion of lessons into pedagogic texts, characterised by structured, prescribed, and repetitive formats, was a novel approach to instruction. The examination system solidified this approach, as the teacher adopted the lead role in managing the classroom through predetermined recitations, while the children were passive listeners and responders (Linne, 2001). This prescribed and repetitive format continues in contemporary scripted curricula and standardised testing regimes.

2.3.4 Contemporary Implications and Racial Dimensions

The emergence of the monitorial system was one of the early nineteenth-century endeavours to standardise, systematise and reform education. The historical patterns established by monitorial schools continue to shape contemporary educational practices, particularly through surveillance technologies and standardisation. Contemporary data-driven educational technologies do not depart from these surveillance techniques but intensify them. The shift from physical to digital monitoring makes these control mechanisms less visible and, thus, more challenging to resist embedding them into professionals' everyday practices and self-conceptions, with profound psychological impacts on professionals navigating these systems. While monitorial schools relied on physical arrangement and visual supervision, today's educational institutions employ sophisticated data analytics,

learning management systems, and performance metrics that monitor student and teacher behaviour digitally in unprecedented detail. Audit cultures impose authority not physically but psychologically through self-governance and the psychological drive for recognition, belonging, and excellence.

The colonial origins of educational control systems have significant implications for understanding racial dimensions of contemporary education.

This transfer of disciplinary techniques from colony to metropole illustrates the mutually reinforcing nature of imperial governance and domestic class control; a pattern that continues in how contemporary educational practices of discipline and school exclusion deploy carceral logics through a discourse of pathology attached to racialised people through policies that control their capacity for self-determination (Rudolph, 2023). Critical Race Theory, in evaluating the existing curriculum and analysing colonialism's social and political legacies in educational policies, reveals how UK education policy does not seek to eliminate racial inequality but instead aims to maintain it at manageable levels (Gillborn, 2010). Viewed through a raciolinguistic lens, Critical Race Theory exposes how the UK curriculum policy's knowledge-rich ideologies reproduce white supremacy and linguistic violence by positioning Western knowledge as superior and universal (Cushing, 2021). Today, the underachievement of the domestic "lower orders of society", i.e., white working-class boys, is being used to demonise anti-racism (Gillborn, 2021). White underachievement-decontextualised from its colonial origins and education's role in preserving social stratification- is employed to re-centre whiteness. The interests of the (white) elite are reclaimed by framing social justice efforts as a competitive threat to white working class boys, whose economic and material disadvantage does not contradict white supremacy; rather it is an essential part of the processes that sustain white power and privilege" (Gillborn, 2010: 3). Whiteness employs boundaries to protect itself but absorbs or rejects elements needed to function and to neutralise the threat to its existing power structures.

The formation of professional identity within neoliberal educational institutions is thus inseparable from the enduring legacies of coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000) and the logics of racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983), through which educational institutions inherit and reproduce racialised hierarchies of knowledge, being, and

recognition. The coloniality of power describes the pervasive influence of modernist (colonial) era power, control, and hegemony systems on contemporary social, economic, and political dynamics (Quijano, 2000).

Standardisation, marketed as a tool of equality with its surface-level neutrality, fails to address the complex realities of diverse learning environments: by demanding sameness, silencing dissent and delegitimising forms of knowledge, identity, and teaching that do not conform, it strips educators of relationality and critical agency. Tracing the historical continuity from Bell's "moral and intellectual machines" to today's digital monitoring systems aids our understanding of how educational institutions have consistently functioned as sites where professional and student identities are formed through complex dynamics of empowerment and control. The historical perspective is key for conceptualising equitable approaches to education that recognise and resist embedded systems of power.

2.4 Radical Education: The Chartist Legacy

The radical origins of further education in the UK position educational institutions as sites of working-class identity formation and contestation, establishing historical patterns of control and resistance that continue to shape contemporary educational practices. The origins of further education (FE) in the UK can be traced back to the emergence of the Mechanics' Institutes in the early 19th century (Collins, 1972), established during the Industrial Revolution in response to the industrial demands for skilled workers with a fundamental understanding of science. This development marked the initiation of a wider educational initiative for working-class adults in the new technological era at the intersection of the Chartist movement, radical working-class aspirations for meaningful education and hegemonic attempts to control knowledge.

The emergence of a radical culture in the late 18th century was not a spontaneous working-class resistance to the Industrial Era's social and economic transformations but a bricolage of relations with the Chartist movement. The movement, emerging in 1832, advocated for political and social transformation, demanding suffrage,

education, and welfare, thus influencing the working class's struggle for rights and representation in 19th-century England (Gillard, 2018).

While the relationship between Chartists and Mechanics' Institutes was congruent in their shared commitment to political education, raising political consciousness, and empowerment through mobilisation among the working class, it was also contested as Mechanics' Institutes evolved and encountered challenges in attaining their political objectives (Donald, 1983). There was also hegemonic resistance to the mechanics' movement. The Leicester Institute's Annual Report for 1835 expressed concerns about the prevailing belief among the middle class that the working class did not need education, fearing that education would incite discontent among them (Lott, 1935: 12). Reverend George Holt, the curate of Oadly, criticised the Leicester Mechanics' Institute and another in Loughborough, arguing that education should not be used to disseminate infidel, republican, and levelling principles (Lott, 1935: 12).

2.4.1 Really Useful Knowledge vs Useful Knowledge

The core of these educational conflicts was an ideological tension about the purpose of education, embodied in the distinction between hegemonic “useful knowledge” and the Chartists’ concept of “Really Useful Knowledge” (RUK). This conceptual framework resonates with the “autonomous” and “ideological” models of literacy and aids our understanding of contemporary debates about educational purpose and content. Chartists engaged in a historical conflict across various educational domains: the objectives of education, the curriculum content and access to education. Their "Really Useful Knowledge" concept deliberately parodied the Society for the Diffusion of "Useful Knowledge" -a subsidised initiative to publish works that would divert readers from radical literature, exposing the political nature of the curriculum and how mainstream educational initiatives strategically depoliticised knowledge to maintain social control and stratification by diverting working-class attention from their social position and indoctrinating them into docility. The Chartists argued that "useful knowledge" promoted by elites conditioned the working class into compliance, diverting them from critical engagement with power structures. In contrast, "Really Useful Knowledge" for social and political transformation, with its inextricable link to the ontological vocation of becoming more fully human (Freire,

Ramos & Macedo, 2000), resonates with Freirean educational principles of humanisation and empowerment.

Chartists emphasised the intersection of political activism and educational reform, challenging the historical divide between vocational and liberal education Donald, 1983) with the RUK and useful knowledge dichotomy applicable to technical versus critical and academic versus vocational knowledge binaries or theory versus practice. These binaries reflect not natural knowledge categories but what Donald (1983) identifies as class-based educational apartheid. This division, constructed to serve class interests, was formalised in the 1944 Tripartite system and perpetuated in contemporary competency-based frameworks that separate technical skills from critical understanding of power relations.

Chartists made two key assertions that contested dominant educational assumptions of their era and persist in challenging contemporary educational ideologies: Chartists recognised education's fundamental role in political consciousness and asserted that intellectual capacity was not class-based. Chartists' understanding of 'mind' was that it could be 'awakened', encouraging active citizenship, or "diverted," reinforcing subjugation (Schnepf, 2006 in RUK). Thomas Hodgskin's warning in *The Mechanic's Magazine* in 1823 that men are better "without education [...] than be educated by their rulers; for then education is the breaking in of the steer to the yoke" (Hodgskin, 1823 in Johnson, 1979: 76) remains relevant and articulates a fundamental insight that remains pertinent: education always serves particular interests. The contemporary emphasis on employability over critical citizenship often continues this tradition of "breaking in" rather than liberation, producing what Jacoby (1975) calls "social amnesia"-a condition where students denied their history cannot transform reality because they lack the "suppressed knowledge" needed to analyse their social position (Weis, 2009).

The Chartist concept of RUK prefigures several contemporary critical pedagogical frameworks that challenge dominant educational paradigms. Freire (1970) argued that education is never neutral; it either functions as a tool of domination or liberation. Schools may thus serve not as equalisers but as sites of cultural reproduction through the transmission of a racialised, classed, and gendered hidden

curriculum. Freire's (1970) critique of the "banking model" of education provides a theoretical framework for understanding alternatives to dominant educational approaches. The "banking" pedagogical model treats students as passive recipients of knowledge and a mode of professional subject formation that reproduces inequality by discouraging critical consciousness and reinforcing conformity through internalising institutional norms without question.

In contrast, Freire's "problem-posing education" engages in praxis, defined as a "dialogue [as] a moment where humans meet to reflect on the reality as they make and remake it. (Shor & Freire, 1987: 98). This process allows individuals to decode oppressive conditions and cultivate the agency necessary to transform their world. This critical praxis centres a pedagogy that values uncertainty, multiplicity, emotional truth and collective reimagining; challenging the logics of performativity that dominate contemporary educational subjectivity. Praxis rejects the neoliberal separation of technical competence from critical consciousness and insists on their integration in professional practice, thus enabling educators and students to develop alternative educational practices that challenge neoliberal and colonial logics. Praxis resonates with RUK and Gutierrez's (2008) "sociocritical literacy" concepts as catalysts for social change. (Gutiérrez, 2018) demonstrated that the attention to history in the present creates innovative educational settings that transmit the past's insights and resources into the future, thus enabling individuals to become 'historical actors' or designers of their future (Espinoza, 2003 in Gutiérrez, 2018). This aligns with Freire's (1972, 1973) ambitious project to use literacy teaching for emancipation as a means to "decolonise minds" and to enable new ways of "reading the world."

2.4.2 Mechanics' Institutes and Working-Class Education

The complex trajectory of Mechanics' Institutes demonstrates the persistent tension between autonomy and co-optation, illustrating how radical educational initiatives become assimilated into mainstream institutions. Initially established as self-governing working-class institutions promoting emancipatory education, many gradually shifted toward middle-class control and conservative content. Nevertheless, research challenges simplistic narratives about the failure of these institutions.

Walker's research (2012) contradicts the prevailing notion that Mechanics' Institutes had a negligible impact on adult working-class education (Martyn, 2012) and reveals how these institutions demonstrated adaptability in response to evolving circumstances rather than remaining static entities. They established unions, introduced national examinations and qualifications (City and Guilds London Institute was established in 1888, McCord, 1991 in Walker, 2012), and provided elementary education for adults and children before the 1870 Education Act, when the provision for working-class children was minimal (Curtis, 1968 in Walker, 2012). In the Lancashire and Cheshire, Northumberland and County Durham, and Yorkshire regions, the institutes established unions that offered financial aid to support the establishment, management and teaching methods (Walker, 2012).

During the mid-19th century, working-class radicalism shifted towards trade unions and parliamentary representation. Forster's 1870 Education Act established a national system of elementary Board schools and irreversibly consolidated the state as the primary provider of mass education (Donald, 1983), indicating a new alignment of political and cultural forces. After 1850, the working class abandoned the conviction that radically transforming society was possible, acquiescing to the notion that capitalism was an immutable system. Their radical demands, encompassing republicanism, secularism, and land reform, either dissipated or were assimilated into Gladstonian liberalism (Donald, 1983). Consequently, their activism redirected towards trade unions, cooperatives, and friendly societies, recognising the necessity of operating inside the existing capitalist system. (Stedman Jones, 1974, in Donald, 1983). By 1870, the English working class's coherent popular culture had been fragmented by state strategies, particularly those implemented by the Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. These strategies addressed radical demands individually, providing suffrage, education, and welfare concessions separately rather than as part of systemic change. This strategy successfully diluted the radical movement, altering working-class culture to resist formal education and confining political opposition within state-defined boundaries (Donald, 1983). Aimed to provide working-class adults and young people, underserved by traditional educational institutions, with practical skills and knowledge relevant to their respective industries and trades during the Industrial Revolution, the emergence of FE in the early 19th century, resembling modern-day FE colleges, illustrates that literacy is not

exclusively a personal skill but forms society's power dynamics and governance. This historical pattern of fragmenting collective demands remains effective in contemporary educational policy through neoliberal logics that reconfigure the meaning and function of professionalism through marketisation, managerialism, and performativity (Ball, 2003).

Depoliticisation under neoliberalism co-opts emancipatory liberal ideals and produces compliant professional subjects, technically proficient and politically neutral, aligned with existing systems without questioning "inequalities structural to the neoliberal agenda" (Harvey, 2005). This highlights the need for my project's objectives of critical reflection on how systemic forces shape educational values and practice. The shift from a public service ethos to a performative regime of control has transformed pedagogical practices and strategically fragmented collective resistance through individualisation, quantification, and data-driven success ideologies, thus undermining critical consciousness and eroding collective professional identities through competitive metrics and the rhetoric of personal responsibility. Bailey's (1995) analysis of the 1988 Education Reform Act highlights how quasi-markets in education may reframe educational inequality through the appearance of choice and autonomy. FE, situated at the margins of mainstream education, remains a contradictory and contested space where resistance continues to challenge the state's attempts to manage and reproduce working-class subjectivities.

2.5 Neoliberal Governance and Affective Control

As contemporary FE colleges face increasing pressure to prioritise employability metrics over critical thinking, they confront the same fundamental question that faced the Mechanics' Institutes: what is education for? Policymakers consider that the most tangible proof of education lies in its conversion to economic gain. Market-driven reforms position teachers as producers and students as consumers, purchasing a career in exchange for financial investment in their education. Davis (2011) notes that consumer logic detaches students from responsibility, framing knowledge as a commodity purchased rather than co-constructed:

"The business model obscures the responsibility and involvement required by students in the learning process. Good students are responsible for reflecting

critically, exploring ambiguities, and giving and receiving feedback. A customer does not have responsibilities beyond the economic."

(Davis, 2011).

While earlier educational control mechanisms in the monitorial system disciplined time, knowledge, and bodies through structural arrangements, neoliberalism colonises emotional and affective domains. The logic of performativity intensifies the disciplining through visibility and repetition by demanding affective investment, emotional alignment, and resilience as moral imperatives. Institutions now function as "affective networks" (Hunter, 2015), shaping professional and learner identities through 'channels of unconscious, non-symbolic communication [that] are separate from, but intertwined with verbal and cognitive communication' (Hinshelwood, 1989: 77-78).

These affective atmospheres produce what McKenzie (2017) identifies as a feeling of 'precarity' or a sense of perpetual low-level crisis that is critical to the operation of contemporary capitalism (McKenzie, 2017) by creating a lifetime of disconnection from authentic professional identity, a fear of annihilation by the institution, and perpetuates cycles of unconscious needs and control in professional relationships.

The instrumentalisation of emotions is not incidental but central to neoliberal governance. Ahmed reminds us that "emotions do things, and they align individuals with communities-or bodily space with social space-through the very intensity of their attachments" (Ahmed, 2004: 119). Emotions align subjects with dominant norms and reproduce institutional logics. Institutions circulate and attach value to hegemonic emotional expressions-resilience, positivity, and compliance while delegitimising anger, dissent, or grief. Teachers internalise performance targets through emotional responses to data. Pride, shame, guilt or uncertainty about teaching practices (Ball, 2003) shapes their sense of self-worth. This emotional governance suppresses, controls or denies hate, fear, violence or trauma within institutions, which then perpetuates these negative affects and leads to violence and aggression becoming institutionalised (Hunter, 2015).

Speed has emerged as an additional affective modality of maintaining the illusion of neoliberal omnipotence. Speed creates a sense of control and predictability over

complex systems and individuals. “Speed is what holds what are relationally uncertainties together in a form already assumed to be known” (Hunter, 2015: 32). Like a line of falling dominoes, speed becomes the mechanism of control: “The linearity of cause and effect logics which assume a rationalist preemptive power rooted in the potential for governing omnipotence; the potential to know the world and the others in it” (Hunter, 2015: 33). The efficiency and rapidity of actions imply that everything is under control and predetermined, reinforcing that the system can govern all variables and control the possible educational trajectory outcomes. Institutions and individuals are advancing at a racing speed; their trajectories are predetermined. No deviation or inquiry is permitted, and everyone is expected to reach their position as rapidly as possible. No novel possibilities exist, and everything has already been determined; alternative route inquiries and research are discouraged. This relentless rush and fixation on the final domino create pressure and urgency. Individuals are expected to maintain a rapid speed, never decelerating or diverting from the prescribed trajectory. There is no time to stop, think, or reflect, and feel.



Figure 7: Domino Effect

The domino effect is a visual metaphor for speed as an affective modality of neoliberal governance in educational institutions (Hunter, 2015): the cascade cannot be stopped or redirected, capturing the relentless momentum of neoliberal educational reforms driven by market-driven logics, performativity metrics, and employability targets, propelling institutions forward at a racing speed with predetermined outcomes. The speed of the cascade and the rapid succession of one domino triggering the next create an illusion of coherence and control over what are complex and uncertain educational relationships and outcomes. The "fixation on the final domino" creates urgency; to pause would be to break the chain, to fail the system. Speed aligns subjects with institutional logics by denying them the temporal space needed for dissent, inquiry, or the co-construction of alternative educational purposes.

Paradoxically, the domino effect also exposes fragility: a single disruption (a domino removed, repositioned, or refusing to fall) could break the entire mechanism. The system's seeming omnipotence relies on relentless speed, obscuring the possibility that its trajectories could be interrupted, redirected, or reimagined.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This historical analysis challenges the assumptions that educational content is politically neutral, that institutional structures do not determine what counts as legitimate knowledge, and that education alone can transcend existing power relations. As Reynolds argues, if literature [education] fails to "offer young people ways of thinking about themselves and their world that suggest that they can make a difference and help construct a discourse of their own to empower them as political subjects, it cannot be excluded from the other social forces implicated in the gelding of youth and youth culture' (Keenan and Thompson, 2004:147 in (Maybin & Watson, 2009 in RUK). This chapter established that literacy has never been neutral. It has consistently functioned as an instrument of political power, operating simultaneously as a social control mechanism and a tool for resistance. From the monopolisation of literacy by medieval religious institutions through to monitorial school surveillance, to contemporary neoliberal governance, educational systems have remained sites of contested power relations.

Three key patterns emerge from this analysis. First, educational control mechanisms evolve across historical periods but remain structurally persistent. Second, resistance movements consistently emerge to challenge dominant educational approaches. Third, the challenges faced by migrant educators today represent enduring historical dynamics rather than new phenomena. The tensions between education as control and education as liberation continue to define the FE sector,

with increasing pressure to prioritise employability metrics over critical thinking and top-down professional development over situated practitioner research projects.

Understanding this historical continuity is essential for developing contemporary resistance strategies that address the cognitive and affective dimensions of neoliberal governance, while challenging inequalities in Further Education. The next chapter examines how these historical patterns manifest in educational theoretical frameworks.



Chapter 3: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

My literature review directly addresses my research question of how everyday literacy practices within educational spaces reflect and shape professional identity as a migrant educator in inner London by establishing the historical and theoretical foundations that make this inquiry both necessary and urgent. I trace the internalisation of external systems of educational control through the parallel processes of linguistic authority, reflecting evolving conceptions of subjectivity and providing further insight into how professional identities are formed and contested within educational institutions. This historical analysis directly addresses my research question of how everyday literacy practices within educational spaces reflect and shape my professional identity as a migrant educator in inner London, by historicising the power dynamics I navigate daily in contemporary FE contexts.

Building on the historical foundation, I demonstrate how the struggle over literacy in the 18th and 19th centuries did not concern access to reading and writing but the control of the meaning-making process, as standardised English became a

mechanism for maintaining social hierarchies through educational initiatives that embodied ideological perspectives ranking individuals against the "hidden referent" of the white bourgeois male. This historical pattern of linguistic exclusion continues to operate in modern FE settings, where my positioning as a migrant educator teaching literacy positions me at the intersection of these enduring power structures. The "hidden referent" of standardised English proficiency continues to marginalise both educators and students whose linguistic practices deviate from dominant norms. My historical analysis of monitorial schools and mechanics' institutes demonstrates that the power dynamics shaping educational institutions were also embedded in language practices, showing how evolving linguistic paradigms reflect and reproduce shifting power relations and conceptions of subjectivity.

Transitioning from external systems to their psychological internalisation, my analysis delineates the internalisation of these systems within individuals' consciousness and identity. The transition from the "grammar of things," grounded in cosmic order, to the "grammar of mind," anchored in human cognition, marks a narcissistic reorientation that centres the white bourgeois male as the normative subject- mirroring the transition in educational control from overt surveillance in monitorial schools to the internalised self-regulation of neoliberal performativity, fragmenting subjectivity and producing pathological modes of existence. This historical trajectory illuminates my contemporary experience of "values schizophrenia" (Ball, 2003) as a migrant educator navigating between authentic pedagogical commitments and institutional demands for performative compliance. Contemporary "hidden referents" in educational contexts include "quality", "excellence", "attainment", "achievement" and external education inspection frameworks; all of which I encounter daily in my FE practice and which continue to reproduce the exclusionary mechanisms established in earlier historical periods.

Extending beyond cognitive frameworks, I highlight that linguistic and educational systems also operate through affective dimensions, forming professional identity at a pre-conscious level. This affective dimension is vital to understanding my research focus on how literacy practices both reflect and shape professional identity, as it reveals how power operates not only through explicit policies but through the emotional and embodied experiences of teaching and learning in FE contexts. The

recognition that affect operates at the core of fragmented professional identities provides the in-between space for resistance strategies with “the collective linguistic consciousness” (Melville, 2025). Having established these theoretical frameworks, I explore practical applications for resistance and transformation, embedded in the affective dimensions of literacy: applications that emerge from my autoethnographic analysis of navigating these historical continuities as a contemporary migrant educator in London's FE sector.

My literature review thus establishes the theoretical foundation for understanding how historical patterns of educational control through linguistic authority continue to shape contemporary FE practice, providing the analytical framework necessary to examine my research question of how everyday literacy practices function as sites of both subjugation and resistance for migrant educators. My autoethnographic analysis connects these historical patterns to the lived experience of contemporary migrant educators in FE and how literacy practices operate as mechanisms of institutional control and tools for professional identity formation and resistance.

3.2 Linguistic Authority and Power

Having established that literacy practices function as sites of both dominance and resistance, I examine how linguistic authority has historically emerged as a mechanism of social control: a pattern that continues to shape how migrant educators encounter institutional power today. By tracing how external systems of educational control operate through linguistic authority, I demonstrate how the power dynamics I navigate daily in contemporary FE contexts are not anomalies but extensions of historical patterns that my research aims to illuminate and disrupt. I examine how literacy and language became central to the consolidation of power, class stratification, and cultural hegemony in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Tracing the history of linguistic authority demonstrates how dominant forms of literacy were institutionalised as tools of social and moral control and epistemic violence, with enduring legacies on contemporary educational practices and ideologies. My analysis will first examine how literacy and language ideologies emerged as mechanisms of social control; second, explore the philosophical shifts in linguistic theory through Cohen's (1977) "three grammars"; third, I will extend this

framework to include affective dimensions of language applying Vygotsky's theories; and finally, I will consider how the "affective turn" in social theory offers new possibilities for understanding professional identity formation. In the subsequent chapters outlining resistance strategies, I will consider how the "affective turn" in social theory offers new possibilities for understanding professional identity formation.

The political and historical context of England in the late 18th and early 19th centuries provides a key foundation for understanding contemporary literacy practices and their relationship to power. During this era, a cultural movement driven by a relatively high level of literacy and a new radical political discourse significantly impacted the emerging state apparatus, illuminating the history of literacy in the UK as intricately linked to restructuring cultural hegemony (Donald, 1983).

The parallel between literacy and the emergence of ruling classes in this period informs our understanding of contemporary further education by historicising literacy as a means of ideological intervention, social stratification, and political empowerment. In response to fears that working-class literacy would disrupt social hierarchies, industrialists and policymakers promoted school-based, standardised forms of literacy to control reading practices and moral development (Donald, 1983), institutionalising an autonomous model (Street, 1984) that privileged dominant norms while marginalising diverse, situated literacies.

The autonomous model was later challenged by ethnographic research that revealed literacy to be plural, contextual, and socially meaningful. Nevertheless, the institutionalisation of an autonomous model of literacy not only standardised language practices but also conflated literacy with morality, positioning school-sanctioned language as a marker of personal virtue and moral worth. As Cook-Gumperz (1986) observes, the formal, regulated, school-based literacy model transformed literacy into a skill defined by decoding, standardised grammar, and authorised genres—often permeated with explicit moral and religious messages, imbuing literacy with the symbolic power of discipline, self-improvement, and goodness. Literacy standards thus defined legitimate ontology or a state of being by wielding power over marginalised individuals. Those whose cultural, regional, or socio-economic contexts shaped their use of non-standard forms of language were

rendered not only linguistically deficient but also implicitly or explicitly constructed as morally deficient or culturally lacking. These historical examples challenge contemporary narratives that frame literacy as an unqualified social good, exposing how the moral authority of institutional literacies polices language, maintains cultural hegemony and delegitimises non-dominant epistemologies or ways of knowing and meaning-making, inducing feelings of inadequacy and inferiority for those excluded by dominant literacies (McHenry, 2002; Pendergast, 2003; Willis, 1995, 2008 in Bloom). Later, in the early 1980s, ethnographic studies, e.g., by Street (1984), reframed our understanding of literacy, positioning it as a diverse, socially embedded practice shaped by cultural and historical contexts, challenging the fixed, text-centred and ethnocentric models and emphasising the ideological nature of literacies over the autonomous, universalist view.

The codification of language standards has historically reinforced social hierarchies and power relations. Balibar (Balibar & Laporte, 1974 in Donald, 1992; Balibar, 1974) historicised the evolution of literacy and education in France, demonstrating how the French bourgeoisie benefited from the Enlightenment humanism's linguistic practices to solidify their emerging dominance in society. "The group in possession of the means of subsistence states the coherence of the universe, of his universe: 'I am'" (Bisseret, 1979: 143). The national French language, a single system of signs, displaced the previous linguistic diversity and was organised around the patriarchal, white bourgeoisie male point of reference. Language became the language of the "single hidden referent" (Bisseret, 1979), producing a split between a language of power and a language of nonpower (Bisseret, 1979). This division defined the axis of domination and subordination, producing and reproducing social categories and subjectivity. It created the conditions for establishing the "intimate" (Gramsci, 1971) and stable relations of cultural hegemony (Donald, 1983). "The signifier thus carve[d] out the body in specific ways in order to give rise to a particular form of subjectivity and desire" (Ruti, 2009: 102).

Similarly, in the UK, the codification of the English language from the mid-eighteenth century period has been shaped by philosophical, logical, aesthetic and historical ideologies of social politics, morality, discipline, and evangelism, with the Oxford English Dictionary as a vital language-evaluation actor. The debates were dominated

by a view that grammars and dictionaries should evaluate and prescribe form as correct and proscribing others as incorrect as opposed to reflecting usage, analysing and describing contemporary practices. The prescriptive approach to language had significant implications for social control. As Donald (1983: 46) contends: "This development was followed in the second half of the century by the rise of the new commercial, mass-circulation press, which effectively marginalised the traditional forms of radical journalism". This marginalisation is a component of a more extensive approach to maintaining cultural hegemony.

Prescriptive standards of spelling, punctuation, grammar and pronunciation, centred on the superiority of the white bourgeois male in shaping linguistic and educational norms, continue to produce rankings against the language's "hidden referent" (Bisseret, 1979). These standards shape relationships within the symbolic world of meanings and produce students as subjects "at risk of falling short of the ideal of what human subjects ought to be" (Davies, 2014: 34; Bloome et al., 2019: 197). Chomsky's concept of the "ideal speaker-hearer's intrinsic linguistic competence" (Chomsky, 1965) and the education system's promotion of Standard English perpetuate the idealised 'native speaker' construct with superior and authentic linguistic knowledge. This construct marginalises the diverse, situated, and socially mediated practices of multilingual or second-language users and entrenches hierarchical assumptions in language education and policy. Research has demonstrated that linguistic hierarchies often function as proxies for racial hierarchies. There is extensive data to suggest that being a "native English speaker" is frequently used as a "proxy for whiteness" (Kubota & Fujimoto, 2013: 197). This means that individuals with varying degrees of proximity to whiteness may construct 'standard English' as embodied in someone white and Western-looking; thus, Caribbean English is not given the same status as British English. These linguistic hierarchies encourage a sense of deficiency among individuals who are perceived to lack literacy skills or literary knowledge and speak non-standard English varieties (Cushing, 2021).

Critical approaches have attempted to make visible the racial dimensions of language standardisation. Advancing the standard language ideology as a classed concept (Donald, 1983; Snell & Cushing, 2021), raciolinguistics (Rosa & Flores,

2017) historicises the deficit racialised language practices perspectives as an effort toward decolonisation and the eradication of white supremacy. The term 'White Mainstream English' (WME) (Alim & Smitherman, 2012 and Baker-Bell, 2020 in Snell & Cushing, 2021) rather than 'standard English' emphasises that minoritised speakers are stigmatised even when using language that would be considered 'standard' when produced by privileged white speakers (Flores and Rosa 2015: 150; Alim 2007 in Snell & Cushing, 2021). WME makes visible and audible the normative whiteness (Baker-Bell 2020 in Snell & Cushing, 2021) embedded in language standards and parallels sociopolitical processes where visible markers of difference are nominally erased while structural inequalities persist. As Spivak (1988) demonstrates in her analysis of subaltern speech, formal access to linguistic resources does not guarantee epistemic recognition when underlying power structures remain intact. Understanding how standardised English became a mechanism for maintaining social hierarchies is essential for analysing the formation of my professional identity within educational spaces that privilege dominant linguistic norms and marginalise the multilingual resources I contribute to FE contexts.

The historical trajectory illuminates my contemporary experience as a migrant educator who must navigate between authentic pedagogical commitments anchored in multilingual and multicultural practices and institutional demands for performative compliance with monolingual and monocultural norms. Language structures reality and enables us to define and understand our social identities and social interactions. Dominant linguistic norms structured around the white bourgeois male as the hidden referent embedded hegemonic power relations in the language itself. Other social groups, defined in opposition to the bourgeois male and often linguistically marked as other or inferior, became peripheral and marginalised (Bisseret, 1979). This process extends to global power relations, where Western modernity positions itself as the universal standard. In geopolitics discursive construction, Western modernity is "the Vitruvian man" or an enunciator who is in a position of managing the discourse by which people who, by reason of gross demographics, cannot aspire to Vitruvian status and are thus named and described as "the Other" (Mignolo, 2009). Educational and social institutions perpetuate this linguistic and social hierarchy through relational and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1979, 1991, 2001). Linguistic

authority thus influences educational outcomes and the development of professional identities by shaping the creation of knowledge, institutional norms, and professional competence. The historical analysis demonstrates that the 'hidden referent' of standardised English proficiency continues to operate as a mechanism positioning migrant educators and students as linguistically deficient, directly informing my research question of how everyday literacy practices can contest these dominant discourses.

The codification of linguistic norms and the institutionalisation of standardised literacy practices reveal how language has been weaponised to construct hierarchies of knowledge and morality. Educational policies continue to reinforce racialised and classed subjectivities through linguistic authority, with profound implications for professional identity formation. In the following section, I explore how philosophical approaches to language have evolved through what Cohen terms "the three grammars," providing a framework for understanding the relationship between language, thought, and identity. The examination of the role of literacy and language in power consolidation directly pertains to how my everyday literacy practices as a migrant educator reflect and are shaped by these persistent hierarchical structures.

3.2.1 The White Bourgeois Male as Norm

Having delineated the historical emergence of linguistic hierarchies, I now analyse how the 'single hidden referent' of the white bourgeois male has been institutionalised as the universal norm against which all professional identities are measured: a phenomenon that impacts migrant educators navigating UK educational institutions. The interrogation of how the white bourgeois male emerged as the universal subject pertains to my research question by elucidating the process of professional identity formation for migrant educators within institutional paradigms that systematically position us as 'Other' to this normative standard. I interrogate how dominant linguistic, epistemological, and institutional paradigms have historically centred the white bourgeois male as the universal subject, shaping not only the production of knowledge but also the constitution of subjectivity and professional identity. Drawing from Critical Whiteness Studies, sociocultural theory, psychoanalysis, and affect theory, I develop an interdisciplinary framework to

examine these processes. Through this lens, I examine how language, professional discourse, and institutional practices reproduce epistemic injustice, symbolic violence, and fractured identities among those positioned as 'Other'. By tracing how affect, language, and institutional structures intra-act in the formation of subjectivity, I argue for a reconceptualisation of identity formation as a relational, historical, and contested process that is continually shaped by power and the potential for resistance, transformation, and reimagination.

Cohen's (1977) framework of "three grammars" details how linguistic authority evolved with the Enlightenment-era linguistics paradigm shift. The anthropocentric turn from "grammar of things" to "grammar of mind" represented a historical shift in how language and subject constitution were understood. As outlined in the previous section, Biseret observed that the Enlightenment era witnessed a transition when "the rising class became the social referent for the gradual reorganisation of signifiers" (1979: 67), moving toward a more secular and human-centred understanding of language. This shift created a dualistic worldview- a significant historical context for my new materialist analysis. Cohen (1997) illuminates this transition by identifying three distinct linguistic approaches that evolved in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The first, "grammar of things", reflects a pre-modern, essentialist worldview that conceptualised language as mirroring a divine and natural order (Cohen, 1977), echoing Platonic and Cartesian assumptions about disembodied reason and hierarchical ontology. Language was conceptualised as a neutral and fixed medium for the expression of reason, excluding material, affective, and more-than-human (posthuman or new materialist) from meaning-making- assumptions that continue to shape curriculum design, assessment regimes, and conceptions of learning and identity. The transition to "grammar of the mind" in the Enlightenment marked a "linguistic turn", introducing a secular and human-centred conception of language as an expression of thought and internal cognitive processes (Cohen, 1977). This paradigm established an anthropocentric epistemology, positioning the Cartesian subject as an autonomous, rational, and sovereign agent of meaning-making. This view was later systemised by Chomsky's innate Universal Grammar (Chomsky, 1965) that positioned syntax as an innate linguistic competence, thus reinforcing the cognitive essentialism of "the ideal speaker-hearer's intrinsic linguistic competence" (Chomsky, 1965). This model

collapsed language and thought into a single, disembodied phenomenon (Chandler, 1995), producing a decontextualised and universalist understanding of linguistic meaning. This universalist perspective asserts that language is a universal, culture-neutral cognitive capacity (Chandler, 1995), denying the role of embodiment, relationality or cultural-historical context in meaning-making.

This transition marked a narcissistic reorientation where language no longer reflected cosmic order but human cognition- the cognition of those with the power to define linguistic norms. This shift established the white bourgeois male as not just the centre of linguistic practice but the measure of all things," creating what Miller & Josephs (2009) describe as 'whiteness as a pathological form of collective narcissism.'" It naturalised a normative subjectivity grounded in whiteness, rationality, and individualism. In contemporary professional contexts, this narcissistic structure persists when Western epistemologies and practices are positioned as universal standards, foreclosing dialogic identity formation. Cohen's framework illuminates how the linguistic practices I employ daily as a migrant educator are evaluated against cognitive-formalist approaches that privilege Western epistemologies while marginalising the sociocultural, multilingual meaning-making processes central to my professional practice.

The final trend in Cohen's taxonomy, "the grammar of sentences", signifies a shift from cognitive-formalist approaches (e.g., Chomsky, 1965) to sociocultural linguistics that emphasises the historical, dialogic and ideological dimensions of language (Cohen, 1977). A central contribution of sociocultural theory is its reconceptualisation of consciousness as socially constituted rather than innately determined. Voloshinov articulates this when describing language as externalised discourse "emerging from a sea of inner signs" (Voloshinov, 1973 in Bloome, 2019: 128), creating a "chain of signs", connecting individual consciousness. In this paradigm, "consciousness becomes consciousness only once it has been filled with ideological (semiotic) content. The individual consciousness is a social-ideological fact" (Voloshinov, 1929, para. 9). This perspective challenges universalist and individualist models by asserting that "autonomous semiotic modes cannot exist in the material-historical world we inhabit" (Prior & Hengst, 2010 in Bloome, 2019: 128), suggesting that

meaning emerges not within isolated cognition alone but through material, embodied social interaction.

While the grammar of sentences approach is more socially situated than the grammar of mind, its application continues to exhibit logocentric tendencies that privilege developmental linearity, psychological homogeneity and linguistic mediation in cognitive development.

With their complementary language-based theories of development and learning, Vygotsky and Halliday's (Hall, 2012) contributions to the sociocultural linguistic approach shaped an interactionist conception of human development. The course of development within each domain- sociocultural history, ontogenesis and microgenesis- is characterised by the transformative effects of cultural tools (mediational means). Semiotic tools, in particular the semantic structure of language, are a powerful semiotic tool with some scholars (Sapir and Whorf in Hall, 2012) ascribing grammar the role of modelling reality. Several scholars also attributed social class reproduction of lower socio-economic students to the interplay of human agency and social structure: in particular, language socialisation and in particular directives (Hasan, 2009; Bernstein, 1975, in Halliday, 2004). Enacting the discursive practice of directives creates or excludes certain realities: what may be produced are the material effects of class. Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) theorises internalisation of socially formed knowledge and skills into individual abilities through the transformation of external speech into inner speech, reinforcing a logocentric model that privileges linguistic mediation as the central organising principle of thought and higher mental function, even as it acknowledges social origins (Wertsch, 1994).

Social semiotics positions language as "a set of resources for meaning-making" (Halliday, 2004), extending this framework to non-linguistic communication modes. Writing becomes an element of a 'multimodal ensemble' (Kress, 2010; Jewitt, 2009; Bezemer and Kress, 2008). Nevertheless, social semiotics addresses semiotic modes as isolated and bounded systems, separating embodied meaning-making processes. Moreover, some reconceptualisations of the ZPD, for example, Wenger's (1998) communities of practice framework, could be critiqued for employing territorial metaphors that conceptualise communities as bounded, static entities and

maintaining neo-Platonic metasocial and metasemiotic ideologies that classify semiotic resources through essentialist, hierarchical lenses. These approaches may reinforce Cartesian dualism and arborescent thinking that impose artificial boundaries on fluid social processes.



Figure 8: Image of a Tree

Western structures of knowledge and knowledge creation as a tree. Unquestionably, hierarchical structures that form from a root, branches that stem from already known ways of being, growing vertically with our defined roles in our defined communities. An arborescent structure is vertical and hierarchical, comprising defined roles and knowledge created from previous knowledge.

While sociocultural approaches illuminate how linguistic practices reproduce social stratification (Hall, 2011), they risk overemphasising linguistic determinism. Bernstein's (1975) language code theory and the distinction between elaborated and restricted codes inadvertently pathologised working-class language and reinforced deficit views. Bernstein's legacy has also been assimilated into Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1994) and neoliberal educational frameworks through the construct of "academic language". This construct perpetuates colonial structures

through the dominance of Western epistemologies and the marginalisation of non-Western knowledge systems (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Miller (2003 in Bradbury & Miller, 2010) expands our understanding of mediation beyond interpersonal interactions by proposing three interconnected orders: “first-order” or individual; “second-order” or cultural meanings inscribed in objects that constitute everyday practices and “third-order” mediation or the cultural world of social and institutional structures. This multi-layered view of mediation raises important questions about power asymmetry inherent in the ZPD: whose knowledge and understanding is privileged in the developmental process?

To understand how subjectivity forms within these power relations, we can apply Buber’s (1971) “I-Thou” and “I-It” relational constructs to analyse interactions in cultural (hegemonic) and educational contexts. Buber’s relational framework about human encounters is applied in psychology, education and organisational studies. “I-Thou” represents a genuine encounter that recognises the other’s humanity. Conversely, Buber’s (1971) “I-It” is a detached way of relating that objectifies the other. These relational frameworks help us understand how language constructs social identities by providing places for ‘I,’ ‘me,’ and ‘you’ within the symbolic world it signifies. These pronouns are not only grammatical constructs but also social positions that define our relationships with others. Similar to Buber’s (1971) “I-It”, “You” creates a space within the symbolic world. The first-person pronoun “I” operates within distinctly different epistemic frameworks depending on who employs it. The dominant “I” of the white bourgeois male as the hidden referent speaks from a place of legitimacy and authority. The dominant “I” is positioned as rational and autonomous. In contrast, as Bisseret (1979) notes, the dominated [subject] is fragmented, split between their authentic identity and the persona they must adopt to be intelligible within the dominant discourse. Thus, the “I” of the dominated “Other” is marginalised and reflects internalised subjugation.

This asymmetry in subject positions manifests as what (Fricker, 2007) identifies as epistemic injustice, particularly testimonial injustice, where “prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker’s word” (Fricker, 2007: 1). Within institutional settings, the institutional “I” commands default epistemic authority, while the marginalised “I” is systemically discredited, interrupted, or reframed

through deficit discourses- not based on content but on the speaker's social positioning. As Collins (2000) demonstrates, this differential treatment of knowledge claims reflects and reinforces broader matrices of domination. The asymmetry between 'I-Thou' and 'I-It' relationships is evident for migrant educators who encounter systematic testimonial injustice when their expertise, knowledge, and pedagogical claims are discredited through being positioned as cultural and linguistic 'Others' within institutional hierarchies, requiring translation of expertise into forms recognisable by dominant institutional frameworks.

Hegemonic and linguistic norms become internalised through education and social practices, shaping identities and relationships according to the dominant standards. Bisseret (1979) notes that unconscious logic governs personal pronoun use. This unconscious logic reflects the historical, social context where the social referent for 'I' represents the authority embodied in the dominant group. 'The dominated 'I' is subordinated to the dominant 'I' which orders. This is why, in a dominated language, the world is not organised in reference to the speaker's (Bisseret, 1979).

Language and dominant discourse not only reflect social hierarchies but also reproduce them within individuals' subjectivity. The "single hidden referent" is an example of the "exteriority within" (Barad); hegemonic ideologies are internalised through language that appears external but is enacted within the dominated subject's psyche. This insight allows us to theorise subjectivity not as fixed or coherent but as a site of contradiction, which can be traced through diffraction-not as a process of mirroring and copying but as one of interference and emergence, where meaning and identity shift depending on the entangled relations and positioning of elements, like the play of light on a peacock iridescent feather reveals an unexpected spectrum of colours through surface-light interference.

Educational institutions play a key role in reproducing social hierarchies. Bourdieu (1979, 1991, 2001) extends the hidden curriculum concept by highlighting how schools value specific forms of cultural capital, i.e., white, upper-middle-class norms, while marginalising others. This privileging of dominant cultural practices, such as standard English, disadvantages students whose cultural knowledge is not recognised, reinforcing systemic inequality through the school's hidden norms or

habitus. These practices constitute symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1979, 1991, 2001), allowing dominant groups to maintain power subtly, without overt force, by legitimising inequality as natural or deserved.

These institutional technologies privilege particular subjectivities while marginalising others. They parallel whiteness as “constitutive of the epistemology of the West as an invisible regime of power that secures hegemony through discourse and has material effects in everyday life” (Moreton-Robinson, 2004: 74) or Bisseret's 'hidden referent' of the white bourgeois male. The concept of institutional whiteness articulates the link between whiteness and institutional practices. The institutionalisation of whiteness, as a metaphor for the dominant liberal norm (Hunter, 2015), involves work (Ahmed, 2006): whiteness institutionalises through human resource management, public relations, and communications practices that define the structure and character of the institution over time (Swan, 2010; Hunter, 2015).

Institutional whiteness is the structural foundation upon which neoliberal governance legitimises itself. It codes professionalism according to white, middle-class norms and privileges, subjectivities that conform to its affective and symbolic order while disavowing others through processes of distorted mirroring. Whiteness, “indescribable in its generality, apparent everythingness,” functions as “the dominant standard of humanity” against which all other identities are measured and rendered inadequate (Dyer, 1997 in Hunter, 2015). As a system, the hegemonic ideology of Whiteness has historically fragmented into false binaries depending on an unarticulated, anti-relational model of legitimacy and an individualist human ideal for assessing race (Hunter, 2015). This fragmentation associates racialised or race-based elements of whiteness with grandiosity, while blackness and 'the other' are associated with devalued forms. Consequently, the professional must perform whiteness to survive within these institutional contexts.

The persistence of essentialist ideology in research practices demands critical methodological responses. Bisseret notes that the essentialist ideology continues to mark everyday practices with nineteenth-century patterns of thought still prevalent in social sciences research (Bisseret, 1979: 17). This results in the fragmentary character of social sciences findings due to the scientific division of labour. New

materialist scholars (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 1988) contend that the essentialised hidden referent of the dominant notion of objectivity has imposed a normative Eurocentric perspective and delegitimised other epistemologies.

Therefore, I adopt a decolonial, autoethnographic research positioning that employs my subjectivity as the epistemological structure. This approach disrupts the colonising paradigm where those in power define who is 'self' and who is 'other' (Haraway, 1998 in Spry, 2016). By making my ideology transparent when defining my identity and my autoethnographic methodology's evaluation criteria, I create space for authentic, situated knowledge production. Scholars may critique the inconsistencies in my work, but they may not impose their conscious or unconscious ideologies and worldviews on me.

The establishment of the white bourgeois male as a normative subject has been discursively and institutionally maintained through hegemonic linguistic structures, affective economies, and educational practices that obscure their violence through claims to neutrality, universality, and professionalism. By integrating Vygotskian theory with psychoanalysis, Critical Whiteness Studies, and new materialist thought, this section has destabilised the dominant "I" as a fixed or coherent centre of authority and reframed it as a historically contingent and affectively mediated subject-position.

The epistemic and symbolic authority of whiteness becomes visible not only in institutional structures but also in the psychic interiority of the dominated, who must navigate "the exteriority within." We can resist this epistemic closure by embracing diffraction, third spaces, and sociohistorical literacy practices. A decolonial autoethnographic positionality reclaims subjectivity as a valid site of knowledge production and disrupts the hidden referents of whiteness embedded in research and professionalism. This approach opens the possibility for new relationalities, new literacies, and new subjectivities anchored not in erasure or conformity but in multiplicity, historicity, and ethical, trans-subjective encounters (Ettinger, 2014). Understanding how 'the exteriority within' operates or how hegemonic ideologies become internalised is key to analysing how my everyday literacy practices reflect these dominant structures and create possibilities for resistance and transformation.

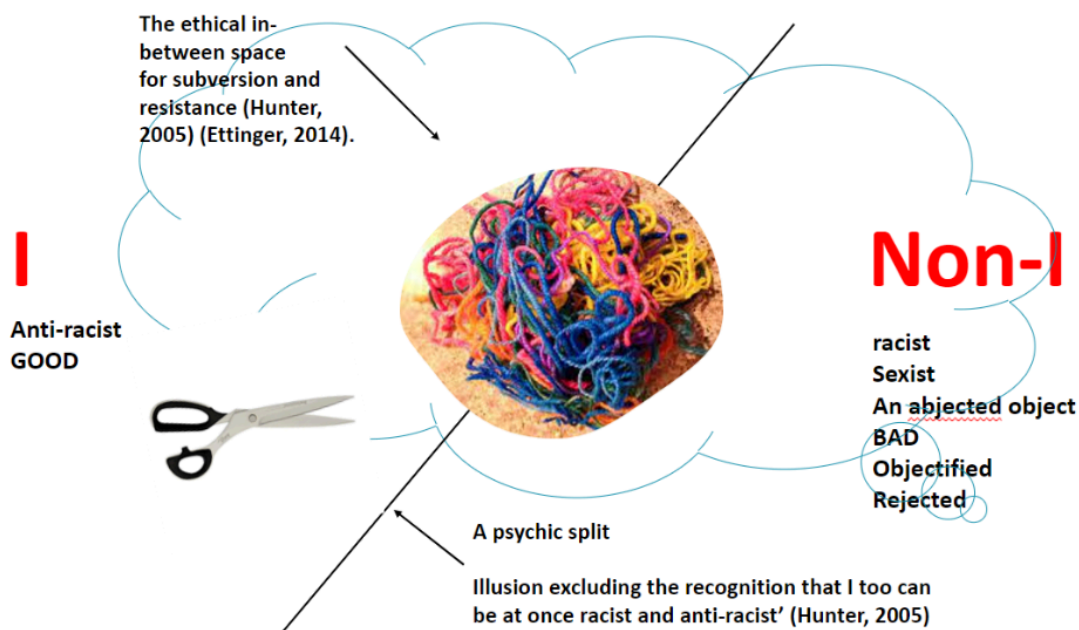


Figure 9: Psychic Split and Identity

Individuals frequently construct a rigid dichotomy between "I" (positioned as GOOD) and "Non-I" (positioned as BAD), with the latter encompassing rejected identities and characteristics such as "racist," "sexist," "the abjected object," "objectified," and "rejected". This binary reflects an inability to tolerate ambiguity, as it denies the possibility of inhabiting multiple, contradictory identities at once. The psychic split is maintained through a metaphorical act of severing, like scissors cutting through the tangled threads of our complex selves, creating an illusion that we can be anti-racist while entirely distancing ourselves from complicity in racist structures (Hunter, 2005). The tangled wool represents complexity as an ethical space- a consciousness that exists in the tension between these seemingly incompatible positions. The tangled, ambiguous territory promotes ethical development, subversion and resistance by encouraging the capacity to confront complexity, complicity, and contradiction without immediately resolving them into false certainties.

3.2.2 From Language to Fragmented Subjectivity

The analysis of the establishment of the normative subject reveals how contemporary neoliberal institutions continue to produce fragmented professional identities through performativity, surveillance, and fabrication (Ball). I apply notions of "values schizophrenia" (Ball), "psychosis of whiteness" (Andrews, 2016), "narcissism", "toxic literacies" and institutional "paranoia" (Hunter, 2015) frameworks

to illustrate educators' experience of internal division between authentic ethical commitments and institutional demands. These notions could be critiqued for presenting educators as passive victims of institutional power, overemphasising pathology and erasing their agency. The tension between structural constraints and authentic pedagogical relationships renders embodied inquiry essential for my research approach as it creates liminal spaces of resistance and transformation within existing structures. Autoethnography and action research as embodied enquiry reject totalising institutional determination by constructing educators as active agents instead of passive subjects. My examination pertains to my research question by highlighting the psychological and professional tensions migrant educators encounter as they reconcile diverse epistemologies, pedagogical traditions, and multilingual practices with the demands of institutional performativity in everyday literacy practices.

Institutions often provide distorted reflections that privilege hegemonic ways of being while pathologising others. Rather than reflecting the teacher's creativity, critical thinking, or ethical substance, the institution reflects only those aspects of the teacher that align with neoliberal, performative logics: productivity, standardisation, data compliance, and external appearance of success; an individual is not seen as a person but only as a role, a metric, or a unit of labour. When institutions demand conformity and reject authentic expressions, (marginalised) professionals may see distorted images of themselves as good or bad, privileging institutional evaluations over their perceptions. The educational discourse is permeated by the deficit terminology like 'struggling', which is associated with a sense of powerlessness, a damaged, stigmatised identity and negative moods and emotions (Culshaw, 2019) like fear, humiliation, numbness, or denial. This deficit perspective reflects structural issues in how educational institutions conceptualise difference. Institutions demand not a diffractive spectrum but sameness. Drawing on new materialism, we can see how institutional frameworks position difference as an essential othering that necessarily divides something from something else for its identity to emerge (Deleuze, 1994, in Ringrose, Warfield, & Zarabadi, 2020). This way of understanding difference produces binary thinking and dichotomous realities that limit professional development and reinforce existing power hierarchies. For example, the Ofsted inspection framework exemplifies the problem of binary thinking through its linear,

sequential, logical timeline with a starting point, an endpoint, and a measurement point. A performance judgment becomes a totalising identity rather than a possible development's description. This mechanistic approach fails to capture the rhizomatic nature of professional development, which is interconnected, evolving, and ever-influencing. When institutions attempt to measure unpredictable, creative, and transformative rhizomatic growth with hierarchical frameworks, they inevitably miss, misunderstand, and mismeasure the complex experience of struggling.

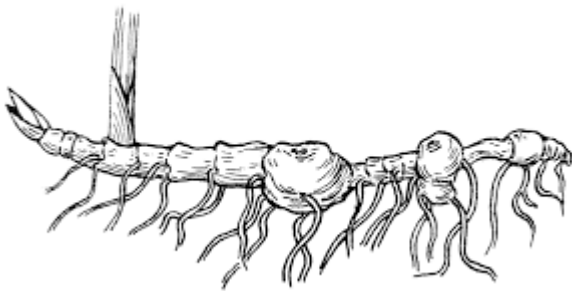


Figure 10: Image of a Rhizome

This image articulates arborescent (hierarchical) and rhizomatic (vertical) Western knowledge structures. Some plants have rhizomes instead of roots: rhizomes are both vertical and horizontal. “Binary logic is the spiritual reality of the root-tree” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 5). Rhizome is connected; we see the parts that want to be seen, underneath there are assemblages all equal, all different, all important. If a node fails, another will break away; the connections are vital to success, and without these ever-changing connections, the assemblage becomes null and void. The rhizome is therefore always becoming, never being. A rhizome denotes a collective, connected communities and individuals or an assemblage. In this metaphor, the production of knowing does not start from human meaning-making. Intention is distributed in complex networks of human and non-human agents.

The institutional devaluation of difference extends beyond policy discourse and becomes an internalised reality that disintegrates professional identity. The genealogy of the fragmentation of professional subjectivity can be traced to how language constructs social identities. Dominated people may experience a split between their true identity and the behaviour they are compelled to exhibit. This split creates a sense of incoherence. The dominant discourse structures the psyche of the dominated in such a way that there is a necessary heterogeneity between their imaginary ‘I’ and their social ‘me’ (set of practices of an oppressed and devaluated being). The ‘I’ and the ‘me’ [the “ego”] can be homogeneous only for the dominant’

(Bisseret, 1979: 144). For the dominated, the "I" they feel and the "me" they must present are misaligned.

The dominated are compelled to associate and identify with the social referent, meaning they may also perceive themselves through the prism of the prevailing, dominant group rather than as independent individuals. This internalised domination of seeing themselves not from their standpoint, but from the perspective of the dominant, creates a distance within. Decentrality presupposes centrality, which is only true of the dominant. 'Only they are homogeneous to the social 'subject'; indeed, there is homogeneity between their concrete being and the imaginary referent, i.e. power, so that their forms of speech necessarily correspond to their practices, including the written practices' (Bisseret, 1979: page number). Their identity and societal status are symbiotic, further reinforced by their power. This homogeneity allows them to comfortably employ 'I' in a manner that reflects both their personal and social identity. The dominated group cannot easily distance or decentre themselves; 'the distance is within them, it is their 'ego' which is dissociated, fragmented, since dominant speech, in fact, forces the dominated to identify individually with the social referent' (Bisseret, 1979). Identity disintegration arises when individuals internalise external power structures of power, leading to a split between the authentic self and the false self or performative roles.

The internal division between the imaginary 'I' and social 'me' extends to geopolitical and affective registers. Migration and colonial discourses (of a predetermined biological kinship system) construct non-pathological subjectivities with rigid, securitised boundaries between subject-self and the other-object. When these borders are breached by ambiguity, ambivalence or complexity, identifying with the "Other", reduced to a negative difference 'worth-less-than' (Braidotti, 2013, in Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012 in Ringrose, Warfield, & Zarabadi, 2020: 31), invokes an extreme form of masochism of a re-encounter with disavowed aspects of the self-guilt, shame, and loss-previously projected onto the (racialised) 'Other' (Miller and Josephs, 2009).

When an individual is unable to internally tolerate this psychic tension and integrate lived experience with the dominant symbolic order, they experience internal

incoherence and dissociation of ego or a psychic split under linguistic domination, leading to anxiety, alienation, or abjection and co-aligns with totality or a 'specificity' (e.g., race, gender, educational level, class) in the outside world. This reinforces the dominant group's essentialist worldview by reinforcing the same categories that an individual attempted to escape. Deleuze and Guattari refer to the human potentiality to "split" as 'micro-fascism' and claim that 'fascism is in us all, in our heads and our everyday behaviour' and that 'everybody wants to be a fascist' (Guattari, 2007), mirroring Bissett's insight that these dynamics are not external anomalies but operate within the psyche and everyday relations.

Creating physical or psychic space between I and the 'Other' extends to over-identifying with the 'anti-racist' identity and rejecting the racist as an abjected object, leading to a psychic 'split' between the 'good' and the 'bad' internal object or subjectivity reinforced by this illusion and exclude the recognition 'that I too can be at once racist and anti-racist' (Hunter, 2005). The 'racist' would be objectified, rejected outside and inside myself and the 'in-between space' -as a metaphor for an ethical space- torn.

Acknowledging multiplicities opens the ethical 'in-between' space for prolepsis (anticipation of possible futures), subversion and resistance (Hunter, 2005; Ettinger, 2014). Nash et al. (2018) conceptualise critical racial literacy as 'a humanising epistemology requiring parents and educators to recognise, refute, critique, and synthesise the structure of race in daily living, moving toward actions, curricula, communication, and restructuring oppressive structures that allow us to realise equity'. This notion attests to the transformational potential of literacy practices as a way of constructing, challenging and resisting 'totality' (Erikson, 2013; Arendt, 1958).

While identity fragmentation is embedded in language and symbolic domination, it is intensified by the emotional and ethical dissonance educators experience under institutional performativity, a psychic split that Ball (2003), building on Foucauldian penal policy discourse, describes as "values schizophrenia": a profound ontological split as educators attempt to reconcile internal ethical commitments and external institutional demands of performativity, managerialism and surveillance capitalism. In contemporary educational contexts, these psychic tensions are reflected in Ball's (2003) notion of "the struggle for the teacher's soul", capturing the extent to which

educators internalise institutional discourses that redefine their self-image, ethics, and consciousness. Resistance becomes challenging as governance operates not by coercion but by colonising professional consciousness, and the desire for legitimacy and belonging becomes a control mechanism. This produces docile, self-disciplining bodies, inauthentic relationships, and fragmented subjectivity (Ball, 2003). Ball's "values schizophrenia"-alignment with institutional norms and loss of authenticity and critical agency-resonates with what Bloom (2011) identifies as the fragmentation within trauma-organised systems where individuals internalise unresolved systemic contradictions, eroding relational integrity and ethical reflection capacity. The fragmented subjectivity is amplified by "organisational alexithymia" or the inability to give words to feelings (Bloom, 2010). The affective and cognitive disintegration that reproduces systemic power is extended by Cooper and Lousada (2005), who demonstrate how marketised and commodified systems are built on a fear of feeling, repressing affective life and ethical incongruity to preserve institutional coherence. Damaging subjectification of repressive surveillance thus operates through parallel processes in which dysfunctional institutional structures are mirrored in individual behaviours and emotional responses as altered states of consciousness, affect, self-perception, and relationships characterised by persistent distrust (Cooper & Lousada, 2005; Bloom, 2010).

This schizophrenic experience is further pathologised when viewed through the lens of whiteness, which Andrews (2016) characterises as a psychosis, a disavowed and violent structure of feeling that upholds institutional governance. Andrew's notion that whiteness exists as a "psychosis" to navigate the dissonance between what Hesse (2007) calls 'white mythologies' and the reality that Western capitalism is built on and maintained by racial exploitation, resonates with "values schizophrenia" and other conceptualisations of fragmentation (Cooper & Lousada, 2005; Bloom, 2010) as it captures the internal conflict of individuals conflicted between upholding idealised narratives and confronting the violent, affectively charged truths of (racialised) social structures.

This psychosis may manifest in educational institutions when diversity initiatives celebrate multiculturalism while simultaneously maintaining structures that systematically disadvantage marginalised students. The toxic gestalt better

encapsulates the pathological relational structure engendered by institutional whiteness, emphasising the imbalanced power dynamics in 'the (shared) psychosis of whiteness' (Andrews, 2016) as an individual and social construct, as whiteness as a structure is a more dominant 'half' in the relationship than an individual.

Oppressive systems produce internalised forms of domination that fragment the subject and reproduce systemic power through affective and cognitive disintegration. The "you" addressed in educational and policy contexts is often not met in dialogue (not encountered in Buber's I-Thou relationship, where parties recognise others' full humanity), but instead pre-constructed by policy expectations, surveillance, and performativity. I-Thou relationships are defined by authenticity, accountability, reciprocity, and transparency, which is what neoliberal governance systematically prevents by reducing educators to auditable categories. Educational institutions operate primarily through Buber's I-It relationships or teleological transactional encounters. "I" becomes a fictionalised interlocutor, responding only within pre-set boundaries, not engaging authentically- what Ball terms a "fabrication"; a quantifiable representation of oneself that matches external evaluation criteria and meets the demand for accelerated, predictable output.

The professional (or an organisation) becomes a fabricated, constructed simulation of excellence, distorted, purposefully constructed version designed to be an auditable commodity' (Shore and Wright 1999: 570 in Ball, 2003: 225), prioritising effectiveness over truthfulness in markets, inspections, and appraisals within an indicator-driven culture (Elliott, 2001: 202) colonised through audit, which promotes "pathologies of creative compliance" (Elliott, 2001: 202). The construction of fabrications produces opacity rather than the intended transparency. This opacity is unevenly distributed and racialised, with privileged market positions affording greater institutional authenticity. Institutions serving marginalised communities must engage in extensive fabrication to survive; their survival depends on the capacity to perform successfully, not on the pursuit of meaningful education. Deviation from white-coded norms must be hidden and corrected.

Whereas psychosis offers a macro-social view of institutional pathology, a micro-relational analysis reveals an additional affective dynamic of narcissism

operating through unresponsive, punitive systems that deny the teacher's need for recognition and ethical attachment. Institutions that surveil, script, and classify people reduce "you" to a controlled object, denying the ethical relationality Buber envisioned, reinforcing dominance and erasing authentic subjectivity. Drawing on attachment theories and Winnicott's Object Relations Theory, institutional whiteness fails to function as a secure, "good enough" base unwilling to meet individuals' "healthy narcissistic needs" (Miller, *Drama*, 21) of trust and psychological safety (Schein, 1965), resulting in organisational silence emerging out of workers' fear to speak up about issues or problems they encounter at work (Morrison and Milliken, 2000 in Bloom, 2010).

Instead, institutions governed by neoliberal logics act as narcissistic, punitive, unresponsive 'primary objects' (Winnicott) or 'insecure bases' (Bowlby), incapable of empathy or mind-mindedness as the ability to understand and respond to another's mental states. While Maxine Greene aspired for teaching to be the practice of "mind-mindedness" (Fleming, 2008) or "becoming a friend of someone else's mind," whiteness functions as an anti-relational force incapable of attunement. The consequent self-alienating and survivalist dynamic of annihilating the "true self" (Miller) to create fabrications (Ball) contributes to pathological narcissism driven by the need to maintain an idealised self-image while repressing authentic emotions and vulnerabilities.

Institutional narcissism is enacted and sustained through toxic literacies that reduce subjectivity to auditable, racialised categories. Language in this context becomes a disciplinary mechanism rather than a medium of relational recognition, producing fragmented subjectivities aligned to institutional demands. Whiteness exploits print to serve hierarchical power systems like patriarchy and capitalism (Taylor), creating infinite hierarchical literacy configurations-patterns of literacy use-that privilege institutions exerting control. The white gaze simplifies and reduces to an observable, quantifiable and governable category that conforms to its measuring apparatus: a struggling, inadequate teacher; under-represented minorities; 'at-risk'; under-achieving; hard-to-reach and achievement gap; perfect attendance; inner city, cultural competency; academic literacies or quality.

Policy documents function as apparatuses of Institutional Whiteness (Ahmed, 2006) that govern the parameters of people's daily existence by classifying individuals, compelling them into literacy configurations of dependency and assigning subject positions that adversely affect their identity. The classification system is defined not by arbitrary innate traits like skin colour or physical features but by abstract metrics, statistics, coded language, and data-assigning individuals' value depending on their conformity to institutional norms. This system not only classifies people but is "only as useful as the emotional impact it has on the individuals being compared, assessed, sanctioned, or rewarded" (Sellar, 2015: 135 in McKenzie, 2017). Policy documents function less as neutral guidance and more as performative rituals to re-enact the state myth. These documents could be framed as 'content' to be monetised or a form of digital token of legitimacy (a non-fungible token) that reinforces hegemony as "the social memory content transfer" (Utkina et al., 2015) and becomes 'the mask which prevents our seeing political practice as it is' (Abrams, 1988). Through this process, the policy becomes a tool of Institutional Whiteness (Ahmed, 2006), encoding racialised and classed expectations into everyday governance and literacy practices that classify, discipline, and constrain identity.

Vygotsky's (1934) concept of mediation offers an explanation for understanding how institutional whiteness reproduces itself. According to this framework, cultural tools and signs (language, policies, assessment criteria), institutions mediate professional identity formation, with whiteness functioning as both a tool and a sign system. Importantly, these mediational means do not only reflect whiteness but actively produce it through internalisation of social relations. For example, professional standards, evaluation frameworks, and institutional discourses serve as psychological tools that mediate how educators understand "professionalism," with whiteness embedded in these tools' structure.

Pedagogic spaces become racialised when mediated through institutional whiteness as an affect-regulating system (Hunter, 2015) that privileges speed, rationality, linearity, and neutrality. This system simultaneously excludes affective, relational, and situated forms of knowing, pedagogic spaces as institutions scaffold development toward white professional norms while rendering alternative ways of being professional unintelligible. In Vygotskian terminology, the racialised institutional

ZPD scaffolds educators toward white bourgeois norms, not as a space of co-construction but as a mechanism of assimilation.

Within this institutional context, toxic literacies (Taylor, 1996) operate as the linguistic mechanism of a paranoid institutional order. This order is characterised by an obsession with performance, a persistent haunting by the impossibility of total control, and is sustained by the compulsive production of fabrications. As Hunter (2015) argues, “institutional paranoia” employs language not to create meaning but to defend against vulnerability and simulate coherence in the presence of systemic collapse.

Fabrications are the affective and discursive products of hyperreflexive institutions paralysed in paranoid self-preservation. These fabrications function as a form of institutional defence against vulnerability, critique, and authentic engagement. They operate by maintaining the strategic appearance of control, coherence, and success under the pressures of neoliberal governance and replacing relational attunement with scripted compliance. At its core, the affective structure that drives fabrication is violence: professionals are compelled to repress their “authentic self” and perform fabrications or a “false self” in a system obsessed with an idealised institutional self-image and a paranoid fear of losing control. This dynamic creates a cycle where the fear of being controlled escalates preemptive attempts to control individuals and data. Hunter (2015) defines hyperreflexivity as a condition “which knows all, but which is coupled with an ever-increasing sense of demoralisation because, in spite of an overall intensification of problem-solving activity, nothing changes”.

Hyperreflexivity represents the cognitive correlate of this violence. The result is a pathological fantasy of omniscience within institutional systems that aim for complete knowledge and control, which ultimately leads to paralysis and the affective collapse that emerges when a system exhausts all efforts at reform but refuses structural transformation.

The institutional dynamics described above create what can be termed a hyperreflexive, colonial desire to know, which in turn creates contested discursive formations, so that it can understand the Other. As Glissant (1997: 190) writes, “In order to understand and thus accept you, I have to measure your solidity with the

ideal scale providing me with grounds to make comparisons and, perhaps, judgments. I have to reduce". In contrast to Glissant's perspective, institutional opacity demands assimilation into legible, white-coded norms. This form of opacity collapses the relational, complex and affective elements into standardised indicators. It conflates surveillance with knowing and understanding and compliance with authenticity, enforcing concealment of vulnerability and difference.

As an alternative approach, Glissant's (1997) concept of opacity resists and protects from violent reduction and flattening by the white gaze and asserts the irreducible complexity and unknowability of relational being. For Glissant, opacity is a refusal of the colonial desire to know, classify, and reduce the Other into intelligibility according to dominant norms. Linking this to identity formation, Vygotsky's (1934) notion of identity as self-fashioning allows us to infer that "to abandon self-fashioning is to abandon the craving for freedom, and to let go of one's stubborn hold upon selfhood, even selfhood conceived as a fiction, is to die" (Greenblatt, 1980: 257). This suggests that even a fabricated identity is vital to feel agentic and alive. In response to these tensions, Glissant advocates for "the right to opacity for everyone", insisting on an autonomous form of self-fashioning that is not required to be fully explicable or justifiable to others.

The fragmentation of professional subjectivity in educational contexts emerges from the intersection of language, institutional structures, and affective dynamics that privilege whiteness and neoliberal performativity. Through deficit ideologies, identity disintegration, and pathological institutional structures characterised by schizophrenia, psychosis, narcissism, toxic literacies, and paranoia, educators experience profound splits between their authentic ethical commitments and institutional demands. This psychological and political fragmentation represents how power operates through colonising consciousness and producing fabricated selves. The theoretical frameworks I examined collectively illuminate how institutional whiteness functions and shapes professional identity through affective and discursive practices.

Despite powerful mechanisms of control, resistance has been a constant in educational contexts: a reality that directly connects to my research question of how

everyday literacy practices reflect and challenge dominant discourses. Ball's analysis emphasises the psychological consequences of performativity but neglects the potential for resistance, risking a fixed understanding of the "teacher's soul" under threat. This limitation omits that migrant educators navigate multiple linguistic and cultural systems and how their everyday literacy practices function as sites of both domination and resistance. My research question asks how these practices reflect and shape the professional identity of migrant educators in inner London FE contexts. The theoretical frameworks examined thus far- from Bisseret's 'hidden referent' to institutional whiteness- reveal the mechanisms of domination, but they also allude to spaces of possibility. The following section on 'Grammar of Affect' addresses this gap by exploring how affective dimensions of literacy create opportunities for what I term 'matrixial becoming'- a form of resistance that operates through relational, embodied encounters rather than individual resistance. This connects directly to the final part of my research question: how can these practices empower others? I apply Vygotsky's concepts of *perezhivanie* and sense alongside Ettinger's matrixial theory, and I develop a framework for understanding how literacy practices can create 'Third Spaces' where alternative professional identities emerge through creative engagement with institutional constraints. The following section will discuss resistance strategies to reclaim spaces for authentic self-fashioning and ethical practice beyond the paranoid logics of neoliberal governance.

3.3 Grammar of Affect: Toward Matrixial Literacies

Building on previous discussions about how institutional structures fragment professional subjectivity, this exploration of affective dimensions in literacy practices addresses how my everyday literacy practices as a migrant educator reflect and shape my professional identity through embodied, relational encounters that transcend cognitive frameworks and institutional constraints, creating opportunities for reconstruction and resistance. Applying diverse theoretical traditions: Vygotskian sociocultural theory, Deleuze and Guattarian assemblage thinking and rhizomatic becoming, Ettingerian feminist psychoanalysis and Baradian new materialist frameworks, I develop the concept of "matrixial becoming with literacy" as a resistance strategy to neoliberal subjectification.

I propose literacy as a liquid epistemology- a living, bodily, breathing, vibrating force that flows through bodies, practices, signs, histories, atmospheres, and assemblages. The metaphor conceptualises how meaning iteratively moves through different states- from the groundwater of unconscious knowledge to the surface waters of articulated thought and to the vapour of shared ideas. Literacy practices are not a set of fixed, isolated skills but part of this continuous cycle of transformation process. First, I establish Vygotsky's concepts of perezhivanie and sense as theoretical foundations; then, I introduce posthuman identity and synthesise Prior and Olinger's (2019) "laminated assemblages" of literacy and "embodied semiotic becoming" of identity with Ettinger's (2006) "matrixial becoming" to argue that the subject emerges wit(h)rough the "matrixial literacy encounter".

3.3.1 Vygotsky's Perezhivanie and Sense

Vygotsky's concepts of perezhivanie and sense align with posthuman and psychoanalytic theoretical principles. Although some critics caution against conflating Vygotsky's sociocultural approach with psychoanalytic frameworks, meaningful conceptual affinities exist, as evidenced by Vygotsky's (1934) concepts of inner speech (Robbins, 2001) and perezhivanie (Rey & Martinez, 2016). Vygotsky's explicit recognition of the affective dimensions of learning and the non-equivalence of thought and language has been underexplored in educational theory. Vygotsky's sophisticated framework aimed at understanding the psyche and integrating an understanding of psychological development and human consciousness as a creative process and emotional-cognitive elements through the concepts of sense, perezhivanie, and subjective experience, although never making the relation between them explicit (Rey & Martinez, 2016). Vygotsky's (1971) work on creativity in "Psychology of Art provides an alternative to the instrumental and operational character of higher psychological functions by emphasising the unity of affective, psychomotor, and intellectual processes, aligning with Halliday's (2004) differentiation between mental processes of emotion, perception, and cognition. The combination of the experiential and interpersonal metafunction (Halliday, 2004) echoes Vygotsky's concepts of 'perezhivanie' and 'sense'.

Vygotsky used perezhivanie in conjunction with other ideas related to the individual's emotional domain, including imagination, fantasy, and emotion (Rey & Martinez,

2016). Similarly, sense was described as being inseparable from emotional experience. Vygotsky supported the catharsis theory of liberation by positing that an explosion of emotions activates the imagination as it interprets these emotions (Lindqvist, 2003). Imagination can be conceptualised as a dynamic, emotional and intellectual process that transforms fragments of reality into new forms, contributing to creativity. “Perezhivanie” (Poole & Huang, 2018) or my understanding of “lived experience” (Melville, 2019), represents the intersection of sociocultural history and ontogenesis, synthesising affective and cognitive experiences within historical contexts. Vygotsky’s account of ‘sense’ as ‘affect rich, imagistic, motivated and personalised’ (Bloome et al., 2019:128) can be conceptualised as subjectivity (Melville, 2019). Vygotsky argued that the psychological effects of lived experiences are not imposed from the outside in linear causation but are formed from the dynamic interplay between external influences and an individual’s internal psychological processes (Vygotsky, 1930, 2004). González Rey (2011) argues that this generative or creative character of the psyche (consciousness), instead of its reflective condition or internalisation of external (Veresov, 1998), was central to Vygotsky’s early work but was temporarily obscured during his instrumental period before reemerging in his final writings. Rather than seeing it as reproductive, Vygotsky argued that imagination is the foundation for all creative activity, including scientific and artistic endeavours. For Vygotsky, creativity involves a complex interplay of conscious and unconscious, and the creative process involves multiple levels of consciousness. Imagination, a constituent of both ‘sense’ and Halliday’s (2004) ‘imaginative model of language’, has pedagogic implications; therefore, we must theorise how educators can scaffold or model it. Vygotsky’s concepts of perezhivanie and sense provide a theoretical framework for understanding how my lived experiences as a migrant educator become sedimented into literacy practices that encompass personal history and cultural knowledge, creating possibilities for resistance through what I term ‘matrixial literacy’ encounters. Perezhivanie for migrant educators encompasses the complex affective dimensions of cultural displacement, linguistic negotiation, and professional adaptation. My lived experiences of navigating between languages, cultures, pedagogical traditions, and UK FE requirements become sedimented into embodied literacy practices.

Vygotsky's psychological framework, centred on his rejection of Cartesian dualism, resonates with PhEmaterialisms. Vygotsky's mind and body integrated model suggests professional identity formation as inherently relational and culturally mediated. Greenblatt's concept of "the self-fashioning" of "identity as a manipulable, artful process' (Greenblatt, 1980: 2 in Vassilieva & Zavershneva, 2020: 19. According to Greenblatt," to abandon self-fashioning is to abandon the craving for freedom, and to let go of one's stubborn hold upon selfhood, even selfhood conceived as a fiction, is to die" (Greenblatt, 1980: 257). Abandoning self-fashioning equates to relinquishing the pursuit of freedom and selfhood, leading to a figurative death. Self-fashioning is achieved primarily through language, a powerful medium for autonomy and selfhood that connects literature, social relations, and individual freedom (Greenblatt, 1980, in Vassilieva & Zavershneva, 2020).

Sociocultural theory (and traditional research paradigms) often consider an individual (the researcher) a discrete entity- a single drop of water separate from the ocean of study. PhEmaterialisms challenge this separation by rejecting a subject-dependent ontology. Individuals (researchers and the researched: subject and object) are seen as part of the same fluid system. The assumed 'I' of qualitative inquiry is that 'there exists a subject 'I' that precedes the verb 'think' (St. Pierre, 2011: 40 in Ringrose, Warfield, & Zarabadi, 2020: 25). This Cartesian model of thought where the researching 'I' produces knowledge at a distance, is critiqued by Deleuze and Guattari in their rejection of representational epistemology (Ringrose et al., 2020). This critique extends to the intersubjective perspective and self-reflexivity (in qualitative and phenomenological research) as it always presumes ' a subject before the verb /.../ a doer before the deed / .../ an a priori subject that exists ahead of [and apart from] language and cultural practice' (St. Pierre, 2010: 3 in Ringrose, Warfield, & Zarabadi, 2020: 34).

In performative paradigms, "the self" is not a fixed, bounded, meaning-making subject that inevitably pre-exists its relations to the world as a taken-for-granted image of thought (Taguchi in Ringrose, Warfield, & Zarabadi, 2020). Knowledge is knowledge-in-becoming as the individual (researcher) constantly creates differences through the entanglement with the world. This entanglement transforms knowledge, knowledge-in-becoming, constantly creating difference and pushing the boundaries

of understanding in a performative paradigm where “learning/be(com)ing/knowing is performative, always in becoming” (Østern, 2003: 278). Barad's agential realism complements these approaches by proposing that the world is composed not of discrete entities but of phenomena co-constituted through intra-action. Barad's framework collapses traditional dualisms- mind/matter, discourse/materiality- and replaces them with an onto-ethico-epistemology, where being, knowing, and doing are inseparable. The primary ontological units are heterogeneous ‘assemblages’ (Deleuze and Guattari) or “phenomena”, defined by Barad as “the ontological inseparability/entanglement of intra-acting agencies” (Barad, 2007:139). Unlike interaction, which presumes mediation between pre-existing entities, intra-action ‘signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies where agency is an enactment, a matter of possibilities for reconfiguring entanglements’ (Barad, 2007). Intra-action emphasises how boundaries themselves are not pre-given but enacted through intra-action, like a coastline, where the boundary between land and water fluctuates.

“Self” is “becoming”- coming together- in affectively charged intra-actions (Barad), i.e., intra-acts with other people and things as apparatuses/ phenomena, reconfiguring-mattering- the world- spacetime-matter. An individual's ability to act emerges within these intra-actions. Agency and power (to act) emerge out of a confederacy of apparatuses. Individuals are brought together into phenomena and given new co-constitutive subject positions. Through their intra-actions, they are given new subject positions. Individuals' subject positions are constantly made and unmade through their intra-actions with phenomena. In educational contexts, becoming literate involves not only skill acquisition but also entering into specific subject positions- becoming a “struggling reader” or a “gifted writer.” These identities are not applied to preexisting subjects but are material-discursive practices that shape our reality. This understanding has profound implications for literacy education. Literacies are produced through entanglements with material-discursive apparatuses and phenomena of the universe in its complexity. Rather than seeing literacy as something students acquire, it is recognised as something individuals become with- a process of co-emergence where texts, teachers, institutional practices, and students' histories all participate in creating new possibilities for being and knowing.

The new materialist approach addresses limitations of sociocultural theory by situating identity within a new materialist ontology that rejects human exceptionalism and promotes "an extended and 'unfolding subjectivity outside the classical frame of the anthropocentric human subject, relocating it into becomings and fields of composition of forces and becomings'" (Braidotti, 2019 in Ringrose & Zarabadi, 2019: 112). Identity is viewed as the outcome of a network of human and non-human agents that transcends the traditional concept of the individual, as "the mind does not inhabit the body; rather, the body inhabits the mind" (Malafouris, 2013 in Ringrose & Zarabadi, 2019: 158).



Figure 11: Depth Within Apparent Unity

My malachite metaphor visualises shifting dimensionality and multiplicity. The malachite appears as a unified object, yet its surface reveals complex internal stratification. The concentric bands of varying green tones demonstrate that identity and literacy contain multiple layers, histories, formations, affects, and material-discursive encounters; some may not coalesce into legible form: some spaces remain opaque as absences or resistances to complete knowability; meaning remains diffused, inarticulable, or non-representational.

3.3.2 Laminated Assemblages, Semiotic Becoming and Sedimented Identities

Having established the affective and unconscious dimensions of Vygotsky's theory, I apply these concepts to illuminate literacy as a dynamic, flowing assemblage rather than a static skill set. Like water flowing through different landscapes, literacy moves through and shapes our lived experiences, identities, and social contexts. Literacy serves as the entry point into subjectivity, functioning not only as a skill but as a material-discursive practice through which identities emerge. Literacy practices become apparatuses that are productive of, and part of, our identities conceptualised as phenomena. The self is what comes of meeting language, culture and power in how they matter, through how they feel as fully embodied experiences that are constantly unfolding' (Leander & Ehret, 2019).

Literacy studies conceptualise lived experience (subjectivity) as funds of knowledge (Hall, 2012:79), a concept extended by Zipin (2009) to include "dark" funds of knowledge- experiences shaped by violence, crime, poverty, trauma, and marginalisation. These experiences, while often avoided in curricula due to the discomfort and institutional risk they provoke, are nevertheless vital for socially just pedagogies, as "letting dark sides of students' lives into articulate classroom consciousness...makes a compelling case for incorporating them as curricular funds of knowledge: that is, as learning assets" (Zipin, 2009: 321). "Funds of knowledge" approaches resonate with Deleuze's assertion that our individuality is that of events (Deleuze 1995:141) enacted across time and space. This understanding of lived experience leads us to consider the lived event becomes a laminated assemblage-a temporal and spatial configuration of meaning-making, identity, and affect. Prior and Olinger (2019) illustrate the complex blend of affect, identity, and emerging practices that converge in laminated assemblages and semiotic becoming.

Lamination is a fluid heterogeneity (subjectivity as an entangled phenomenon) or moving fluidly between contexts, adapting literacy practices to the demands of each situation. Laminar flows, and laminating pertain to multiple rhizomatic lines of Lemke's (2000 in Prior & Olinger, 2019: 137) "heterogeneous semiotic artefacts (bodies, texts, tools, buildings) converg[ing] in moments" (Prior & Olinger, 2019: 137). "Assemblage (the here-and-now of activity) is always becoming" (Prior &

Olinger, 2019: 137); the immediate moments of activity are points of dynamic, turbulent flows. Turbulent flow or assemblage can be seen in waterfalls, with the water flowing rapidly and irregularly, colliding and mixing with the surrounding air and creating bubbles and foam. "What spins off from turbulent moments are laminated, heterogeneous artefacts heading into their futures" (Prior & Olinger, 2019: 137). For migrant educators, laminated assemblages encompass transnational knowledge flows and cultural practices that transcend geographical boundaries. My literacy practices emerge from these complex assemblages, creating educational strategies that utilise resources invisible to institutional frameworks.

Similar to how water shapes the landscape over extended periods while simultaneously being influenced by it, reading practices form and are formed by our identities. Semiotic becoming articulates embodied, historical and distributed becoming or identity transformation as a distributed process through engagement with signs, i.e., literacy events and practices. Semiotic becoming extends beyond reading and writing practices towards activity, cultural events, artefacts, and literacy as a laminated assemblage (Prior & Schaffner, 2011 in Prior & Olinger, 2019) or a dialogic, all sign-mediated meaning-making entangled in multiple histories (Prior & Shipka, 2003). Semiotic becoming is not framed by the ideological model of literacy emphasising a fixed set of skills acquisition but by laminated assemblages-embodied and affective beyond cognitive and symbolic. In this framework, literacy is a mode of semiotic becoming.

The concept of sedimented identities relates to semiotic becoming, which suggests that personal histories and sociocultural practices become layered or "sedimented" into the texts and artefacts people create (Rowell & Pahl, 2007). As individuals-meaning-makers- create texts, they sediment parts [pieces] of themselves into texts, creating artefacts that reflect their previous identity formations. Thus, texts serve as artefacts that trace the process of identity-making across timescales. The analysis of sedimented identities in texts allows researchers to identify how literacy practices reflect ways of being and doing in the world/ the specific context. This approach can reveal common practices across communities and trace intergenerational sedimentations or patterns of identity formation. In this view, the body itself becomes a living text, continuously inscribed by cultural

contexts, with literacy traces manifesting in meaning-making and life performances that are never neutral (Rowse & Pahl, 2007). The notion of 'sedimented identities' is relevant for migrant educators whose texts and pedagogical artefacts reflect traces of multiple cultural and linguistic heritages. My everyday literacy practices, from lesson planning to student feedback, sediment elements of multiple cultural knowledge systems that transcend institutional recognition but create possibilities for liminal spaces.

I extend Vygotsky's sociocultural and affective theories of meaning-making through Barad's spacetime mattering and Secor's (2023) spacetime unconscious[ing], to argue that literacy is not only cognitive mastery or social apprenticeship, but a trans-material unconscious process that unfolds through space, time, and psychic residue. The concept of 'spacetime unconscious[ing]' illuminates how my everyday literacy practices operate across temporal and spatial dimensions, carrying traces of past experiences while creating possibilities for future transformation, directly addressing how these practices can empower others through shared affective resonance.

Vygotsky's assertion that the movement from thought to word is a dynamic process and does not follow a single, linear path but instead allows for "extremely varied direct and reverse movements" (Vygotsky, 1987: 283 in Delucchi & Arcila, 2020: 263) aligns closely with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizomatic image of thought. Sociocultural theory employs representational linguistic structures, but Vygotsky's "rhizomatic" inner speech, emphasising multiplicity, flexibility, and the disruption of fixed pathways, resonates with the performative "systems of thought and language do not have fixity but are always changing" (Le Grange, 2019: 7).

Vygotsky (1987) described how inner speech, guided by sense, becomes abbreviated and predicative in ways that parallel Freud's (1915) unconscious thought processes, including condensation and abbreviation, displacement, simultaneous thought, non-contradiction and translation, revealing compelling insights into psychological processes (Suárez Delucchi & Fossa Arcila, 2020). Like water moving between visible and hidden spaces, Vygotsky's theory acknowledges the flow between conscious and unconscious processes. A student may struggle to articulate

a complex idea as their abundant, condensed and multidimensional inner speech transforms in an attempt to express it in the linear format of classroom discourse. This transformation is not only cognitive but also affective as the student navigates feelings of uncertainty, vulnerability, and the desire for recognition.

Vygotsky describes Inner speech as characterised by “a syntactic abbreviation and a semantic condensation” (Delucchi & Arcila, 2020: 268), aligning with Freud's observation that “the intensity of a whole train of thought may eventually be concentrated in a single ideational element” (Freud, 1900 in Suárez Delucchi & Fossa Arcila, 2020: 266). Unlike external speech, inner speech allows multiple thoughts to coexist simultaneously, demonstrating thought's non-linear nature. Vygotsky's (1934) emphasis on diffuse, sensory-based experiences in consciousness that precede symbolic mediation (Suárez Delucchi & Fossa Arcila, 2020) aligns with Freud's notion of thinking in pictures and suggests that thought existed before language. Vygotsky describes a process of censorship when adapting inner speech, imbued with “sense” to social language norms, imbued with meaning. This transformation aids an individual in regulating and anticipating their behaviour in the shared social reality, suggesting pedagogical relevance in facilitating the articulation of affect-laden, unconscious thought (Suárez Delucchi & Fossa Arcila, 2020).

While rejecting Freud's sexual determinism and asking why consciousness has to be “an impotent tool in the hands of the [un] conscious,” when it is our consciousness that interprets our [un]conscious emotions (Vygotsky, 1971: 81 in Lindqvist, 2003: 247), Vygotsky embraced psychoanalytic ideas, particularly the role of unconscious processes in creativity. Contesting the notion of a man ‘as the slave of his early childhood’ (Vygotsky, 1971: 81 in Lindqvist, 2003: 247) and the notion that all creativity originates from childhood Oedipal conflicts, Vygotsky (1971) situated his theorisation within a sociocultural framework (Suárez Delucchi & Fossa Arcila, 2020). Vygotsky conceptualised the link between the conscious and unconscious by creating a link between unconscious processes and his concept of “perezhivanie” (Suárez Delucchi & Fossa Arcila, 2020).

Studying inner speech presents methodological challenges due to its private nature, but combining Vygotskian and psychoanalytic approaches offers promising avenues (Alderson-Day & Fernyhough, 2015). Autoethnography is an optimal methodology for investigating this private sphere as it enables researchers to leverage personal narratives and reflexivity to examine the intricate, subjective dimensions of inner speech's role in consciousness. Vygotsky's analysis of inner speech resonates with migrant educators' experiences of multilingual consciousness. My inner speech moves fluidly between languages, encompassing cultural notions and pedagogical concepts that defy translation into institutional English, producing meaningful although often neglected resources for meaning-making.

Vygotsky challenged traditional understandings of mind by rejecting strict internal/external dichotomies, arguing that "something external and internal cannot work anymore" (Veresov, 1999: 15) as consciousness comprises both elements. Vygotsky's rejection of Cartesian dualism created a psychological paradigm that integrates the mind and body, culture and consciousness.

The problem of external and internal in psychology pertains to understanding how social (external) activities transform into mental (internal) processes. As a sign-mediated process, Vygotsky's concept of internalisation aimed to reconcile this distinction but has incited debates over their equivalence or complete divergence. Critics argue that equating the two renders the concept meaningless while separating them makes the transformation process inexplicable. An alternative view, aligned with the systemic approach in modern psychology (Järvillehto, 1994 in Veresov, 1999) and Vygotsky's theories, suggests no rigid border exists between external and internal; instead, they form one integrated system, as seen in the example of a pointing gesture: a child and an adult form a single system where the child uses the adult's abilities as an extension of their consciousness to achieve a goal and resolves a volitional task. This repositions internalisation as the recombination of meaning across a distributed co-functional system.

This relational conceptualisation enables a critique of traditional models of subjectivity. Bisseret's sociological analysis explores how language fragments subjectivity and aligns with cultural-psychological paradigms that demand a split in

the self to align with an external referent. These paradigms operate within an egocentric and positivist methodology, framing development as increasing separation and individuation.

Using the metaphor of the womb, developmental models study subjectivity from the perspective of the child being birthed, not through a socio-centric lens that considers the mother/child network. It is conceptualised as a physical and psychological separation, 'a split' from the inside into the outside world. In this framework, language acquisition is thought to separate the infant's subjectivity from the maternal and feminine even further, propelling a trajectory towards autonomy. This paradigm reinforces pathologising discourses as failing to 'individualise'; the subjectivity is at risk of pathologies and 'splitting' or alienation from culture (Vygotsky, 1978). The limitation of this subjectivity model is that it reproduces psychic violence as the subject is valued by its distance from the devalued other, whether feminine, the racialised or the dominated.

Ettinger offers an alternative model. Notwithstanding neoliberal power asymmetries, for Ettinger (2006), the "metramorphic" (Ettinger, 2006:9) consciousness does not emerge from a fixed centre but from a dynamic in-between "matrixial" space- a liminal zone between "I" and the "Other" that Ettinger (2006) refers to as "non-I". "Metramorphic" is a creative dimension in the human unconscious relating to the "trans-subjective" co-emergence-in-difference with the m/Other (Ettinger, 2006: 36). This has profound implications for identity formation. Trans-subjective affective encounters in the matrixial inscribe traces of "unthought- of and uncognised, but charged with some awareness" (Ettinger, 2006: 89) into ontogenetic memory. Foreclosing this co-subjectivity forms the psychic basis for "a range of racisms" and suspends solidarity "among all that wears a human face" (Habermas in Ettinger, 2006: 28).

3.3.3 Ettinger's Matrixial Theory

In educational contexts, literacy learning unfolds in shared psychic spaces where traces of others remain present. When a student struggles with writing, this struggle is not only cognitive but involves unconscious traces of previous encounters with language, authority, and judgment. The teacher who recognises this can create

conditions for co-emergence rather than demanding autonomous performance. Ettinger's concept of "trans-subjectivity" extends sociocultural insights by challenging the traditional psychoanalytic emphasis on internal processes of separation and loss, proposing a model of subjectivity instead based on connection and co-emergence. Matrixial theory uses the womb and birth act as models for human situations and processes. All humans have the intrauterine experience of being a guest in someone else's body or one body sharing two subjectivities, thus subjectivity is conceptualised not as 'a split' from the inside into the outside world but co-emergence. Ettinger's (2004) concept of the matrixial borderspace provides a framework for understanding how meaning and affect can be shared between subjects without absolute integration or separation. Unlike traditional psychoanalytic models (Lacan), Ettinger (2004) re- theories the birth act from a split to co-poiesis and the womb as a matrixial borderspace that we can distance from or return to without becoming psychotic. In this view, we are never cut off from the Other or from the matrixial space but can distance from or return to.

Can one body share two minds? Is consciousness an emergent property of the brain? Could one person's consciousness displace another's? (Netflix, Universal Television (2019)- Russian Doll. Season 2, Episode 3 "Brain Drain" dialogue).



Figure 12: Consciousness

The medical imaging of a fetus in utero (two distinct biological entities sharing one body) represents complex and contested questions about consciousness, the permanence of identity, and whether subjective experience is intrinsically linked to tangible biological material or could potentially migrate between bodies. When does consciousness emerge, and what constitutes a separate mind or identity? Does consciousness operate as a discrete, bounded phenomenon associated with individual bodies, or do more entangled formations exist?

Matrixial theory uses the womb and birth as models for human situations and processes. All humans have the

intrauterine experience of being a guest in someone else's body. The intrauterine experience, as a metaphor for human relationality (one body sharing two subjectivities), conceptualises subjectivity not as a split from the inside to the outside world, but as co-emergence. Matrixial borderspace (Ettinger, 2006) articulates how meaning and affect can be shared between subjects without absolute integration or separation. The matrixial is a psycho-affective structure of compassionate hospitality toward otherness and co-emergence with the Other. The concept does not denote a literal pregnancy, but a mode of subjectivity constituted through shared affective resonance and borderlinking rather than separation or individuation. Matrixial borderspace is accessible to all subjects, irrespective of sex or gender. In pedagogy, creating matrixial borderspaces requires educators to embrace "self-fragilisation" (Ettinger, 20026) or a willingness to be vulnerable and open to transformation through encounters with students.

Conquergood's (2002) claim that "a boundary is more like a membrane than a wall" aligns with Ettinger's matrixial ontology, which conceptualises subjectivity not as autonomous but as a shared, co-affective emergence across permeable borders. In this framework, the amniotic fluid becomes a metaphoric (and biological) space of osmotic relationality, where symbolic, affective, and material exchanges flow between self and m/Other (Ettinger).

Matrixial literacy is not a fixed transmission or a dissolution into multiplicity but a relational osmosis: a process of semiotic and affective becoming across affective membranes of shared resonance, allowing movement, absorption, and differentiation.

While Deleuze and Guattari's "becoming" is assembled in an infinite arena with potentially limitless deterritorialisation and without predetermined boundaries or orientations, Ettinger's matrixial borderspace conceptualises becoming as trans-subjective, emerging in and through co-affective encounters with the Other. Anchored in feminist psychoanalysis, matrixial theory centres vulnerability, unconscious resonance, and "wit(h)nessing"- a compassionate attentiveness to the trauma and presence of the Other who is neither assimilated nor objectified.

Trans-subjectivity (Ettinger, 2006) offers a resistance to neoliberal discourses that fragment professional identity and reduce subjectivity to measurable outcomes. This approach challenges the dominant view of educators as isolated, competitive individuals by reconceptualising identity as relational, fluid, and shared.

Trans-subjective thought creates in-between spaces for educators to resist psychic splitting and institutionalised alienation. The matrixial borderspace provides a framework for understanding attachment. Ettinger (2004) describes the matrixial as

an ethical, creative space and an understanding of subjectivity as a fluid multiplicity. Co-emerging rather than relating in the matrixial border space means that subjectivity is not a binary but male/female/mother/daughter/subject/object in a time/space/place that is not yet or a site of emergence. Within this framework, consciousnesses can communicate as subject/object or two partial subjects, unrestricted by time/space, synergise and co-emerge or iteratively reconfigure spacetime as part of the ongoing dynamism of becoming' (Barad, 2007:142) for the world is remade again in each intra-action (Barad, 2007:185).

Ettinger (2004) aligns with Hunter's (2015) understanding of 'multiplicity of subjectivity ' insofar as the subjectivity's ability to tolerate the distress of transitory states without fracturing, splitting or the need to become or view the other as either totally good or totally bad. A point of a new possibility rather than a contention is in Ettinger's reconceptualisation of our in-between relatedness as trans-subjective co-emergence rather than intersubjective relationality. In the matrixial, the I-Thou or subject-object relationship becomes a fragilised 'I and non-I' of two equal partial subjects.

Attachment theory provides further insight into the early relational architectures of subjectivity.

The concept of "mind-mindedness" (Fleming, 2008)- a caregiver's ability to understand and respond to another's mental states- connects attachment theory to educational practice, suggesting that effective professional relationships require attunement to others' thinking processes beyond linguistic expression. This concept echoes Bowlby's "good enough mother" and Winnicott's "adequate primary object" or an internalised representation of "mind-mindedness" necessary for unimpaired higher mental functions (Vygotsky, 1978 in Hall, 2012).

These formative attachments shape not only interpersonal trust, but also how students approach literacy and learning: curiosity and resilience or fear. Attachment theory aligns with sociocultural perspectives on the social origins of higher mental functions and illuminates how early relational experiences influence how individuals approach learning situations (West, 2014; Fleming, 2008; Mezirow, 2000 in West, 2014)-echoing Vygotsky's concepts of sense, perezhivanie, and subjectivity. Our

early relational experiences shape our "here-and-now "without clues to their origins from past events (Siegel, 2001: 74 in Bremner & Slater, 2004).

This temporal dimension of attachment resonates with Barad's conception of time. Barad (2007) posits that the past is not closed but, in tandem with the future, it is iteratively reconfigured and enfolded through the world's interactivity. Rather than being erased, the past is threaded through and enfolded into spacetime mattering.

Secor (2023) extends this with the concept of spacetimeunconscious[ing] and radically displaces the anthropocentric notion of the unconscious. The unconscious is not internal to the subject but "always already unfolding with spacetime-mattering" as a vibrant field of the not-yet, the still-forming, the opaque but agentic. "Water's forgetfulness" and not "quite knowing how to become ice" without a nucleator (Secor, 2023) represent a kind of unconsciousness in matter. Pohl (2023) asserts that the spacetimeunconscious[ing] demands an ethics of not-knowing: an engagement with the unknowable, the indeterminate, the unfinished, and the more-than-human.

3.3.4 Special Clouds and Critical Episodes

My framework extends "knowledge in becoming": the self does not 'know' what it knows until a catalyst- an affective, semiotic, or material encounter- sets into motion a re-membering. Literacy becomes an event of condensation, not completion. Applying Vygotsky's concept of "perezhivanie" reveals thought as cloud-like- diffuse, hovering, condensing, and precipitating into language through affective forces. Vygotsky (1937) emphasised the affective-volitional basis or the notion of the motives of thought as the origins of the psyche and the foundation of psychological experience (Delucchi & Arcila, 2020). This affective sphere is described metaphorically as the "wind that puts the [hovering] cloud of thought [that gushes a shower of words] in motion," (Vygotsky 1987: 282 in Delucchi & Arcila, 2020: 258), signifying the dynamic relationship between emotion and cognition. Unlike Freud, who located psychic origins in biological drives mediating psychological representations and action, Vygotsky viewed the psyche as mediated by symbolic tools such as thought and language, which allow affective experiences to be expressed and transmitted within a cultural context.

Barad's agential realism conceptualises language as entangled material phenomena and discursive practices mutually implicated in the dynamics of intra-activity. In this framework, the primary ontological units are heterogeneous 'assemblages' (Deleuze and Guattari) or "phenomena". Assemblages and phenomena are a performed organisation of language and matter (material). In the Deleuzian and Guattarian concept of an assemblage, language becomes just one 'line' while in the Baradian conceptualisation, language is an apparatus that is productive of and part of phenomena. 'Apparatuses are specific material reconfigurings of the world that do not merely emerge in time but iteratively reconfigure spacetime-matter as part of the ongoing dynamism of becoming' (Barad, 2007:142). Apparatuses do not pre-exist their encounters. Apparatuses are productive of phenomena; the changes in apparatuses, productive of phenomena, do not follow a trajectory; their boundaries are constantly being reworked.

In an assemblage, the relation between language and matter is one of the social force of affect. Affect 'does not describe individual emotion but rather a collective 'capacity to affect and to be affected' (Goodchild, 1996, in Leander & Rowe, 2006:449). A rhizoanalysis of assemblages transposes a representational approach to emotion with a nonrepresentational approach to affect that extends our understanding of 'how textual engagements feel as they are becoming (affect), and before they are named with a feeling (emotion) (Leander & Ehret, 2019).

In this framework, language becomes like water- condensing, evaporating, pooling, and flowing across multiple modalities and temporalities. Writing, reading, or thinking become events of condensation, crystallisation, or diffusion into ideas and sensations, not unlike steam (thoughts) becoming water, or water becoming ice, freezing into written words and texts, codified and standardised forms and institutional policies. Nevertheless, not all meaning can be nucleated and remains diffused, unarticulateable or non-representational. Literacy as liquid epistemology and a medium of multiplicity, unpredictability, and form-shifting becoming defies logocentric capture. To teach language and literacy through the water metaphor is to accept that some clouds cannot be named, some thoughts can only be felt, and some knowings arrive only in the moment of writing.

Spacetimeunconscious[ing] enables a conceptualisation of meaning and literacy as emerging not only through symbolic scaffolding but through material-discursive ruptures and residues-like condensation, delay, deferral, opacity, and even forgetting. Educational practice contains critical episodes- sudden changes in the learning terrain- with the potential for pedagogical transformation. These moments rupture the slow and continuous laminar flows and generate turbulent flows (assemblages)- cascades and waterfalls of affect, meaning and material colliding and mixing in unpredictable ways. These waterfalls induce “special clouds” or “cataractagenitus”- the meteorological phenomena that emerge out of a powerful, natural element: they appear, disappear, and reappear, representing unpredictable, surprising, and transient connections- the connections are “rhizomatic” (Deleuze and Guattari) in their potential infiniteness.

These moments, as special clouds, are temporary opportunities for creating Third Spaces and developing sociocritical literacy (Gutierrez, 2008), synonymous with ‘using literacy as a nomadic war machine’ and forming new, critical consciousness (Freire, 1970 in Hall,2012). Other destructive forces, like wildfires, also produce special clouds. This destruction that leads to regeneration resonates with Sabrina Spielrein’s psychoanalytic insight that “creation and destruction are entwined in the process of transformation and growth. Transformations arise in a dialectical process of creativity and destruction” (Spielrein, 1994: 100). Learning, literacy and identity transformation emerge in these dialectical spaces where disorientation and rupture coexist with regeneration and becoming.

Literacy studies theorise the “special clouds”- inducing events as ‘critical episodes’ (Blunden, 2014 in Poole & Huang, 2018) or ‘productive moments’ (Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kind, Kicher, 2017 in Kuby, Spector & Thiel, 2018) that emerge out of life(world) (Kalantzis & Cope, 2016) prompting us to attune ourselves to the material relationships, affects and intensities that ‘punctuate our individual and social spaces’(Pearce, 2010:13 in Kuby, Spector & Thiel, 2018).

Attending to these critical moments creates pedagogical opportunities that create temporary openings for forming Third Spaces (Gutiérrez, 2008), where sociocritical literacy emerges. Sociocritical literacy, defined by Gutiérrez (2008: 149) as “a historicising literacy that privileges and is contingent upon students’ sociohistorical

lives, both proximally and distally”, co-constitutes these spaces: it emerges out of special clouds and also mediates them. It historicises everyday and institutional literacy practices and texts, reframing them as powerful tools for critical social thought or sociological imagination. Through this process, sociocritical literacy reorganises the sociohistorical practices of communities to amend historical injustices by creating transformative learning opportunities (Gutiérrez, 2018) and epistemic justice (Anderson, 2012).

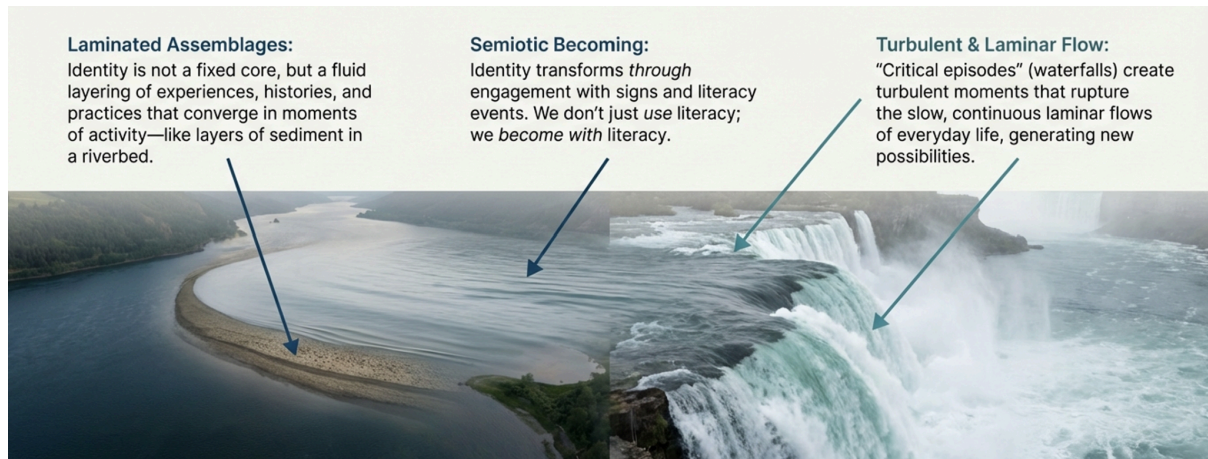


Figure 13: Hydrological metaphor

The waterfall visualises critical episodes that rupture laminar (river) and generate turbulent flows. The mist rising from the impact zone visualises “special clouds” as transient and unpredictable phenomena. The waterfall's turbulence illustrates the collision of affect, meaning, and material elements in unpredictable and uncontrollable ways. Literacy and identity do not follow fixed developmental trajectories through linear scaffolding (“with”), but are fluid and transformative processes that emerge through the energy of contact (“and”). Rivers change course, waterfalls erode their edges, and mist dissolves distinctions between liquid and gas. This illustrates how meaning does not preexist its articulation but emerges through entangled intra-actions, shaped by the permeable boundaries we enact.

Vygotsky’s imagination is central to this process. As Gutiérrez (2018) argues, it allows students to become historical actors- to understand the historical origins of personal problems and envision alternative futures. Yet this transformative practice must also respect opacity. As articulated by Glissant, the right to opacity affirms the ethical and epistemic legitimacy of partial unknowability in subjectivity and knowledge production, challenging assimilationist and colonial demands for

transparency while enabling resistant, dialogic, and ethical educational spaces. These spaces value complexity, ambiguity, and irreducible differences, allowing learners to remain in process-complex, ambivalent, and irreducible. Opacity does not imply isolation or deliberate obscurity but acknowledges the inherent limitations of knowing and meaning-making while still being pedagogically valuable. It resonates with non-representational registers that resist complete translation into dominant discourses. These spaces invite educators to resist institutional demands for legibility and measurement and instead embrace partial opacity.

Since learning involves identity transformation (Hall, 2012) (in the trajectory of our “semiotic becoming”), laminated assemblages extend our understanding of spaces where this learning and identity transformation happen. Literacy studies conceptualise the spaces where we realign our “perezhivanie” as Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978 in Hall, 2012:48-49); figured worlds (Urrieta, 2007); ‘affinity spaces’ (Gee, 2004:85 in Hall, 2012: 100); ‘legitimate peripheral participation in ‘community of practice’ (CoP) (Lave and Wenger, 1991 in Hall,2012:100); Third Spaces (Guitierrez, 2008) and a Zone of Affectual Development (Melville,2019): all conceptualise spaces of possibility.

I understand these liminal spaces as in-between the multiple rhizomatic lines and layers that converge together in an assemblage through which semiotic becoming unfolds. These spaces have psychoanalytic resonances, aligning with psychoanalytic endeavours to create physical and mental spaces for dialogue, complexity, and ambivalence, encouraging us to embrace ‘undecidability’ (Cooper and Lousada, 2005) and the not-yet-knowing. They align with Anzaldúa’s (1999) Borderlands, imagined as psychic and physical sites of resistance to oppression and transformation.

These “in-between spaces”, inherent in agential cuts, allow for mapping rhizomatic connections and enacting boundaries. In the performative ontology, meaning does not pre-exist its articulation. It is not found or discovered, but emerges through entangled intra-actions (Barad, 2007), shaped by the boundaries we enact. Rather than mapping rhizomatic connections, agential realism is a boundary-making practice. Agential cuts- assigning genres, grading rubrics, interventions- are not

neutral. Agential cuts stabilise meaning but also exclude and conceal. As Barad notes (2007), cuts 'do violence by excluding agency and knowledge but also open up and rework the agential conditions of possibility' (Barad, 2007). Recognising this allows educators to treat these boundaries as contingent, reworkable, and ethically charged.

Affective intensities allow us to create lines of flight and smooth spaces that allow for movement. The critical episodes are opportunities for empowering students in the creative immanence of their rhizomatic cartography (Leander & Rowe, 2006:435) by making ethical cuts that will diffract the full spectrum of the *perezhivanie* (Zipin, 2019), including the dark funds of knowledge. Neglecting Vygotsky's theory of creativity is the resulting developmental linearity and logocentric legacy.

Sociocultural theory employs representational linguistic structures and operates through the preposition "with", emphasising mediation and the betweenness of tools and language or "between what a learner can accomplish independently versus with support" (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) conceptualises learning as a linear, teleological process guided by a more knowledgeable other and mediated by cultural tools, particularly language. Nevertheless, such models presuppose a rational, autonomous subject whose development is scaffolded toward mastery. Affect theorists work with the conjunction "and", emphasising the energy of contact as things come together. At the site of this conjunction -this coming together- are raw flows of undifferentiated energy or intensities (Kuby, Spector & Thiel, 2018).

In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of becoming offers a radical departure from this developmentalism and logocentric representationalism, enabling us to pay attention to rhizomatic cartographies of becoming (in education) rather than chronological ontogenesis. Agential realism (Barad, 2007) and the Deleuzian and Guattarian concept of an assemblage reject identity as a stable endpoint. For Deleuze and Guattari, becoming is atelic, non-linear, and non-representational. Becoming is juxtaposed with performativity or immanent relations (Barad, 2007; Leander & Rowe, 2006:451): a deterritorialising process whereby subjectivity emerges through affective intensities and rhizomatic assemblages that dismantle rigid, "molar" structures and produce new potentials.

3.4 Continual Professional Development

3.4.1 Embodied Inquiry: Autoethnography, Action Research and Autognosis as Professional Resistance

The affective dimensions of literacy examined in the preceding section are practically applied through activist methodologies, which provide frameworks for operationalising theoretical insights about matrixial becoming and spacetimeunconscious[ing] into tangible practices of transformative practice. Autoethnography and action research appear to be some of the most condemned and criticised traditions due to the researcher's over-involvement, bias and subjectivity in interpretations (Winter 1982 in Ahmadian and Tavakoli, 2011). My rationales for employing autoethnography and action research are mostly interchangeable. The values and the unique perspectives of autoethnographers and action researchers resonated with me. As suggested by Brydon-Miller, action researchers don't do well with boundaries and 'are not the world's greatest rule-followers' (Brydon-Miller, 2003: 20).

Traditional paradigms of simplicity (Ahmadian and Tavakoli, 2011) view contradictions as errors. Performative inquiry welcomes them. My project is framed by aporias identified by Patti Lather: aporia of objectivity, complicity, difference, interpretation, and legitimisation (Lather, 2006). While 'conventional researchers worry about objectivity, distance, and controls, action researchers worry about relevance, social change, and validity tested in action by the most at-risk stakeholders (Brydon-Miller, 2003: 25). 'The crucial difference lies in the commitment of action researchers to bring about change as part of the research act' (Robin McTaggart quoted in Brydon-Miller, 2003: 15).

Action research reorients us from 'the hidden referent' of externally imposed performance metrics and market responsiveness as the universal value against which all education is measured, towards a multiplicity of potential access points to pedagogical excellence by setting the creativity and problem-solving innate to industry and academic research as performance indicators, thus not fragmenting subjectivity but multiplying it.

In my hydrological metaphor, meaning iteratively moves through different states. This flow mirrors the action research cycle where inquiry begins from lived experience, is surfaced through critical reflection, condensed into action and then re-evaporates into new insights that re-enter the cycle. The action research cycle is potentially infinite: reflection is not the end but an osmotic return, reshaping what will condense in the future.

3.4.2 Autognosis and Craftsmanship

Action research becomes a vehicle of resistance to the terrors of performativity (Ball)-not as technician improvement but as “autognosis” or ‘a diagnosis by the use of the self’ (Messner, 1979), allowing reflective practitioners to identify and solve problems through reflection. The concept of autognosis emphasises problem attunement, a mastery skill of optimisation, refinement and enhancement of teaching practices by noticing systemic issues to optimise the learning environment, contrasted with competence or struggling 'exclusively on getting things done' (Sennett, 2009: 20). Autognosis is not only a pedagogical tool but a political act that not only diagnoses systemic harm but becomes a relational praxis, reorienting professionalism toward relational attunement and embodied ethics, not institutional legitimacy. It enables educators to resist objectification by recognising how their experiences, values, and intuitions serve as valid sources of inquiry, directly challenging modern epistemology.

Action research reveals the intricate links between individuals and multiple contextual, environmental, and systemic factors, enabling novel avenues of understanding education and research. At the mastery level, teaching is 'no longer a mechanical activity; people can feel fully and think deeply what they are doing once they do it well' (Sennett 2009:20). 'It is at the level of mastery...ethical problems of craft appear' (Sennett, 2009: 20). Autognosis or problem-attunement is thinking and doing with and through self and knowledge in a commitment to excellence and a rejection of a rigid and generic pre-determined development path. In this way, action research becomes a form of ethical resistance, reasserting autonomy against performative control and re-politicising teaching as an embodied, situated, and critical practice. It reveals the possibilities for reclaiming professional identity and

disrupting the neoliberal-colonial logics that frame educational purpose solely in terms of economic output.

The notion of RUK and useful knowledge resonates with Sennett's (2009) argument that autonomy, defined as authority's antonym, is critical for creating an ethic of excellence or a culture of craftsmanship and pride in work, linking human potential to social relations and experiences. Richard Sennett describes craftsmanship as excellence-driven work, highlighting that proficiency, creativity, and problem-solving are essential in industry and education.

The capacity to identify and articulate a problem within an educational context is equally, if not more, critical than problem-solving itself, as the entire process is contingent on understanding the root cause of the problem. Action research assists in cultivating teachers' ability to identify and analyse the challenges they encounter in their professional practice. Do the challenges that emerge in the classroom align with the initial or external judgements? Are the primary challenges presented in the classroom indeed what we perceive them to be? Educational projects should continuously evolve by encouraging practitioners' 'eyes to do the thinking' (Sennett, 2009: 95), constantly re-framing and re-positioning the research puzzles. This approach enables the exploration of complex issues rather than superficial ones (Smith, 2024).

Autognosis and craftsmanship rely on autonomy, defined by Sennet as 'a self-sufficing work conducted without the interference of another' (Sennett, 2009: 54). It is 'a drive from within that impels us to work in an expressive way, by ourselves' (Sennett, 2009: 65). Autonomy is vital for craftsmen as excellence-driven individuals, as it enables them to define standards and pursue unique, creative visions while continuously reflecting on the effectiveness of their work without being excessively constrained by rigid codes of practice (Sennett, 2009). The pride craftsmen take in their craftsmanship motivates them to strive for excellence as they continuously reflect on the effectiveness of their work (Sennett, 2009). Nevertheless, autonomy is not only the absence of interference; it becomes political within the neoliberal governance structures that attempt to standardise practice and subsume professional identity into quantifiable outputs.

Excellence is produced by pride in one's work and autonomy in a creative process. Teaching is inherently creative and necessitates creative spaces that encourage innovation and risk-taking. When teachers embrace their autonomy and take pride in their skills, they are more likely to achieve excellence in their craft despite challenges. This pragmatics emphasises the importance of ethical inquiry within the teaching practice process rather than after-the-fact ethics (Sennett, 2009). This method encourages ongoing reflection and judgment, evaluating our classroom practice, relationships and the quality of teaching.

Vygotsky's view of imagination as a central process of meaning-making activated by emotional catharsis (Lindqvist, 2003) and Deleuze and Guattari's concept of rhizomatic thought challenge the neoliberal emphasis on instrumental rationality, reject the non-linear model of development and open space for alternative pedagogical futures. Action research embodies this reimagining, not denying reality but offering a method of staying with the trouble (Haraway, 1998)-of thinking, feeling, and acting otherwise. It is a praxis anchored in attunement, cooperation and affective resistance. Craftsmanship (Sennett, 2009) and the pursuit of autonomy create space for slow thinking, reflective inquiry, and ethical judgment-qualities actively suppressed under whiteness and neoliberal governance's fast-thinking, performative logics (Hunter, 2015; Kahneman, 2011).

Action research is conducted by practitioners and for practitioners, moving beyond tick-box toolkits or producing practical reports. Although action researchers may encounter significant challenges when integrating theory with practice, avoiding these difficulties limits a practitioner-researcher to the roles of consultant or academic scientist, overlooking the social function of action research, which aims to enhance democratic participation and create public spaces that strengthen local economies. Action-researchers should not merely produce knowledge but find novel ways to describe problems or understand processes that perpetuate inequalities; they should reflect upon their research's social and ethical implications and build a better world. Action research projects evaluate knowledge in action, i.e., applying knowledge in real-world situations. This practical approach makes the research more relevant and applicable. Those conducting the evaluations are stakeholders or

interested parties, personally impacted by the outcome, making the result their personal problem. Unlike other forms of social research, action research consistently meets the test of action (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003).

3.4.3 The Good Enough Teacher

In my hydrological framework, the good enough teacher resembles water itself—adaptable, responsive to the contours of the learning environment, capable of both flowing and holding, neither rigid nor formless.

Action research enables the emergence of the “good enough teacher” not as a technocratic ideal but as a figure of relational attunement and epistemic humility. Drawing on Winnicott’s notion of the “good enough mother,” this teacher tolerates uncertainty, embraces frustration, and co-creates dialogic spaces where students and teachers can risk encountering the unfamiliar. In contrast to the idealised, performative subject demanded by neoliberalism, the good enough teacher embraces ambivalence as a pedagogical method and refuses to participate in the delusional fantasy of institutional omnipotence, embodying the possibility of teaching as a shared encounter with fragility, complexity, and transformation. Rather than forcing learning into predetermined routes, this teacher works with its natural movements while providing necessary boundaries.

The professional autonomy of a good enough teacher includes an understanding of the social, political, and cultural context within which they operate to create equitable learning environments. A good enough teacher is a friend of a student’s mind (Greene): becoming a friend of a student’s mind involves mindedness, which encourages teachers to resist premature conclusions about students from a different socio-cultural context and resist stereotyping, the ethical commitment to see beyond the institutionalised projections of performativity and whiteness.

3.4.4 Autoethnography as Critical Professional Development

Autoethnography is a critical interrogation and emancipatory practice method that encourages the researcher to analyse their beliefs and experiences and take action to resist limitations or oppression. Autoethnography as a methodology and a method have a decolonial lineage, which helps us understand transformational resistance

and the place of educators within the 'matrix of oppression' (Collins). It enables anti-oppressive practices and the development of critical consciousness as an entry point for critical pedagogy. Austin and Hickey (2007) suggest that autoethnography's intrinsic consciousness-raising intent aligns with the Action Research Cycle, which entails identifying an initial 'problem' for inquiry and societal transformation. Critical engagement with the problem results in potential opportunities and solutions that can be implemented within the social system. Subsequent reflection, action/implementation and application ensue. Autoethnographic work mirrors the cyclical nature of action research. It engages and interrogates the initial provocation to inquiry (professional identity formation, action-researcher identity formation, CPD activity initiation, a developmental programme enrolment, etc.) to generate formative understandings of self and integrate them back into the social dynamics as elements of individual identity formation. Individuals continually reflect and enhance their understanding of self and actively engage these understandings for emancipatory practice. Aligning with the Action Research Cycle, practitioners progress from within their Communities of Practice (ref) to an actionable stage of the autoethnographic process by applying their notions of self and understandings of identity and Identity formation in a critical pedagogical way to their professional practice (Austin and Hickey, 2007). Austin and Hickey (2007) contend that individuals employing the autoethnographic methodology can critically analyse their identities and the socialisation processes that shaped them. This methodology demonstrates potential as a central element of critical pedagogy, promoting socially emancipatory professional practices by recognising differences and diversity and understanding the 'Other'. With its emphasis on identity formation, autoethnography has the capacity to create critically reflexive and emancipatory professional practices in Education.

Action research and autoethnography are critical qualitative inquiry (CQI) methods. These approaches depart from traditional research methods due to their emancipatory intent and critical interrogation. CQI is defined as "qualitative research undertaken beyond the theoretical to intentionally engage the political discourse to advance the public good, social justice, power structures, or critical consciousness within a socially-just democratic society" (Throne, 2020, in Throne, 2021: 173). In other words, critical autoethnography is an "activist qualitative methodology" (Lynch

& Kuntz, 2019 in Throne, 2021). Similarly, action researchers are "a hybrid of scholar/activist in which neither role takes precedence" (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003: 20). Action researchers prioritise designing a transformed future, implementation, and impact with real-world participants over passive observation of life as it unfolds (Bradbury, in Brydon-Miller et al., 2003: 20).

3.4.5 Embodied Inquiry and Transformative Practice

Autoethnography presents a decolonial resistance to neoliberal subjectification by embracing "political narcissism".

Critiques of autoethnographic research (writing) as 'narcissistic' is an example of instrumentalising affect to sediment in people's consciousness a system of ideas embedded in the social system about 'how writing should be used by whom to do what, when, where, and how, with what texts, and with what meaningfulness' (Bloom, ch 2). This example captures how social control functions ideologically and how dominant social and economic institutions and actors striate and territorialise our being (Deleuze and Guattari). It is a method of exerting power over marginalised communities by delegitimising their experiences and discrediting their forms of expression, including the validity of their literacy practices, which contest and differ from those of dominant, white power structures and institutions (McHenry, 2002; Pendergast, 2003; Willis, 1995, 2008).

'Representational logics risk eliding not only the bodies and affects that defy representation, but also the visceral effects of their potential violence' (affect book). By attempting to name women's emotions as 'selfish' and assigning them the 'narcissistic' subject position, Whiteness declines an invitation to live justly and makes a cut that excludes the woman's agency. What is elided is the woman's possibility for finding her own language; 'the language of the hitherto unnamed sensations and feelings' (Miller, 1997:185). The concept of "political narcissism" (Tyler, 2005) offers a strategic feminist reframing of what dominant discourses label as narcissistic self-expression.

The diffractive, politically narcissistic approach to autoethnography has significant methodological implications. Rather than pursuing individualistic narratives reinforcing neoliberal ideals, this approach connects personal experience to

institutional processes and collective action. Feminist autoethnography is a critical counter-narrative that weaves personal experience into social and political analysis to challenge dominant institutional narratives, amplify marginalised voices, dismantle patriarchal structures and disrupt dominant narratives.

3.5 Literature Review Gaps and Contributions

My literature review reveals several gaps that directly inform my inquiry into how my everyday literacy practices reflect and shape professional identity as a migrant educator in UK further education.

The literature examines literacy's social control function from the 18th century through neoliberal governance, yet connections between these historical patterns and contemporary resistance practices remain absent. Although the literature traces the evolution of monitorial schools into data-driven performance management, it provides limited analysis of how educators today practically resist these inherited systems within existing institutional structures. This creates a disconnect between historical critique and present-day agency. The literature establishes that educational institutions continue to operate as racialising technologies and sites of institutional whiteness, but provides limited empirical investigation of how individual professionals navigate and potentially transform these systems through their everyday literacy practices. This represents a gap between structural critique and agentic possibility, or between understanding how power operates and discovering how it might be disrupted.

The literature, while referencing multiple theoretical traditions (new materialism, matrixial theory, and critical race theory), does not effectively integrate these frameworks into coherent methodological approaches, resulting in fragmented theoretical concepts that limit the theoretical development of analytical tools and their practical application. A gap exists between the theoretical complexity of "laminated assemblages" and "semiotic becoming" concepts and their practical implementation within everyday educational encounters, the material constraints of contemporary educational institutions, and how these concepts might inform pedagogical practice. Although the literature identifies historical continuities between colonial educational practices and contemporary neoliberal governance, it lacks an analysis of how past

violences become sedimented in present practices and how such sedimentation might be disrupted through contemporary resistance practices, leaving historical analysis disconnected from transformative possibility.

The relationship between everyday literacy practices and institutional transformation is underexplored, as the literature provides limited insight into how individual practices mediate between personal agency and collective resistance; thus, it misses vital connections between micro-level encounters and macro-level change. Ettinger's work is mostly absent from mainstream educational scholarship, with matrixial theory mostly applied in art-related studies. This disciplinary gap limits the integration of its theoretical insights into everyday educational practice and restricts understanding of how matrixial theory could inform literacy practices and professional identity formation, especially in further education contexts shaped by migration, multilingualism, and institutional power dynamics.

Fisher and Bickel (2023: 3) describe the fragmented nature of existing applications as a "fragile relationship wherein co-emerging interest in Ettinger amongst educators co-fades", suggesting that without more sustained theoretical development and empirical investigation, the potential of matrixial theory for educational transformation may remain unrealised. This gap affects understanding of how matrixial concepts like "wit(h)nessing," "co-emergence," and "trans-subjectivity" might operate within the material constraints of contemporary educational institutions. Understanding how matrixial theory intersects with institutional power structures and systemic inequalities remains limited. While the literature explores matrixial concepts in relation to pedagogy and care, analysis of how these concepts might challenge or be co-opted by neoliberal educational governance is absent. Research on how matrixial approaches may address racialising technologies and institutional whiteness in educational contexts impacted by migration, Brexit policies, and the complexity of UK further education is notably absent, highlighting this gap. This represents a limit for understanding how matrixial theory might inform resistance to Ball's (2003) "values schizophrenia" and professional identity fragmentation under neoliberal governance. A gap exists in methodological development and empirical application of matrixial theory in action research and autoethnographic research, and its potential to connect individual experiences with institutional analysis. This approach aligns with matrixial

theory's emphasis on relational subjectivity and the co-constitution of self and other, yet remains underdeveloped.

These identified gaps directly inform my research question: "How do my everyday literacy practices within educational spaces reflect and shape my professional identity as a migrant educator in inner London, and how can these practices reveal and challenge dominant discourses and institutional power dynamics to empower others?" My research addresses these gaps in several ways. Focusing on everyday literacy practices rather than idealised pedagogical encounters, my research responds to the need for empirical investigation of how matrixial concepts operate within the material constraints of contemporary educational institutions. The autoethnographic methodology I employ bridges individual experience and institutional analysis, demonstrating how personal narrative can reveal systemic patterns while remaining accountable to the relational dimensions that matrixial theory emphasises.


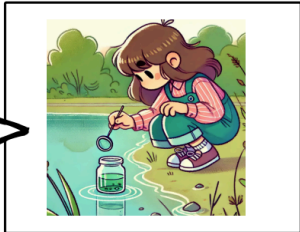
Examining professional identity formation as a migrant educator addresses gaps in understanding how matrixial theory intersects with institutional power dynamics and systemic inequalities. By investigating how literacy practices function as sites where professional identity is negotiated within structures of institutional whiteness and neoliberal governance, my research extends matrixial theory beyond arts-based applications toward questions of educational justice and institutional transformation. Integrating matrixial theory with new materialist and posthumanist approaches responds to the need for more sophisticated theoretical frameworks accounting for the complexity of contemporary educational encounters. By developing "matrixial literacies," my research contributes to methodological development identified by Fisher and Bickel (2023) as vital for advancing the field of matrixial education studies. Emphasising collective empowerment and institutional transformation addresses the gaps in understanding how matrixial approaches might inform resistance to neoliberal educational governance. By demonstrating how individual literacy practices connect to possibilities for collective action and institutional change, my research contributes to critical analysis while providing concrete examples of how matrixial theory might inform transformative educational practice.

My research addresses how matrixial concepts operate within the everyday realities of further education practice. Instead of creating special conditions for matrixial encounters, I investigate how concepts like "co-emergence," "wit(h)nessing," and "trans-subjectivity" emerge within institutional contexts where participants have not chosen to engage with alternative pedagogical approaches. This investigation extends to constrained temporal structures of timetabled lessons and term-based courses, where matrixial theory's emphasis on slow unfolding must negotiate the rigid scheduling demands of contemporary educational institutions. I explore the operation of these concepts within the context of institutional surveillance, including quality assurance frameworks, inspection regimes, and performance management systems that monitor and govern pedagogical relationships. My project examines resistant encounters where students, colleagues, or institutional structures actively oppose relational or transformative approaches, taking place within material constraints of under-resourced institutions, precarious employment, and competing institutional demands that shape the affective and relational possibilities available to educators and students.

Through addressing these gaps, my research contributes to what Fisher and Bickel (2023: 3) identify as the urgent need for "more effective ways of introducing Matrixial theory and encouraging open dialogues regarding its benefits and limitations and where it can evolve next". I contribute to the theoretical development and empirical insights of Ettingerian theory by integrating matrixial concepts in the everyday contexts of educational practice. This can inform future applications of Ettingerian theory in educational settings.

4

Chapter 4: Methodology

	<p>As researchers, we zoom into a phenomenon of interest and analyse it using a knowledge apparatus created for our research project.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the phenomenon continues in its continuous flow.</p>
<p>It does not pause or freeze because it is being researched, nor does it wait for the researcher to conclude the project and reach a conclusion. Scooping out a part of the phenomenon and holding it in a jar to study later means that we have already changed what we are trying to understand.</p>	

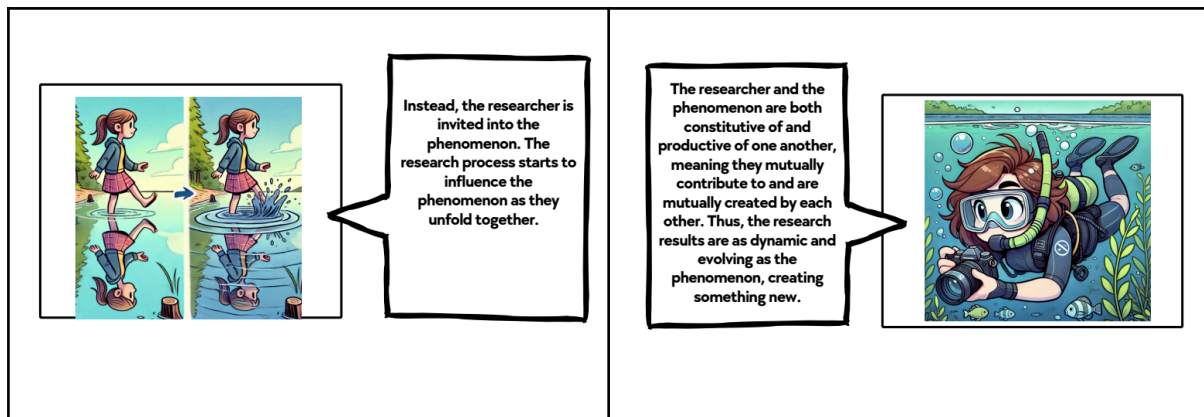


Figure 14: Research Philosophy

My research philosophy, where I- the researcher- and the phenomenon are seen as dynamic and mutually influential. My image depicts a dynamic approach to research in which the researcher does not simply observe a phenomenon from a distance. I argue against studying a phenomenon in isolation, suggesting instead that the researcher becomes part of the phenomenon and evolves with it throughout the research process. It argues against the idea of scooping out a part of the phenomenon and holding it in a jar to study later, because such isolation changes the very thing the researcher wants to understand. The phenomenon itself is in a continuous flow and does not stop or freeze just because it is being studied. Instead of being a detached observer, the researcher is invited into the phenomenon. From this point, the research process begins to influence the phenomenon, and they start to unfold together. This relationship is mutually constitutive and productive. This means the researcher and the phenomenon contribute to and create each other as the research progresses. Consequently, the results of such research are not static conclusions, but rather dynamic and evolving as the phenomenon itself, ultimately creating something new.

4.1 Introduction

The quality of knowledge depends on the quality of the tools with which that knowledge is gained (Vygotsky)

The researcher of consciousness acts as a detective discovering a crime that he never saw (Vygotsky, 1982, V.1: 62 in Veresov, 1998)

My research project examines the social construction of professional identity using literacy as an entry point into subjectivity. I investigate how everyday and institutional literacy practices and texts produce cultures, establish ethical systems, and construct ethical subjectivities in the contemporary UK FE sector. Beyond

investigating how literacy practices reinforce power structures, I explore how educators navigate and attempt to extricate themselves from the dominant discourses of the “hidden referents” (neoliberal excellence, quality, external education inspection frameworks, etc.) to promote “craftsmanship” (Sennett), equity and social justice through literacy education and cultural practices.

My research question was designed to connect the individual self to the world because belonging is bigger than any small story I have of myself. The following question guides my inquiry process:

How do my everyday literacy practices within educational spaces reflect and shape my professional identity as a migrant educator in inner London, and how can these practices reveal and challenge dominant discourses and institutional power dynamics to empower others?

My research has personal, social and political dimensions. The motivation for this study emerges from my lived experience as a teacher and a learner navigating the tensions and contradictions of educational practice. I aim to improve my teaching practice by critically examining how cultural, social, and institutional narratives shape teacher identities and influence learning outcomes. Enhancing my theoretical understanding of professional identity formation through literacy practices may also provide new insights into the profession’s knowledge of continual professional development.

Framed through the dual lenses of autoethnography and action research, I explore how learner transformation as a process of identity negotiation is a personal and pedagogical imperative. My commitment to transformation contrasts with neoliberal education models that privilege assimilation into dominant norms, where difference is often flattened or erased in favour of standardisation, performativity and compliance. My assumption that learner transformation employs learner agency as an energy that drives learning is in tension with the assimilative logic of education under global coloniality, which continues to structure institutional priorities and practices.

The social motivation for my research is its potential to provide methods of identity construction for other teachers negotiating their identities in traditionally white-male-dominated academia, aiming to “make themselves visible” through critical reflection and improve their practice through autonomy and self-improvement. Recognising teachers as knowledge producers rather than merely knowledge transmitters is essential for developing educational approaches that serve social justice rather than economic imperatives. Any educational policy should be informed by research evidence and reflexive practice. I will be able to use my findings to position research as a professional responsibility, enabling practitioners to demonstrate that quality teaching requires ongoing critical reflection on how systemic forces shape educational values and practices and to make policy demands that create reflective spaces that challenge the “thinking fast” cultures of performative institutions.

4.2 Ontological and Epistemological Foundations

To address the complexity of professional identity formation, I have developed critical “autopraxis” as a methodological innovation that synthesises autoethnography’s reflexivity with action research’s commitment to social transformation. As this study is concerned with identity construction, a qualitative methodology within a critical-interpretive paradigm that attends both to cultural and historical context is the most appropriate to explore this process. Nevertheless, conventional research methodologies may not withstand the methodological complexity of investigating self-creating subjectivity and professional identity formation, as these processes involve intuitive and unconscious elements that elude quantification and resist representation through standard qualitative approaches. Therefore, I plug in (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012 in Østern et al., 2023) performativity (post-qualitative and post-critical inquiry, non-representational theories and methodologies) and Ettinger’s (2006) and the psychoanalytic concept of the “matrixial” to create a transdisciplinary approach. Although the posthuman tradition draws on Deleuze and Guattari’s (anti) psychoanalytic genealogy, I extend this with Ettinger’s (2006) matrixial “becoming” as I found it inherently transethical.

I employ a (post) QUAL-qual mixed methods design (Morse, 2010) and utilise action research and autoethnography- “autopraxis” (Melville, 2025) as alternative data sources to address complex professional subjectivity phenomena. My simultaneous and sequential (post) QUAL-qual mixed approach within the performative paradigm leverages the strengths of both methodologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Autoethnography, “a self-narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social contexts” (Spry, 2016: 710), is a research repertoire of qualitative inquiry (Adams, Holman Jones, & Ellis, 2015, in Sughrua, 2020: 2). This approach treats research as a political, socially just, and socially conscious act (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2010). Autoethnography, additionally known as auto-anthropology, an autobiographical ethnography, or sociology, integrates ethnography with autobiography and attempts to investigate and interpret (graphy) the personal (auto) to illuminate the cultural (ethno). Between “auto-,” “-ethno-,” and “-graphy” lies the notion that I, the researcher, am the research instrument. Action research is a systematic study that combines action and reflection with the intention of improving practice (Ebbutt, 1985: 156 in Cohen et al., 2000).

The integration of these approaches through autopraxis allows me to engage in iterative cycles of action and reflection, examine my embodied experiences as data, connect personal narrative to sociocultural contexts and implement and evaluate interventions aimed at transformation.

Action researchers and autoethnographers are never removed from their corporeality; they are engaged in iterative cycles of reflection and action in which their physical bodies are entangled with research problems and analysing messes. ‘Pain, joy, fear, bravery, love, and rage are all present in our ... research lives’ (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003: 22). Performative research paradigm acknowledges the inherent interconnectedness, inseparability and entanglement of human/matter and nature/culture (Barad, 2003, 2007, 2014; DeLanda, 2005; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; O’Brien, 2020 in Østern et al. 2023). This paradigm was chosen for its mandate of permissibility, desirability, and necessity of being embodied and affected. It also demands that a researcher avoid the attempt to isolate sensory modes of cognition, communication and engagement with a research phenomenon (Østern et al. 2023). My intellect, body, instincts and intuitions, interests, emotions, experiences, views, values and beliefs, and everything else coalesce to make me a

unique research tool (Adams; Herrmann, 2023).

Research focused on “unequal power dynamics, inequities, injustices, and other personal, cultural, and social destructive dynamics” (Adams, 2017 in Throne, 2021) becomes a type of “critical qualitative inquiry” (CQI) (Denzin, 2014: x; Denzin, 2015 in Sughrua, 2020). CQI is defined as “qualitative research undertaken beyond the theoretical to intentionally engage the political discourse to advance the public good, social justice, power structures, or critical consciousness within a socially-just democratic society” (Throne, 2020, in Throne, 2021: 173). In other words, critical autoethnography- and by extension, critical autopraxis- is an “activist qualitative methodology” (Lynch & Kuntz, 2019 in Throne, 2021). Additionally, the study of affect becomes crucial for sensing how social, cultural, and political inequalities are also mediated affectively (Juvonen and Kolehmainen, 2018 in Dernikos, Lesko, McCall & Niccolini, 2020) and theories of affect (Ahmed, 2010) provide new ways of conceptualising the social that break from the representational logic of rational humanism (Braidotti, 2013 in Dernikos, Lesko, McCall & Niccolini, 2020).

The research focus for this study is to explore identity negotiation and transformation through literacy practices. I hypothesise that literacy practices give insight into resistance to dominant neoliberal and global coloniality subjectification modes maintained through educational initiatives. A multidisciplinary approach was needed to understand professional identity formation and its hidden referents; therefore, this study utilises the methodological advances of linguistic ethnography by adopting a critical linguistic autoethnography (CA) case study with less-structured observations (Foster, 2006) combined with textually based approaches (multimodality and Systemic Functional Linguistics). These methods have been chosen for their shared concern with context.

Nevertheless, I extend the sociocultural assumption that social context is an external variable (Cole & Scribner, 1980) and individual differences are quantitative variations on a universal, qualitatively homogeneous a-priori psychological structures (Thorndike, 1911: 6 in Richters, 2021). These assumptions obscure the heterogeneity of lived psychological experience, or what Vygotsky (1934) conceptualised as *perezhivanie* and *sense* (1934). Therefore, I found that post-qualitative and post-critical approaches situated in the performative paradigm

could withstand the complexity of psychological and causal heterogeneity. The data is qualitative in nature (even though it draws on quantitative data such as quality indicator reports) and collected in naturally occurring contexts, rather than being produced under experimental conditions created by the researcher.

Performative paradigms, epitomised by autoethnography and action research, emphasise entanglement, non-representation and material-discursive relations. Performative research is non-representational and destabilises boundaries between the ontological and epistemological. There is a paradigm shift to onto-epistemology, referring to the inseparable connection between ontology and epistemology (Østern et al. 2023).

4.2.1 Performative Paradigm and Post-Qualitative Inquiry

The research emphasis has redirected from defining the nature of reality or the phenomena-what quality, excellence, action-researcher identity 'is' -to understanding its effects-what it 'does'. This transition demands methodological experimentation and innovation and entails transitioning from being to becoming. This is an onto-epistemological shift- a different image of thought (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) that challenges researchers to actively investigate questions of ontology and epistemology (Barad, 2007).

The notion of performativity examines the situational impact of research in a specific physical and discursive context, including the relational impact on the researcher, the research, and other-than-human participants (Østern et al., 2023). (Post)qualitative research does not privilege knowledge in research; it decentres it, embraces ethics, ontology and knowledge, as depicted in Barad's (2007: 409) neologism, 'ethico-onto-epistemology'. (Post)qualitative research, therefore, is post-Cartesian (Le Grange, 2019).

Key ethico-onto-epistemological principles include creativity, action and "response-ability" (Barad, 2010). Performative does not denote 'performance-like' and is not associated with performance arts. It is closely associated with Austin's (1975) performative utterances or "How to do things with words" (Austin, 1975), emphasising the act-like character of language (von Hantelmann, 2014: unpaginated in Østern et al., 2023) over epistemological reflection. Performative utterances cause

an action or change in the world, contrasting with constative utterances representing reality. Austin argued that statements produce realities beyond language under certain conditions, recognising no clear line between describing reality and creating it. Every utterance contains constative and performative elements. The performative paradigm posits no boundary between constative, reality-describing, and performative, reality-producing research (Hantelmann, 2014 in Østern et al., 2023).

Although qualitative paradigms are critical, reflexive, and constructed, the findings are presented as representations of an independent reality that pre-existed the research endeavour. Representational logic implies that there is an isolated, objective reality to be discovered and that we can represent it by employing language (St. Pierre (2013 in Le Grange, L. 2019). Post-qualitative inquiry creates a space for escaping 'representational logic and the language/material binary' (St. Pierre 2013: 650 in Le Grange, 2019). The 'truth' is an entanglement of our communicative activity and the (methodological and semiotic) diffractive apparatuses that we use to interpret the world.

Performative research encourages novelty, innovation, and experimentation by prompting revitalising practice, theoretical aspects and research methods. A performative paradigm creates a space for experimentation, motion, emancipation, liberty, ingenuity and inclusion. 'A performative paradigm produces a space where we can breathe and move, even with unexpected twists and turns. It allows for complexity and creates a space that welcomes 'different questions, phenomena, communities, languages and still-not-existing-research-methods and methodologies without pressing them into a (paradigmatic) jacket that does not fit, and that reduces their meaning-making, affective and knowledge-producing potentials and capacities' (Østern et al. 2023: 283).

Research is viewed as creating something new in the world that did not exist before the researcher's involvement, rendering it non-representational, with no intent to represent a pre-existing reality (Østern et al., 2023). "Rather than treat this ontological generativity as an aberration - caused by some form of ideological distortion or personal bias that we need to remove from the research process - it is embraced as an irreducible element of social research for which we need to take responsibility" (Rosiek, 2018:1). As making 'cuts' marks bodies, 'objectivity, instead

of being about offering an undistorted mirror image of the world, is about accountability to marks on bodies (Barad, 2007). To be objective is 'a matter of accountability for what materialises and comes to be. Objectivity and agency are bound up with issues of responsibility and accountability. Accountability must be considered in terms of what matters and what is excluded from mattering (Barad, 2007:184). Autoethnography may mediate innovation, influence policies and humanise practices. This 'practice of diffraction' may develop alternative interpretations of the pathologised identities and contested discursive formations.

Research results do not reflect an a priori reality that existed preceding the researcher's involvement, since the researcher is entangled with the object of the study as a researcher-body (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012 in Østern et al., 2023). The researcher's body is no longer insignificant and counterproductive to the knowledge generation but becomes a companion (Østern et al., 2023). The researcher is not separated, distant, objective or neutral but affected and embodied, as are all other human and more-than-human research participants (Lenz Taguchi, 2012 in Østern et al., 2023).

Lenz Taguchi (Ringrose, Warfield, & Zarabadi, 2020: 25) asks: 'What images of thinking do we enact when doing research, and what is it to be/become a researcher? If we are becoming, what kind of researching 'I' (St. Pierre, 2011 in Ringrose, Warfield, & Zarabadi, 2020) and (researcher) subjectivities our research produces?' I use the terms professional, action-researcher identity and subjectivity interchangeably.

Although in a qualitative research paradigm, the researcher's position is on the inside, qualitative inquiry privileges humans as central to meaning-making. Knowledge is believed to be constructed intersubjectively, and language is the central meaning-making medium for knowledge construction and reflexivity (Zembymbylas, 2017 in Østern et al., 2023). In a performative research paradigm, knowledge is generated in material-discursive entanglements, referring to the interconnectedness of material and discursive elements in knowledge production. More-than-human bodies become equally crucial for meaning-making, highlighting the dynamic and interactive nature of knowledge production (Østern et al., 2023).

Epistemologically, to produce/gain knowledge in positivist research, the world needs to be divided into categories that can be quantified, tested, or compared. The performative paradigm moves beyond intersubjectivity towards entanglements or relations as the 'smallest components' to produce knowledge and the smallest units of analysis (Østern et al., 2023).

While quantitative research focuses on representation and predefined categories, qualitative research emphasises constructed reality and reflexivity. Performative research centres on entanglement, material-discursive relations, and non-representative results. This highlights the shift towards sensing and thinking in the research process. (Østern et al. 2023). (Post)qualitative research acknowledges that the methodology is performative. I opt for transformative methods that enable the transformation of the world. These methods emerge and unfold through intra-actions with the world (Le Grange, 2019).

4.2.2 Autoethnography as Resistance

Autoethnography is a methodology and a method. As a method, autoethnography functions as a product and a process (Ellis, 2004). Autoethnography was chosen due to its creative method for writing social science texts. This qualitative research field's creative opportunities for evocative and transformative writing appeal to me as a vibrant research methodology and method.

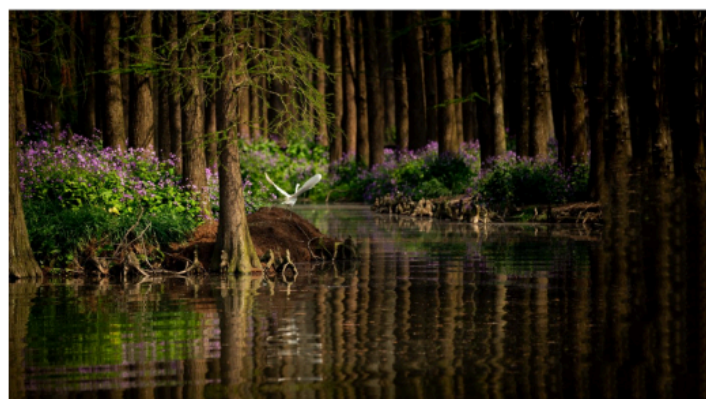
I employ critical autoethnography in my methodology because I use critical theories aligned with critical paradigms (sociocritical literacy, critical pedagogy, and critical race theory) following my theoretical framework to challenge the existing power dynamics shaping and being shaped by dominant discourses. Critical researchers have the potential to actively identify, create, and encourage spaces for counterhegemonic action. In alignment with the struggles of the marginalised, Apple (2009) encourages organic intellectuals and researchers to supportively critique conventional norms of history, politics, culture, and methodology (Koro-Ljungberg and Cannella, 2017).

Chang (2008) suggested three data collection strategies for autoethnographic research: personal memories, self-observation, and external data. Critical autoethnography as a 'cultural analysis through personal narrative' written through 'a

critical lens' (Boylorn & Orbe, 2016:17 in Poulos, C. N, 2021), allows me to add a critical dimension to the interpretive and engaging audiences in direct dialogue with critical theory to enhance a cultural critique of power hegemony, hierarchy, etc.

Ellis (2009) argues that it is the process of storying ourselves that is essential rather than the validity of memory. I utilise elements of self-study and narrative methodology; however, Gant et al. (2019 in Throne, 2021) described the distinction between autoethnography and narrative reflection as autoethnography situates the experience of self within the broader sociocultural context. In the same way that language underpins the social construction of reality, our own reality is socially constructed through stories and the significance of a story is determined by how it intersects with the world. Therefore, the professional identity and knowledge of the researcher are revealed in two ways: in the narratives and by situating the researcher within the cultural context (Hamilton, Smith & Worthington, 2008). This auto-ethnography follows good research practice, including the critical elements identified by Clandinin, Pushor, and Orr (2007) and uses a variety of research strategies.

4.2.3 Action Research and Embodied Inquiry



In the swampy lowlands, problems are messy and confusing and incapable of technical solution.' (Donald Schon, 1987: 3)

Figure 15: Swampy Lowlands

Action research confronts “messy,” “swampy,” and “wicked” problems: terms that describe complex, dynamic challenges resistant to technical solutions (Schön, 1987; Brydon-Miller et al., 2003). These problems signal misalignments between theoretical frameworks and practical realities, demanding systemic approaches to practice, policy, and decision-making (Ackoff, 1999; Natasha et al., 2024).

Action-researcher provides a framework for addressing the ‘messy’, ‘swampy’ and ‘wicked’ problems (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003) that defy technical solutions. (Schön, 1987: 3) in educational settings. “Messes are complex, multi-dimensional, intractable, dynamic problems that can only be partially addressed and partially resolved” (Russell Ackoff, 1999 in Brydon-Miller et al., 2003: 21). Wicked problems are not inherent in complex systems but rather feedback indicating a misalignment between theoretical frameworks and practical realities, emphasizing the importance of adopting a systemic approach to policy and decision-making (Natasha et al., 2024). Action researchers committed to social change must inevitably deal with messes, compelling them to follow the problems wherever they lead in their determination to change the world positively (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003). This approach aligns with complexity theory as an emerging paradigm in education (Ahmadian and Tavakoli, 2011) for investigating complex systems such as colleges.

Action research is a cyclical process that embodies a complex system due to its heterogeneity, dynamism, emergence, unpredictability and irreversibility, nonlinearity, openness, and adaptivity. Action research aligns with MacLure’s description of the Critical post-qualitative inquiry as immanent, becoming, and in flux (MacLure, 2016 in Koro-Ljungberg & Cannella, 2017). Critical qualitative inquiry allows for the emergence of the unexpected and the unthought, enabling it to respond effectively to continuously changing environments, policies, and practices by not assuming fixed outcomes (Cannella, 2015, in Koro-Ljungberg & Cannella, 2017).

The pragmatic approach of action research is closely associated with Dewey's theory of experiential learning (Dewey, 1929) and Lewin's social psychology (Lewin, 1946). Lewin’s social psychology posits that action emerges from social interactions rather than intellectual deductions. Action research cycle approach is thus a social practice; cyclical, reflective, participatory, and entails ‘the integration of intellectual and

theoretical engagement in praxis' (Somekh 2006, 13; original emphasis in Ahmadian and Tavakoli, 2011).

A key methodological contribution of this research is the development of "matrixial literacies" (Melville, 2025)- a framework that synthesises Prior and Olinger's (2019) "laminated assemblages" of literacy and "embodied semiotic becoming" of identity with Ettinger's (2006) "matrixial becoming."

This framework integrates feminist psychoanalytic concepts with literacy studies and posthumanism. "Matrixial literacies" conceptualises literacy practices as matrixial semiotic process- a posthuman- affective layered, embodied, and relational becoming where literacy, identity and subjectivity emerge through semiotic assemblages, matrixial jointness, and affective resonance across human and non-human entanglements. Ettinger's (2006) "matrixial becoming" extends "embodied semiotic becoming" by accounting for the unconscious and the "unthought known" (Bollas in Ettinger, 2006: 28).

Prior and Olinger's (2019) "laminated assemblages" and "embodied semiotic becoming" framework integrates the traditions of ethnography, multimodal discourse analysis (Bezemer and Kress, 2008) and New Literacy Studies (Hall, 2012:23), extending social constructionism and moving towards posthuman and affect turns to account for the non-representational and the non-human (material) embedded in literacy as social practice. My choice of social semiotics as framing this research was guided by the aspects of this theory that are relevant to the research questions: language is viewed as a semiotic resource system for meaning-making and is studied in relation to social contexts.

My choice to employ action research and autoethnography methodology represents a departure from traditional research methods. My decision was influenced by the values and the unique perspectives of action researchers, who, as suggested by Brydon-Miller, 'don't do well with boundaries' and 'are not the world's greatest rule-followers' (Brydon-Miller, 2003: 20). Robin McTaggart substantiates this sentiment with the statement 'Welcome to the world of the heretics!' (McTaggart, quoted in Brydon-Miller, 2003: 20). Autoethnographers and Action researchers are met with resistance and even arrogance from the academic community. I resisted the

institutionalised patterns of 'violence to thought' (Deleuze, 2000: 97) inherent in the charges of narcissism, subjectivity, chaos, unreplicability, illegitimacy, etc., leveraged against my methodology. The charges did not fragment my researcher identity or my sense of ethical self-realisation. I assert that autoethnography is a valid, inductive, ethical, non-extractive feminist practice. It is a critique of the colonial voyeuristic origins of ethnography and an assertion of relational knowing, self-definition and situated knowledge (Spry, 2016; Haraway, 1998). Action researchers, unlike traditional researchers, prioritise the design of a transformed future, implementation, and impact with real-world participants over passive observation of life as it unfolds (Hilary Bradbury, quoted in Brydon-Miller, 2003: 20).

There were those who stated that direct action is not research or that my usual way of working (and thus being, i.e. ontology) "will not work". I felt that I was not trusted to know my own life and interests. Brydon-Miller (2003) writes about her advisor's statement that, "You can't mix your politics and your psychology", and notes that, fortunately, action research provided a way to preserve both while losing the advisor. When resisting advisors who misrecognise knowledge or undervalue and delegitimise a valid research method, action research provides a compelling intellectual counterargument (Brydon-Miller, 2003). I attempted to "articulate an analysis of the dynamics that make universities as institutions behave as they do" (Brydon-Miller, 2003:22) and concluded that there is a need to decentre and decolonise doctoral pedagogies. It is vital to stress that decolonisation is not a metaphor (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Yet, post/ decolonial scholars may limit their actions beyond peer-reviewed articles and reports, inadvertently normalising academic elitism and perpetuating power imbalances, hierarchies, and harmful research practices instead of actively working to dismantle oppressive structures within the academy. Audre Lorde's statement, "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house," cautions marginalised and non-traditional academics against using conventional theoretical and methodological approaches to achieve social justice. These conventional 'tools' are insufficient and may be detrimental to equity as they fail to address the root causes of structural and intersectional inequality. Instead, they centre White, Western, cisgender male, middle-class, and heterosexual experiences as normative, prioritise amelioration over transformation, and construct minoritised people from a deficit ideology in need of remediation and control

(Bowleg, 2021). “Dismantling the master's house” entails creating innovative methods to effectively dismantle the intersectional structures and systems of oppression that perpetuate inequity. My project aims to leverage my formal academic training in this endeavour while actively resisting the renovation of the ivory tower.

A doctoral student should not merely produce knowledge; they should reflect upon their research's social and ethical implications and endeavour to build a better world. Action research projects evaluate knowledge in action, i.e., applying knowledge in real-world situations. This practical approach makes the research more relevant and applicable. Those conducting the evaluations are stakeholders or the interested parties, personally impacted by the outcome, making the result their personal problem. Unlike other forms of social research, action research consistently meets the test of action (Brydon-Miller, 2003). ‘Conventional researchers worry about objectivity, distance, and controls. Action researchers worry about relevance, social change, and validity tested in action by the most at-risk stakeholders (Brydon-Miller, 2003: 25). ‘The crucial difference lies in the commitment of action researchers to bring about change as part of the research act’ (Robin McTaggart quoted in Brydon-Miller, 2003: 15).

Action Research moves beyond its academic nature and embodies the day-to-day context and ordinary dynamics of collaborative learning between individuals united by their passion for improvement and viewing challenges as opportunities. Autoethnography is a reflective and subjective form of research that affirms personal narratives and emotional truths as legitimate sources of knowledge, generates a sense of the veracity and integrity of my narrative, and positions the white readers as active participants in a cognitive, affective and ethical encounter, emphasising white people’s responsibility.

4.3 Research Context and Participants

Applying autopraxis, I created and examined my twenty-year career across multiple sites (eleven) located predominantly in inner London’s FE colleges. My professional knowledge was formed on several professional knowledge landscapes (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996 a): as a classroom teacher, a coach, a mentee, an advanced

practitioner, a teacher educator, an informal educator, a classroom assistant, a parent-researcher, a student, a colleague, an action-researcher, a practitioner-research facilitator, etc. My roles depended on a positioning between myself, the student, the mentee, the trainee teacher, my children, practitioner-researchers, students' parents, doctoral supervisors, and other officials in educational institutions.

The implications of relational ethics for human participants are that the researcher and subject are the same. I am an insider to the research, neither impartial nor objective, nor a fixed observer of facts and happenings. However, I can identify themes and patterns in my narratives from my emic position and then return to the stories from an etic position to develop themes.

Recruitment and participation were twofold. First, action research involved multiple practitioner-researchers and participants. Second, although my findings and reflections invite a response post-publication, readers (researchers and professionals) may engage with my published work and communicate via pedagogical documentation. Aligning with my 'community' ethical principle, this polyphonic approach is key to accountability and institutional changes. Second, central to the research process and the knowledge produced, my professional identity emerges as an expression of an inherently collective assemblage that brings together populations, multiplicities, territories, affects, and events (Deleuze, 2002 in Kuby, Spector & Thiel, 2019).

My researcher subjectivity is "a superposition of beings, becomings, here and there's, now and then's. Superpositions, not oppositions" (Barad, 2014: 176); it is superimposed (Barad, 2007) on the multiple relationships and interactions with the cultural and social context, my relationships with research participants, and the research process. Similarly to the world being socially constructed, identity or our sense of self can also be understood as "a product of historically and culturally situated interchanges among people" (Gubrium and Koro-Ljungberg, 2005: 693 in Donovan, 2019). This implies an ontological stance that "individuals are themselves composites" (Salomon, 1995, in Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). Consequently, subjectivity's composite and relational nature of becoming (Barad) resulted in

recruitment at any given moment reflecting the changing social and cultural dynamics.

Critical autoethnography can be comprised of personal, political, emotional, and intellectual perspectives to explore the phenomenon from the viewpoint of the autoethnographer as well as to situate the participant-researcher's positionality within the study framework (Zilonka et al., 2019, in Throne, 2021). Autoethnography brings an immediate interplay between the self as researcher, participant, and data analyst (Jones, 2016, in Throne, 2021). Diffractive methodology (Barad, 2007) allowed for an understanding of research through the ethnographic notion of multiplicity of roles (a diffractive spectrum).

Adopting diffractive analysis, my positioning was similar to that of Woods, who claimed that he played 'at least five different roles' (Woods, 1979 in Foster, 2006:25). My roles were not predetermined or static entities: I moved between the complete participant, participant-observer (Foster, 2006), practitioner and learner roles. These multiple roles are reflected in the various philosophical perspectives offered by the Seedhouse framework (1998). Through participant-observation, ethnography afforded me an opportunity to 'examine the way interactions and social meanings change and develop over time' (Foster, 2006:9). As a complete participant, I used my privileged position of an insider role (Foster, 2006) to gain access to a highly private and complex domain in which literacy practices are entwined with personal and social relationships.

As a participant-researcher, I engaged in a "researcher gaze" with an "intense reflexivity and introspection" (Tilley-Lubbs, 2016, p. 1 in Throne, 2021) to connect my individual experience and the larger sociocultural, sociohistorical, sociopolitical, and/or socioeconomic experience through an embodied sociocultural lens to "make meaning and draw implications from the interpretive layers of these lived experiences" (Tilley-Lubbs, 2016 in Throne, 2021). I moved beyond the insider/outsider dualism by embodying "transpositionality" that simultaneously allowed me to engage identity affectively as the lived phenomenon of inquiry and analytically as the outsider/researcher (Reed-Danahay, 2017 in Throne, 2021) from the scholarship and theoretical foundations context.

4.4 Methods and Data Collection

To emphasise the empirical dimension of my qualitative study, and to contextualise its “ethno” (cultural) aspect, I employ a wide range of data collection tools.

4.4.1 Literacy Dig and Auto-archaeology

A primary data collection strategy is the "literacy dig" (Taylor, 1988)- an archaeological metaphor of digging or collecting artefacts and excavating through layers of social, cultural and historical practices to uncover the underlying factors influencing literacy (Taylor, 1988). This approach aligns with psychoanalytic perspectives that view the mind and meaning-making as having layers developed over time and across multiple spaces as individuals alternate between different conceptions of time and space. This temporal-historical perspective highlights that past experiences can continue to affect a person's subjectivity, even if they are not consciously aware of them, thus challenging representationalism (Hake, 1993)

Auto-archaeology as a methodological approach merges elements of archaeology and autoethnography, employing institutional documents or artefacts to bridge personal experiences with an institution's broader social and political structures.

Particularly within feminist autoethnography, auto-archaeology provides a critical lens for exploring how institutions, often governed by patriarchal norms, respond to those who challenge such structures. The conceptualisation of institutional documents as 'archaeological' artefacts, the auto-archaeology method offers insights into the cultural and power dynamics underpinning institutional practices, demonstrates the influence of these dynamics on individual lives and exposes the institutional mechanics perpetuating systems of oppression, such as patriarchy.

As an archaeologist of everyday life, I collect artefacts, including my literacy practices and external data sources, to verify, corroborate, or query the internal data generated from recollection and reflection. Chang (2008: 107) explains that artefacts “are the material manifestations of culture that illuminate their historical contexts”.

Examples include photographs, emails, written reflections, conversations, institutional reports, observations, field notes, social media posts, email correspondence, archival materials, visual artefacts, events, etc.). External data sources “provide additional perspectives and contextualise information to help [me] investigate and examine [my] subjectivity” (Chang, 2008: 103). Chang (2008) suggested that the researcher observe their daily or weekly routines for a designated period of time. Self-observation followed my (the researcher’s) external reality and captured my actions, thoughts, and affects as they unfolded in the present. Accordingly, I used personal memories followed by textual data, documents and artefacts, and observations.

4.4.2 Critical Friends and Collaborative Inquiry

To enhance the rigour of my autopraxis research, I engage with critical friends who promote intense self-reflection and self-reflexivity. Parallel to Action research that involves multiple action-researchers, critical friends (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014) encourage the application of constructivist methodologies to comprehend educational outcomes. This collaborative approach extends the scope of study beyond individual teaching settings, encompassing programme or institution-wide initiatives on a global level. Since critical friends bring their subjectivity into the inquiry, the term 'critical' adopts a subjective perspective and does not align with a positivist concept of objectivity. 'Critical' denotes higher cognitive processes and the ability to evaluate and synthesise information. The critical friend relationship provides valuable insight that may only be attainable from an outsider's perspective (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). Trust is a prerequisite for establishing a relationship between critical friends and researchers, and I have established 1-5 critical friendships. The study emphasises authenticity and verisimilitude over quantifiable data. Engaging with Critical Friends (Baskerville & Goldblatt, 2009) offers alternative perspectives, promoting a critical approach to my methods.)

4.5 Data Analysis: From Coding to Thinking-with-Theory

This analysis was conducted as ‘praxis’ or an activity which involved reflection and action on the world in order to transform it (Freire, 1972): simultaneously reading the world as well as the word.

Moving beyond traditional humanist qualitative analysis that may produce codes, categories, themes, or patterns that search for and produce sameness, my analysis aims to produce "differences that make a difference" (Barad, 2010). Post-qualitative inquiry emphasises thinking-with-theory over employing established qualitative methods (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012 in Østern et al., 2023).

My methodology positions everyday activity as the starting point of analysis, resisting pre-coded categories instead attending to emergence, affect, and becoming. The data comprised an ever-changing living body (Jones, 2016, in Throne, 2021). My analytical process located me in the colonial matrix of power. In this stage, I used predominantly memory data. Quijano (2000) described the colonial matrix of power in four interrelated domains: control of economy (land appropriation, exploitation of labour, control of natural resources); control of authority (institution, army); control of gender and sexuality (family, education) and control of subjectivity and knowledge (epistemology, education and formation of subjectivity). To identify my place in the matrix, I employed agential cuts (Barad) along macrosocial lines. I then complicated my demographic categorisations by applying a supplementary frame of "lifeworld differences" to construct my "narrative" (Kalantzis and Cope, 2016). Interleaving theoretical explorations of intersectionality, critical Whiteness studies and migration studies into my analysis explained my actions within the larger cultural contexts of this study. This enabled me to investigate how to translate differences into educational practice.

Once I had located myself in the colonial matrix of power, I located my professional identity in my literacy practices. I collected literacy artefacts to inform my enquiry and to identify identity traces in my literacy practices.

Using memory recall exercises and a literacy dig, I created a personal narrative highlighting experiences throughout my life that are associated with creating my professional identity. I reflected on critical incidents in the form of diary entries, a dialogue with myself and my writing voice (hooks, 1994) to explore how literacy practices and attitudes can affect relationships and social justice.

I create composite characters and utilise narrative and poetry. Autoethnography amalgamates biography and ethnography. It enables me to examine my personal

experiences within cultural contexts. Narrative and poetry are instrumental in communicating my experiences, providing a unique perspective on the interaction between societal and individual dynamics and allowing me to articulate complex experiences. I balance these methods with critical analysis to ensure verisimilitude.

Storytelling and the poetic process are central to understanding and communicating the complexities of human experiences. The methods allow me to act as a bricoleur, creatively weaving personal and cultural narratives to produce knowledge in dynamic social contexts. The narrative and poetic process in autoethnography challenge traditional power paradigms by valuing human experiences equally with diagnostic approaches, thus broadening the scope of what is considered valid knowledge (Menzies & Bernstein, 2023).

The poems and narratives are written from the viewpoints of composite characters. Composite characters are a methodological tool that enhances participant anonymity while allowing me to articulate complex narratives. My approach protects individuals from identification and enables data aggregation into coherent stories. While composites introduce complexities regarding authenticity and representation (Hradsky, 2024), they can also reflect the multiplicity of self and the non-unitary nature of identity, aligning with posthuman perspectives that challenge traditional notions of the self (Wilde, 2022).

4.5.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics and Multimodality

Literacy practices were examined using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Hall, 2012) and “matrixial literacies” (Melville, 2025). Linguistics offers ethnography ‘a range of established procedures for identifying discursive structures’ (Rampton, 2007 in Litosseliti, L. (ed.) 2010). SFL recognises three aspects in the description of the context of a situation: field, tenor and mode; thus, it provides an authoritative and accountable analysis of language use and meaning-making in relation to the context and social positioning. SFL provides a linguistic rationale for the role of language in ‘the formation of consciousness’ (Hasan, 2009:434). Tenor (Halliday, 2004) exemplifies affect and is therefore of particular interest in relation to subjectification through everyday literacy practices. Nevertheless, Halliday's model of language can be methodologically critiqued as dichotomising language as ‘context-dependent’ and

'decontextualised' (Halliday, 2004) and as providing a deterministic perspective on data linking social positioning to dichotomised forms of consciousness.

Posthumanism does not dismiss the salience of culture in literacy studies; rather, it wonders not only about the moments that create a specific form of consciousness, but also exclude other forms and realities.

To balance SFL's detailed technical analysis with the process of reflexive sensitivity (Litosseliti, L. (ed.) 2010), this study adopted a case-study approach, which is an apt method for capturing the qualitative and subjective aspects of meaning-making.

When conducting qualitative research, paying attention to contextual details and achieving a 'thick description' (Geertz 1973:6 in Pahl, 1999:13) achieves a level of insight into the complexity and nuances of the case study, allows a degree of holism and assures validity of the findings. Applying "matrixial literacies", emphasising the transsubjective, unconscious, and affective flows entangled in literacy as a social and material practice, will allow the researcher to map "collective literacy consciousness" (Melville, 2025) in motion.

4.5.2 Action Research Cycle

When analysing literacy events, I employed an action research methodology that aligned with the cyclical nature of literacy practices and identity formation, as illustrated in Diagram 1. The diagram captures my thesis as a form of literacy practice that transforms both researcher and institutional contexts through sustained engagement with the material-discursive practices of educational resistance. The diagram illustrates the cyclical and iterative nature of literacy practices, identity formation, and resistance in my research. It does not represent a linear progression but dynamic feedback loops in which events become products of prior experiences and catalysts for future transformation. The process begins with specific literacy events that generate immediate affective responses. These embodied reactions prompt critical analysis using the theoretical frameworks I have developed, leading to concrete resistance practices.

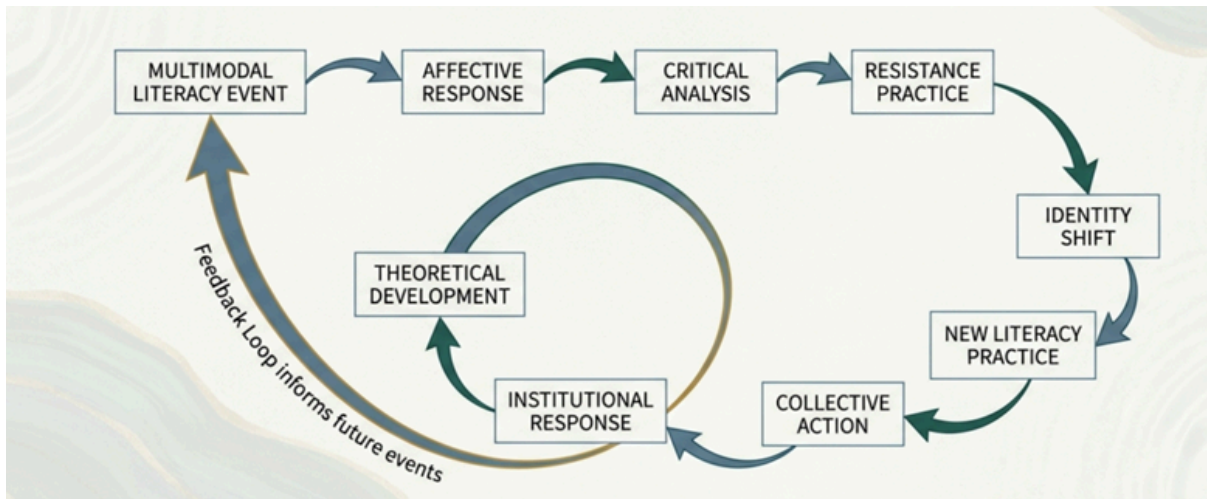


Figure 16: Process Flow Diagram

In the planning phase of each cycle, I identified literacy events within my educational practice as primary data sources that generated affective responses as data points. These affective dimensions provided insights into how dominant discourses were attempting to subjectify my consciousness while simultaneously revealing spaces for potential resistance. The action phase involved engaging in critical analysis using theoretical frameworks; it was not merely interpretive, but constituted a form of resistance practice itself, involving the refusal of subject positions that dominant discourses (Figure 17) attempted to impose.

The reflection phase corresponded to the identity shifts documented in the diagram. Each cycle of critical analysis and resistance produces identity shifts that reshape my understanding of myself as a migrant and an educator. These transformed subject positions then inform new literacy practices, which often evolve into collective action with students and colleagues. The resulting institutional responses generate new data that feed into ongoing theoretical development. The feedback loop reveals the theoretical work as “praxis,” informing future literacy events and creating “iterative intra-activity” (Barad, 2007). Each cycle builds on prior insights while being attentive to unexpected encounters and emergent possibilities, implying that change arises from ongoing relational encounters rather than predetermined outcomes.

The feedback loops between resistance practices and identity shifts demonstrated

layering that happens without erasure: the non-representational, affective, and unconscious residues of spacetime mattering (Barad) and spacetime unconscious[ing] (Secor). Literacy sedimentation occurs across bodies, texts, artefacts, affects, and institutions and identity is made of matter, discourse, time, and relation. Sedimented identities are the analytic outcomes of what can be traced in artefacts.

Future-oriented elements signal the anticipatory dimension of literacy as semiotic becoming.

The malachite metaphor articulates how identity and/as literacy (migrant educator subjectivity, multilingual inner speech, or transcultural literacy practices) can be one phenomenon while containing non-reducible layers, without collapsing into coherence or chaos, through absences, silences, and inarticulability as non-deficit structural features. The malachite's concentric bands prefigure sedimented identities and anticipate spacetime mattering (how past stays present without speaking).

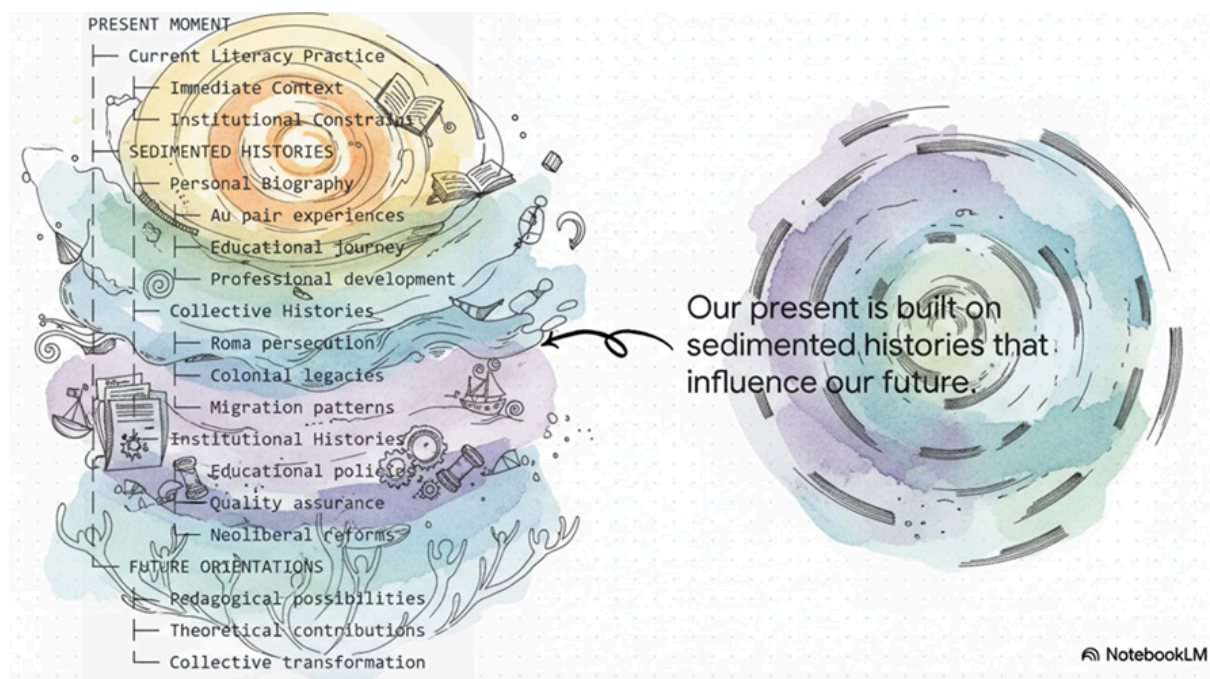


Figure 18: Temporal Layering with Sedimentation Diagram

The metaphors of water and lamination articulate the dynamic dimensions of semiotic becoming or the mechanisms through which these layers are deposited. Laminated assemblages, as event-level convergence, and semiotic becoming, as processual transformation, explain how sedimentation happens moment-to-moment,

which events are layered, and what practices produce particular sediments. The surface is the point at which various laminated assemblages converge.

The Intersectional Identity Matrix (diagram below) reveals how literacy practices mediate different contested identity positions with tensions between compliance and resistance. The present moment of literacy practice emerges from sedimented histories that are reactivated, re-assembled, and re-signified within specific contexts. Literacy practices are laminated with sediments of contradictory hegemonic and transformative strategies, mediating a rhizomatic positioning across axes of identity and enabling the educator to inhabit multiple subject positions simultaneously. The liminal spaces with liberatory epistemologies that emerged through literacy practices (multimodal resistance, collective writing) are conceptualised as matrixial borderspaces (Ettinger, 2006).

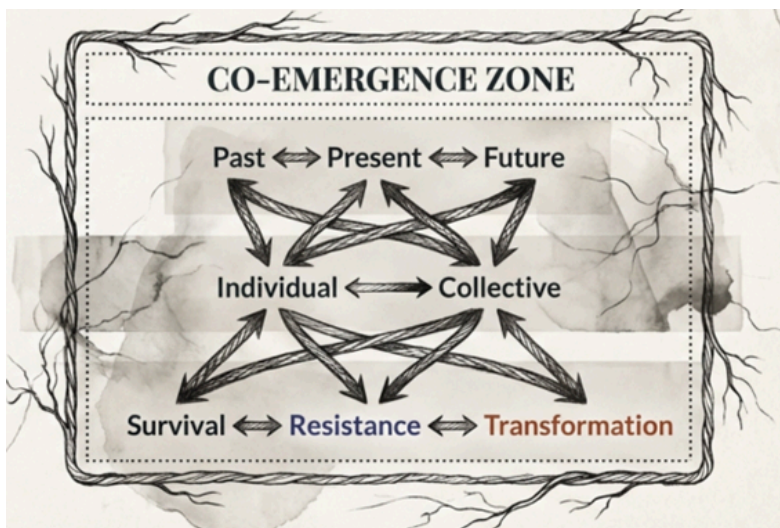


Figure 19: Intersectional Identity Matrix

4.6 Ethics and Political Narcissism

Autoethnography has been described as an “ethical practice” (Ellis, 2007: 26 in Holman Jones, Adams & Ellis, 2016) because it entails the researcher being ethical and honest about the events described (Mendez, 2013 in Holman Jones, Adams & Ellis, 2016). Nevertheless, using the Self as the primary research focus- as researcher, informant, and author (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004; Tolich, 2010 in Holman Jones, Adams & Ellis, 2016)- may lead to complex ethical dilemmas. Using

oneself as the primary source of research data does not erase the need to engage with others because “writing about yourself always involves writing about others” (Ellis, 2009: 13 in Holman Jones, Adams & Ellis, 2016). Autobiographical research thus requires a type of ethical engagement that is highly contextual and primarily relational. The project adopts feminist ‘relational ethics’, discussed by Ellis (2007 in Holman Jones, Adams & Ellis, 2016). Relational ethics refers to the ethics involved in writings about personal experiences where people close to us are included and refers to the notion that ethical considerations extend beyond individual conduct and entail relationships between individuals and their social, cultural, and historical context. Ethical dilemmas will thus be negotiated with participants as they arise.

The British Educational Research Association’s Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research state, ‘Researchers using auto/biographical approaches and autoethnography need to consider how their work implicates other people, and what the consequences may be for individuals who, although not directly involved in a study, may be identifiable through their relationship with the researcher or other participants’ (BERA, 2018). BERA’s (2018) guidelines add: ‘...The maintenance of confidentiality and anonymity is not considered the norm for research using historical or archival data, nor is it achievable for autoethnographic work published under the author/researcher’s name. My writing choices of a fictionalised narrative and composite characters are thus made, in part, to protect identity. Consequently, I will use several strategies to de-identify data of those who may be implicated: the use of pseudonyms for individuals and contexts or changing a person’s demographic information. Another technique may entail creating composite characters by collapsing several people (Ellis, 2007, in Holman Jones, Adams & Ellis, 2016).

‘Philosophers don’t just rely on reason... but use other tools that are just as important: intuition, emotions, imagination, and their communicating and relating skills’ (Thayer-Bacon & Moyer, 2006). Andrew (2017) proposes an ethical research framework integrating autoethnography and intuitionism to navigate complex ethical situations and acquire insight through reflexive processes. Intuitionism, a philosophical approach to ethical inquiry, advocates using intuition to grasp the ethical implications of complex cases instead of relying solely on abstract theory or other forms of knowledge, like propositional or practical knowledge. Nevertheless,

intuitionism does not imply that all ethical decisions are intuitive. Instead, intuition aids in discovering basic ethical principles, and ethical decision-making entails reflecting on the available options and rendering judgments. In my aim for self/other/world transformation, I adopted several ethical principles.

My ethical framework for autopraxis methodology creates a space where personal narrative and collective experience can co-exist without harm. By balancing fidelity, justice, beneficence, non-maleficence, vulnerability, and relationality, I aim to create research honouring individual and shared humanity. My approach does not aim to eliminate discomfort entirely, as discomfort can be generative, but to ensure that any discomfort serves a purpose of greater understanding and connection rather than causing unnecessary harm.

In developing my autopraxis methodology, I operate within Ettinger's "matrixial borderspace," where subjectivities can co-emerge and co-exist (Ettinger, 2006). My narrative intertwines with others' experiences in complex, sometimes discomforting ways. This borderspace requires careful ethical navigation as I balance my voice with respect for others who may identify with the narrative/ composite characters. While I honour my situated knowledges and "perezhivanie" in my narrative, I acknowledge that my interpretation is not universal. As autoethnography posits justice as a value intrinsic to its methodology, I commit to presenting polyphonic perspectives without silencing my voice or imposing its totality, creating a "wit(h)nessing" process (Ettinger, 2006): witnessing while simultaneously being with others in their experience.

My work intends not to cause distress but to invite reflection upon the issues of education, justice and equity, which would, in turn, cause them to assess their behaviour, which would have almost certainly prevented the commission of further injustices against others in the future. As Ettinger (2006) suggests, this creates a "transcriptum"- a memory tracing with and for others that acknowledges our interconnectedness. Though my narratives may evoke emotional responses, I anticipate and minimise potential harm. The critical portrayals will not be produced with malice, with imposed limitations to avoid harm to self and others. The use of Bakhtin's carnivalesque elements in autoethnography creates a subversive strategy for challenging institutional norms by disrupting hierarchies and exposing the

absurdities and power imbalances of institutional responses. In this context, humour acts as a vital tool of resistance, balancing critique with agency and hope while transforming personal experiences into accessible and engaging narratives that inspire collective action. In feminist autoethnography, humour can be employed to expose the illogical and inadequate nature of institutional responses to issues like gender-based violence. Reframing critique with irony rather than condemnation portrays subjects (individuals and institutions) not as malicious but as misguided, exposes systemic dysfunctions, reveals their inadequacy, prompts questioning of their legitimacy and creates productive dialogue, leading to transformative change.

Lastly, I express gratitude to those who offered assistance with this project. I recognise that my work exists within a web of relationships and acknowledge the "weaving" process (Ettinger, 2006)- creating knowledge with others rather than about them. I address the dangers of solipsism as one of the primary ethical issues in the subsequent section when defending autoethnography against the charge of narcissism. In response to critiques of feminist personal writing as narcissistic and unoriginal, motivated by conceit, a desire for revenge, or a wish for justification (Gass, 2017), I reviewed my autoethnographic methodology against the hegemonic ideology of narcissism, including its cultural (Ahmed, 2007) and psychoanalytical meaning, to assess the validity of this charge. I concluded that the conceptualisation of autoethnographic research as 'narcissistic' exemplifies how affect is manipulated to silence testimonies that challenge and differ from dominant, white power structures and institutions. Instrumentalising narcissism to critique counter-narratives is a way to impose social control and delegitimise the experiences and forms of expression of marginalised communities while promulgating judgmental, isolating, and discriminatory sexual and racial politics. Strategic feminist political narcissism (Tyler, 2005) emphasises how individuals can resist unjust patriarchal systems through practices of self-care and self-examination (Foucault, 1984 in Goh, 2020).

Autoethnography opens up a discursive space for an assembled self that can embrace and express its true self and feelings without guilt or self-blame. Ahmed (2014) contends that individuals charged with wilfulness may not contest, but embrace it. Similarly, reclaiming narcissism can be a powerful form of resistance and political action. Readers may identify with the fictionalised narrative or the

fictionalised, composite characters, and, since our responses and interactions with others are motivated by unconscious drives, my data may evoke varied affective responses. The implications of this prospect are fivefold.

First, the intention of the project is not to cause distress to the participants-readers but to cause them to reflect upon the issues of education, justice and equity, which would, in turn, cause them to assess their behaviour, which would have almost certainly prevented the commission of further injustices against others in the future. I also hoped that my project would cause the reader to accept the reality of past injustices perpetrated by Whiteness. Either of the scenarios outlined above is ethical in the context of this research project. As a corollary, second, throughout life, identification is a way to remain open to other people and allow them to influence us and help us change. Identification is the attribution of aspects of object-images to self-images (Sandler and Rosenblatt, 1962, in Hamilton, 1990). In Object Relations theory, an object is a person, place, thing, idea, fantasy or memory invested with emotional energy (love or hate or more modulated combinations of love and hate). An external object is a person, place, or thing infused with emotional energy. An internal object is an idea, fantasy, or memory of a person, place or thing. Object relations are the interactions of the self and internal or external objects. Self and object representations do not exist independently but in relationships called object relations units: humans are part of fragile and shared systems. Through taking in aspects of new relationships and experiences, we never become a thing but always remain a process, an interaction of self and object. Identification is the ability to maintain a feeling of being distinct from important objects and yet attribute aspects of the object-image to the self-image. The emotional response evoked by the readers' identifications with the object- research may thus lead to personal accountability.

Third, relational ethics within autoethnography means refraining from prioritising the researcher's view of the world and respecting others' perspectives and voices (Roth, 2009 in Winkler, 2018). The methods employed in my project have been criticised for implying that researchers have access to unconscious meanings or fantasies that research participants do not and therefore have a superior understanding of participants' thoughts and feelings (Barnes, 2016). Nevertheless, the aforementioned relational identification or the notion of becoming (always remaining a process) as

opposed to a fixed identity, subjectivity or positionality, thus also results in a multi-layered analysis reflecting 'the importance of the contestability of meaning for social transformation' (Hunter, 2015). Moreover, the assemblage of Whiteness is not considered linear and staged but rather multimodal, heterochronic and multistratified. Consequently, the unfolding reading paths are non-linear and multiple. Ethics is about being response-able to the way we make the world, and to consider the effects our knowledge-making processes have on the world (Barad, 2007: 381); therefore, my project emphasises the role of the reader as an active participant in the creation and interpretation of meaning. Meanings may be multiple and may change with our positionality.

Four, the autoethnographic data presented in my research may externally represent prevailing, internal self and object constellations as evidence of verisimilitude and a reminder that the researcher's concerns are shared by others. Thus, verisimilitude is a generalised set of guiding principles, while my data may be viewed as a form of community-building.

Lastly, the emotional energy (love or hate or more complex composites of love and hate) invested in the object that the reader identifies with evoking an affective response is an invitation to produce a sense of personal accountability for this affective response. Thus, as a researcher, I aim for the reader to identify with my respectful attitude toward the readers' autonomy and capacity to discover and create meanings.

4.7 Legal Fiction as Matrixial Positionality

The legal fiction presented here is a positionality statement. Positionality statements in conventional research are often formulaic acknowledgements of identity categories (gender, ethnicity, class) presented as transparent confessions of bias to be subsequently bracketed. A positionality statement alone does not guarantee ethical research: without structural consciousness, it becomes exclusionary. It produces what "moral insulation"-the sense that, having reflected on one's identity, one has discharged one's ethical obligations. Positionalities that remain wilfully ignorant of how their worldviews participate in racialised harm, that perform

self-reflection without following it into structural critique, sustain hierarchies of whose suffering is recognised and whose is rendered invisible or manageable.

My positionality statement attempts to account for the embodied, affective, and historically sedimented positionality that accounts for my data glowing; a phenomenon familiar to any qualitative researcher:

"Now and then, out of the wearying mass of ethnographic 'data' ... something would catch our attention, usually in a project meeting, and start to form itself into an example. It is hard to describe how this happens... One way to describe its beginnings would be as a kind of glow: some detail - a fieldnote fragment or video image — starts to glimmer, gathering our attention"
(MacLure, 2010: 282).

MacLure refers to fragments of field experience that draw the researcher's attention without always announcing why. Crucially, data does not glow for everyone in the same colours, depending on who the researcher is and what they have been forced to confront about themselves and their world.

My positionality is an account of why my data glowed and explains the conditions of my perception: the partial, situated, embodied, and historically specific vantage point from which certain educational encounters became legible as significant, worthy of sustained theoretical attention, and ethically urgent. The legal fiction is also an invitation. It models a form of structurally conscious self-reflection that invites other educators and researchers to enact in their contexts to excavate their positionality.

This section presents my positionality through a "laminated assemblage" (Prior and Olinger): a creative semiotic artefact that layers legal discourse, autoethnographic reflection, creative non-fiction, PhEmaterialist, and matrixial theories encompassing multiple temporalities and material practices. My positionality exemplifies how matrixial literacies operate as posthuman-affective layered, embodied, and relational becoming where literacy, identity, and subjectivity emerge through semiotic assemblages, matrixial jointness, and affective resonance across human and non-human entanglements.

Integrating "Legal Fiction as Matrixial Positionality" into the methodological framework, instead of delineating it as a distinct findings chapter, constitutes a deliberate methodological innovation that contests conventional academic

boundaries between researcher positioning, data collection, and theoretical analysis. The legal fiction exemplifies "thinking with theory" (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012) or the inseparability of methodology and theoretical development. Employing the precedent of *Lucy Connolly v The King* [2025] to analyse maternal racism through Barad's agential realism and Ettinger's matrixial theory, I demonstrate how creative methodological approaches can generate new analytical frameworks and understandings of how racism operates through relational "material-discursive practices": insights that emerge from the methodological engagement with jurisprudential discourse. Theorising racism as operating through "trans-subjective" processes that transcend individual intention and demand collective accountability, the legal fiction creates a complex analytical framework for tracing how personal educational encounters are inherently influenced by institutional and historical forces. My methodological contribution disrupts the notion of distinction between micro and macro scales and deconstructs the fiction of the autonomous private subject.

Positioning legal fiction within methodology reflects a commitment to "self-fragilisation" (Ettinger) as an ethical research practice. Examining my complicity in systems of racial violence through fictional case models, this vulnerable inquiry advocates for decolonial educational practice, reflecting my commitment to methodological transparency about my positioning within "the colonial matrix of power" (Quijano, 2000).

The analysis is structured around a fictional legal case, *Mother v The Matrixial*, which serves as both an analytical framework and creative intervention in academic discourse about maternal racism and responsibility, with pedagogical implications elaborated in the subsequent case studies. The legal fiction applies the precedent established in *Lucy Connolly v The King* [2025] EWCA Crim 657, creating tensions between actual and imagined jurisprudence to expose the contradictions within maternal and liberal racism: the coexistence of care and contempt, protection and erasure within the same relational matrix.

The legal fiction creates a "matrixial borderspace" (Ettinger), where boundaries between the researcher and the researched, the personal and the political, and the individual and the collective become permeable without collapsing. This methodological vulnerability establishes the ethical foundation for the subsequent analysis of educational encounters. Traditional positionality statements position the

researcher as a fixed subject encountering research phenomena. The legal fiction challenges representationalist logic by demonstrating how positionality itself emerges through "intra-active" encounters with theoretical frameworks, personal history, and institutional structures. The Court's analysis of the Mother's practices as "agential cuts" that simultaneously separate and connect different phenomena reveals how the researcher's positionality functions as an active element of knowledge production, aligning with Barad's (2007) assertion that "we are not outside observers of the world" but "part of the world in its differential becoming."

In this way, the fictional court becomes more than an imaginative device: it is a methodological apparatus that renders visible the entanglements of law, race, care, and pedagogy. The documented case of Lucy Connolly, a childminder who incited racial hatred while simultaneously caring for racialised children, and a legal fiction account of discovering concealed Romani heritage alongside a lifetime of maternal eliminationist rhetoric, illuminate the unconscious transmission of racial boundaries through matrixial semiotic violence- the nonverbal, affective, and embodied transmission of racist ideology beneath the boundary of explicit discourse.

The analysis proceeds through several interconnected arguments: first, I demonstrate how maternal racism operates through what Barad (2007) terms "material-discursive practices" that actively reconfigure social reality beyond passively representing pre-existing racial categories. I then examine how practices of concealment and revelation function as "agential cuts" that produce racial boundaries through apparent acts of protection or care. Lastly, I explore the implications of these findings for educational practice, arguing that pedagogical spaces must be understood as "matrixial borderspaces" where ethical transformation becomes possible.

The legal format also allows for rigorous examination of evidence, precedent, and theoretical application while maintaining space for the multimodal, non-representational, and affective dimensions of literacy and identity by inviting engagement with multiple voices, layered subjectivities, and phantasmatic traces within a single semiotic assemblage. Writing becomes a felt process to analyse data and experiences that can only be felt, 'a feeling of a feeling of writing for which there are no words' (Ehret, 2018b in K. Leander & Ehret, 2019: 151). In becoming with this assemblage, literacy research is reconfigured: not as an overly rational process that

feigns to know completely or unethically reduces life to extractable data and meaning, but as an attunement to how life feels in becoming relations with texts. It is through these affective entanglements that bodies are moved toward more or less just acts of doing, making, and being together. Literacy thus emerges in new material forms as an ethical charge that affects living and doing education differently.

This chapter advances academic conversations by providing insights into the mechanisms of racism within intimate relationships and domestic spheres, challenging idealised notions of pedagogic care by exposing the entanglement of nurturing and violence. Tracing maternal racism's emergence through material-discursive practices rather than individual pathology, the analysis creates possibilities for developing more effective anti-racist pedagogy that acknowledges our mutual constitution while remaining accountable for the material effects of our actions in the ongoing reconfiguration of racialised worlds.

This inquiry attends to the “maternal” and the unconscious racism variant. My critical focus is on the affective charge of the mother-child relationship as it is shaped and fractured by external racialisation processes and how it reconfigures the affective dimensions of white womanhood. As a white woman (child), thriving in whiteness as a system of white domination and racial discourses, I ask, “What does it feel like to be formed affectively within whiteness?” I apply this inquiry to interrogate the political dimensions of personal and pedagogic practices, examining how the affective formation of subjectivity through whiteness might be critically disrupted. The aim is to make the invisible mother-child processes explicit for the (white) readers who need vivid examples of, firstly, the false good/bad and racist/non-racist binaries and, secondly, a space to disinherit hegemonic white subjectivities and co-emerge with the “non-I” (the 'Other') affective sensitivity. This inquiry is also an attempt to answer White’s (2009) call to explore white subjectivity, revealing “faces of hatred other than those [that are] known...And perhaps just as important, would thinking and feeling through what it is to be white, in relation to what it is to be black, tell us something about who we are in this world of ours? Now, these would be interesting conversations!” White (2009: 421).

Maternal thinking becomes a critical epistemological and pedagogical intervention. As Adrienne Rich (1982: 651) states, “The experience of motherhood was eventually to radicalise me”. This radicalisation is not simply ideological but affective and

embodied: a becoming that defies traditional epistemic hierarchies. Rich (1976) contends that if we examined maternal experience, we would encounter “the embodiment of rage, of tragedy, of the overcharged energy of love, of inventive desperation”- an affective field shaped and distorted by the “machinery of institutional violence” (Rich, 1976: 285). Maternal ethics, and by extension, pedagogical practice, emerge and are co-opted through this affectivity. The integration of maternal thinking into educational theory disrupts the false binaries that separate rationality from emotion, mind from body, and public from private. Maternal ways of knowing, as theorised by Sara Ruddick (1989), highlight a situated epistemology of lived relationality and moral complexity. Ruddick’s notion of maternal thinking is not an essentialised identity but the transformative potential of cognitive and ethical practices developed under conditions of care, protection, and resistance. These practices are profoundly political and epistemologically complex, presenting a significant challenge to the disembodied rationalism of prevailing educational paradigms.

Within the laminated assemblage of Mother versus The Matrixial, Ruddick’s framework enables a re-reading of maternal responsibility not as a static virtue, but as a contested site of affective, semiotic, and ideological struggle. The legal fiction reveals the operation of racism via affective concealment disguised as care, while maternal thinking exposes how pedagogical institutions invoke ‘care’ to perpetuate racialised, gendered, and classed hierarchies. Ruddick’s concept of “attentive love” (1995) can be interpreted as an ethical framework and as a site of institutional capture or “maternal performativity” (Jeremiah, 2006) where the materiality of mothering is inseparable from its discursive conditions. Educational institutions may perform care while structurally negating it, demanding that teachers perform maternal labour within competitive, audit-driven environments that systematically devalue it. Thus, maternal epistemologies operate as a resource and critique. They reveal how pedagogical subjectivity (of the female or feminised educator) is constituted through the contradictory demands of emotional labour, institutional loyalty, and ethical care. Rich’s (1976) distinction between the experience of motherhood and the patriarchal institution of motherhood maps directly onto the tension between pedagogic practice and its institutional containment. Rich’s call to reclaim embodied knowledge as a radical act resonates with the methodological

choices in my study, emphasising the affective, non-verbal, and non-linear as valid modes of inquiry.

The variability and relationality of maternal practice defy any totalising account. Bailey (1994) contends that the ideal of maternal thinking cannot encompass the full diversity of maternal experiences, especially when recognition of care is distributed along lines of race, class, and citizenship. The concept of “motherwork” (Collins, 1994) illustrates the entanglement of Black and racialised women’s maternal work with survival, resistance, and collective identity formation. Within education, these insights reveal how institutional discourses of ‘care’ often reproduce racialised and gendered inequalities under the pretence of neutral professionalism. The figure of the teacher, like the mother, becomes a fiction: a composite subject demanded to care ethically, regardless of burnout, identity, or structural injustice, and whose failure to meet these demands is framed not as a systemic contradiction, but as individual inadequacy. This framing obscures the necropolitical violence (Mbembe, 2003) embedded in the care economy of education, where care becomes a site of disposability and obligation.

My multi-voiced, posthuman inquiry into the affective and ideological production of educational subjectivities opens space for developing response-able pedagogies attuned to the layered realities of care, the material-discursive practices of race and gender, and embodied knowledge: a call to stay with the trouble (Haraway, 2016) of maternal epistemologies, to resist their capture, and to explore how they might enable more just, affective, and accountable modes of educational practice.

MOTHER v THE MATRIXIAL
[2025] ACAD CRIT 001

Case No: PhEM/2025/001

IN THE COURT OF CRITICAL THEORY
POSTHUMANIST DIVISION

ON APPEAL FROM THE DOMESTIC SPHERE

Her Honour Judge Barad KC and Professor Ettinger

Case Reference: MAT/DOM/2025

Royal Academy of Critical Justice

New Materialist Wing, London

Date: 30/05/2025

Before:

LORD JUSTICE AGENTIAL-REALISM

DAME JUSTICE MATRIXIAL

and

MR JUSTICE RESPONSE-ABILITY

Between:

THE MOTHER (Appellant)

- and -

THE MATRIXIAL (Respondent)

Dr PhEmaterialist (instructed by Posthumanist Solicitors) for the Appellant
Professor Intra-Activity (instructed by New Materialist Chambers) for the Respondent

Hearing dates: 29-30 May 2025

APPROVED JUDGMENT

WARNING: This judgment contains theoretical content that may challenge anthropocentric assumptions about agency, subjectivity, and responsibility. Readers are advised that exposure to posthumanist concepts may result in ontological disorientation and the dissolution of humanist certainties.

CASE SUMMARY

Lord Justice Agential-Realism:

The Facts: This matter comes before the Court following a symbolic claim brought by the Claimant, an adult daughter, against her late Mother, alleging intergenerational racialised harm. The Mother, a border force officer, was charged with the offence of expressions of violent racial contempt within maternal discourse in violation of matrixial trans-subjectivity. The case centres on two key facts:

- **Violent Rhetoric:** Throughout the Claimant's childhood, The Mother frequently articulated eliminationist fantasies, stating her desire “to stand on the balcony of our fifth-floor apartment and use my service firearm to fatally shoot and eliminate all members of the Roma community residing in our neighbourhood.”
- **Heritage Concealment:** The Mother concealed the Claimant's half-Romani heritage for almost 30 years. The Claimant only discovered this through independent genealogical research as an adult.

The Legal Question: Can a mother be held responsible for racialised harm when she simultaneously cared for her child while expressing violent hatred toward that child's ethnic community- a community the child didn't even know she belonged to?

The Court noted that under section 19(1) of the Matrixial Ethics Act 2025, expressions of violent racial contempt within maternal discourse constitute a violation of trans-subjective responsibility where:

- (a) The maternal subject intends thereby to foreclose ethical co-emergence with the racialised other or
- (b) Having regard to all the circumstances, such foreclosure is likely to occur.

The Court's Approach:

- The Court was constituted not to assess guilt in the punitive sense but to examine "response-ability" or how actions participate in creating shared reality in the relational, ontological and matrixial sense, regardless of conscious intention, as articulated by Barad (2007) and Ettinger (2006).

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Dame Justice Matrixial:

The Court's analysis is anchored in "PhEmaterialist jurisprudence," an approach synthesising Karen Barad's agential realism with Bracha Ettinger's matrixial theory.

Core Concept 1: Agential Realism (Karen Barad)

Basic Principle: Reality emerges through relationships, not from pre-existing separate entities.

Key Terms Explained:

- Central to our analysis is the concept of "intra-activity"-the mutual constitution of phenomena where "distinct agencies emerge through, rather than precede, their intra-action" (Barad, 2007: 33). Applied to this case, the Mother and the Claimant were not pre-existing entities that subsequently interacted but rather emerged through specific material-discursive practices within the domestic

sphere. The daughter's identity as “white” and the mother's identity as “protective” emerged together through the concealment practice.

- “Boundary-making practices”: Actions that simultaneously separate and connect different phenomena, creating the boundaries between self/other, included/excluded. Barad's foundational work established that “discursive practices are not speech acts. Rather, discursive practices are specific material configurings of the world through which determinations of boundaries, properties, and meanings are differentially enacted” (Barad, 2007: 335). Applied to the present case, the Mother's eliminationist rhetoric functioned not merely as representation but as a material intervention in the world's differential becoming.
- “Apparatus”: The material arrangements through which boundaries are enacted, and phenomena emerge. In this case, (maternal) subjectivity functions as an “apparatus”: “boundary- making practices that are formative of matter and meaning, productive of, and part of, the phenomena produced” (Barad, 2007: 146). The mother's concealment and hate speech functioned as a racialising “apparatus” that rendered Roma people as eliminable others, enacting a boundary that separated the daughter from her Roma heritage while connecting her to whiteness.

Core Concept 2: Matrixial Theory (Bracha Ettinger)

Basic Principle: Relationships involve profound vulnerability and openness, and any act of violence toward the Other in the matrixial space constitutes a psychic and structural rupture within the self.

Key Terms Explained:

- “Matrixial borderspace”: Applying the metaphor of the womb, “the matrixial borderspace” is “the psychic sphere which is trans-subjective on a sub-subjective partial level. A mental matrixial encounter-event transgresses individual psychic boundaries even if and when its awareness arises in the field of the separate individual subject” (Ettinger, 2005: 703). In contrast to classical psychoanalysis, which emphasises individuation, the matrixial

borderspace is a psychic space where co-emergence, fragility and partial subjectivity as the foundation of relationality.

- Trans-subjectivity: the concept that subjectivity is co-constituted and shared. Material traces as non-conscious affective patterns from matrixial encounters transgress individual boundaries.
- “Wit(h)nessing”: Ethical attention to otherness that involves self-fragilisation and compassionate hospitality. Thus, matrixial, i.e., pedagogical relationships are not interpersonal- they are foundational to ethical capacity and co-affectivity.
- “Metramorphic moments”: Fundamental shifts in borderlines between being/absence, self/other. The subject is formed through borderlinking with the non-I, and any act of rejection that forecloses co-affectivity produces “devastating unconscious effects”.

Applied to this case, the mother's failure to “wit(h)ness” her daughter's full identity (including Roma heritage) violated matrixial ethics by foreclosing ethical co-emergence with the racialised other.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND PRECEDENT

The Facts:

- The Court applied the precedent established in *Lucy Connolly v The King* [2025] EWCA Crim 657, where a 41-year-old childminder and Mother was sentenced to 31 months for inciting racial hatred. Following the murder of three children in Southport in July 2024, Lucy Connolly published a social media post in response to claims that the assailant was an undocumented immigrant, in which she stated: “Mass deportation now. Set fire to all the fucking hotels full of the bastards for all I care. ... I feel physically sick knowing what these families will now have to endure. If that makes me racist, so be it” (*Connolly v The King*, 2025, para. 4).
- In her defence, Connolly explained that her actions were driven by the emotional pain of losing her 19-month-old son in 2012 due to medical negligence. Connolly claimed she did not intend anyone to set fire to migrant hotels or murder politicians; she was just angry (*Connolly v The King*, 2025,

para. 39). The Court of Appeal upheld her sentence in May 2025. In response, the leader of Reform UK, Nigel Farage, asserted that "millions of mothers at that moment in time after Southport" felt "exactly the same" as Connolly (The Telegraph, 2025), a statement widely condemned for normalising violent rhetoric.

Legal Significance:

- Significantly, as noted in the Connolly judgment, the defendant simultaneously cared for racialised children, "including those from Somali and Bangladeshi backgrounds," whom she "loves... like they're her own" (BBC News, 2024). This apparent contradiction provided a crucial precedent for understanding how maternal care and racial violence can become entangled (Barad, 2007) rather than existing as discrete phenomena. The Court found that maternal subjectivity, though historically idealised as protective and nurturing, is also a site of constitutive exclusion.
- Rather than viewing Connolly's care and contempt as contradictory, agential realism reveals how they constitute "complementary" aspects of the same phenomenon (Barad, 2007: 121) that emerge through what Barad terms "the entangled nature of differences that matter" (Barad, 2007: 381). Connolly's household's resemblance to the "United Nations" (The Exposé, 2025), alongside her eliminationist rhetoric, demonstrates how racist ideologies operate through "iterative reconfiguring of spacetime-matter relations" (Barad, 2007: 178).

Application to Present Case:

- Like Connolly, the Claimant's mother also displayed protective care towards her daughter as well as other honourable qualities, such as bravery in her service as a border force officer, defiance and subversion of totalitarian structures with a strong commitment to freedom, democracy, human rights, and social change. The court must examine how these seemingly contradictory positions work together.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Mr Justice Response-Ability:

- The Court finds that the Mother's practices constituted what Barad terms “agential cuts” (Barad, 2007) that:
 - Severed the Claimant from knowledge of her Romani heritage
 - Positioned the Roma people as objects of eliminationist fantasy
 - Produced the Claimant as "white" while erasing her racial lineage
- The concealment of heritage was ruled not an act of protection from societal harm and discrimination but a “cutting together apart” (Barad, 2007: 394) that demonstrated how racial categories are “intra-actively produced” through specific material practices (Barad, 2007: 335). This reveals how “boundaries do not sit still” (Barad, 2007: 170) and that racial categories are continuously reconfigured through material-discursive practices.
- Applying Ettinger's matrixial theory, the Court found that the Mother's failure to recognise the “non-I” within the Claimant foreclosed ethical co-emergence. As Ettinger explains, “non-I is not an intruder, but a partner in difference. The Matrix reflects multiple and/or partial joint strata of subjectivity whose elements recognise each other without knowing each other” (Ettinger, 1993 in Pollock, 2009: 5). The Mother's eliminationist rhetoric toward Roma people while concealing the Claimant's Roma heritage violated this fundamental principle. Since “pregnancy [is] a state of being alive in giving life” and wanting to “live beside that given life” (Ettinger in Pollock, 2009: 6), the mother's failure to “live beside” the claimant's full identity (including Roma heritage) represents a betrayal of matrixial ethics.

THE CLAIMANT'S EVIDENCE

Racialisation:

- The Claimant provided compelling testimony about the material effects of The Mother's practices. She described how, despite concealment efforts, she experienced racialisation through affective processes, including being told her brown eyes (as the only visible phenotypic difference) were “dirty” and being instructed to wash them with soap. This evidence demonstrated the “materialising effects” of discursive practices (Barad, 2007: 209) and “marks

on bodies” (Barad, 2007: 178) that exceed individual intention, revealing how “materiality and discursivity are mutually implicated in the dynamics of intra-activity” (Barad, 2007: 336).

- The claimant gave evidence that her persistent sense of affective othering predated and now reframes her heritage revelation within a broader narrative of racialisation and historical marginalisation. Her testimony demonstrated that “the past is never left behind, never finished once and for all” (Barad, 2007: 181). The material traces of racialisation, she explained, remain “sedimented” in the body's becoming, showing how “matter carries within itself the sedimented historicalities of the practices through which it is produced” (Barad, 2007: 180).
- The claimant agrees that passing as non-Roma undoubtedly offered her better opportunities and a more comfortable life, leading to greater acceptance and fewer social challenges associated with half- Roma identity.
- The claimant’s biological father, a border force officer like the Mother, also concealed his and his family’s identity as he not only felt a sense of shame about his heritage, but Roma's cultural identity was also seen as an insurmountable obstacle to the capacity to take a “normal” part in social life.
- The Claimant’s testimony revealed how this apparent advantage operated through what the Court termed “selective inclusion/exclusion” that created the appearance of inherent deficiency while actually reflecting systemic processes of boundary-making and rejection.

Identity Reconfiguration:

- The Claimant’s testimony revealed that learning about Roma heritage as a parent of two children, at age 27, represented an irrevocably altered reality and created a misalignment with her expectations for unconditional maternal acceptance. The Claimant's discovery of her heritage represented what Ettinger terms a “metramorphic moment”: “the process of change in borderlines and thresholds between being and absence, memory and oblivion, I and non-I” (Ettinger in Pollock, 2009: 3). The claimant moved from “being” white to recognising her “absence” from full knowledge of her identity, demonstrating how “boundaries are drawn by mapping practices; ‘objects’ do

not pre-exist as such. Objects are boundary projects. But boundaries shift from within; boundaries are very tricky” (Haraway, 1998 in Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012: 109). Changes or alterations to one entity's state instantaneously affect the state of the other, irrespective of their spatial distance, highlighting the significance of maternal relationships in exploiting, revealing, denying and negating racial differences and ultimately defining humanity.

Internal Questioning:

- The claimant's evidence revealed her internal questioning: “Was I included or excluded in my mother's hate speech and violent rhetoric? Did my mother wish to annihilate half of me? Did my mother construct me with contempt, like the objects of her racialised humour? Would my mother also have victim-blamed me had I been subjected to sexual violence or abuse by authorities, institutions, or the legal system in the way she demonised Roma women reporting police violence?”
- The claimant described how she found herself self-objectifying through racialised attitudes, societal norms and power relations, confronting fundamental questions about her position within her mother's racist discourse. Her internal questioning revealed the devastating effects of what Ettinger describes as when “rejection occupies the space of such a fragile openness, devastating unconscious effects necessarily occur” (Ettinger, 2005: 708). The claimant's ordinary errors in childhood- moments of emotionality, inattentiveness, lack of discipline and productivity- later came to signify that she embodied some of the behaviours the civilising process was meant to have overcome, the “repressed” of modern civilisation. She questioned whether she was “partially inherently criminal, too”, revealing how racialised subjects come to internalise pathological paradigms imposed through systemic boundary-making practices.
- The claimant described how “the I and non-I [were] wit(h)nessing one another, and by that [we] bec[a]me partialised, vulnerable and fragilised” (Ettinger, 2005: 704). Her evidence demonstrated her vulnerable witnessing position - her mother's inescapable racist expressions made her “partialised” and “fragilised” in relation to her own identity. She testified that self-objectifying

herself from a Roma perspective revealed whiteness as homicidal, demonstrating how “subjectivity here is a transgressive encounter between 'I' (as partial-subject) and uncognised yet intimate 'non-I' (as partial-subject or partial-object)” (Ettinger, 2005: 703).

Identity as a Process:

- The claimant's evidence reveals how racial categories are continuously reconfigured through material-discursive practices. Her testimony demonstrates that identity formation occurs through complex processes of inclusion, exclusion, and the ongoing negotiation of boundaries that are never fixed or stable. As she explained: “the disintegration of the artificially isolating boundary leads to the dispersal of subjectivity and the knowledge that it is not a classifiable autonomous totality but emergent and expanding”.
- The claimant testified that when she (partially) lost her white positionality, she acknowledged the fluidity and vulnerability embedded in the enactment of Whiteness. This illustrated that “subjects are differentially constituted through specific intra-actions” (Barad, 2007: 379) and revealed how whiteness is not an inherent advantage but a behaviour and power ritual. Her testimony demonstrated that racial categories emerge through what Barad terms “intra-actions [that] necessarily entail constitutive exclusions, which constitute an irreducible openness” (Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012: 161), meaning that racial dualism is never fully fixed.
- The claimant's testimony regarding her questions of inclusion and exclusion in her mother's hate speech demonstrated the “entanglement” of seemingly separate entities. Her evidence showed that subjects are not external observers of the world situated in context; instead, they are integral to the world's ongoing intra-activity (Barad, 2007). The claimant explained that this entanglement means that boundaries between self and other are always already unstable and require constant maintenance through “iterative intra-activity” (Barad, 2007).
- The Court found that the claimant's testimony powerfully illustrated how “the matrixial web is thus the body-psyche-time-space of the intimate even though it is a web of several, and it is from the onset transgressive” (Ettinger, 2005:

704). Her evidence demonstrated that racialisation is not the product of isolated individual prejudices or inherent characteristics, but emerges through trans-subjective spaces. Her account revealed how white privilege and disadvantage are part of the same system of oppression perpetuated by white supremacy. This entangled subjectivity formation corroborates Barad's assertion that "boundaries do not sit still" (Barad, 2007: 170) and that "the subjects so constituted may range across some of the presumed boundaries...that get taken for granted" (Barad, 2007: 379). In other words, the Claimant's subject position as both the beneficiary and target of racial violence exemplified the shifting, unstable nature of racialised identity within intra-active and matrixial processes.

- The claimant's evidence revealed that "each psyche is a continuity of the psyche of the other in the matrixial borderspace" (Ettinger, 2005: 704-705), demonstrating that maintaining the multidimensionality of subjectivities does not lead to identity fragmentation but rather to an exchangeable positionality that resists the dominant gaze's negation, invalidation, or erasure. Her testimony resonated with what Braidotti (2019) terms nomadic subjectivity: "A mobile entity, an enfolded sort of memory that repeats and is capable of lasting through sets of discontinuous variations, while remaining faithful to itself" (Braidotti, 2000: 159 in Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012: 19).

LEGAL ANALYSIS

Lord Justice Agential-Realism:

- The Court's analysis draws heavily on the Connolly precedent, which established that maternal racism cannot be understood as individual pathology but must be examined as emerging through relational, trans-subjective encounters.
- As noted in Connolly, maternal subjectivity, though historically idealised as protective and nurturing, is also a site of constitutive exclusion. The present case extends this analysis by examining how concealment functions as a form of constitutive exclusion that operates through apparent inclusion.
- The Court applied Ettinger's concept of "wit(h)nessing", noting that ethical maternal relationships require "self-fragilisation" and "compassionate

hospitality” toward otherness. The Mother's failure to “live beside” the Claimant's full identity represented a betrayal of matrixial ethics.

THE QUESTION OF CONTRADICTION

- The Connolly case provides a clear precedent for illustrating the co-existence of inclusion, care and love for the racialised Other (children) "...like they're her own" (BBC News, 2024) and exclusion and elimination of the Other (asylum seekers) by "...sett[ing] fire to...the bastards..." (Connolly v The King, 2025, para. 4). White (2002) established that hatred is an ordinary human experience with extraordinary results. She argues that everyone has experienced both hating (self and the Other) and being hated (by Others), yet we regard hatred as taboo, creating a “collusion of silence” that renders it immensely dangerous. White (2002) suggests that racial hatred, while destructive, has also created complex mutual identifications between racial groups that enhance cultural diversity and individual identity formation.
- The central question in maternal racism cases is not whether love and hate can coexist- they demonstrably can and do. The real issue lies in our tendency to pathologise this contradiction, treating the simultaneous presence of care and contempt as an aberration. Parker (1995), expanding on Winnicott's (1956) concepts, examines maternal ambivalence- the coexistence of love and hate in mothering- as a normal, potentially creative element of emotional development. Winnicott proposed the notion of primary maternal preoccupation, a transient state of intense, exclusive attention on the infant; Parker views ambivalence as an essential counterbalance, aiding mothers to re-establish their identities and engage with the external world. Both emphasise that acknowledging a mother's hostile feelings- rather than denying them- can promote empathy, reflection, and healthier emotional development for both mother and child.
- The pathologisation of this contradiction conceals that the coexistence of care, contempt, and eliminationist desire is not an anomaly but a recurring pattern across both maternal and pedagogical (matrixial) domains. When hate speech and violent rhetoric are deployed as amusement or humour to convey racial contempt, it functions as an extreme form of “boundary-making practice”

that seeks to enact- rather than simply represent- racialised boundaries as absolute or “constitutive exclusions” (Barad, 2007: 57).

- These exclusionary boundary-making practices, framed as humour, grief or anger “matter” in normalising dehumanisation and enact the affective work of desensitisation, normalising mass shootings and materialising racialised bodies as targets of violence. These expressions function as “apparatuses” that, in Barad's terms, “play a role in the production of phenomena” (Barad, 2007: 335), specifically, the phenomenon of normalised racial violence within the matrixial sphere.
- The Court recognised that “The womb and the prenatal phase [as] the referents to the Real” (Ettinger, 2006: 17) renders the maternal domain as a foundational space where reality itself is constituted. When maternal racism operates through this space, racial boundaries are being enacted at the most fundamental level of subject formation, making them appear natural rather than constructed.
- Applying Ettinger's concept of “self-fragilisation” and “com-passion”, maternal and pedagogic relationships reveal profound vulnerability and openness to the other. As she explains: “Com-passion involves transformational affects... primary compassion (that precedes and might counter-balance abjection and abandonment), and primary awe (that might counter-balance shame and fear)” (Ettinger, 2009: 1). However, this same capacity for fragility can become weaponised through racist boundary-making practices. The maternal domain's inherent vulnerability makes it a particularly potent site for both ethical opening and violent exclusion. The very openness that enables profound connection also creates possibilities for profound harm. “A matrixial co-emergence has a healing power, but because of the transgression of individual boundaries that it initiates and entails, and because of the self-relinquishment and fragilisation it calls forward, it is also potentially traumatising” (Ettinger, 2005: 705-706), revealing the dual nature of maternal relationships as both protective and harmful and containing both healing potential and traumatising possibilities.
- Ettinger's analyses illuminate how these contradictions function: “The infant meets the maternal subject via its own primary affective compassion. I view the effect of primary compassion as a primal psychic access to the other. It

arises before, after and also alongside abjection” (Ettinger, 2010: 1). This reveals how, in the context of maternal racism or violent pedagogy, love, care and contempt can coexist in early psychic life and how those contradictions are not pathological, but constitutive of subject formation.

- The Court recognised that racist ideologies are not a coherent ideological system. Instead, there are many “racisms”, including liberal and maternal forms that contest binary understandings that position individuals as either racist or anti-racist. This complexity reveals how these contradictory positions can coexist within the same individual through complex processes of subjectification, where intersectional marginalisations, harm, grief, maternal identity, and racial hatred cannot be separated into discrete causal factors. They co-emerge through ongoing relational processes that exceed individual consciousness and intention.

RESPONSE-ABILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AGENCY AND INTENT

- The Court fundamentally rejected traditional approaches to intent, adopting Barad's understanding that “agency is not aligned with human intentionality or subjectivity” but rather “is a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has” (Barad, 2007: 235). The court emphasised that response-ability extends beyond individual intention to encompass participation in ongoing world-making. As Barad argues, “We have an obligation to be accountable for how our practices participate in the world's ongoing reconfiguration” (Barad, 2007: 178). The Mother's maternal care and racial violence were found to be not discrete actions but entangled phenomena emerging through intra-action.
- This theoretical framework proved key in establishing the Mother's responsibility through her ongoing participation in practices that created a world where Roma people could become targets of eliminationist fantasy. The Mother was found accountable not as an autonomous agent acting upon a passive world but as an agent within an apparatus of racial violence, participating in the iterative materialisation of whiteness through omission, silence, and affective hostility. The mother's practices functioned as part of what Barad calls “iterative reconfiguring”- ongoing processes that

continuously reshape the boundaries of who counts as human, who deserves protection, and who can be eliminated. The Mother's rhetoric participates in the spatio-temporal iterations of violence. Over the past two decades, Roma communities in CEE have also been subjected to numerous violent attacks, including fatal shootings, arson and deaths in police custody. The temporal relationship between the Mother's elimination "jokes" and an off-duty policeman killing three Roma people in 2012 (BBC News, 2012) demonstrates the "iterative reconfiguring of spacetime" (Barad, 2007: 390), revealing how material-discursive practices become sedimented across space and time. The eliminationist expressions function as affective and ontological reinforcements of structural violence and reconfigure the very possibilities for violence.

- This finding directly challenged the Mother's defence that her eliminationist fantasies were driven by the "emotional pain of intersectional marginalisations and betrayal", which the Court deemed insufficient to negate response-ability.
- The Court rejected the defence argument that concealment constituted protection, finding instead that it participated in what Barad terms "constitutive exclusions" that foreclose possibilities for ethical relationality.
- Applying the Connolly precedent, the Court acknowledged that "the prevailing primal mother-phantasies of over-devouring, abandonment and not-enoughness are necessary for survival: these are human early tools for organising the not-sufficient reality of living in the world" (Ettinger, 2010: 7), supporting the Mothers' claims of existential distress.
- Here, we of course have every sympathy with The Mother over the intersectional marginalisations and betrayals she experienced throughout her life, and we can understand why she remained angry about the circumstances of her professional and personal struggles.
- Deep fears of loss and engulfment shape how subjects organise their psychic worlds. While recognising the Mother's legitimate existential distress, the Court distinguished between anxieties that are symbolically processed or relationally held within contexts of grief, trauma and precarity, versus those projected outward through violent boundary-making that participates in the apparatus of racial violence.

- The Court must rightly observe that the Mother did not channel her pain into practices of care and protection for her racialised child. Nor, we would add, did she direct her hostility solely toward the systems and structures that had harmed her. She chose instead to incite eliminationist violence against large numbers of Roma persons while simultaneously concealing her child's connection to this very community. The Mother's personal history of trauma cannot significantly reduce her culpability for these serious violations of matrixial ethics.
- The Court finds that these cases demonstrate how the interaction of racial essentialism with the social and affective structures generated by Whiteness functions as a catalyst for racialising everyday "sad" affects (Spinoza) or existing antagonisms and transforming them into noxious racial contempt, re-externalised and reinforced by hateful rhetoric.
- The court contends that the Mothers' defended identity, grief and survival were centred on the authority to demarcate, evade and eradicate the "Other" as the symbolic materialisation of their internalised pain. Establishing securitised borders and reinforcing them with hateful rhetoric was an attempt to reiterate the differentiation of self and the "Other"- a phantasmatic attempt to stabilise their worlds and to reclaim a sense of control or moral clarity by constructing an "Other" to blame and eliminate.
- The Mothers' repeated elimination fantasies can be identified as defensive responses to vulnerability and phantasmatic attempts to foreclose ambiguity, stabilise her world and recover control by establishing rigid, racialised boundaries between self and the Other to be blamed and eliminated. The violent boundary-making enactments can be linked to the maternal condition itself: the subject who must live with the tension of giving life, remaining beside it, and also confronting its fragility and unpredictability may find this tension unbearable, leading to racist rhetoric functioning as fantasies of psychic control. Tragically, the Mothers were unwilling to devise a viable alternative strategy to meet their fundamental human needs.
- The boundaries between self and the "Other" are enmeshed with the socio-political reproduction of historical explanations of racial superiority, denial and complicity, making them scaffolded and adaptable rather than self-sufficient and autonomous. If permitted, racist rhetoric and eliminationist

fantasies may function as fantasies of psychic control, masking anxiety with performative strength, and difference with expulsion. Therefore, the material and symbolic conditions that permit the substitution of internalised existential distress and ontological insecurity with the readily available power of racism highlight the urgency of response-ability (Barad) for unsettling the societal contexts that form our ability to respond.

- The court recognises the need for transforming maternal racisms into unconscious, affective strategies for managing existential fear- moving from a relational, phantasmatic defence against the not-enoughness of being that tragically reproduces structural violence and forecloses ethical co-emergence with the racialised Other toward practices of matrixial wit(h)nessing that can hold complexity without resorting to eliminationist solutions.

Missed Opportunities:

The Court found that the mother missed opportunities to engage in everyday anti-racism that could have challenged white supremacy within the maternal relationship while still protecting her daughter from external harm.

The mother could have acknowledged the daughter's heritage while teaching her to navigate racism, rather than participating in the erasure of Roma identity and anti-Roma hate.

AGGRAVATING FACTORS

- The Court identified several aggravating factors that intensified the harm:
 - a) Concealment of Heritage: The Mother's concealment of the Claimant's half-Romani heritage for almost 30 years constituted what the Court termed “genealogical violence”-the active erasure of ancestral connection.
 - b) Professional Position: The Mother's role as a border force officer amplified the material effects of her boundary-making practices, demonstrating how individual racism becomes entangled with institutional apparatus.
 - c) Temporal Duration: The eliminationist rhetoric was not a single incident but a repeated pattern throughout the Claimant's childhood,

creating what Barad terms “sedimented historialities” (Barad, 2007: 180).

MITIGATING CONSIDERATIONS

- This theoretical framework revealed that The Mother's practices could not be understood as isolated individual choices but as manifestations of broader systemic forces. The Court found that maternal racisms thus cannot be understood as individual prejudice but as emergent through relational, trans-subjective encounters and boundary-making practices (Barad, 2007) that exceed individual subjects.
- Within this matrixial understanding, the Mother's actions emerged through the broader apparatus of racial violence, including:
 - a) The pressures of white normativity operating at trans-subjective levels
 - b) Institutional complicity that shapes matrixial encounters before conscious awareness
 - c) Transgenerational sedimentation of racist practices transmitted through pre-subjective relational fields
- The Court determined that these systemic forces operate through the matrixial borderspace, where racial formations are transmitted and reproduced through encounters that “transgress individual psychic boundaries” even when individuals remain unaware of their participation in these processes. The Court determined that the Mother's eliminationist practices toward Roma people were not merely personal prejudices but emerged through trans-subjective encounters within systemic, relational and affective systems of racial violence that precede and exceed individual consciousness.

SENTENCING CONSIDERATIONS

Dame Justice Matrixial:

- In determining the appropriate remedy, the Court considered the unique nature of posthumanist jurisprudence, which seeks transformation rather than punishment. A posthumanist approach to justice recognises that “ethics is about mattering, about taking account of the entangled materialisations of

which we are a part” (Barad, 2007: 384), demonstrating how individual subjects are themselves “phenomena” produced through “specific intra-actions” (Barad, 2007: 206). This demands attention not only to individual accountability but to the broader apparatus of racial violence and the material conditions that make certain bodies vulnerable to eliminationist rhetoric and practice.

- The Court noted Ettinger’s observation that “respecting [the parental figure] does not have to wait for forgiveness to arise; respect has its own originary sources” (Ettinger, 2010: 1).
- The Court rejected approaches that would reduce The Mother to a “ready-made-mother-monster”(as an automatic cause of suffering), noting that such framing “gives rise to mother-hate [and] ... delegitimi[ses] and dehumani[ses] maternal subjectivity” (Ettinger, 2010: 4). Instead, the Court sought to maintain respect for the complexity of maternal subjectivity while acknowledging and holding accountability for harmful practices.
- Rather than treating The Mother’s racism as evidence of “bad mothers, the court considers that “The prevalence of the imaginary mother-monster readymade figure testifies... to the systematic disrecognition that particular kinds of recurring phantasmatic and imaginary complaints... represent in fact primal phantasies” (Ettinger in Pollock, 2009: 22), suggesting that examining how maternal racism emerges through broader phantasmatic structures that position certain (racialised) others as threats to be eliminated, reveals systemic rather than individual pathology.
- The Court imposed the following remedial measures:
 - Symbolic reparations through academic practice
 - Pedagogic re-articulation of matrixial ethics
 - Conceptual re-weaving of matrixial threads through academic engagement

CONCLUSION AND FINAL ORDERS

Mr Justice Response-Ability:

- This case demonstrates how maternal racism operates through material-discursive practices that exceed individual intention while demanding

new forms of collective responsibility. The entanglement of care and violence within the maternal domain reveals the inadequacy of approaches that treat racism as individual pathology.

- The Court's PhEmaterialist analysis provides crucial insights by revealing how racism emerges through “intra-active” processes rather than existing as a property of individual subjects. The concepts of agential cuts, entanglement, and response-ability offer frameworks for developing more ethical approaches to both maternal and pedagogical relationships.
- As Barad argues, “We are responsible for the world within which we live not because it is an arbitrary construction of our choosing, but because it is sedimented out of particular practices that we have a role in shaping” (Barad, 2007: 203).
- The Court, therefore, orders:
 - Recognition that transformation requires attending to the “entangled materialisations of which we are a part” (Barad, 2007: 384)
 - Development of matrixial pedagogical practices that embody “compassionate hospitality in living inter-with-in-beside the almost Other” (Ettinger in Pollock, 2009: 7).
 - Acknowledgement that the “non-I” must be recognised as “a partner in difference” rather than a threat to be eliminated. This “wit(h)nessing” with transformational possibilities requires “self-fragilisation with-in the process [that] sublimates com-compassion itself into a special kind of ethical human contract” (Ettinger, 2009: 3).
- The Mother's appeal is dismissed. The sentence of symbolic reparations and pedagogic re-articulation stands as imposed.
- This judgment shall serve as a precedent for future cases involving the intersection of maternal responsibility, racial violence, and posthumanist ethics.

Leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Critical Theory refused.

This judgment is approved for publication and may be cited as authority in future proceedings involving PhEmaterialist jurisprudence.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

The Court noted that this case has profound implications for pedagogical practice, positioning pedagogic spaces as sites where “the matrix-informed attitude of the teacher can prove beneficial at all stages of education and in various educational situations” (Kisiel, 2022: 497-8 in Bickel and Fisher, 2023). Pedagogic spaces function as inherently matrixial borderspaces (Ettinger, 2006) where students and teachers engage in trans-subjective encounters that transgress individual boundaries.

The Legal fiction methodology aligns with Daniels’ (2025) structural analysis of anti-Black racism within the Metropolitan Police Service by rejecting the notion of racism as an individual pathology. Daniel’s (2025) patterns parallel mechanisms identified in my research context: “institutional whiteness” (Ahmed, 2006), “fabrication” (Ball, 2003), and audit cultures perpetuate structural inequalities while presenting as neutral. Daniels (2025) identifies 30 “patterns of harm” within the Metropolitan Police Service, mapping a systemic architecture with institutional logics that produce and sustain racialised harm:

1. Admittance is conditional (**entry logic**)
2. Containment manages harm without cure (**reaction logic**)
3. Data provides knowing without seeing (**epistemic logic**)
4. Control masquerades as development (**internalisation logic**)
5. Coercion becomes routine (**discipline logic**)
6. Digitisation scales structural advantage (**expansion logic**)
7. Denial modernises avoidance (**closure logic**)

Daniels (2025) provides a cross-sectoral framework for analysing whiteness within public institutions, enabling me to contextualise my findings within a systemic critique of the normalisation, management, and invisibility of racialised harm. This alignment validates my empirical and theoretical insights. It illuminates the universal logics of power, denial, and resistance that shape the experiences of marginalised professionals and communities. This convergence is a deliberate methodological and political choice, emphasising the relevance of cross-sectoral, historically informed, and relational analyses in pursuing institutional transformation and epistemic justice (Fricke, 2007; Ahmed, 2006; Barad, 2007). The table mapping my findings to the 30 Patterns of Harm (Daniels, 2025) can be found in the Appendix.

Lucy Connolly's role as a childminder and the wife of a Tory councillor (Sky News, 2025) and the Mother's role as a civil servant illustrates that cultural institutions (family, friendship, education, workplace, government, etc.) exhibit multiple superimposed states simultaneously, indicating that racism emerges not as a discrete, isolable, pre-existing attribute but through the entangled becoming of institutions, subjects, and material practices. The entangled nature of these formations means that making precise value measurements or assessments of multiple elements simultaneously is unascertainable and leads to differing impacts of racism on individuals, with some racism so subtle that it goes unnoticed by both parties.

This legal fiction is read alongside published statutory safeguarding reviews in education, including the Child Q Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (Gamble & McCallum, 2022) and the Mossbourne Victoria Park Academy (MVPA) Child Safeguarding Review (Wood, 2025), as a structural re-articulation of the same structural patterns of harm identified by Daniels (2025). The MVPA and Child Q reviews identify contradictions that resonate with the Legal Fiction. The former identifies the paradox of "outstanding results alongside deep distress" (Wood, 2025: 78) and the latter the contradiction between institutional claims of care and the enactment of racialised and gendered violence within protective pedagogic and safeguarding spaces. MVPA "has created a system optimised for pupils who can navigate its strictures but has failed to build in the flexibility and compassion required to protect those who cannot" (Wood, 2025: 78). Child Q, a Black female child of secondary school age, was strip searched by Metropolitan Police officers at her London school in 2020 without an 'appropriate adult' present. The strip search involved the exposure of her intimate body parts while she was menstruating. The MVPA paradox has been explained by "a culture that prioritises compliance and control above all else" (Wood, 2025) while the Child Q review findings state that "racism (whether deliberate or not) was likely to have been an influencing factor in the decision to undertake a strip search" (Gamble & McCallum, 2022: 6), aligning with the Legal Fiction findings. The Child Q review concluded that adultification bias was evident in Child Q's criminal justice and disciplinary response "rather than a child protection response" (Gamble & McCallum, 2022: 34). Adultification operates through gendered mechanisms: black boys are constructed through institutional

discourse as inherently dangerous. Their bodies and behaviours are interpreted through frameworks of threat rather than vulnerability (Graham, 2022). Black girls are sexualised and are attributed with adult levels of sexual awareness and responsibility. They are constructed as hyper-visible sexual beings and invisible as children requiring protection (Epstein et al., 2017; Georgetown Law Centre on Poverty and Inequality, 2019, in Gamble & McCallum, 2022). Their childhood is systematically stolen, and institutional protection is withdrawn. The Child Q review (Gamble & McCallum, 2022) or the Mossbourne Victoria Park Academy (MVPA) Child Safeguarding Review (Wood, 2025) recommendations expose how institutional logics (Daniels, 2025) produce carceral pedagogy and systemic safeguarding failure and how the harm is subsequently contained, justified, or erased through institutional discourse.

"[Schools] should have been more challenging to the police, seeking clarity about the actions they intended to take. All practitioners need to be mindful of their duties to uphold the best interests of children" (Gamble & McCallum, 2022).

This Child Q review recommendation (Gamble & McCallum, 2022) demonstrates how legitimised child protection and welfare processes can become instruments of embodied violation when mediated by racialised suspicion, procedural compliance, and institutional authority. These encounters are not local but entangled with previous police encounters, media narratives, officer training manuals, legal frameworks and colonial and racial histories. The “moment” of the encounter is a condensation of elsewhere. In a Baradian sense, what happens “here” is shaped by what is elsewhere. Relation precedes place (location): past, present and future are folded together. Structures act through bodies, so a non-local account shifts analysis from isolated moments to entangled histories, infrastructures, and affects that act through bodies and spaces. Educational institutions’ responses are too condensed patterns of harm and institutional logics (Daniels, 2025), entangled with neoliberal accountability regimes, performative targets, Ofsted inspection frameworks, risk-averse governance cultures, and legalistic safeguarding protocols that prioritise organisational protection over relational care.

Many working-class and marginalised adolescents come into contact with the police (Efstathiadou & Ioakimidis, 2025), yet may not share those encounters publicly. Structural modifiers (Daniels, 2025) (class, neurodivergence, colourism, etc.) determine the forms of institutional violence that black children encounter: a trivial act of wearing a hoodie—a banal sartorial choice for adolescents, may result in extrajudicial killing by neighbourhood vigilantes, such as Trayvon Martin's murder in Florida in February 2012, profiling and excessive force (IOPCS, 2024) or construction as "disrespectful" within educational settings governed by Eurocentric traditions that perpetuate colonial-era racist practices (Graham, 2022). Their encounters with the police are traumatic experiences, disrupting their education, employment prospects, and trust in state institutions (Efstathiadou & Ioakimidis, 2025), emphasising the need to interrogate the role of state and police violence in students' lives.

The secondary traumas of police encounters illustrate a form of institutional violence that should be recognised within safeguarding frameworks: police or state violence and discriminatory enforcement practices, including adultification as systemic violence as extra-familial harm. Yet, educational institutions may fail to recognise, believe, or act on disclosures of state harm (Gamble & McCallum, 2022).

Safeguarding frameworks may fail to acknowledge police violence as a form of extra-familial harm requiring protective intervention and interpret contact with police as evidence of young people's "risk". Re-labelling of vulnerability as risk becomes a mechanism for quiet exclusion rather than protection (Lloyd, 2024). This risk reversal and misreading of victimisation contribute to the deficit framing that justifies further exclusion from educational and social support systems: racially minoritised young people were three times overrepresented in secondary education exclusion data relative to local populations (Lloyd, 2024). "Disruptive behaviour" and "attendance issues" were cited as primary reasons for exclusion—often masking underlying trauma and exploitation (Lloyd, 2024: 23).

State institutions can thus become sources of trauma and harm for young people, particularly those from minoritised communities. This institutional blindness to state violence as a source of harm represents limitations in safeguarding approaches, particularly given the disproportionate impact of police violence on racially minoritised young people who are already overrepresented in exclusion data.



Figure 20: Author's digital artwork

Educational institutions may mirror carceral logics, producing pedagogic spaces not as neutral containers for learning but active sites of “intra-active” (Barad, 2007) educational encounters where subjectivities, knowledge and institutions are continuously co-constituted through material-discursive practices (Barad, 2007). Matrixial pedagogy, anchored in vulnerability, trans-subjectivity, and ethical encounter, rejects neoliberal instrumentalism by emphasising an aesthetic-ethical praxis of wit(h)nessing, carriage, fragilisation, and co-emergence (Ettinger, 2006). Ettinger (2006) offers an alternative perspective on fragmented subjectivity. Policy documents are conceptualised as polyphonic (Bakhtin, 1981) sociosemiotic actors (Haraway, 1998; Hunter, 2015), productive of an infinite potentiality of practices. Historicising everyday and institutional literacy practices and texts emphasise the gendered and racialised nature of discourses, and not only makes the principles of exercising power in the research setting more transparent but prompts us to consider the resources people have to extricate themselves from and negate the dominant discourses within themselves to establish their own identity. Hunter (2008) theorises identity as an active negotiation of an individual position within a multi-layered network of relations with others within social structures and ideologies, and highlights the positive dimensions of sociocultural practices so deeply embedded into our consciousness that they have become invisible. Attending to the relational ontology of policy documents, we can shift our focus from the ‘ontologically insecure’ (Ball, 2003) identity categories that policy creates to the relationship between people and structures.

Acts of institutional violence articulated in the MVPA and Child Q reviews, and their subsequent concealment, operate through “trans-subjective” processes (Ettinger, 2006) that exceed individual agency while demanding collective accountability. When

professionals enact violence and then construct fabrications to conceal it, they engage in “agential cuts”- boundary-making practices that simultaneously separate and connect phenomena, creating the very realities they purport to describe (Barad, 2007). These acts of violence and their concealment through fabrications constitute an ethical violation and an ontological event that binds perpetrators within the very futures they attempt to foreclose. Meaning is intersubjective and happens in the in-between of the borders between a typology of systems. A neoliberal discourse is then simultaneously a material and immaterial complexity of semiotic, social, biological, and physical systems in a multi-systemic framework of situation types or contexts. An individual and collective subjectivity in a cultural institution is a multiplicity of unmerged voices and a site of conflict and synergy (Gregory, 2007). Dialogue syncretism between various linguistic consciousnesses has transformational potential. Singleness of monologism (Bakhtin, 1981) of the coercive nature of neoliberal discourses or domination from within does not exist in this epistemology. Reconceptualising policy, teaching and learning and literacy practices by foregrounding polyphony (Bakhtin, 1981) or the diversity of independent and interdependent voices and consciousness offers a gateway to engage with the embodied, material and historical complexity of being human among other humans and has the potential to humanise and embrace the messy aspects, including affect, in themselves and others.

Building on Bakhtin’s (1981) ideas of dialogic chronotopes and Goffman’s (1981) interactional lamination, my research design and interdisciplinary approach will allow me to map relatedness and layered intersubjectivity across relationship networks.

To illustrate, below is the “compositional” relationship of instantiation in steps:

Step 1. Step 1 is an example of the possible texts, discourses and socio-semiotic processes an educational professional may engage with

	Context: socio-semiotic process	Discourse used to	Examples
Illustrating general knowledge about the world	explaining, categorising/ documenting	create and disseminate general educational knowledge	educational journal articles, educational textbooks, educational lectures, educational handbooks
Reporting on a particular phenomenon	chronicling, inventorying, surveying	record information about case studies, and recount the experiences of students	Student progress notes, learning targets, student records, referrals (emails, forms), educational questionnaires, educational interviews, and educational news
Recreating aspects of (human) life, typically imaginatively	dramatising, narrating	dramatise or in other ways create fictional versions of educational contexts	educational TV dramas, school stories
Sharing personal experiences and values	reminiscing, emoting	exchange personal experiences and values relating to education	casual conversations about students and sharing good practice, student feedback
Doing some social process	directing, coordinating	facilitate educational practices	Initial assessment, diagnostic assessment, individual learning plans, out-of-class support, and liaising with safeguarding
Recommending some course of action	advising	advise students	Parents' evening, educational leaflets, open evenings, advertisements
	Promoting	promote educational services and products	

			Course prospectus
Enabling some course of action	instructing	mentor teaching practitioners (in training)	lesson demonstrations peer observations and support
	Regulating	controlling practices relating to education	educational legislation, educational qualifications
Exploring public views, values, and ideas	reviewing; arguing, debating	mentor teaching practitioners (in training)	educational editorials, opinion pieces about education

Table 1: Range of contexts relevant to education in terms of socio-semiotic process (Adapted from Matthiessen, 2013)

Applying Halliday's systemic-functional linguistics (SFL), Matthiessen employs field, tenor, and mode in the analysis of communication contexts. The field represents the social and semiotic activities unfolding in context and can be interpreted as the domains of professional activity. Matthiessen delineates eight primary types of socio-semiotic processes within the field: expounding, reporting, recreating, sharing, doing, recommending, enabling, and exploring. These processes pertain to multiple professional domains. In educational environments, "expounding" includes delivering lectures, explaining concepts, and sharing subject knowledge. "Reporting" involves providing feedback, writing progress reports, and engaging with parents. "Doing" encompasses conducting action research projects, collaboration, and managing classroom activities. "Enabling" includes supporting students' learning, mentoring, providing guidance and resources, and creating a conducive learning environment.

Step 2. At the level of context, I can investigate education as a cultural phenomenon from either of the two poles of the cline of instantiation. I can generalise from particular texts I observed and record them in their contexts of situation.

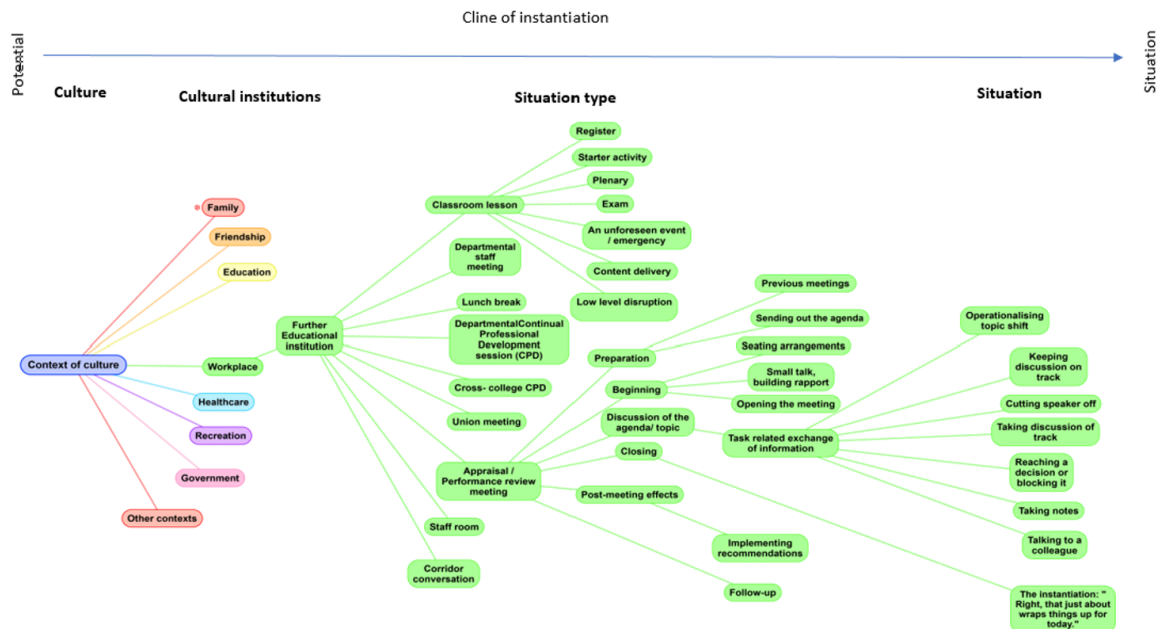


Figure 21: Cline of Instantiation

Education as a contextual theme extended along the cline of instantiation (Adapted from Matthiessen, 2013)

Extending Matthiessen's paradigm, my project contends that institutional positions impact communication patterns, meaning-making, and delimit the intelligible or legitimate professional subjectivity forms. Matthiessen's notion of instantiation signifies the connection between a system (e.g., a culture) and its instances (e.g., specific events or practices), suggesting that subjectivity is not an inherent trait but fluid and constructed through iterative experiences within a system (specific institutional, pedagogical, social, and cultural contexts). Individuals constantly negotiate and modify their sense of self in response to the demands and expectations of their professional roles.

Matthiessen's cline of instantiation describes the progression from abstract semiotic potential to concrete instances of meaning, tracing how systemic patterns are realised in texts and interactions and, through iteration, become stabilised as normative social practices. At one end of the cline are institutionalised meaning potentials (policies, genres, and discursive norms), while at the opposite are situated events in which these meanings are enacted, negotiated, or resisted. Within this framework, field, tenor, and mode operate as key organising principles through which meanings are instantiated: field structures the nature of social action and institutional objectives, tenor configures relational positioning, power, affect, and legitimacy, and mode influences how meanings circulate, are recorded, and legitimised.

Diffraction through agential realism (Barad, 2007), these instantiations are material-discursive intra-actions co-producing boundaries of responsibility, credibility, and professional legitimacy- and not merely representing them.

Field organises the performed social actions and their institutional objectives, integrating racialised logics into everyday practices, policies, and decision-making processes. Safeguarding procedures, disciplinary processes, risk assessments, and performance management structure action in ways that embed racialised assumptions about risk, credibility, and compliance. These activities are then relationally enacted through tenor.

Tenor denotes the social and semiotic relations between participants in an activity, continually reconstituted through institutional practices and affective intensities. Tenor configures power, authority, affect, and legitimation by differentially positioning racialised subjects as problematic, non-compliant, or untrustworthy, while simultaneously affording institutional actors credibility, legitimacy, and epistemic authority over whose experiences are rendered intelligible.

Mode signifies the medium of communication and refers to the methods individuals use to articulate their professional selves. Mode influences how harm is documented, justified, and rendered administratively intelligible through bureaucratic, evidentiary, and procedural discourses that fragment events, erase relational context, and diffuse accountability.

Step 3. Adding relationships to the distinction within the field of the primary types of socio-semiotic processes in Table 1, I can produce a more detailed map of relatedness

This step could be illustrated by Mbakwe's TikTok post (2025), illuminating how racialised meanings and affective responses are produced, circulated, and realised across contexts.

"Imagine you are on your way to work and you see a group of black boys walking towards you. You feel this deep sense of fear, and you hold your purse tightly. You are tempted to cross the road. You finally get to work. You work in a school. Do you think your unconscious is able to distinguish between the group of black boys that you saw on the street that you didn't know and any groups of black boys that you may see during the school day that you also may not know? Do you think your racism stays outside on the street, or do you think it travels inside the building with you and impacts all the interactions that you have with your black students?"

Mbakwe (2025) explains that these questions are posed because white women make up the majority of the education system in the UK and the US, and that some white teachers are teaching students whom they are afraid of.

"Not necessarily because the student has done anything, but because the student is a person of colour. How do you think this tension plays out in real time?", Mbakwe (2025) continues.

Mbakwe (2025) then references Morris' (2022) study of white female teachers' perceptions of black boys and their subsequent achievement. Morris (2022) identified white female teachers' deficit beliefs: black boys have social-emotional needs that cause extreme behaviours; trauma causes the Black boys to struggle in school; black boys don't want to learn, or perceptions about a lack of parent involvement. Morris (2022) suggests that these beliefs negatively affect the academic achievement of Black male students.

Mbakwe (2025) concludes: "Racism is impacting your ability to do your job" and exemplifies how field, tenor, and mode configure racialised social relations and power dynamics. The activity of "walking to work, seeing Black boys, and entering a school" constitutes "field" as a semiotic environment of intersecting fear, anticipation, and institutional responsibilities. Tenor highlights the interpersonal and power

dynamics of professional interactions between white educators and Black students. The cline of instantiation is illustrated in how abstract systemic patterns of racism (anticipatory fear, deficit thinking, professional norms) become actualised in concrete instances of moment-to-moment pedagogical encounters (a teacher's moment of fear on the street and subsequent classroom interactions). Racialised cognition, affect, and ideologies of race are reinstated in new contexts, produce patterned, relationally distributed effects on professional identity in racially stratified educational contexts, and encode racialised subjectivities. The cline demonstrates the continuity between societal structures and classroom micro-practices. The student-teacher interactions as material-discursive events produce material effects.



Figure 22 Educational institution situation types (Adapted from Matthiessen, 2013)

Step 4. Lastly, I consider the relationality between micro, meso and macro systems of the professional

In the context of systemic racism, racialised inequalities are not reducible to individual prejudice but emerge as patterned instantiations across the cline, where everyday professional interactions sediment racialised assumptions into enduring institutional norms. Professional identity is constructed along this cline, as individuals assume subject positions that are repeatedly instantiated through racialised configurations of field, tenor, and mode, rendering some forms of professional subjectivity credible and legitimate while marginalising others. Professional identity emerges through these patterned intra-actions, as racialised subjects are differentially positioned across interactions, texts, and systems in ways that reproduce unequal outcomes while appearing procedurally neutral.

Within neoliberal governance, tenor mediates the affective atmosphere generated by accountability regimes, performance metrics, and audit cultures, recalibrating interpersonal relations and professional conduct. Experiences commonly framed as individualised responses (stress, burnout, or resilience) may be redefined as affective effects of institutional arrangements, distributed across human and non-human actors, including policies, data infrastructures, and performative frameworks.

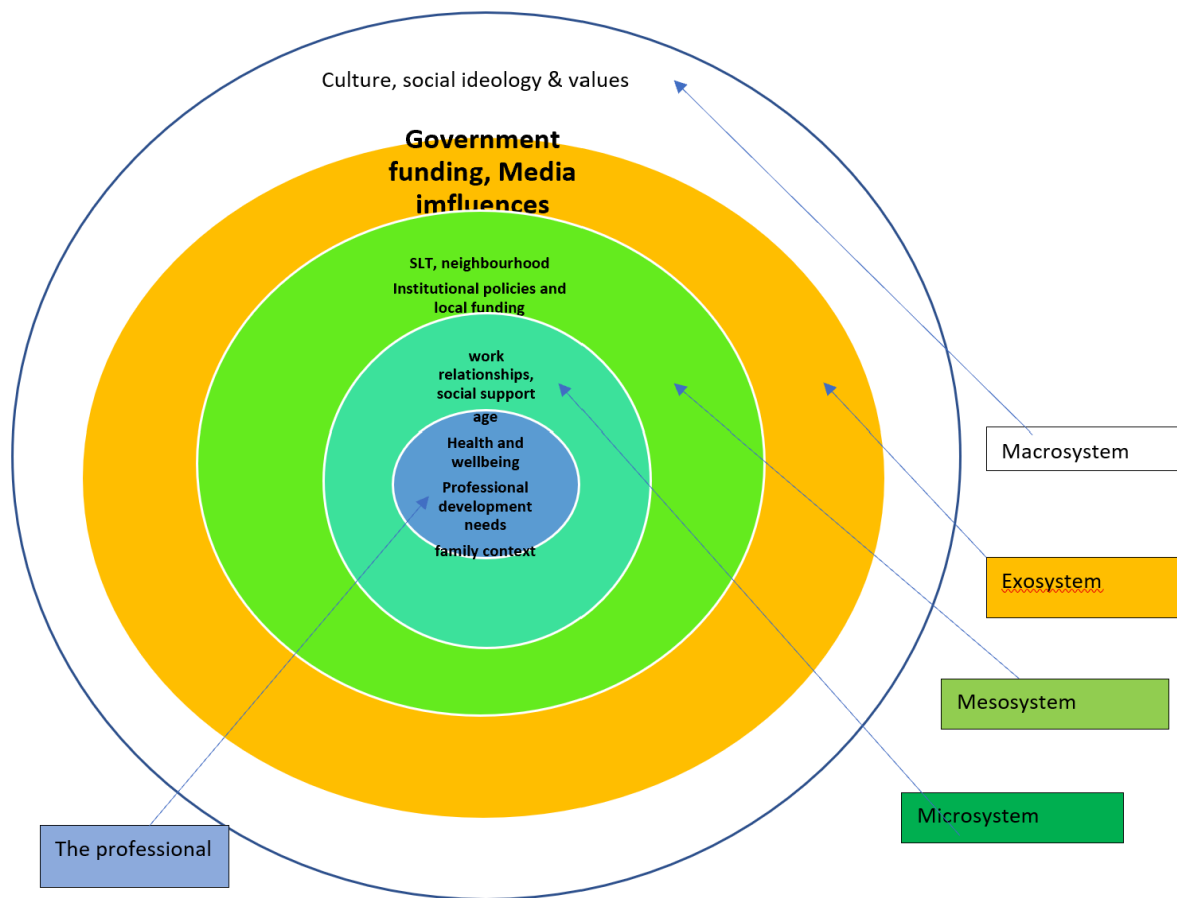


Figure 23: Ecological system of the Professional, adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979), Ecological systems theory

4.8 Chapter Summary and Limitations

There are several potential challenges in conducting ethical research within a relational epistemology and ontology. Consistent with qualitative, feminist, and critical approaches, autoethnography encourages researchers to identify how their identities and social positions influence the research design, analysis, and interpretation. Unlike modernist traditions that rely on distance and objectivity, the researcher's identity and context may be discernible. Autoethnography occupies a dual space, personal and academic, combining an authentic voice with theoretical engagement that connects lived experience to broader political, social, and historical structures.

This approach acknowledges the researcher vulnerability as knowledge, and meaning-making is fluid and evolving. While personal narrative articulates lived experience, autoethnographic analysis interrogates what these experiences reveal about power. Without structural analysis, we risk reproducing hierarchies of whose suffering matters. By contrast, autoethnographic analysis positions lived experience as a site for examining power, institutional norms and structural violence. This reflective process shifts understanding from claims of neutrality toward recognition of systemic inequality and the researcher's positionality within it.

Ethical rigour is established through verisimilitude, trustworthiness, authenticity, and reflexivity rather than generalisability. Autoethnography invites readers to interrogate their unique context, embodied knowing and interpretations. Moreover, relational ontology allows multiple interpretations; thus, even previously published research can be reinterpreted. Relational ontology also introduces ethical tensions: balancing openness with the need to protect others when constructing accounts of unsettling realities. To navigate this, decisions about disclosure are guided by Grice's (2002 in Grice, 1991) maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner. The maxim of quantity is the endeavour to be as informative as possible and provide only the necessary information. The quality maxim is being truthful and not providing deceptive information unsupported by evidence. The maxim of relation means contributing relevant information pertinent to the discussion. Finally, the maxim of manner is conciseness, coherence and cohesion, avoiding obscurity and ambiguity.



Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

My data revealed that the typology of systems and contexts is non-sequential; it is neither ascending nor descending. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) provide helpful methodological tools for mapping the relationships and connections in a non-hierarchical way as an organic multiplicity of discourses, intersubjectivities and culture. Rather than a representational map, these lines will create cartography that will enable me to represent the complex relatedness and layered intersubjectivity across relationship networks to make new connections and make the previously impossible and invisible lines observable.

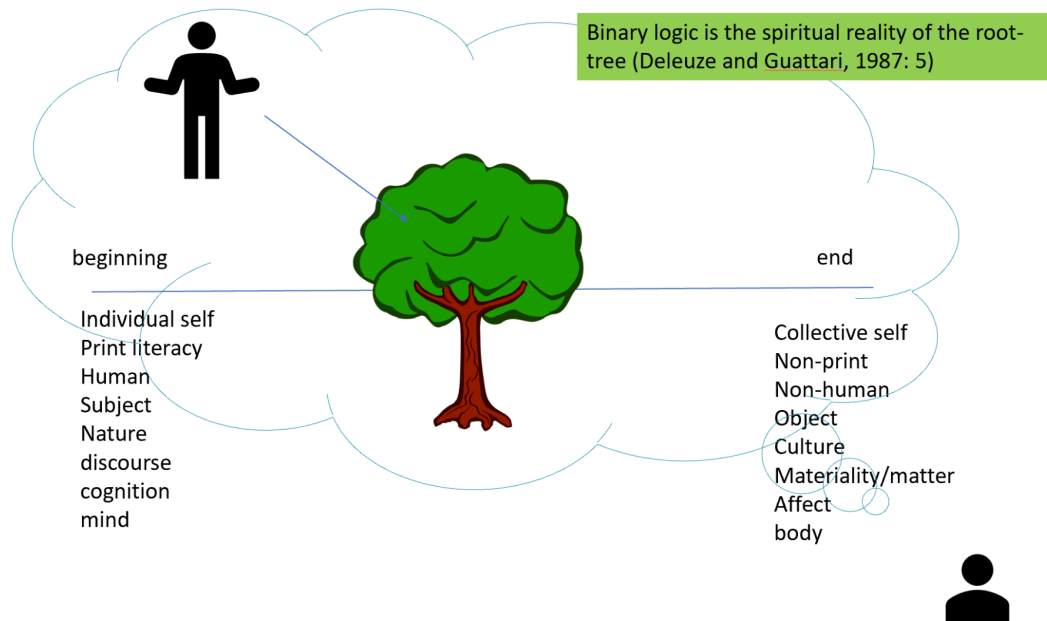


Figure 24: Linear professional development

In the research process or professional or student identity formation, we think of a sequential logical timeline with a beginning and an end that both have a measurement point. This is the Western knowledge structures' binary logic as the "spiritual reality of the root-tree" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 5). The figure denotes several binaries: print literacy versus non-print literacy or cognition versus affect, for example. These binaries are disrupted by rhizomatic thinking.

Deleuze and Guattari use the rhizome metaphor to represent the patterns of creative thought and unpredictable movement. Deleuze and Guattari's focus is on the movement and changes taking place between points and less on the points themselves. In their view, thinking rhizomatically can effect change, break up order and boundaries, and produce growth - rhizomatic thinking is thus transformative. My initial hypothesis was that neoliberal discourses producing micro-fascism are monologic (Bakhtin, 1981) molar lines with no 'becoming'. My research interest was to find molecular lines with new connections and possibilities and 'lines of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) that create a new becoming and a better future.

Recognising that trying to understand a student's or a professional's identity in their literacy performances could overlook what they might be becoming through the performance process. Leander and Rowe build on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987)

'critique of representational logic and perform a rhizoanalysis 'to offer a means of tracing and valuing the multiple connections and novel becomings produced by literacy performances' instead of treating the performances 'as stable texts to be decoded' (Leander and Rowe, 2006: 433). Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) idea of the assemblage is useful for the researcher for viewing the literacy performance in terms of multiple elements of social bodies, human bodies and textual materials. My earlier hypothesis of individual desire (Lacan, 1948) being captured, territorialised, and assigned molar categories of appraisals, performance reviews and forms of performance-related pay was modified by a new 'line of flight' in my thinking produced by the feminist, psychoanalytical theory of Ettinger (2006). Ettinger's conceptualisation of relationality as trans-subjectivity, rather than intersubjectivity, offers a gateway to continue rethinking texts as 'boundary objects' even further. Texts are conceptualised as 'orchestrated designs' (Jewitt, 2007:276), also to include day-to-day lived events (Flewit et al., 2009:42).

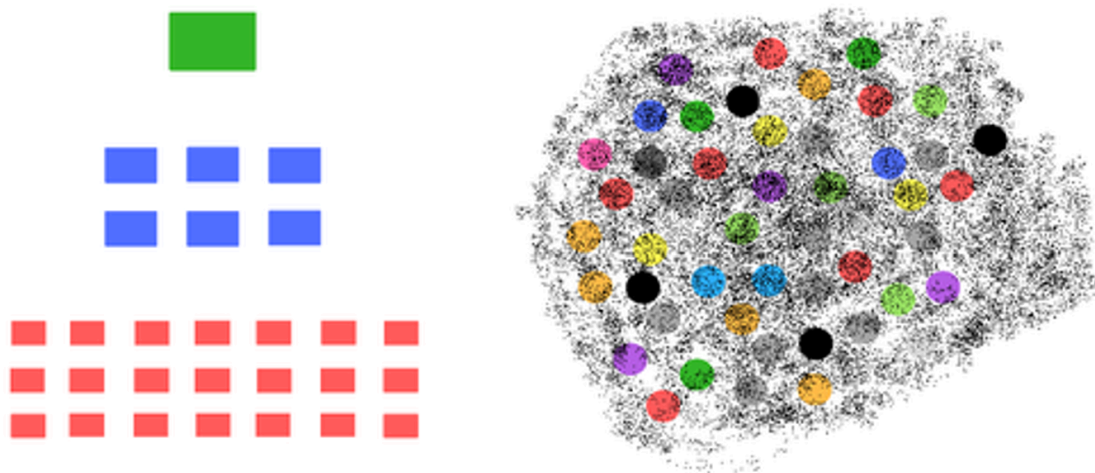


Figure 25: Arborescent structure vs rhizomatic connections

The figure above conceptualises two bodies with disparate structures: our classical hierarchy on the left and an organic multiplicity on the right. Frameworks and quality assurance discourses measure success in logical and hierarchical ways. The rhizome does not erase the frameworks, i.e., the tree's arborescent and hierarchical structures. Instead of measuring a tree, we measure the rhizome. In an assemblage,

rhizome forces us to think wider than a timeline: the circle, nodes, and black fuzz is the researcher and all their 'stuff', i.e., assemblages (voice, agency, subjectivity, positionality). The research process forms part of this assemblage, so, in this philosophical format, subjectivity is defined not by its human and Eurocentric superiority but by what it does - its capacity to affect and be affected. This metaphor conceptualises a symbolic decentering of the human subject and a radical questioning of how (human) subjectivity as such is produced (Pedersen, 2010, in Ringrose, 2021). Assemblages are ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts. Assemblages are living, throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within. They have uneven topographies, because some of the points at which the various affects and bodies cross paths are more heavily trafficked than others, and so power is not distributed equally across their surface. (Bennett, 2010: 23-24). A rhizome, too, can be used to describe a community, a researcher, subjectivity, a classroom, or an institution. The rhizome is interconnected, evolving and ever influenced and influencing. Rhizome is unpredictable, growing in various directions and forming surprising connections. Rhizomatic thinking is therefore unpredictable, creative and transformative. When measuring a rhizome with a logical, hierarchical framework, we may miss, miss-understand and miss-measure what it means and feels like to be a professional educator and by extension, a professional student. This notion is conceptualised in the figure below in the representation on the left. The representation on the right depicts rhizomatic and unpredictable connections.

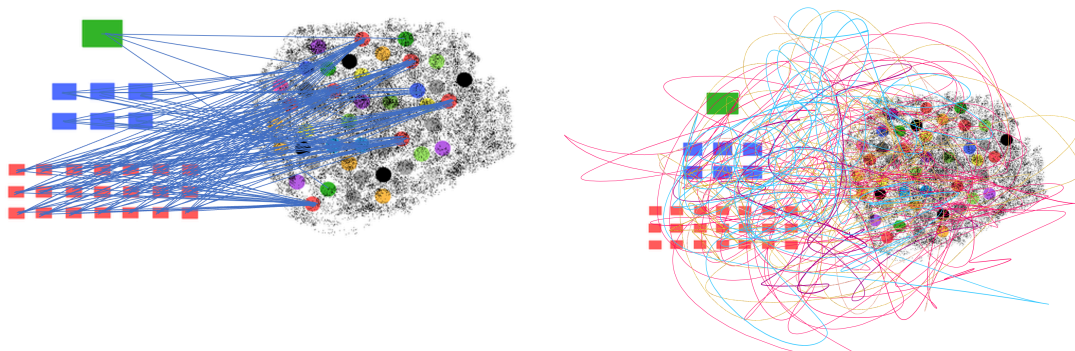


Figure 26: Miss-measuring a rhizome

Matthiessen's Framework and Instantiation align with embodied literacy by emphasising how abstract concepts like 'professionalism' and 'identity' are instantiated and enacted in specific literacy events and practices. This framework allows me to analyse how policies and discourses (macro-level) are reflected in teaching materials (meso-level) and experienced by individual students (micro-level), revealing the complex dynamics that shape professional identity formation.

Each case study reveals new dimensions of the same fundamental dynamics- how power operates through seemingly neutral educational practices to reproduce racial hierarchies while simultaneously creating possibilities for resistance. This repetition is intentional, reflecting the “rhizomatic” nature of oppression and resistance that simultaneously operates across multiple scales and contexts. Rather than a linear progression, these case studies function as “diffractive” readings that reveal different aspects of the same phenomena when approached from different analytical angles.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC DATA			
Institutional whiteness & Power Structures	Identity & Positionality	Literacy as a Political Act	Resistance & Agency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multimodal assemblages of power • Quality assurance policy analysis • From Zero to Hero 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peripheral whiteness • Legal Fiction Positionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agential cuts co-constituting racialised subjects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serendipity

Table 2: Data Themes

The table articulates the themes that emerged from my autoethnographic data: institutional whiteness, identity & positionality, literacy as political acts and resistance & agency.

Institutional whiteness & Power Structures

The institutional whiteness theme resonates with the 30 Patterns of Harm report (Daniels, 2025) that provides a cross-sectoral framework to map whiteness and institutional logics producing anti-black racism and racialised harm. Daniels' (2025) identification of language and accent as structural modifiers modulating institutional anti-Blackness resonates with my notion of multimodal whiteness and reading whiteness as an assemblage. Language as a structural modifier becomes a material-discursive apparatus that co-constitutes racialised subjects through ongoing institutional practices and a mechanism of racialised violence distribution and intensification. The 30 patterns of harm demonstrate the reproduction of violence through the ongoing reassembly of sedimented institutional logic and historical residues within contemporary literacy and accountability practices. Repeated institutional actions sediment over time and form layered residues that render certain harms predictable yet unnamed. Lamination reactivates sedimented patterns in the present through heterogeneous assemblages by converging multiple layers of past harm.

Identity & Positionality

Daniels (2025) notes that the 30 Patterns of Harm report may resonate with people who are not Black, and that this resonance is real, yet it is not the focus of the report. The universalised “we are all suffering” response is a form of misplaced empathy that blurs the analytic line that traces anti-Blackness, protecting institutional comfort rather than confronting racialised violence (Daniels, 2025). My positionality and autoethnographic methodology allow me to de-centre my resonances, de-personalise harm and centre structural analysis. We are all suffering, yet I recognise how the system treats people differently and how I am positioned within it. Harm against white people does not contradict white supremacy- instead, it is integral to the processes that sustain it. White harm does not negate white supremacy but operationalises it. Whiteness employs boundaries to protect itself but absorbs or rejects elements needed to function and neutralise the threat to its existing power structures, so white people- depending on where they stand in relation to power- may also encounter state violence and must be prepared to recognise and resist it. Whiteness is not a binary: white people benefit versus black people harmed. Whiteness does not require all white people to benefit equally. Whiteness is an apparatus that produces Whiteness and Blackness as differentiated

positions that are co-constituted - they cannot be understood separately. Anti-Blackness produces white subjects who (conditionally) benefit from institutional protection. Hierarchies within whiteness stabilise the racial order by creating aspirational whiteness, disciplining non-compliant white subjects, and demonstrating that the system is fair (since even white people suffer): whiteness is re-secured as reasonable, compassionate, and non-violent.

Literacy as a Political Act

My autoethnographic positioning is an agential cut that enacts a "boundary-making practice (Barad, 2007). Rather than mapping rhizomatic connections, agential realism is a boundary-making practice. Phenomena are the ontological inseparability/entanglement of intra-acting agencies (Barad, 2007:139). 'Intra-action' signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies where agency is an enactment, a matter of possibilities for reconfiguring entanglements (Barad, 2007). An ethical and political cut creates accountability rather than equivalence. My methodological positioning produces particular possibilities for solidarity founded on structural analysis, not shared suffering. "Agential cuts cut things together and apart" ...diffraction is about the entangled nature of differences that matter (Barad, 2007: 381). Rejecting the universalising "we are all suffering" move, I am not denying shared vulnerability but cutting differently. Separating affective identification from structural explanation and de-centring my resonance enacts a cut that refuses to let white affect reorganise the field of meaning. These distinctions emerge from entangled conditions rather than pre-given separations. Reading whiteness as a multimodal assemblage or to be literate and to possess racial literacy in my conceptualisation of matrixial trans-subjective literacy practices as productive of subjectivities, identities and the world signifies a political act or agential cuts that re-locate agency away from individual feeling and resonance towards structural operation, producing a difference where institutions can not hide behind empathy or inclusion rhetoric. Knowing and being are entangled, so my methodological choices are not representational but performative; not descriptive but world-producing. Universalised empathy collapses difference post hoc, whereas my cut holds difference at the moment of analysis, when power is exerted. Decentring resonances enables analysis of institutional mechanisms without collapsing the

asymmetrical racialised distributions of harm they produce.

Resistance & Agency

My project does not represent my data and findings but operates as an ethico-onto-epistemological intervention. Serendipity names moments when the world becomes otherwise through intra-active reconfiguring of material-discursive relations that redistribute agency (across human and nonhuman, affective and institutional, discursive and material forces), and unsettle boundaries. Institutional logics momentarily fail to contain meaning, opening new possibilities for acts of resistance. Resistance is not a heroic rupture from outside power but immanent re-patterning within it. It is produced through diffractive literacy practices that reject universalisation, maintain racial specificity, and cut against institutional comfort.

5.2 Multimodal Assemblages of Power: Reading Whiteness

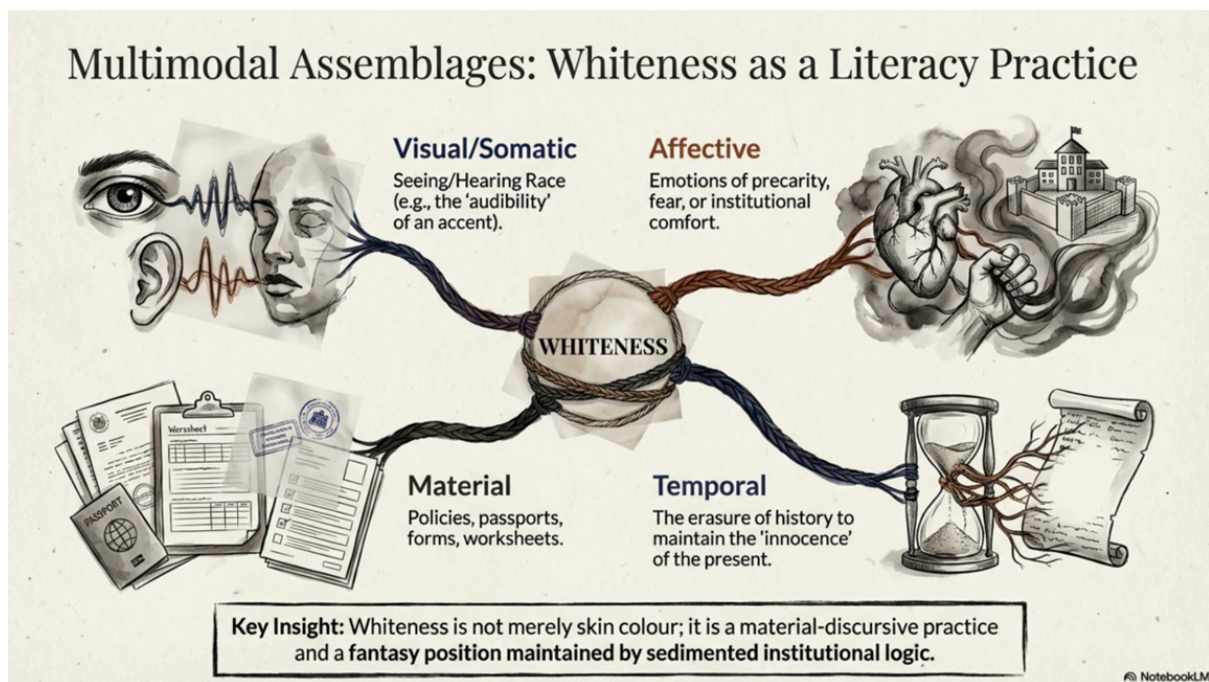


Figure 27: Multimodal Assemblages of Whiteness

This chapter presents Whiteness as a multimodal literacy practice: a complex assemblage of meaning-making resources operating across multiple modes simultaneously, which produces and maintains racial hierarchies while presenting itself as a neutral educational standard. I apply Barad's (2007) agential realism,

which provides a performative account of how material-discursive practices constitute reality; within this framework, academic integrity policies and quality assurance systems are conceptualised as apparatuses, i.e., boundary-making practices that produce the phenomena they claim to measure. I address my research question, “how everyday literacy practices shape professional identity,” by demonstrating that identities are not pre-existing but co-constituted and co-emerge through material-discursive encounters within educational spaces. Professional identity is continuously co-constituted through interactions with policies, students, and institutional processes. Academic integrity can be conceptualised as an onto-epistemological process where individuals materialise in particular ways through their interaction with policy apparatuses. As the analysis will demonstrate, these interactions are never neutral but always already political, creating specific subject positions that either reinforce or challenge existing power relations.

5.2.1 Quality Assurance as Racialising Technology

The Quality Assurance apparatus exemplifies how policies function as multimodal assemblages: QA operates through explicitly neoliberal logics (Maisuria and Cole, 2017), commodifying education across multiple modes. Policies are power structures that enforce societal norms and preserve political, social, and economic order. Policies can be thought of as technologies of state power that render individuals visible to state surveillance and control. Policies serve as a unifier, standardising values and behaviours by establishing a universal order that exists at all times and in all locations. Policy measures can emerge as areas subject to subversion and appropriation for purposes other than those intended by the policymakers. Despite efforts to ensure academic integrity, it appears as though integrity is more of an exception than the rule. I will attempt to exemplify how Barad's (2007) framework of agential realism has the capacity to theorise the workings of academic integrity practice. I will discuss how one of the critical elements of the illusion of legitimacy that the state projects is the persistence of the binary oppositions between ‘civilisation’ and ‘savagery’ and other related dichotomies. This is precisely the boundary-marking effect that Institutional Whiteness (Ahmed, 2006) seeks to create, reminding us that the boundary must be maintained in order to retain the state's civilising purpose, embodied in the Quality Assurance bodies. Apart from the broader debate about the link between policy and the state, the ritualistic nature of policies

and quality assurance systems will be emphasised as essential to the aims of this critical policy analysis. Policy and policy documentation could be framed as a form of resistance against hypernormalisation, i.e., 'the failure of politics to adequately grasp and deal with the present' or 'living as if the absurd situation was normal' (Nicholls, 2017). Conversely, policy documents as an apparatus of Institutional Whiteness (Ahmed, 2006) can be used to classify individuals and assign subject positions. The classification system is defined not by arbitrary innate traits like skin colour or physical features, but by statistics or language as an abstract coded system, and it is only as useful as the emotional impact it has on the individuals being compared, assessed, sanctioned, or rewarded (Sellar, 2015: 135 in McKenzie, 2017). Policy documents could then be framed as 'content' to be monetised or 'rituals' to be performed to re-enact the state myth. The ritual of policy and its enactment as a method of social memory content transfer (Utkina et al., 2015) is conceptualised as a form of NFTs or a non-fungible token. Policy becomes 'the mask which prevents our seeing political practice as it is' (Abrams, 1988).

Academic integrity is a code of conduct that is widely recognised and adhered to by higher education institutions, systems, and stakeholders. It is widely acknowledged internationally and encompasses academic values such as honesty and rigour. The International Centre for Academic Integrity defines academic integrity as 'a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage' (THE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, Third Edition, 2014). The literature focuses on demonstrating a perceived lack of academic integrity (Macfarlane et al., 2014). 'Dual' (i.e., teaching and sexual) connections between students and teachers are frequently discussed, as are conflicts of interest associated with commercial organisations sponsoring research. Today, most publicly funded universities in the developed world have mechanisms for research ethics approval, whereas ethics committees privilege research over teaching. This is in part to safeguard the institutional reputation and avert potential litigation (Macfarlane et al., 2014). The term 'academic integrity' is commonly used as a proxy for the conduct of students, predominantly in the context of plagiarism and cheating. The International Centre for Academic Integrity defines academic integrity as 'a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility,

and courage' (International Center for Academic Integrity, 2021). Academic misconduct is described as an activity that contradicts these values and commitments and results in a student gaining an unfair academic advantage in an assessment (Qaa, 2021). Over the last few years, quality assurance (QA) organisations have actively supported and implemented initiatives aimed at eradicating contract cheating in the education sector. Contract cheating, in which a third party is commissioned, or a service purchased, to produce an essay which the student subsequently submits as their own work, is one of the many academic integrity violations. Worldwide, legislation prohibiting contract cheating continues to be enacted. The Skills and Post-16 Education Bill (clauses 29 to 33) sets out new offences criminalising cheating services for post-16 students in England ("Skills-and-Post-16-Education-Bill-Bill-No-176-of-2021-22-HL," 2021). Other manifestations of academic misconduct (Wu & Kimber, 2018) include inappropriate or fraudulent degree validation (higher education providers who engage in unethical or illegal validation arrangements with overseas partner institutions), admissions fraud (this may involve fabricating credentials or falsifying recommendations enabled by lax or inefficient admissions practises) and corruption within HE institutions ('an assemblage' of corruption: unethical officials coordinating fraudulent practices, including admissions, assessment, and certification).

To understand who the various stakeholders are and how they can play a role in upholding and enacting academic integrity in our learning communities, Eaton (2020) conceptualised the 4M Framework. The 4M Framework (S. E. Eaton, 2020) is a multi-stakeholder or systemic approach to academic integrity that takes into account a culture of integrity and the expectation that all members of the academic community, including teachers, students, and researchers, act with integrity, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students, alumni, and others who may not be involved on a day-to-day basis can be enlisted in promoting academic integrity at the Mega level. The Macro level includes the learning organisation and its policies implemented at the Meso level by the various departments. Individual students and teachers are centred at the Micro level. Informed by systems theory, this framework posits that a culture of integrity cannot be created if only certain individuals are engaged (McCabe et al., 2012). The 4M framework demonstrates that cultivating an integrity-based

culture takes deliberate and ongoing effort on the part of a wide variety of stakeholders.

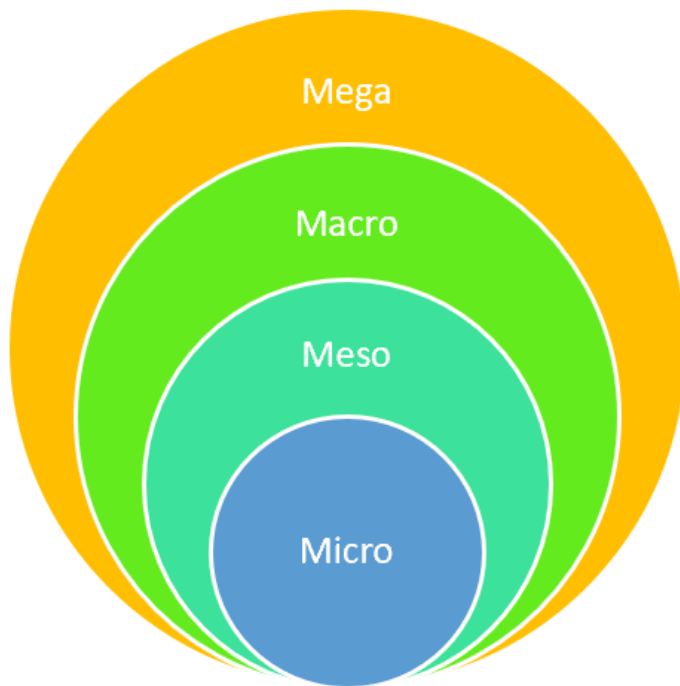


Figure 28: The 4M Framework: Micro, Meso, Macro, and Mega Levels (Eaton, 2020)

The agential realism framework provides a performative account of the material-discursive practices of mattering. 'Material-discursive' means understanding discursive practices in terms of the material. Matter in Barad's framework is not limited to the 'natural' but includes cultural phenomena as well. Barad contends that matter and meaning are inextricably linked and provides an understanding of the relationship between discursive practices and material phenomena. Mattering is a dynamic articulation/configuration of the world (Barad, 2007:151-152). Continuous redrawing of boundaries is what matter emerges from and is integral to its nature. Discursive practices reconfigure the world and are intrinsically material (Barad, 2007). The primary ontological units are 'phenomena' (Barad, 2007) or heterogeneous 'assemblages' (Leander & Rowe, 2006:451). Assemblages and phenomena are a performed organisation of language and matter (material). In Baradian conceptualisation, language is an apparatus that is productive of and part of phenomena. 'Intra-action' means that people are not simply in this world, but

emerge as part of this world. Barad (2007) contends that humans are not passive observers of the world. Only an agential cut enables matter to emerge (or materialise). Making cuts means performing phenomena by diffracting different types of agencies. What emerges/matters is contingent on the apparatus. Apparatuses are boundary-making practices. (Barad, 2007: 148).

Academic integrity can be conceptualised as an onto-epistemological process (Barad, 2007) in which individuals materialise in particular ways as a result of their interaction with the policy. Academic integrity skills modelling, teaching, and policing take place within a more complex and diverse set of practices and contexts than the government's policy implies. As a critical policy analyst, my claims to validity are centred around the insights produced by exposure to these contexts (Papen in Bloome et al., 2019). Unlike fiction, which directs attention to the writer's 'imaginative acrobatics', nonfiction presents 'real thought and actions' for scrutiny (Clendinnen, 1999, in Schwartzman, 2017: 172). In the following sections, I will utilise lived experience as evidence with which to explore and make visible the phenomena of Institutional Whiteness in (Ahmed, 2006) in academic integrity policy enactments. It is impossible to assert an a priori autonomous existence while enacting an academic misconduct policy. 'Intra-action' signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies where agency is an enactment, a matter of possibilities for reconfiguring entanglements (Barad, 2007). Individuals are conceived of as specific material-discursive 'spacetime-matterings'. This notion draws attention to how emotion mediates the boundaries that teachers create. The analysis at the Mega level (Eaton, 2020) will demonstrate how the use of data and metrics depends on the emotional effects these variables have on the individuals who are compared, evaluated, sanctioned, or rewarded based on those variables (Sellar, 2015: 135 in McKenzie, 2017). Ben Anderson (2014: 26) notes, 'States, institutions and corporations now know, target and work through affective life', operating as 'affect structures' that organise and mediate, including through apparatuses that affect the mobilities of how policies are developed, spread, or resisted.

Mega level: Quality Assurance

The 2011 White Paper (Education, 2011) and the 2015 Green Paper (Great Britain. Department for Business, 2015) permitted private for-profit institutions to compete with traditional universities to offer students more options. The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 created a single register for HE providers and allowed alternative providers to charge £9,000 fees (Hubble & Susan, 2018). There is evidence that competition as the driving force shaping higher education enables private institutions to meet strategic objectives around widening participation and generate substantial revenue from tuition fees by engaging in malpractice and unethical practices. Private institutions attract and recruit poorly qualified international students who fraudulently claim student loans, and the students are allegedly encouraged and assisted in falsifying attendance records and committing academic misconduct (Malik et al., 2014; Qaa, 2017; Watson, 2017). The institutions accused of malpractice vehemently deny all accusations and defend themselves by citing robust procedures and successful inspections by QAA and exam boards (Malik et al., 2014; Watson, 2017). Corrupt institutions attach the notion of 'community' to their competitive transactional ways of viewing education and weaponise the language of essentialist identity politics. 'Widening participation' is no longer a radical notion but has become 'content' to be monetised. Not only does a pyramid system built on deception of students and other stakeholders conceal the state's practices behind policies, processes, and successful inspections, but it also constitutes the state. The policy's significance resides in its ability to make the institution's fabrication appear legitimate rather than in its ability to expose or detect misconduct. The violence and corruption dynamics are legitimised by this illusion of legitimacy.

QA has been increasingly restructured so that, as a result of deregulation, it is now left to market forces, notwithstanding its efforts to eradicate contract cheating. (Maisuria & Cole, 2017) articulate the regime of quality assurance (QA) as explicitly neoliberal. They begin their critique with Graeber's (in Semley, 2014) description of the role of 'quality assurance officer' (together with that of student experience manager) as a 'bullshit job' (Graeber in Semley, 2014) invented by neoliberalism 'just for the sake of keeping us working'. These 'pointless jobs' accomplish little other than creating protocols to legitimise their existence (Graeber in Semley, 2014), with QA protocols becoming axiomatic, rendering them almost unquestionable. QA has become synonymous with 'excellence', producing metrics as a proxy for quality and

high standards, creating an illusion of choice for students in the expanding HE market (Maisuria & Cole, 2017).

The neoliberal project's performance-driven objectives necessitate that students evaluate the performance of those who provide them with a commodity.

Policymakers consider that the most tangible proof of education lies in its conversion to economic gain. Students expect high grades as the academic currency they use to purchase a career in exchange for financial investment in their education.

Students who receive higher grades indicate higher levels of satisfaction and quality in their evaluations, according to many academics' National Student Survey experience (Maisuria & Cole, 2017). Eaton and Penaluna's (2019) data analysis indicates rising grade inflation, recognised as a worldwide phenomenon (Baker, 2018), and defined as 'an increase in students' grades (and by extension, their grade point average) without corresponding evidence of any increase in achievement' (Potter, Nyman & Klumpp, 2001). Grade inflation may thus be related to the use of quantitative measures to promote competition in marketised neoliberal education systems. Student evaluations are best understood in the context of neoliberal accountability (Brown, 2015, in Thiel, 2020) as they establish an artificial quasi-market by ranking universities against one another based on 'customer satisfaction'. Student evaluation documents can be viewed as generating student voice power while also intensifying academics' anxiety in their interactions with students and altering professional practice enactment (Thiel, 2020). Ethical evaluation of student work is, therefore, a critical component of academic integrity that is frequently overlooked.

Macro-level Managerialism

In an episode of an anonymised autoethnographic narrative, Schwartzman (2017) describes systemic efforts to remove competition in the education market. After his department voted to deny him an extension on a contract and promotion, Jay hired a lawyer to sue the university where he worked. Documents and evidence presented to the Grievance Committee hearing revealed a catalogue of anomalies, infractions, and antics. For example, the department head removed positive peer assessments and fabricated defamatory incidents as rationales for their vote against Jay. At the

same time, faculty claimed he publicly shamed a blind student in a mass lecture course he never taught. The data given at the grievance tribunal demonstrated that grades declined under Jay's supervision compared to the several years prior to his arrival, when the students received grades high enough to qualify as grade inflation. Unsurprisingly, student evaluations of the course suddenly turned negative. The competition thus went directly to the university's financial resources.

The narrative exemplifies the all-too-common managerial mindset phenomenon that is derived from business and creates quantitatively driven, efficient education as a transaction between producers (teachers) and consumers (students). Eaton & Penaluna (2019) identify situated factors contributing to grade inflation at a variety of levels utilising the 4M Framework (Figure 28) (Eaton, 2020). At an individual level, lecturers may struggle with what Ball (2010) refers to as ontological insecurity and inflate grades to avoid student complaints or poor course evaluations. At the Meso-level, grade inflation may be a result of course evaluations being used to make hiring, contract, promotion, or salary increases decisions. At the Macro or institutional level, grade inflation may be linked to allowing late withdrawal from courses to prevent lower grades or course re-takes, with the lower grade being erased from the transcript. At the mega-level, Eaton & Penaluna (2019) propose metrics (i.e., statistical modelling of individual graduate data to predict expected patterns of degree classification) for limiting unjustified rises and preserving the value of UK higher education credentials over time by incentivising teaching excellence.

Meso-level Policy and Whiteness

At the Meso level (Eaton, 2020), the learning organisation is accountable for institutional direction and academic integrity culture. This includes having well-defined policies and procedures that can be applied consistently and fairly throughout the institution. Bretag et al. (2011) identified five core elements of exemplary academic integrity policy: access, approach, responsibility, detail and support. The elements are schematically portrayed as a five-stranded 'seal knot' to emphasise the elements' interconnected and non-hierarchical nature. Bretag et al. (2011) compared the five elements to the UK Higher Education Academy's (HEA) (Supporting Academic Integrity Approaches and Resources for Higher Education,

2011) best practice guidelines to identify any gaps or potential areas for development. The identified elements do not aim to standardise academic integrity but establish a collaborative approach beyond a policy-level mechanism. Since the institution's policy definition of academic integrity affects how it is taught and embedded in the curriculum, policies, procedures, instructional practices and assessment processes should be interconnected. To ensure consistency, QAA (2021) provides guidance for academic integrity investigations with fairness and proportionality as guiding principles and differentiating poor academic practice (plagiarism, collusion and exam offences) from a clear intent to deceive or mislead in order to gain an unfair advantage (falsification, fabrication, impersonation and contract cheating) (QAA, 2021). A tiered approach with a clear progression of penalties, increasing in severity, is also provided by QAA (2021). The lack of intent to deliberately commit misconduct may indicate a need for additional support and may not warrant elevation to a panel stage and a penalty. However, the guidance for academic integrity investigations with a tiered approach with a clear progression of penalties, increasing in severity (QAA, 2021), parallels the Criminal Law Act by substituting police interaction for the lecturer-student relationship. Moreover, BAME students are overrepresented in academic misconduct proceedings (Rendell, 2021), a trend that parallels the overrepresentation of BAME defendants in the criminal justice system (Yasin & Sturge, 2020).

Identifying that academic misconduct, like other elements of education, arises in a relational context prone to implicit bias distortions, Rendell (2021) addresses the overrepresentation of BAME students in academic misconduct proceedings in relation to systemic racism. Systemic racism could be mapped onto the Marco level in the 4M Framework (Eaton, 2020). Rendell (2021) uses the outdated term 'BAME'. BAME (Black, Asian, and minority ethnic) is an inadequate descriptor since it emphasises particular ethnic minority groups (Asian and Black) while excluding others. Additionally, the terminology can conceal disparities across ethnic groups and lead to erroneous interpretations of data (GOV.UK, 2021). This paper will use the term BAME when referring to Rendell's (2021) findings, whereas the terms 'non-traditional', 'racialised', 'marginalised' or 'minoritised' will be used elsewhere. Rendell (2021) also identified unconscious bias and BAME students' reluctance to access support as reasons for their over-representation in academic misconduct

cases. These reasons could be mapped onto the Micro level (Eaton, 2020). At the Macro level (Eaton, 2020), Rendell (2021) named 'poor academic writing skills' as a reason for BAME students' over-representation in academic misconduct cases. Rendell's (2021) suggested strategies at the Meso level (Eaton, 2022) for addressing the overrepresentation of BAME students in academic misconduct cases include using clear language, facilitating access, and being transparent about expectations and processes as policy hallmarks, in addition to embedded mentoring. Additionally, educational specialists should assist in the evaluation design of modules with a high percentage of academic misconduct. At the Mega level (Eaton, 2020), suggested actions include unconscious bias training, diverse academic misconduct panels and focus on inclusive curricula, teaching, learning and assessment methods (Rendell, 2021).

Reporting academic misconduct may be daunting, and the disincentives may add misery to teachers' lives when confronted by the offending students, their non-reporting peers, and their institution's imperfect policies. While several lecturers in Robinson's (2021) study believed they had irrefutable evidence of misconduct, hearing the pleas and even suicide threats of international students fearful of failing the course, being withdrawn from the programme, and risking deportation had a severe emotional toll on lecturers. Nevertheless, social conscience for justice and fairness, claimed as elements of their professional identity, compelled teachers to continue to report academic misconduct (Robinson, 2021). Moreover, teachers also cited protecting innocent students from academic misconduct and concerns for public safety if professional graduates have not genuinely acquired the skills of their profession as reasons to report academic misconduct. Therefore, relationality emerged as the underlying narrative of the academic misconduct reporting experience. However, the academics felt alienated from the outcomes of their decisions after reporting. Their inability to make progress by altering student behaviour was exacerbated when institutional processes allowed students committing academic misconduct to undermine the teachers' authority by going around them to coordinators and supervisors. In contrast, policies and documentation were comforting because they provided teachers with a supportive milieu for reporting academic misconduct. The form used to report academic

misconduct was a container for transforming a private act of deceit into a public one (Robinson, 2021).

Micro-level Academic Language and Whiteness

At the Micro level (Eaton, 2020), findings also show a gap between teachers' and international students' understanding of academic integrity (Robinson, 2021; Rendell, 2021). Although discrepancies in faculty and student perspectives and judgments of academic misconduct have been demonstrated through cross-cultural research (Higbee & Thomas, 2002; Magnus et al., 2010), deficit views of 'collectivist' cultures as predisposed to misconduct are prevalent (Eaton, 2020). Collectivist and individualist cultures also appear to collide in 'post-transgression student dealings' (Robinson, 2021) when international students from collectivist cultures (Hofstede, 2001) act in groups to petition faculty to modify the penalty. Dealing with groups was reported to be visibly different and more traumatic than dealing with domestic students (Robinson, 2021). The authors conclude that while reporting academic misconduct is critical for academic integrity advancement, cultural differences must be considered before punitive action is taken (Robinson, 2021). Nevertheless, the underlying theme of the paper is the 'othering' of students and negatively labelling what are in effect 'non-native speaker' cultures as 'collectivist' (Holliday, 2006). This othering of individuals from other racial and linguistic backgrounds based on essentialist cultural preconceptions and discriminatory attitudes has been labelled 'native-speakerism': a neo-racist ideology that infers false cultural superiority and inferiority by classifying individuals as either "native speakers" or 'non-native speakers' (Holliday, 2014).

An academic misconduct policy that defined practices as academic language skills affected me as the classroom teacher and the students. The following section will evaluate academic integrity using agential realism as an analytical framework and demonstrate how agential realism may be utilised to theorise the relationality of academic misconduct policy. Lecturers and students at some institutions report that, despite being enrolled in more practically oriented undergraduate programmes (Higher National Diploma in business, media, hospitality, music production, and tourism), students with 'only basic language, writing, and computing abilities' are admitted (Malik et al. 2014). Within education policy making, academic integrity is

viewed as a set of generic skills (referencing, study skills, paraphrasing, academic writing skills, self-plagiarism) with the assumption that students can be equipped with tools to apply appropriate academic conduct or that effective practises for teaching and regulating these skills can be identified. Through the use of language as an abstract coded system, race and language are co-constructed in ways that result in specific subject positions or individual identities as 'spacetime-matterings' (Barad, 2007). Academic language is positioned as having the capacity to bridge not only professional and spatial barriers into academia or employment, but also a temporal barrier between savagery and civilisation.

The assumption of 'poor academic writing skills' (Rendell, 2021) troubled me, so I challenged my own and colleagues' constructions of students as linguistically deficient. Barad's agential realism approach contests the logocentric approach that reduces thought to language. Reading through a material-discursive frame, I shifted my focus from the raciolinguistic notion of language as an abstractable coded system to the student and concluded that academic integrity as relationality (Robinson, 2021) does not require academic language. Similarly to Morrison (2017), who wrote that '...there are no strangers. There are only versions of ourselves, many of which we have not embraced, most of which we wish to protect ourselves from', Ettinger (2006) contends that relationality and subjectivity cannot exist without traces of 'the other', so the phenomena are visceral, not only symbolic. I consciously rejected the collective affect of othering students to forgo boundaries between lecturers and students, allowing viable alternatives to combat the adverse effects of neoliberal apparatuses to emerge. 'Setting aside nefarious motives and actions' (Schwartzman, 2017), the proceeding anonymised narrative questions the systemic factors and hegemonic strategies that compel individuals to govern or perceive others' linguistic abilities.

5.2.2 Academic Integrity and Linguistic Hierarchies

The following composite autoethnographic account illustrates how academic integrity frameworks and dominant linguistic norms function as racialising technologies at the micro-level of everyday classroom practice. Through the story of Amelie, a multilingual student positioned as deficient within institutional literacy frameworks, I demonstrate how the deficit ideologies theorised in Section 5.2.1 are enacted

through the affective, relational, and discursive choices of individual practitioners, alongside explicit policy directives. The narrative is presented as a composite vignette, drawing on anonymised accounts from multiple professional contexts, to demonstrate how such encounters are expressions of systemic institutional patterns, not isolated incidents.

'Amelie is back on track!', the lecturer exclaimed with delight one day as she waltzed into the classroom, clapping her hands: her joy and relief sweeping through the air.

Amelie was born in Jamaica and spoke Jamaican Patois as her first language. Other public statements made by the lecturer regarding Amelie included the following: 'I'm not sure how you managed to get a Bachelor's degree; the university should have detected your deficient literacy skills' and 'I should never have allowed you to enrol in my teacher Education programme'.

The lecturer labelled Amelie as 'dyslexic': not to offer her targeted support but to negatively explain Amelie's 'inferior writing skills', causing her considerable anxiety. Amelie was labelled in violation of the guidelines, causing her considerable anxiety. She did not undergo a diagnostic assessment or receive a written report with recommendations for reasonable adjustments.

Unbeknownst to the lecturer, Amelie asked Brenda for help. Brenda corrected Amelie's spelling, punctuation and grammar and found that the errors were predictable and easily rectified based on comparing the relevant features of Jamaican Patois with Standard English. Amelie did not require any more support following Brenda's brief intervention and was now 'remedied' as the lecturer excitedly shared with the class that day. Brenda later pointed out that other (white-looking) students had 'substandard' writing skills. Consequently, she experienced the wrath attendant to perceived resistance to challenging a culture of compliance. The lecturer publicly declared that she regretted taking Brenda into her programme too.

The Literature reviewed contemporary implications of linguistic authority and evidenced racialised "native speakerism" (Kubota & Fujimoto, 2013: 197) and 'White Mainstream English' (WME) (Alim & Smitherman, 2012 and Baker-Bell, 2020 in Snell & Cushing, 2021)- concepts applying raciolinguistics (Rosa & Flores, 2017) historicises the deficit racialized language practices perspectives as an effort toward

decolonization and the eradication of white supremacy. The term, rather than 'standard English', emphasises that minoritised speakers are stigmatised even when using language that would be considered 'standard' when produced by privileged white speakers (Flores and Rosa 2015: 150; Alim 2007 in Snell & Cushing, 2021). WME makes visible and audible the normative whiteness (Baker-Bell 2020 in Snell & Cushing, 2021).

Native-speakerism can be seen in other aspects of teaching practice when students from outside the English-speaking West struggle with the UK's democratic (progressive) approach to education, which favours participation, collaboration and group work. Students from 'non-native speaker cultures' who may be used to the pedagogical model of having facts presented to them (and then gaining control over the facts and applying them) may be described as requiring 'spoon-feeding' knowledge. Students may be othered and labelled as 'uncreative' or 'dependent', 'hierarchical', 'collectivist', 'reticent', 'indirect', 'passive', 'docile', 'lacking in self-esteem', 'reluctant to challenge authority', 'easily dominated', 'undemocratic', or 'traditional' and, in effect, uncritical and unthinking (Holliday 2005: 19, Pennycook 2002, Kubota 2001 in Holliday, 2006). There is an agreement that 'non-standard students are more resource intensive in terms of recruitment and teaching' (Coffield & Vignoles, 1997: 13); however, some institutions' apparent liberalism of learner-centredness conceals the manipulative attempt to maximise enrolments, minimise costs and reduce teacher workload by encouraging collusion, plagiarism and fabrications. An Initial Teacher Education Program (ITEP) at some colleges is structured as what could be described as entirely student-led instruction. Therefore, students at some colleges may be considered to provide the service they paid for under 'student-centred' education. Each module is delivered by students, who spend weeks conducting independent research and preparing before presenting it to the class. As module leads, students assume the responsibilities of a lecturer in terms of course content and instruction, with the additional costs for preparing the teaching resources for their module delivery. The lecturer's job is to see that others teach, rather than teach themselves. The model is justified as renegotiating student identities to engage in a more democratic learning process, and the teacher education programme ethos 'heavily relies on trainees playing an active role'. Additionally, the institutions fail to deliver on the aggressive and deceptive

advertising, leaving students without placements and the required 100 hours of teaching practice. The module delivery amounts to approximately ten hours, so for the remaining 90, the students are instructed to work with hypothetical teaching scenarios or simulations in class or stage photographs of participation in projects. The accompanying reflective assignments, evaluations and personal development planning appear to be genuine since the students are instructed to comment on teaching experience in detail and from a personal perspective. It is clear that this type of assignment is not immune to third-party creation, fabrication, or creative writing. Thus, the teacher's responsibility is not to educate but to ensure that the fabrications appear authentic. Those who defer to the institution may later be rewarded with teaching posts to integrate the new cohort of students into the organisation's 'culture'. The students who expected a genuine academic programme, unaware that they enrolled in a corrupt institution, described their studies as possibly the most soul-destroying activity imposed on them to qualify. They became hyper-independent due to their ineligibility to renew tuition loans and the awarding body's daunting statements in response to their complaints. Some students became overly reliant on the 'model answers' the institution provided them, and could not cross-reference or self-assess their work. They felt betrayed, inadequate and incompetent. The emphasis on conformity and meeting the demands suppressed their will to experiment and take risks. They become disinterested in transformational intellectual adventures and only want to meet the assessment requirements.

In academia, academic discourse is a language variety that is unfamiliar to native and non-native speakers alike, making the native/non-native dichotomy irrelevant. Academic misconduct policy documents orient academic writing skills as a problem to be solved, while academic language is oriented as a resource. Orientation, as it is applied in this context, refers to a complex of dispositions toward language and its role and toward languages and their role in society (Ruíz, 1984). Ruíz aimed to highlight the values of language underlying policymaking in formulating the orientations. Ruíz's tripartite orientations (Ruíz, 1984) (language as a problem, language as a right and language as a resource) have been used to inform analysis of language policy and planning on different space and time scales. The orientation toward language as a problem is predicated on a monolingual ideal and assimilationist mindset (Hornberger, 1990: 24; Evans & Hornberger, 2005: 94 in Hult

& Hornberger, 2016). In academic misconduct policy documents, student from linguistic minorities are framed through a deficit lens, emphasising their linguistic deficiencies in the academic language. Rather than an asset, their languages are considered a disability, i.e., 'poor academic writing skills' that must be overcome. Compensatory programs or mentoring prioritise academic development of English over minority language maintenance or lifelong bilingualism. Academic writing skills or English for Academic Purposes (EAP) are positioned as a 'thing in and of itself' as a resource for academic achievement, cognitive development, employability and the economy. Academic writing skills are positioned as empirically-based language practices and dichotomised in the autonomous model of literacy (Street) with non-academic cognitively undemanding language. Ideas of academic language as a set of autonomous skills and disembodied features is an ideological raciolinguistic construct that positions the everyday language practices of racialised and minoritised communities as inherently deficient (Flores & Rosa, 2015). The assumption that racialised students are linguistically incompetent and so incapable of developing academic language skills (Flores et al., 2018) pathologises minoritised language varieties and conceals the logic of European colonialism that governs perceptions of racial and linguistic differences as either embraced or abjected (Rosa & Flores, 2017). Racialised and classed language policing that frames minoritised students' language practices as inherently deficient and in need of remediation and control originated as an alternative to eugenics in the 1960s with 'verbal deprivation' (Bereiter & Engelmann, 1966 in Rosa & Flores, 2017) and a 'culture of poverty' theory (Lewis, 1959 in Rosa & Flores, 2017). These ideological dogmas persist, as exemplified by recent assertions of a 'word gap' between mostly white middle-class and low-income communities (Hart & Risley, 1995; Suskind, 2015, in Rosa & Flores, 2017), explaining low educational achievement and related societal problems. Translanguaging appeals to 'resist neocolonialism through the soft power of English' (Wei, 2021: 8).

As a political, decolonising position, 'translanguaging' prompts us to reject the raciolinguistic framing of language norms and standards, which not only discriminates against 'non-native' learners but also favours an elite group of English users (Wei, 2021). In the UK, the term 'literacy' was only coined late in the nineteenth century as an ideological response to maintain social, economic and

political hierarchy through the creation of cultural hegemony promoted by compulsory schooling (Donald, 1983). Coercion and hegemonic strategies could compel minoritised groups to adhere to the social norms set out by the dominant group and govern their own behaviour accordingly (Snell & Cushing, 2021). Advancing the standard language ideology as a classed concept (Donald, 1983; Snell & Cushing, 2021), raciolinguistics (Rosa & Flores, 2017) historicises the deficit racialised language practices perspectives as an effort toward decolonisation and the eradication of white supremacy. Languages emerge through the creation of nation-states and geopolitical (re-)configurations that serve dominant interests. These sociopolitical pressures territorialise languages along national and racial lines, assigning them different statuses (Wei, 2021). The labelling of a language is an act that is more about its users than about the language itself. Academic language, as a sociopolitical construct, is prejudiced against students who are racialised, minoritised, bilingual and multilingual, or socioeconomically disadvantaged. The uniform model of literacy as a school-based skill was created and used by the dominant groups in nineteenth-century England as an apparatus for shaping the consciousness and subjectivity of the working classes. Autonomous model of literacy, introduced by schooling, 'changed forever the relationship of the majority of the population to their own talents for learning and for literacy' (Cook-Gumperz, 1986: 32 in Bloome et al., 2019: 20). The hegemonic methodology was used in an attempt to exert moral and intellectual governance over the subordinate classes (Donald, 1983). Ettinger (2006) introduces the matrixial to propose a (psycho-)somatic basis of subjectivity as a second consciousness-determining structure. The matrixial is central in facilitating an encounter with the other that does not seek to oppress or dominate them. It is this ethical subjectivity that engages with difference through the affective encounter of 'compassion, awe and fascination' that is often neglected.

Sociocultural approaches to language attempted to link students' outside literacies and those in the classroom in the Third Space (Gutiérrez, 2008). Rather than 'building bridges', I adopted the language architecture framework (Flores, 2020) and presupposed that students already possessed the linguistic resources necessary to engage in cognitively demanding tasks; thus, I created a new listening subject position. Creating a space that welcomed multiplicities of semiotics and affect of awe

removed a limiting assumption from thinking, thus creating 'immanent possibilities' (Leander&Rowe, 2006:451). Moving beyond language-centric assumptions about thinking and paying attention to 'becoming' represented a matrixial borderspace/ space where the student/ the 'other' entered a dialogue that recognises commonality but also honours difference/ co-emergence without raciolinguistic prejudices. Translanguaging reconstituted the power dynamics among languages, knowledge systems, and pedagogic practices. Bodily encounters and mutually transformative encounters can redistribute agency in ethically significant ways. However, not all individuals in an assemblage had equal agency, with the institution and its neoliberal affects holding auxiliary power. It is not the attitudes of individual teachers that need to be reconfigured, but rather the institutional mechanisms that govern classroom interactions. Rejecting the dichotomous theory of language was insufficient in resisting raciolinguistic ideologies and neoliberal affects. Within two months, the students made significant progress in their academic writing; however, the institution was uninterested in eliminating collusion and fabrications. My frustration morphed into exhaustion, and like so many other disillusioned educators, I distanced myself from that culture and environment. Frustration is rooted in deceit (Skeat, 1963, in Robinson, 2021), and it is the deception that rendered teaching worthless since teaching failed to accomplish its stated goals.

Affect studies identify the feeling of 'precarity' or a sense of perpetual low-level crisis to be critical to the operation of contemporary capitalism (McKenzie, 2017). Classification through data as an apparatus of power was utilised in manipulation through both individual feelings and collective affect to prevent academic integrity from mattering. However, institutional apparatuses alone do not determine policy's affective encounters. Integrity must not be overlooked in considerations of how people come to be subjected to, and position themselves in relation to, forms of power and authority in society. Barad (2007) contends that humans are not passive observers of the world. Individuals must actively intervene to 'see the world', as they are a part of it. Intra-actions are conceptualised as 'becoming' instead of 'being'. The future is not what will come to be in an unfolding of the present moment; rather, the past and the future are enfolded participants in matter's iterative becoming (Barad, 2007: 181). Apparatuses resonate with 'multiplicity' or possibilities for becoming (Leander & Rowe, 2006:451). In an assemblage, the relation between language and

matter is one of the social force of affect. Affect 'does not describe individual emotion but rather a collective 'capacity to affect and to be affected' (Goodchild, 1996: 2 in Leander & Rowe, 2006). In other words, affect can account for how are bodies formed through relations that extend beyond them and how do bodily capacities express and become part of those relations (Anderson, 2014). Hunter views policy documents as 'material semiotic actors' that both constitute and facilitate the movement of affect and emotion (Hunter, 2008). In posthuman conceptualisation of literacy and thus policy documents, the assemblage is the smallest unit, not the words, the idea, or the concept of the signifier. It is always an assemblage that produces an utterance. Utterances are not caused by a subject acting as an agent of enunciation, nor are they related to subjects acting as subjects of utterance (Mazei and Jackson in Kuby et al., 2018). This concept is analogous to Ettinger's (2006) concept of the matrixial, which provides an account of an 'in-between' space where subjects co-emerge and constitute one another. Thus, consciousness is 'plural and shared, but does not imply the annihilation of one by the other in its development. Policy documents are thus 'the constellation of voices' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 84 in Kuby et al., 2018). It is always an assemblage of forces, bodies, affects and things that produces policy and policy documents. This 'agentic assemblage' (Bennett, 2010) signals expressions -to-come. The continuing of expression across experiences means that it is too big to fit the contours of an individual body. Its moving-through envelops the sky-like immensity of its field conditions of emergence, and the numberless collectivity of a people to come' (Massumi, 2005). The idea of potentiality of policy as resistance is highlighted in lines of flight and abductions. Abductions are sensed and unfold in the in-between encounters; they have the capacity to affect a body, but do not belong to individual subjects or objects (they only seem so retrospectively. Rather, 'force arrives from outside to break constraints and open new vistas' (Massumi, 1987: xiii in Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Policy as a ritual or content represents molar lines as diversionary tactics to send us on a hopeless search that keeps us moving along segments through time, having 'a future but no becoming' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 195). Molar lines produce a life that was 'someone else's idea' (Sáenz, 2012). Nevertheless, molar lines are always fraying into molecular lines that 'make us feel something', moving at a quicker pace -but not yet grasping 'something' as yet unfindable, is unfolding. Molar lines might emerge when individuals are faced with a psychic choice between acceptance by the

'community' and preserving integrity. Ettinger's (2006) concept of the matrixial reaffirms an ethical subjectivity through relationality or interdependence. This notion of ethical response as an affective mode of being, which is experienced in/through the body frames documentation as a tool of resisting hypernormalisation, i.e., 'the failure of politics to adequately grasp and deal with the present' or 'living as if the absurd situation was normal' (Nicholls, 2017). As Hunter (2008) notes, documents continue to act and their story is ongoing. Documents both constitute and facilitate feelings and affect of solidarity. Due to its plural character, consciousness possesses extraordinary resources and has the capacity to survive on very little, and occasionally on nothing, for an extended period of time. In a rhizome, even if the mother fails, the offspring can survive. This is the psychic pattern and promise for those with little resources or in torturous conditions (Estés, 2008). In the midst of arduous labour, policy documents can operate as a rhizome or a form of emotional recuperation, as Hunter points out.

The analysis focused on both 'bad' and 'good' forms of affect (McKenzie, 2017) (e.g., precarity, fear, shame, aspiration, justice) in relation to academic misconduct policy. Implementation of policy at each level of The 4M Framework (Eaton, 2020) seems to centre collective affect (e.g., precarity, justice) and individual bodily encounters (e.g., friendship). Stakeholders are constitutive of the academic integrity policy since they are not merely policy administrators implementing sanctions but individual professionals affected by their bodily encounters with other professionals and students.

Understanding how culture enters into the psychological processes of learning and examining the circulation of cultural meanings, objects and identities in diffuse time-spaces (Marcus, 1995: 96 in Beach et al., 2019) is conducted in a theoretical framework where ontogeny intertwines with the phylogenetic and cultural-historical constituents. The framework is situated in Deleuze and Guattari's (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) concept of becoming and the concept of syncretic subjectivities (Hunter, 2016; Ettinger, 2007) to theorise Whiteness as a multimodal literacy practice and juxtapose it with racial literacy. The empirical data in the form of a material-discursive encounter juxtaposes the phenomena, the metaphors (Kakos & Fritzsche, 2017b), taken directly from diverse research accounts, including

autoethnographic data, to demonstrate how whiteness enacts quality assurance functions in an education assemblage and how focusing on the mode of affect opens a space for emergent ontologies ranging from transforming institutions and inequitable practices to individual agency transformation and knowledges that are valued and leveraged across spaces. Whiteness creates affects and educational subject positions.

Whiteness as a multimodal literacy practice can be examined by conceptualising the education assemblage and spacetime metaphors. Reading Whiteness as 'a complex map of education' is an attempt to explore the relation between the social and the individual. It rejects the a-priori presumption of psychological structures and processes inherent in sociocultural theory of mind (Cole & Scribner, 1980). The theory infers individual psychological processes from 'collective subjects' or groups of people. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) denote the existence of the multiple within the singular as molar and molecular. Groups can be molar, singular, coherent entities, but from a molecular view, they are constituted by an assemblage of individuals or heterogeneous elements.

Individuals have to adapt to social institutions; individual minds are formed in the process of socialisation. An identity is a product of an expression of an assemblage, which is always collective and constitutes affects and events. In an assemblage (K. M. Leander & Rowe, 2006), the relation between language and matter is one of the social force of affect. Cultural institutions are simultaneously semiotic, social, cognitive, affective and material. The literature revealed institutions as "affective networks" with entangled unconscious and cognitive communication (Hinshelwood, 1989: 77-78 in Hunter, 2015b). Research investigating institutional non-symbolic communication (Hunter, 2015c) has been critiqued for implying that researchers have access to unconscious meanings or fantasies that research participants do not and therefore have a superior understanding of participants' thoughts and feelings (Barnes, 2016). Nevertheless, the assemblage of Whiteness is not considered linear and staged but rather multimodal, heterochronic and multistratified. The unfolding reading paths will be non-linear and multiple. Hunter's (2015c) methodology suggests that the fantasy genres should be presented rather than merely represented. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) illustrate this distinction effectively by

differentiating between tracing and a map. Tracing is fixed and an attempt to define and represent, whereas a map is 'open and connectable in all dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. Map-making is a process of building 'a map of the unconscious--with its strata, lines of deterritorialisation, and black holes' (Watson, 2011). A map is an attempt to present and explore a process functioning outside of language but nevertheless makes use of signs. Making maps creates and produces. Tracing or fixing points by what they represent loses the 'lines' between the connections in the plurality; it misses the creative and unpredictable changes taking place (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

The literature revealed that multiplicity of subjectivity opens the ethical 'in-between' space- as a metaphor for revealing socio-spatial processes- for prolepsis, subversion and resistance (Ettinger, 2014) and that these spaces co-emerge through matrixial literacy, also theorised as sociocritical literacy (Gutierrez, 2008). The literature also revealed various Whiteness fantasy genres (delusion, narcissism, paranoia, etc.). The data suggests that prolepsis, as an imagination rather than a Whiteness fantasy genre, describes an organised field of social practices that directs social order. The vision transcends individual human consciousness. It is social and contributes to producing systems of meaning and creating participatory affinity spaces. Dialogue syncretism between various linguistic consciousnesses has a transformational potential. Imaginaries have material consequences in their influence on behaviour, feelings of individual and collective identity, and the formation of narratives, policy and institutions (Marcus, 1995).

A historically accurate education increases our capacity to identify modes and decode Whiteness's sociocultural conventions and assumptions to counter its myths and distortions. (Lander, 2011)notes the teachers' inability to produce counternarratives to negative media representations of ethnicity. King (1991, in Waite, 2021) defined the disposition 'including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs' (King, 1991: 135 in Waite, 2021) that rationalises inequality and exploitation under the existing social order as 'dysconsciousness'. Research has demonstrated that educational professionals must be reflective practitioners and that reflective practice is effective and valuable. Moreover, engaging in liberatory pedagogies enables students to develop critical consciousness, thus progressing

toward disrupting dysconsciousness (Gooden and O'Doherty, 2015; Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis, 2016 in Waite, 2021). In their study of early childhood contexts, Nash et al. (2018) illuminated how individuals are racially socialised over their lifespans. Racial identity and dysconsciousness were found to be developed over time and across multiple spaces. As well as alternating between different conceptions of time, individuals alternate between the spatial manifolds of Chora: concrete location and topos: virtual or online space (Rämö, 2016). The heterochrony and spatial heterogeneity between contexts provide resources for conceptualising White racial identities as trajectories of semiotic becoming.

By centring ontogenetic development in the representation of context as concentric circles, we attain an analytical level coinciding with microgenesis, our everyday experiences, cultural practises, or activity systems as the ideal units of analysis. Circulating texts and literacy practices within activity systems or assemblages provide the infrastructure for and production of institutions (Giddens, 1984, in Bazerman, 2012). The multimodal assemblage framework is political and ecological across a range of scales and heterogeneous topoi: building on the knowledge and practices of individuals developed in various institutional and non-institutional contexts and addressing social histories, institutional structures, and changing power relations. In education, the in-between space of contexts is the intersection of identities and everyday experiences with institutional learning. Institutional learning is influenced by everyday life, and institutional learning shapes individuals. White racial identities as trajectories of semiotic becoming could be considered a sequence of literacy practices in a multimodal genre chain within genre systems or institutions. Institutions can be analysed as aggregates of situation types (Matthiessen, 2013). Bateman, 2011 in Hiippala, 2015) contends that genre is a 'multi-stratal' phenomenon, meaning that the 'semiotic work' in deploying a genre entails making choices on several strata.

Racial literacy critiques hegemonic structures that impact people's day-to-day activities and provides them with the tools to resist and dismantle racism. The ideologies that permeate racial literacy practices can be identified as Critical Race Theory (CRT), Critical whiteness studies (CWS), Black Emancipatory Theories and Critical Racial Literacy. The three goals of CRT are first, to expose and explore

racism as a legal and structural reality; second, to evaluate neo-liberalism and its effects on laws and policies perpetuating racism, and third, to produce testimonies of historically marginalised communities via storytelling and counternarratives (Lynn and Dixson, 2013 in Nash et al., 2018). CWS 'denormalises and scrutinises whiteness as a social construction that incessantly fortifies 'the power of white identifications and interests' (Gillborn, 2005: 488 in Nash et al., 2018). Genres of Black emancipatory theories of Du Bois, Fanon (Bois & Meer, 2018; Fanon, 2008) include: naming and identifying oppression and its constituent components; learning history; imagining possibilities of a better world; taking reflective actions to interrupt ongoing oppression and organising and collaborating with others seeking to dismantle oppressive structures (Nash et al., 2018)

Racial literacy and the literacy of Whiteness metaphor can be juxtaposed with the ideological model of literacy, which views literacy as part of human experience that shifts based on contexts. Street (1984 in Bloome et al., 2018) challenges the autonomous model of literacy. The autonomous model of literacy is a hegemonic ideology promulgated by institutions that conceptualises literacy as a standardised, uniform and naturalised set of technical skills. The autonomous model of literacy is a myth, as it is, in fact, an ideological model of literacy or the values of the cultural heritage of the White middle class (Beach et al., 2019), held as if it were the only model of literacy and literacy practices.

Whiteness is a racialised discourse which has been established over time to privilege White people. Marx (2006: 6 in Lander, 2011) notes that 'Whiteness is much more than a racial discourse[, it is] an amalgamation of qualities including cultures, histories, experiences, discourses and privileges shared by Whites.' Hunter emphasises that whiteness is a fantasy position that comes to be through material, symbolic and affective work (Hunter, 2010 in Hunter, 2015c). Leonardo (2002 in Lander, 2011) adds that Whiteness is predicated on 'othering' ethnicity and the 'naturalisation' of White as the norm, and that attempting to erase historical wrongs as a means of moving forward is an attempt to conceal the formation of dominance. (Hunter, 2015b) notes that whiteness has varied meanings at different times and places; it is both malleable, encompassing diverse groups of people (such as the Irish, Jews, and Eastern Europeans) and fixed. In modernity, however, whiteness is a

metaphor for the dominant liberal norm (Hunter, 2015c). It is the unknown, empty standardising ideal against which race can be seen. Whiteness is indescribable in its generality, its apparent everythingness, the dominant standard of humanity against which the (raced) particular is measured (Dyer, 1997 in Hunter, 2015c). Lander (2011) uses the theoretical framework of Whiteness to demonstrate how the education system fails to develop racial literacy (Skerrett, 2011 in (Lander, 2011) or the knowledge, skills, and awareness that teachers need to understand the constructs of race and ethnicity, their own racialised positions, and appropriate responses to racist incidents, at all levels, but especially in initial teacher education.

Defining language as social means locating it in a sociocultural context and theorising it at multiple scales. The autonomous model of literacy conceptualises literacy as a monolithic set of psychological processes, failing to account for diverse meanings across cultures. Sociocultural theorists propose literacy as a mediational means with cognitive consequences, and the acquisition of literacy forming a higher, systematic mode of thinking. Language is dialogic, comprised of multiple juxtaposed voices as people interact in the world. Higher psychological functions transcend individual human consciousness (Wundt, 1879, in Cole, 1998) because a language can never be created by an individual. Thus, listening can be a racist act.

Intelligibility is a mutual objective of oral communication. Intelligibility is not located in any one person or accent. It is achieved relationally and contextually. Therefore, it is negligent, insufficient and deceptive to frame accentism or native speakerism as purely linguistic issues without addressing race, colonialism and nationalism. Hunter notes that 'speech and listening are forms of interdependent social action which are intra and intersubjective'; therefore, 'voices are not straightforward expressions of how things are but are a means of negotiating in relationships with others different social identifications' (Hunter, 2005). The psychological homogeneity assumption of the same psychological structures functioning in precisely the same way within each individual fails to contribute to the theoretical understanding of the causes of psychological and behavioural phenomena. The assumption is that there are no causes since individuals are homogeneous objects of classical physics. However, human activity entails intricate and dynamic divisions of labour and experience within cultures so that no two individuals can be expected to have internalised the same parts of whatever 'whole' is claimed to exist (D'Andrade, 1989; Schwartz, 1978, 1990

in Cole, 1998). A definition of language is always, implicitly or explicitly, a definition of human beings in the world (Williams, 1977: 21 in Bloome et al., 2018).

Consideration of writing in isolation from the multimodal ensembles in which it is embedded is becoming increasingly problematic. When writing is considered one component of multimodal composition, it becomes increasingly complex to understand its function and goals (Domingo et al., 2015, in Rowsell & Pahl, 2015: 251-52).

Researchers agree that the goal of reading instruction is to provide means for individuals to reorganize their meaning-making activity using print and that 'reading text is an elaboration of the pre-existing ability to "read the world" using signs of various kinds' (Cole, 1998: 16). Racial literacy can provide means for individuals to reorganise meaning-making activities using the mode of affect. The framework of assemblages offers the rhizomatic mapping of nonrepresentational affect: 'the forces that move and/or immobilise bodies' (Colman, 2005b: 232; Leander & Rowe, 2006:433).

Conceptualising Whiteness as a multimodal text or assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) expands the idea of 'text' as a bounded linguistic material object to encompass 'textual formations' in space and time (Jewitt, 2007:276) and this conceptualisation of texts as 'orchestrated designs' (Jewitt, 2007:276) to include day-to-day lived events (Flewitt et al., 2009)2). Like spoken or written texts instantiating only language, multi-semiotic texts can be defined by reference to context, more specifically to the context of a situation, which is important in education. A semiotic mode concept describes the structure and functionality of language, image, or combinations of these in a situational context to identify what modes do and how they do it. A medium, i.e., a material substrate, transports the semiotic resources. Modes emerge when a suitable substrate emerges over time.

The design of Whiteness as a multimodal text is shaped by particular social, cultural and economic factors. Multimodal analysis focuses on meaning potential and the process of meaning-making: a selection of modal resources as a choice from a network of alternatives (Halliday, 2004) in relation to ideological systems. The analysis and decoding of Whiteness demand that we include and evaluate how

modes function together in a 'multimodal ensemble' (assemblage) of Whiteness to make meaning. Increased access to and availability of modes and media means more possibilities for expression, subjectivities, and structural conditions in text production. Identifying and understanding the significance of the media and modes in any given context increases our capacity to decode the sociocultural conventions and assumptions that form the day-to-day (educational) practises of Whiteness, i.e. deficit models of ethnic or linguistic diversity (Kakos & Fritzsche, 2017a; Lander, 2011). Therefore, the interpretation will likely vary according to the individual's background (teacher or student). Consequently, the meaning will vary depending on the person reading. This highlights the need for people to develop racial literacy by being inducted into Whiteness or a shared understanding of social and educational practices and beliefs. This means that from a sociocultural perspective, people need to understand and accept the values and systems that underlie and sustain the learning activity and develop communicative competence to read Whiteness.

Framing language as a social semiotic entails interpreting language within a sociocultural context in which culture itself is viewed semiotically. Language and Whiteness are, therefore, social and cultural phenomena. Learning a language and reading Whiteness is learning how to mean. Learning a language and reading Whiteness are life-long processes in which new contexts provide new opportunities for learning how to mean: an expansion of one's resources for meaning-making.

Reading acquisition is a collaborative and interactive process that requires a team effort. The methodological claim is that psychological processes and human activity are co-constituted. Psychological processes are also involved in the production and reproduction of culture; human thought and culture must be assumed to be intrinsically intertwined. Although literacy is a cognitive and social tool with the potential to transform the mind and society, Cole and Scribner (Cole, 1998) demonstrated that if literacy practices are pervasive and integrated into a society, the cognitive skills associated with literacy will also become extensive and intricately intertwined, giving the illusion of a transformation in modes of thought. If writing uses are constrained (absence of mass production technology, legal restrictions on using the script in civic matters or adherence to a religion employing a different script), then the skill development they facilitate will be restricted to a narrow variety of

activities and subject domains (Cole, 1998). Whiteness may not place the same value on racial literacy practices, compounded by ethnocentric lenses, blinding us to the meanings and uses of literacy that differ from those in the dominant culture. Therefore, literacy practices are not only recognised literacy events but also ‘the meanings and values attached to literacy within particular contexts’, placing them on a cline.

Whiteness as multimodal literacy practices encompasses situated values, attitudes, emotions, and social relationships (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, in Bloome et al). These include racism (Chubbuckin Yoon, 2012 in Vinnie 2; Leonardo, 2002 in Lander, 2011) manifested as racial microaggressions (Huber and Solorzano, 2015, 298 in Lander & Santoro, 2017) and the associated microinsults (Sue et al. 2007, 274 in Lander, 2011) or microinvalidations (Sue et al. 2007, 274 in Lander, 2011).

Sue et al. (2007 in Lander & Santoro, 2017) note that many individuals only link racism to the historical actions of white supremacist extreme groups. Time or ‘the past’ is thus a mode employed by Whiteness to maintain dominance by erasing and delegitimising marginalised communities’ experiences by demanding they perform the desired emotional response of forgiveness. Whiteness thus diminishes its accountability and centres on the imagined cruelty, vengeance or callousness of those it harmed.

Racism, according to CRT, is more than overt violence (Delgado and Stefancic 2001; Taylor 2009 in (Lander & Santoro, 2017); it can employ silence as a mode functioning to stabilise the Whiteness assemblage in ways that produce centres of power (Picower, 2009 in (Lander, 2011). Since the meaning of race varies across time and space, modes of Whiteness demonstrate the semiotic dynamism of physical perceptions, categorisations and gradations. Race is a concept associated with our physical senses. Consequently, the ability to smell, see or hear race is evidence that Whiteness (colonialism, racial capitalism, etc.) conditioned our senses. Colour (skin tone) or sound (accent) is not an isolatable sign or an objective rubric but acquires meaning moving through context and history. Modes have different affordances: perceptions of accents are contained within geopolitical boundaries rather than global. For example, a prestigious accent in one country can become stigmatised in another (and vice versa). Accents are also audible tools to (de-)

emphasise one's ethnoracial background. The materiality of accent is revealed by how it is projected from bodies and can be audibly felt by others. But there are also material consequences. Depending on how a person sounds (and looks), they can be denied employment or asylum in a country. The perceived benefit of accent reduction is a raciolinguistic myth or a fantasy that perpetuates the narrative that accent is linked to professional competence. Accent discrimination highlights how employability has a sound and that racialised voices as aurally unsuitable for the workplace. The expectation to modify accent teaches aurally stigmatised people to conform to oppression rather than develop tools to resist it (Ramjattan, 2019). Race is not representational; it is the practices and materialities that get produced rather than a-priori phenomenon inscribed with meaning. Race is related to temporal and situational practices and materialities with in-between possibilities and complexities, and imbued with past and present affective traces. Whiteness also employs metaphors or constructs to maintain power and centre itself: meritocracy, professionalism, decency or respectability (Ramjattan, 2022).

Emotions constitutive of Whiteness have been identified as anger and defensiveness (Picower, 2009 in (Lander, 2011)); colourblind racism or a 'colour and power evasive' position (Picower, 2009; Frankenberg, 1993 in (Lander, 2011)). (Miller, 2015) explores the emotional and psychological discord experienced by people from dominant groups due to their positionality. In her parent research, Miller (2015) found that her children felt or imagined 'a mix of discomfort, distance, fear and pity towards persons of colour formed within discourses of blackness'. Thus, 'demonising, pitying, differencing, and distancing the Other' operated in tandem with glorification, exaltation, re-framing, and normalisation of whiteness. When positive emotions associated with being white are juxtaposed with negative emotions associated with white views of blackness, 'the duality between whiteness and blackness can be understood more completely in the development of white identity' (Miller, 2015: 147).

Understanding the notion of multimodal genre from functional and non-functional perspectives can be advantageous in addressing how social purposes or goals shape and structure a trajectory-of-semiotic-becoming emerging within particular sociocultural contexts. The two perspectives provide analytical tools for identifying the semiotic choices on multiple strata that structure genre as a stratified

phenomenon. At the centre of cultural institutions are the activities and the participants - or, in systemic functional terms, field and tenor. (see, e.g., Halliday, 2004). Tenor embodies affect. It is the social and semiotic roles of the persons participating in these activities and their institutional positions within the hierarchy. Education is an innately collaborative activity, and central to the quality of provision is the division of labour among people in different institutional roles. Genres, as complex, goal-oriented social activities, are described in a series of stages in systemic functional linguistics (SFL), which all contribute in different ways to achieving social purposes. These stages are usually associated with characteristic patterns and shifts in field, tenor and mode.

5.2.3 Material-Discursive Encounter in Educational Spaces

This section shifts from policy-as-text to policy-in-practice, examining how institutional whiteness operates through the material and relational dynamics of a complaint process within FE settings. Section 5.2.1 traced how Quality Assurance systems function as racialising technologies at the structural level, and Section 5.2.2 illustrated how linguistic deficit ideologies are enacted in individual pedagogical encounters, this section demonstrates how these forces converge and intensify within institutional complaint mechanisms. Drawing on a composite autoethnographic account of a departmental meeting and its written aftermath, I show how racialised harm is managed, rerouted and obscured by institutional procedures, and how collective literacy practices can constitute a form of counter-apparatus. The encounter is analysed as a literacy event in which policies, complaint genres, and collaborative writing become apparatuses through which racialised subject positions are simultaneously produced, contested, and negotiated.

Typically, departmental meetings were hybrid, with some team members joining via conference call, but this week, all team members were required to come in person. Senior management failed to provide the team with an agenda, so until it commenced, no one was aware that the urgent need for an in-person meeting was due to student complaints. The students requested an appeal under Stage 3 of the Academic Appeals policy against Tahsye's assessment decision to the Quality team after their Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints were rejected. The students wanted to apply to university at the end of the academic year, and the complaints were

motivated by the students' aspirations to fast-track their Functional Skills English enrolment to meet the English language requirements for university admission. The alternative to the government-funded Functional Skills (FS) qualification was to pay privately for the IELTS assessment (International English Language Testing System) later that year. The complainants could have also applied to a different institution that would have accepted their application for the FS programme that this institution did not approve. At stage 1 of the Academic appeal, one of the students began acting aggressively: they violated Tahsyne's personal space while raising their voice. They were continuing students and attempted to convince Tahsyne that they had been discriminated against in some way since their prior enrolment. They were then observed photographing and interfering with other students' online Basic Key Skills Builder (BKSB) initial assessments.

One of the student grievances at Stage 3 was that the College employs lecturers from 'certain nationalities'. Tahsyne was of a 'certain nationality' and did not know to whom the student complaint was referring. She felt 'under the spotlight' because students may have reported not being able to understand her accent (Lander & Santoro, 2017), or perhaps her professional credibility was questioned due to her being a 'space invader' (a non-native English speaker teaching English) (Puwar, 2004 in Lander & Santoro, 2017). Tahsyne had experienced and witnessed discrimination in the past, but she did not always speak out against it since 'complaints were hard to make and real issues ignored' (Pilkington 2011: 15 in Lander & Santoro, 2017). She was therefore both 'responsible and innocent' (Hoggett, 2001: 53 in Hunter, 2005). One lecturer audibly gasped in shock. Although Tahsyne remained silent, she appreciated that sound of protest. Senior management did not uphold this objection but did uphold the others and expected the department to improve. For example, the all-female staff was 'miserable' and asked to be less so. Tahsyne felt that the description was too vague, non-specific and unhelpful. Examples, i.e., 'the teacher refused to help me', would have been more constructive. She felt that women were subjected to gendered expectations and that their expressions were constantly monitored. The characterisation 'miserable' lacked detail. Referring to women as 'miserable' could be perceived as sexist and ableist, as smile solicitation is linked to gendered and neuronormative societal norms. Moreover, 5 out of 7 department members were black women, and three members

were non-native speakers of English. The complaint pointed to a level of irresponsibility, thoughtlessness, and reprehensibility of students' conduct. This, in turn, involved the appropriateness of the employer's response and the atmosphere created by the employer's response. Tahsyne did not appreciate students concerning themselves with lecturers' immigration status - that is the role of the Human Resources department. The students took it upon themselves to define lecturers' suitability for their roles. It presupposes that they know the institution's hiring process. Moreover, by excluding 'certain nationalities' and putting others forward as 'the norm', they set an unattainable performance standard for all 'space invaders' (Puwar, 2004, in Lander & Santoro, 2017). Therefore, some professional identities were threatened by the fact that students defined them. Tahsyne wished that the 'complaint' was relayed more sensitively and that support was offered. Instead, the senior management emphasised 'good customer service' and increasing 'customer retention'. The management was unable or unwilling to name racism, implying Whiteness, which is inextricably linked to racism (Chubbuckin Yoon, 2012; Leonardo, 2002 in Lander, 2011; Lander & Santoro, 2017).

Later, Tahsyne learned that two team members were aware of the student complaints hours before the meeting because the complaints were directed at them, and the Quality department requested a written response. The complaints accused two black lecturers, one of whom was also a middle manager, of forming 'a gang' and discriminating against non-black ['Afro'] students. No specific examples of the teachers' discriminatory acts were given. The complainants also cited a 'horrible + African country adjective accent'. The students demanded that the College inform the lecturers subjected to the complaint that 'this [UK] is not Africa. Since she was not an African or black woman and the complaint could not have been directed at her, Tahsyne no longer felt paralysing shame. Since the complaint was initially about her assessment decision, Tahsyne did not understand why her colleagues were targeted. This development illustrates how Whiteness produces, perpetuates and ignores the contradictions that emerge 'in the struggle to centre it as a dominant discourse' (Lander, 2011). After a discussion with a friend outside of the institution, she informed one of the lecturers subject to the complaint that she would suggest the team write an open letter to senior management at the next departmental meeting,

with her permission. The team agreed, Tahsyne's draft was edited, and an open letter was sent by the middle manager to the senior leadership team.

Dear Ellie,

Following your meeting with the team on Wednesday, the team have asked me to forward a joint open letter to you to express our team's concerns around how the institution deals with race discrimination and race hate crime (in the Equality Act, race can also mean ethnicity).

Regarding the complaint from the learner that was discussed, the team felt that a colleague had been targeted because of their race. Being an equal opportunities employer does not only entail compliance with equality laws and the employment of individuals with protected characteristics. It also entails informing students that racism is not tolerated on our campus. Whilst we are aware that the learners were challenged because of their language, the team felt that the harm that students' comments could have on practitioners was not adequately addressed. Racism has been identified as a stressor, and it has been suggested that it may contribute to burnout.

We know you will agree that racial abuse must not be tolerated. As was the case here, students should have been challenged about their racist behaviour to develop their 'work-readiness' and 'functionality' or the ability to apply skills to solve problems at work. Grievances should not be an excuse for racist behaviour. Nor should students be able to rely on the support or cooperation of the management should they make malicious, racially motivated complaints.

Lastly, the staff must be confident that their employer will protect them from racially motivated complaints and condemn racism in the strongest possible terms.

We feel that staff need to be aware that support is available, and training should be offered to staff college-wide to ensure staff feel heard and valued. Thank you for taking the time to consider the points raised in this letter. The team would appreciate a follow-up meeting to clarify the current status of the learner who submitted the complaint.

Regards,

This collective writing practice built upon earlier insights about individual resistance, demonstrating how literacy can function as personal and communal resistance. Where my earlier analysis of translanguaging pedagogy showed individual pedagogical resistance, the open letter revealed how collective literacy practices could challenge institutional power more directly. However, as the following case study will demonstrate, even collective resistance operates within broader systemic constraints that require deeper theoretical intervention.

The open letter was intended to distribute the risk of institutional retaliation and a strategy rejecting the institutional model of establishing precedents via individual complaints. The letter expressed concerns about the College's handling of race discrimination and hate crimes. The team felt that a colleague had been targeted because of their race. They articulated that being 'an equal opportunities employer' does not only entail compliance with equality laws and the employment of individuals with protected characteristics, but also informing students that racism is not tolerated on our campus. It seemed disingenuous to cite legislation without addressing the harm that students' comments could have on practitioners. The team felt a copy of the complaint should never have been given to the two lecturers for a response. Instead, the students should have been challenged about their racist behaviour to develop their 'work-readiness' and 'functionality' or the ability to apply skills to solve problems at work. Grievances should not be an excuse for racist behaviour. Nor should students be able to rely on the support or cooperation of the management should they make malicious, racially motivated complaints. The framing of 'work readiness' was in direct response to the employer's emphasis on teachers as customer service providers. The team felt that the senior management and the Quality department should have warned students that racism was unacceptable and be prepared to terminate their professional relationships if they did not improve their conduct. The team wanted to be confident that their employer would protect them from racially motivated complaints and condemn racism in the strongest possible terms.

As described by Picower (2009 in Lander, 2011), a predictable email exchange ensued with defensiveness as the emotional response, perpetuating the centrality of Whiteness. The institution cited 'clear policies and procedures for equality of

opportunity, including complaint procedures' as a tool of Whiteness in maintaining 'the ethical good self'. However, the Academic Appeals policy's criteria for an appeal against a decision relating to an assessment decision seemed to have been ignored. The allegation that two black women 'formed a gang' and were only 'nice to "Afro" students was reframed as 'exam unfairness, staff favouritism and level setting'. Eventually, a hybrid meeting was called with Human Resources in attendance to "offer the team support". Although the students wanted to return, they will not be re-enrolling, which has been made clear on their student records.

A complaint is 'a goal-seeking activity' (Byrne and Long, 1976: 31 in (Charlton, 2018) with both the complainant and the complainees actively seeking to achieve their individual objectives. The complaint-related meeting and events could be considered literacy events. Complaint studies revealed that complaints follow a consistent pattern across settings. The complaint sequence will begin with the complainant's allegation and the respondent's denial. After that, countercomplaints are employed by both the complainant and the subject of the complaint as a defence tool. The intermediary moves may entail restating the problem and requesting a solution (Dersley and Wootton, 2000; Laforest, 2002; Migdadi et al., 2012 in (Al-Momani, 2014). The institution established the three stages of the complaint 'genre', but there were numerous 'invisible' intermediate processes. Considered from the initial encounter to Stage 3, the complaint was constructed multimodally with acts of verbal and aggression and physical intimidation. Rather than looking at how social purposes affect the way that a text is structured and the lexicogrammatical patterns that occur across its different stages, i.e., how genres are made, I aim beyond textual analysis of genre by using a range of methodologies to understand professional culture and practice rather than the genre itself. When in a cultural setting other than our own, we become more conscious of the stages of a given genre precisely because it may not be part of our automatic routine repertoire. Shifts in tenor (affect) included the neoliberalist BKSB (Basic and Key Skills Builder digital assessment tool) as an online assessment of an individual's literacy. BKSB's design intends to identify and display students' individual skills gap with the aim of self-governance to account for their deficiencies through study. The team and the complainers were drawn into the affective intensities of the multimodal neoliberal literacies and the literacies of Whiteness performance rather than standing outside of

the performance and decoding it as a received text (Leander & Rowe, 2006:451). Paying attention to 'affective intensities' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) is about 'being moved by literacy and using literacy to move' (Leander & Ehret, 2019). The team's power to act or agency emerged not out of an individual but out of a confederacy of elements in the assemblage.

The team simultaneously performed emotional and aesthetic labour by maintaining bodily decorum and etiquette and projecting 'professional, appropriate and polite' emotions throughout due to the risk of being perceived as impolite, unprofessional or 'miserable'. The team's feeling of incongruence was preceded by affectively charged intra-actions; it was individualised and made social. 'Representational logics risk eliding not only the bodies and affects that defy representation, but also the visceral effects of their potential violence' (Leander & Ehret, 2019). Had they not performed the emotional and aesthetic labour, and the SLT had attempted to name the team's emotions as 'miserable, rude or aggressive' and assigned them the 'unprofessional' subject position, the SLT would have excluded the team's agency.

The non-functional perspective on genre indicates a greater emphasis that aims to examine the wider sociocultural practices. Genres are the tools for transmitting and applying knowledge in specific contexts (Bazerman, 2012). Material, social, and textual realms in a document are indexed and rendered relevant by explicit representation or implicit assumption, establishing knowledge to be accessed while decoding the text. Thus, knowledge is produced and maintained within genres and activity systems. Bakhtin's (1981, in Bazerman, 2012) chronotope is a valuable concept for defining the knowledge and reasoning of a genre. Bakhtin associates a genre with a distinct spacetime realm represented in each text; moreover, this spacetime encompasses anticipated figures, settings, relations, and events. The students attempted to present a condemning account demonstrating the two lecturers' conduct as unjust and one of the lecturer's accents as 'horrible + an African country adjective' so that the Quality team would 'affiliate with the complainer', thereby establishing rapport and building solidarity with the addressee (Drew, 1998: 303 in (Al-Momani, 2014) ('this is the UK, this is not Africa'). While visual modes and physical differences (skin tone) were mitigated, more subtle auditory modes and differences between individuals ('horrible + an African country

adjective accent') were used to establish affinity. In the racist capitalist system, ethnicity ('an African country adjective') was a safe subject to discuss overtly and was employed to denounce the teacher's 'linguistic deficits' and legitimize racist hiring practices. The complaint's implied assumption is that the ethnic differences mentioned are related not only to professionalism and competence (sounding professional being equated with sounding non-African, i.e., White) but positioned the teacher as a space invader (Puwar, 2004 in (Lander & Santoro, 2017) ('tell her that this is London/ UK; this is not Africa). Pollock (2010: 2 in Kabuto & Martens, 2014) notes that Whiteness may deny the power, privilege, and very existence of race by employing ethnicity as a shield to strike an opponent without being seen, thus displacing racism because ethnicity is all that is visible. Race was evoked to construct the complaint with intertextual links to a fantasy genre of Blackness oppressing Whiteness in an imagined space colonised by the anticipated figures of space invaders (i.e., the teachers are only nice to 'Afro' students). The fantasy conjures a world where Black people brutally avenge historical injustices, excluding an equitable world alternative.

The complaint and the subsequent open letter were multimodal assemblages of voices. The assemblages acted as a heterogeneous team of components that ordered, fragmented and re-organised new ontologies, realities and linkages within and beyond the institutional spaces or 'affective vibratory blocks of space-time' (Ringrose et al., 2019). The team's resistance is not traceable to an individual but to the agentic assemblage. The intertextual complaint genre circulated in a genre system with policies. With the introduction of new policies, policymaking has shifted significantly. As noted above, although ontologically different to physical violence, Whiteness can employ other modes to exclude or erase other possibilities. A policy can be racist if it performs polite inclusion that excludes the racialised experiences (Delgado and Stefancic 2001; Taylor 2009 in Lander & Santoro, 2017). From a socio-cultural perspective that centres on what people accomplish with language, we could argue that while the technologies have changed, people are continuing to do what they have always done through writing and other modes (communicating, interpreting, relating to others, doing). The complainers employed the institution and its policy as the medium to 'do their work' of Whiteness and to organise how the world should be (the College should not employ people from certain ethnicities).

Policy can be considered a transitional approach in that responsibility for implementing the policy rests not with the policymakers but with the practitioners. The goals of the policy may have been different for the Senior Leadership team (SLT), the complainers and the practitioners. The Academic appeals policy and the Complaint policy entered into a genre chain with Whiteness and the Equality Act (2010) that the team employed to do their work. The organisation's decision outcome was ultimately guided not only by present contingencies but by projected future action requirements and consequences of non-compliance with the Equality Act (2010). SCLA notes the central roles of ambiguity and prolepsis (anticipation) as systemic features of culturally mediated joint activity and cognitive change (Cole, 1998). Prolepsis is the 'cultural mechanism that brings 'the end into the beginning' (Cole, 1998: 63). Humans are viewed as future-oriented beings who construct cultural tools that mediate how we interpret and act in the world. By resisting the SLT's misinterpretation of 'quality' (i.e., delivering good customer service and increasing 'customer retention'), the team put their policy prolepsis into action by enfolding a vision for their desired future into the present, not compromising their ethics and understanding of professionalism.

Possibilities for employing literacy as a political act in reading and remaking the world exist at every moment, and these possibilities entail an ethical obligation to act responsibly in the world's remaking or becoming. The complaint medium (a letter, i.e., a sheet of paper; an email, i.e., a computer screen) circulated in the complainants' spaces and then the organisation's offices and ultimately arrived in the lecturer's inbox. The lecturer's identity as 'unemployable', acoustically incompetent, expendable, and failing to meet quality standards thus emerged hours or days after the complaint had been processed. In contrast, the employability of lecturers with a euphonious accent was not highlighted as preferable until the complaint was filed in the Quality department. Therefore, quality is not produced in the present, during a lesson, but after a complaint is filed. As quality moves through an organisation and simultaneously through time, a complex relation between spacetime(matter) and the moment of the phenomena (identity, quality, incompetence) emergence is revealed. Therefore, quality does not reside exclusively in the teacher's performance; it is a becoming that changes directions and significations as it is produced in different locations and times. The in-between of time and spaces did not need to be

synchronised to this outcome; the organisation could have used their response to racist incidents as one of its quality performance indicators.

Thus, listening can be a racist act. Intelligibility is a mutual objective of oral communication. Intelligibility is not located in any one person or accent. It is achieved relationally and contextually. Therefore, it is negligent, insufficient and deceptive to frame accentism or native speakerism as purely linguistic issues without addressing race, colonialism and nationalism.

5.3 Agential Cuts: Co-Constituting Racialised Subjects

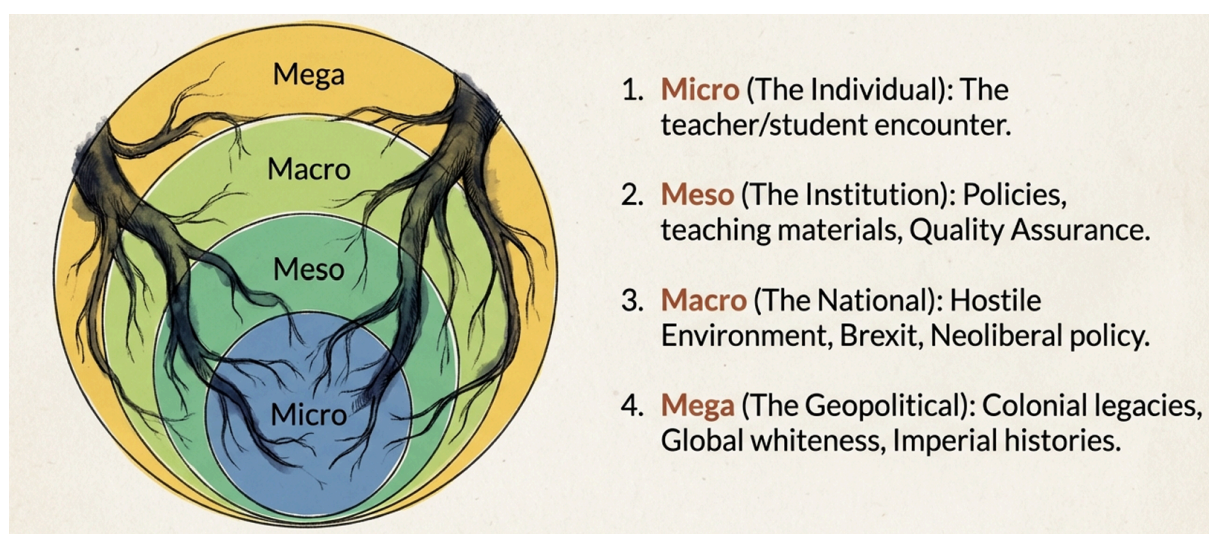


Figure 29: Scalar entanglements: a micro event powered by mega forces

Traditional anti-racist education often operates through “representationalist approaches” that treat racism as distorted representations of pre-existing racial groups that can be corrected through better knowledge transmission. Conventional frameworks exhibit several problematic characteristics. Some anti-racist pedagogy targets individual prejudices rather than recognising that “different intra-actions produce different phenomena” (Barad, 2007: 508). This means that educational practices themselves function as “apparatuses” (Barad, 2007) that enact particular “agential cuts” through which racialised subjects and knowledge emerge and participate in constituting racialised subjects. Traditional approaches regard (racial) identities as fixed properties that students bring to educational spaces, rather than as

phenomena continuously reconfigured through pedagogical encounters. Conventional frameworks separate “real” material conditions from “symbolic” representations, missing how these are always already entangled in educational practice. Furthermore, traditional approaches often operate through mechanistic rules that manipulate others' boundaries, limiting behaviours to civility and passivity, neutralising resistance and enforcing obedience to existing hierarchies. When institutions reproduce racist logics, they create conditions where racialised students come to embody the “symptoms” of systemic oppression. My research question, “How do my everyday literacy practices within educational spaces reflect and shape my professional identity as a migrant educator in inner London, and how can these practices reveal and challenge dominant discourses and institutional power dynamics to empower others?”, requires a different analytical framework that recognises educational encounters as constitutive and not representative.

This chapter presents a combined analysis of three interconnected literacy events that demonstrate how educational encounters operate as "material-discursive practices" co-constituting racial categories and cultural identities. My everyday literacy practices (as a migrant educator in inner London) reveal how institutional apparatuses reproduce and disrupt hegemonic boundaries and create possibilities for "matrixial" pedagogical encounters (Ettinger), revealing how my professional identity co-emerges through pedagogical encounters. The case studies operate across multiple educational scales: from institutional policies to classroom artefacts to interpersonal pedagogical encounters and demonstrate how "agential cuts" (Barad, 2007) emerge through the entanglement of material and discursive forces.

The case studies address my research question by demonstrating how my literacy practices function as sites where professional identity formation and institutional critique intersect. Literacy practices reveal how my identity as a migrant educator is reflected in my developing and forming capacity for racial literacy shaped through my autoethnographic experiences and how the same practices simultaneously actively shape my professional identity by positioning me as a "material-semiotic actor" (Haraway, 1988) who develops "response-ability" for the worlds created through pedagogical encounters. I illustrate how my literacy practices reveal and challenge dominant discourses, demonstrating how professional identity formation and empowerment practices are inextricably entangled. I argue that professional identity

formation (for migrant educators) cannot be understood separately from material-discursive practices through which we navigate, resist, and transform the institutional spaces we inhabit, and that these practices of navigation, resistance, and transformation are themselves the apparatuses through which we create possibilities for empowering others.

The challenge for pedagogical practice is developing “response-ability” as a form of accountability that recognises how “each intra-action matters” (Barad, 2007: 160) in the ongoing reconfiguration of racialised boundaries. This requires moving beyond both colourblind approaches that deny the material effects of racism and essentialist approaches that reify racial categories toward practices that attend to the “ongoing intra-activity” through which both maternal subjects and racialised others are differentially constituted (Barad, 2007). An alternative approach is anchored in several key principles. Moving beyond individual accountability toward collective “response-ability” (Barad, 2007) for the worlds we create through our pedagogical practices. Educational institutions must be understood as apparatuses capable of either reproducing or disrupting hegemonic cuts that define legitimacy and racialised subjectivity. In contrast to the “paranoid orientation of the phallic paradigm” (Bickel & Fisher, 2020: 430), Ettinger's “non-paranoic paradigm [of Fearlessness]” (Bickel & Fisher, 2020: 430) offers educators a counter [hegemonic] -logic through “non-paranoid theory of subjectivity and relationality [that] is foundational to a true restorative and transformational possibility” (Bickel & Fisher, 2023b: 50).

This model allows educators to sustain spaces of ambiguity through “wit(h)nessing care” that involves simultaneous “co-emerging and co-fading” dynamics of I’s and unrecognised non-I’s” (Healy et al., 2022: 179-80), repositioning pedagogy not as transmission but as a site of co-affectivity and ethical becoming (Bickel, 2023) across racial and historical difference. Wit(h)nessing operates as a mode of ethical attention in which participants become vulnerable together in shared borderspaces. Walsh and Bickel (2022: 140) describe wit(h)nessing as “deep listening, compassionate conjointment, and artistic artworkings” that strengthen education's transformative potential. These practices directly challenge neoliberal rationalism and its reduction of education to measurable outcomes and accountability metrics. Through Ettinger's concept of “self-fragilisation” (Kisiel, 2022: 504), educators are invited to engage

affectively and aesthetically with students, cultivating relationships built on trust that transcend the need for certainty.

A matrixial approach to education demands a fundamental rethinking of pedagogy as an encounter between partial, vulnerable subjects co-emerging in aesthetic-ethical relation. It involves holding space for fragility, difference, and co-affectivity, rather than enforcing normative standards of success and identity. As Bickel reflects, “There will be no compassion without creativity” (Bickel & St. Georges, 2020: 7), and the classroom must become a site where such compassion is co-created through matrixial practices.

The shift to the present tense in the following account is intended to convey the embodied quality of the encounter, situating lived experience as a legitimate site of theoretical knowledge production and reflecting the performative paradigm's understanding that literacy events are never fully "past"; they continue to shape professional identity in the present.

As a migrant, I am expected to have a culture, to value it, to feel pride in relation to it, to preserve it, be transformed by it and to transfer it onto my children; however, I re-negotiated my identity, and transformed my ‘culture’. My creative and transformative process of cultural hybridity and my rejection, abandonment and disaffiliation from the discourses that subjectified my consciousness is distinct from the forced, systematic erasure of traditions and relationships. Ingenuity and inventive originality or creole subjectivities (Anim-Addo, 2013) rather than the politically dominant ideal of culture as a sedentarist or geographical location constitute ‘culture’ or ‘cultural authenticity’.

I do not engage with institutions’ attempts at multiculturalism, and my interactions with the institutions are marked by my resistance to my ‘other’ subject position and to my essentialised identities when invited to ‘dress up like my culture’ for ‘culture day’. A tokenistic ‘multiculturalism’ (Castles, Cope, Kalantzis, & Morrissey, 1992; Glazer, 1997; Taylor, 1994 in Cope & Kalantzis, 2016) may celebrate ethnic differences (the cosmopolitan city of ethnic

restaurants, or the school projects on 'other cultures'), while not enhancing social access. 'Culture is a verb' (Street, 1993 in Kuby et al., 2018); thus, there is no use in attempting to define culture. What can be done, however, is to say what culture does. Culture has agency or the ability to act. It has the ability to define words, ideas, things and groups. Culture is a dynamic phenomenon (Barad, 2007)-a machine (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) that materialises individuals and individual identities.

Intentionally endeavouring to reject many of my ancestors' decontextualised maladaptive trauma responses disguised as cultural traditions, I inherited 'passionate yearning for justice'; a passion enfolded into the core of my being (Barad, 2007). Transforming our thinking about families and religious or cultural affinities as 'haecceities' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987): relationships in their 'here and nowness' rather than continuing to 'fixate on how they could or should be' (Blake, 2017) may normalise estrangement in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity.

Matrixial education unsettles institutional expectations of fixed identity. Students are invited into "co-emergence" as "an ongoing state of becoming" (Romano, 2016: 47) through "matrixial borderlinking" that "is not a cognitive act" but instead is "accessed by aesthetical and ethical joining-in-differentiating and working through"(Bickel & McConachy, 2013: 142) without being compelled into predetermined categories. This reflects Ettinger's understanding of "matrixial hospitality as a place of co-emergence- a pre-gendered holding space where we all experienced being carried and thus experienced originary compassion" (Bickel, 2023: 113).

Educational institutions must develop practices of "wit(h)nessing" that involve ethical attention to otherness and create conditions for "metramorphic" transformation rather than reinforcing existing boundaries.

A new materialist approach to addressing identity, race and racism in education would emphasise what Haraway (1988) terms "material-semiotic actors", recognising that educational encounters are not simply spaces where pre-existing subjects discuss racism, but rather material-discursive events (Barad, 2007) through which both knowledge and subjectivities are continuously reconfigured. Ettingerian

pedagogy highlights the affective entanglements of racism, power, and identity, recognising that subjectivity is formed not through opposition but co-poiesis- the mutual becoming with others.

Educational institutions must support students in navigating complex processes of cultural disaffiliation and renegotiation while avoiding essentialising student identities, compelling them into predetermined categories, demanding transparency about their cultural positioning, and recognising the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and goals they bring to educational spaces.

Coloniality reproduces through intergenerational transmission of cultural norms and values reflecting dominant ideologies. Educational institutions must develop a sophisticated understanding of how students navigate the complex process of ejecting toxic cultural inheritances, disclaiming their traditions, national belonging, and familial heritage while simultaneously creating new forms of cultural belonging and renegotiating generational power dynamics, while emphasising the dangers of essentialising student identity and recognising the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and goals they bring to the classroom.

This process of cultural disaffiliation is not simply conscious rejection but emerges through what new materialists identify as “differing” - “the way the body is able to sediment itself or form itself within the socio-cultural, according to the practices in which it acts” (Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012: 153). Cultural hybridity thus becomes an innovative and transformative process that results in growth rather than cultural banishment. Educational practice must support students in this creative process while avoiding the assimilationist tendency of silencing practices to deny agency and integrity that preclude renegotiating generational conditions and validating separate realities. Trans-subjectivity and co-emergence “open up for learners and educators to co-create more socially just pedagogies through the disruption of pedagogical authority and thereby transform unequal power relations within [cultural institutions]” (Romano, 2016: 47).

The analysis of academic integrity policy revealed how institutional apparatuses operate through “material-discursive practices” (Barad, 2007) that position multilingual students as inherently deficient. Understanding how policies function as

racialising technologies prepared me to recognise similar dynamics operating through seemingly innocent pedagogical materials. The following literacy event demonstrates how these same deficit ideologies materialise in everyday classroom artefacts, revealing the pervasive nature of institutional whiteness across multiple scales of educational practice.

5.3.1 The Crystal Ball Worksheet

This literacy event embodies the central metaphor of the crystal ball and its links to Romany identity while emphasising the exclusionary stereotypes embedded in educational materials. I explore how a worksheet artefact attempts to predict the future while simultaneously erasing the histories and humanity of Romany people.

An educator shared a worksheet for students whose first language was not English. The aim of the lesson was to introduce the future tense. The education professional thought it would be appropriate to use an image of a Romany woman with a crystal ball. The idea was to elicit some previous knowledge from the learners and get them to think about the future/future tense language forms (I will, you will). The rationale behind using the image was that learners would activate their prior knowledge by connecting their schema of 'crystal ball reading' to 'thinking about the future'. When I suggested that the use of the image in this context essentialises Romani identity and culture and could be perceived as reinforcing narrow-minded stereotypes, they got offended. 'What other jobs do gypsies have?' they replied. 'How else could you portray them?' Our professional mentor claimed that GRT learners do not value education and, therefore, pose a problem to us, educators.

The field of the interaction was a grammatical concept (future tense), and interpersonal meanings were established by affect: my affect in 'meeting' the worksheet involved 'semiotic phenomenology' (Lanigan, 1988, in Pahl & Rowsell, 2010) and transformed my interaction with the professional in unexpected ways. The textual metafunction was performed by the non-linear conception of time.

A crystal ball is a mode that conveys meaning and affords meaning-making (fortune-telling) in material and embodied ways. Barad's (2007) agential realism approach and the theorisation of "agential matter" contest anthropocentric (humanist) and logocentric representationalism and juxtapose these notions with

performativity or immanent relations. Interrelated concepts are (Haraway's (2003) 'naturecultures' or Bennett's (2010) 'vibrant matter'. Material, posthumanist or new materialist arguments assert that objects have subjectivity and 'have their ways of making themselves intelligible to us' (Maclure, 2013: 660). Instead of being reduced to passive products of language devoid of agency, as social constructivism's concept of discourse implies, objects are recognised in their own right. The worksheet artefact's 'thing-power' (Bennett, 2010) to evoke my repressed emotions and to engage with the unconscious (Csikszentmihalyi and Rohber-Halton, 1981:173 in Pahl & Rowsell, 2010: 50) embodies the artefact's dialogicity (Bakhtin, 1981).

In qualitative analysis, posthuman analysis could be defined as attending to entanglements of things in assemblages that exert an agential force. Primary ontologic units are 'phenomena' (Barad, 2007) or heterogeneous 'assemblages' (K. M. Leander & Rowe, 2006)- a performed organisation of language and matter (material). Fortune-telling could thus be described as marginalised bodies making space through embodied literacy performances. Romany people do not engage in fortune-telling among themselves, nor do they believe in the supernatural powers attributed to them by the non-Roma. Romany people may strive for economic autonomy by exploiting exoticism in others' desires and longings, while simultaneously constructing cultural difference through an alternative aesthetic. As an artefact, the crystal ball is a transmediation of Roma lived experiences and an example of a Romany woman advancing an object for the non-Roma gaze. Recognising that character reading skills and long-term experience are required, the Romany people are, in effect, giving good psychotherapy (Okely, 2010). How do we account for the learning and development embodied by and through movement, the border and boundary crossing of students? What new capacities and identities are developed in this movement? To what extent do these capacities and identities travel and shift across settings? And what new educational arrangements provoke and support new capacities that extend students' repertoires of practice? (Gutierrez, 2002).

Agency is assigned to human and non-human materials that are 'entangled' (Barad, 2007) or connected (K. M. Leander & Rowe, 2006) in multiple ways; thus, one of the most potent characteristics of materialist ideas is the persistent emphasis on

non-humans as relevant to human becoming. The relation between language and matter is one of the social force of affect. Affect 'does not describe individual emotion but rather a collective 'capacity to affect and to be affected' (Goodchild, 1996 in Leander & Rowe, 2006: 449). The Petra-practitioners-worksheet-crystal-ball-grammar-training-(Roma) history assemblage comes together in the literacy practice/ event, and in its heterogeneity, it has flows and vectors of energy that cannot be described in a single word and certainly not in static ways. What were these flows and vectors? What was alive in the assemblage, or said otherwise? What did this particular assemblage at this moment in time bring to life?

This literacy event and the worksheet artefact were shaped by people with distinct pasts; nevertheless, their pasts and mine shaped how we conceptualised our present interactions, Roma people in the present and in the future. The collective 'now' offered new meanings and assemblages. The concept of spacetime-mattering is key in the new materialist understanding of temporality. Complementing sociocultural history with attending to 'affective intensities' (K. M. Leander & Rowe, 2006) or intra-actions (Barad, 2007) allows us to engage with iterative intra-active becoming" (Barad, 2013: 17) and tend to the nonlinearity of time. The New Materialist concept of diffraction (Barad, 2007; D. J. Haraway, 2003) presents a perspective of individuals, their lives and narratives as 'a nonlinear enfolding of spacetime-mattering' (Barad, 2013: 18). Our (collective) identities and self-understanding was disrupted or even destroyed. The multiple agencies of our identities and the discourses of racism, Romaphobia or eugenics materialised through intra-acting in co-constitutive ways in mine and my interlocutor's figured worlds (Holland et al.,2001) and were given new co-constitutive subject positions. The discourses of fortune-telling, exotification, Romaphobia, white supremacy obscure their materiality and that racism is 'a visceral experience' (Coates, 2015:10 in K. Leander & Ehret, 2019). This literacy event and my interaction in the past were already/ always connected to the future, and the recent tragic discovery of unmarked graves of indigenous children in Canada recalled the historical link between indigenous segregation and forced sterilisation, explanations of racial inferiority and Roma in Central European countries.

The idea of becoming in affectively charged intra-actions with other people and things is distinctive from the idea of (professional) identity. It is part of the educational level required of teacher trainers that they will be aware that excellent and productive teaching begins from an inclusive framework of building on strengths and the wealth of resources within various communities (Funds of Knowledge, Moll, et al., 1992) that the learners bring with them. Some Romanies are PhD holders; however, that does not mean that there is something shameful about the profession of a fortune-teller. How was the life and energy of the worksheet- not captured in a representation of the document (the words on the page)- lived out in relation to becoming? What new differences emerged in the lived movements or continual becomings, the life and energy of the worksheet? What is the world making with our intentions and in spite of them?

The Romani migrated to Europe from northern India in the Middle Ages and have endured slavery for over 500 years, oppression, and genocide in modern times. German anthropologist Eva Justin received her doctorate in 1944, intending to prove the racial inferiority of half-Romani children who were later murdered in Nazi concentration camps (Benedict et al., 2017). Her research dehumanised the Roma community and persists in shaping educational barriers and limited opportunities for the Roma today. Constructing Roma as “other” and “uneducable” led to assimilation efforts to suppress their cultural heritage rather than create autonomous individuals. Homogenising stereotypes, associating Roma with anti-social behaviour and intellectual deficiency, continue to be perpetuated. Many Roma children, whose rightful place is in mainstream education, are placed erroneously in special schools and de facto segregated, severely reducing their future employment and education opportunities. Instances of forced sterilisation as recent as the 1990s and subsequent lawsuits revealed the intersectional persistence of eugenic motivation in some European countries.

5.3.2 Holocaust Denial and Historical Erasure

This literacy event illustrates the violence of anti-Semitic and Romaphobic narratives in education and the erased histories of the Holocaust. I examine how language can reinforce stereotypes and dehumanise individuals, stressing the impact of words on collective memory and identity. Additionally, I emphasise the tendency to dismiss the

Holocaust's relevance, linked to the systemic neglect of marginalised histories in education. Building on the previous case's revelation of how stereotypes materialise through educational artefacts, this encounter demonstrates how historical amnesia functions as a form of ongoing colonial violence that shapes contemporary educational practices.

An educator expressed anti-Semitic views and complained about “having to teach our learners about the Holocaust”. “It is not relevant”, they claimed. I objected to their views and added that, like the Jewish people, the Romani people were also singled out by the Nazis for racial persecution and annihilation. Claiming that the Holocaust ‘is not relevant’ erases not only the history of the Jewish people but also the history of the Romani, non-heteronormative, disabled and other Non-Jewish People killed by the Nazis. They then went on to express Romaphobic views by stating that “nobody cares about dirty Gypsies”.

This incident is critical to understanding the mechanism by which humanity is defined -and, subsequently, how that definition is weaponised.

Although the Roma story is unique, in the Roma people's story, we see aspects of the story of African Americans, Native Americans, the Jewish Diaspora, the Armenians, the Syrians, the Rohingya, and the Dalit. The Roma people offer humanity a legacy of survival and resilience in the face of extraordinary hardship. “We should look at GRT (Gypsy, Roma and Traveller) cultures as a complex and pioneering form from which refugees, migrants and emergent minorities might themselves seek to devise creative strategies (Okely, 2010). Thus, Roma people's history co-constitutes my identities.

Consciousnesses can communicate as subject/object or two partial subjects, unrestricted by time/space, synergise and co-emerge or iteratively reconfigure spacetime as part of the ongoing dynamism of becoming' (Barad, 2007: 142) for the world is remade again in each intra-action (Barad, 2007). Since all instances of language, filled with different voices and ideologies, respond to previous use and anticipate the following utterance, (Bakhtin's (1981) ideas of dialogicality and heteroglossia also helpfully inform the notion of the potentiality of consciousness

residing in a nonlocality and a delayed-choice from the potentiality (Barad, 2007; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Goswami, 1990). Viewing our subjectivity or consciousness as a linguistic body (di Paolo et al., 2018) with changing possibilities of becoming, we can make ethical choices for the practices that we shape in the process of sedimenting the world in which we live (Barad, 2007). We are all socialised in a racist society and internalise the beliefs. Racism can be insidious and needs to be discussed by everyone: perhaps not in the same way or perhaps in separate training that addresses internalised white supremacy or participation in racist practices. Nevertheless, everyone needs to reflect and write themselves out of the colonial narratives because we deserve educational institutions devoid of racism. The coloniality of memory (Boatcă, 2021) is the discursive mechanism ensuring the systematic omission of enduring colonial ties from public discourse on Roma genocide, alongside the systematic avoidance of co-emergence with the non-I (Ettinger, 2007).

One reason I, as an academic, chose an autoethnography methodology is that I did not want to replicate prior violence, injustice and epistemicide (Hall & Tandon, 2017) of research and education. The Catholic Church that provided me with formal education was also the architect of the colonial residential schools and genocide of the First Peoples in Canada under the guise of 'education'. Though the historical trauma of European colonisation and the Holocaust are distinctive and different series of events, in addition to the historical link to Nazism, there is intersectionality of violence, the residential care system, Christian 'civilising missions' and the deficit ideologies and reductive notions of culture and cultural communities with the employment of classist and racist explanations of students' underachievement. Christian discourses othered Roma as 'parasitical', 'criminal', 'a threat', and the theology handbook from 1962 reads as follows: 'Neither bloody persecution nor well-intended civilising missions changed their nature or their number' (Meier, 2018).

One of the first nurses in the world to receive a PhD, Eva Justin, did so by concluding that half-Romani children, whose deportation to gas chambers was delayed until she completed her study, were mentally deficient because they belonged to an 'inferior' race (Benedict et al., 2018). Moreover, they could not ever become socially well-adjusted adults even if they were removed from their families

and sent to special schools, and they too must be sterilised.’ The violence in representational logic emanates from the education professional’s representation of Roma people as ‘dirty Gypsies’ that dehumanise and unreal Roma people. The violent potential of their comment was enabled by underdeveloped understandings of how representations such as discourse come to affect bodies, how discourse comes to matter, and come to mark bodies and sediment coloniality of memory (Boatcă, 2021) into our collective consciousness. The education professional’s comment assigned the murdered Romani children ‘destructible’ and ‘ungrievable’ (Butler, 2010) subject positions. Knowing how representations such as discourse come to matter requires a non-representational onto-epistemology that bridges the representational gap between what is, how we know it and who we become when we cast ‘the other’ as ‘lose-able’ (Butler, 2010). Understanding formative stories of genesis and place as a discursive-material phenomenon (Barad, 2007), we may develop our capacity for ‘moral imagination’ (Lederach, 2005) of the past that lies before us through the art of ‘restorying’ (Lederach, 2005: 148), thus transcending violence.

5.3.3 Roma Identity Disclosure and Passing

Having established how institutional artefacts and historical erasure function as forms of educational violence, the final event demonstrates how pedagogical encounters co-constitute alternative spaces for identity negotiation and cultural becoming, revealing possibilities for transformation through "matrixial" pedagogical practices. This event explores the revelation of Romany identity, the complexities of passing and concealment, and how literacy practices create spaces for marginalised identities to resist oppressive narratives through the interplay of performance, identity, and oppression. Shadows, shifting and altering to light and perspective, metaphorically symbolise the fluidity of identity adapting to contexts, the marginal spaces occupied by stigmatised or marginalised identities in dominant societal and institutional settings, the emotional toll of concealment, the ambiguous nature of passing as survival and erasure, and the hidden layers of meaning in literacy and performative acts.

Three male, first-generation (South-Eastern and Central) European migrant, 16 to 19-year-old study programme students expressed Romaphobic views. I

attempted to challenge their racism with data and informed them about the history of the Roma people and their present condition. The students then felt safe to disclose their hidden Roma identity and shared their perspectives on the 'epistemology of the closet' (Kosofsky, 1990) or 'passing'.

Although it is customary to refer to Romanies as 'the blacks of Europe' (Kligman, 2001), Roma are 'a hard to see minority'. Depending on their location or circumstances, 'passing' Romanies "can make their Gypsiness 'disappear'" (Williams, 1987: 53-72). Similarly to Aboriginal people, many Romanies are 'so white' that, were it not for their 'association with blacks', 'the average individual would characterise them as practically normal' (Van Krieken, 1999). 'Passing' could be described as a particular type of performance or a strategy employed by marginalised people to conceal marginality. The denial of marginality may be preceded by a conviction that "their future lies in association with us, and they must either associate with us on standards that will give them full opportunity to live worthily and happily or be reduced to the social pariahs and outcasts living without a firm place in the community" (Hasluck, 1953: 6 in Van Krieken, 1999). Marginalised immigrants can also reconnoitre racism as part of their process of (pathological) integration.

What strategies could be devised for nurturing pride and cultural identity? It is important to stress that pride should not be based on a comparison with the oppressor group. Nor should it be a reactive type of pride based solely on the endurance of, or resistance to, oppression. It takes the form of liking oneself because of one's intelligence, one's creativity, one's courage, one's goodness and so on, and not because 'I am better, bigger, stronger, more honourable, etc. than you' (Ruth, 1988). Ruth (1988) asserts that oppressor groups are unlikely to have much experience of dealing with oppressed people who act with confidence and high expectations for themselves. These incongruent feelings can manifest as shame (Erikson & Friedrich, 2013). The attitude of the oppressed toward oppressor groups as one of independence can often be a difficult and identity-destabilising experience for the oppressor. Confronting complicity in violence is an example of a shift and ambiguity that may manifest as splitting (Erikson & Friedrich, 2013). Thus, 'decolonisation' may require creating new identities.

Studies that focus exclusively on the suffering of marginalised groups are exploitative and ineffective; thus, my analysis utilises the anti-colonial 'ethnographic refusal' method (Tuck & Yang, 2014). The pain of oppressed groups is not the focus of my research; rather, I 'study up' (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2015) and examine the institutions and individuals who are accountable for this suffering. By refusing to debate aspects of 'being Roma' that some Roma may prefer to abandon, or that should be abandoned, or even forcibly abolished - a 'cleanliness' regime that restricts the lives women, and arranged child marriage, for instance (Commissioner for Human Rights, 2012, in Cope & Kalantzis, 2016: 104-105), I respect the community's right to self-representation and determine that these issues should be responded to by the communities themselves. Understanding identity requires an understanding of the funds of practices and social and emotional life that people use. An identity is a product of an expression of an assemblage that is always collective and brings populations, multiplicities, territories, affects and events (Deleuze, 2002 in Kuby et al., 2018). It emerges from the material-discursive practices of gross demographics (race, nationality) and attachment histories as an entanglement of forces, bodies and affects. The attachment history is thus a continuing expression across experiences; it is too big to fit the contours of an individual body: it is the 'numberless collectivity of people to come' (Massumi, 2002, in Leander & Ehret, 2019) that unifies process and product as one. The act of categorisation may imply that in-group cohesion, cultural commonalities and personal identifications are prioritised over intergroup relations and processes of co-construction of difference. Barad's (2007) ethico-onto-epistemology of agential realism argues that the starting point of all entities is a state of unbounded material-discursive-affective entanglement. The ontological starting point is thus an entanglement or an assemblage. The violence implicit in the othering of Roma means that various othering strategies or 'situated knowledges' (Haraway, 1988) as 'the apparatus of bodily production' (Haraway, 1988: 595) materialise boundaries between 'I and non-I' (Ettinger, 2007) as a consequence of 'mapping practices'. Boundaries are always open for displacement, so not only must we expand the diverse group of people constructed as 'Roma', but also those who engage in the process of Othering. Attending to classifications or 'boundary projects' may avoid splitting and be a productive method of establishing the co-constitutive elements of the diffractive phenomenon of Whiteness and who we may become when boundaries shift.

The Roma people left India about 1000 years ago and have since been the 'unwelcome guests' in someone else's country. However, holding fast to the 'sedentary mythical charter which privileges an Indian origin going back to 10,000 AD (Okely, 2010: 224-43), freezes Romanies in a mythical past as well as place. Although not all Romany people are nomadic, through critically engaging with the history and present condition of the Roma people, we see the extent to which our Western society fails to appreciate the possibility of a people separate from borders and geography. We see reflected to us in the ambiguous function of the seemingly innocuous utterance 'Where are you from' or educational institutions' approaches to exoticising multiculturalism rather than critically engaging with it.

In conclusion, the events collectively illustrate how my positioning as a migrant educator enables particular forms of critical recognition that reflect my professional identity while revealing institutional power dynamics. The analysis suggests that professional identity formation for migrant educators requires moving beyond assimilationist approaches that demand cultural abandonment and multiculturalist approaches that reify cultural categories toward "response-able pedagogical practices" that attend to the ongoing "intra-activity" through which both educators and students are differentially constituted. This demands developing "response-ability" (Barad) and creating a "differential consciousness" (Sandoval, 2000) that can navigate multiple modes of resistance and solidarity contingent on context.

5.4 Peripheral Whiteness and Professional Becoming

In this chapter, I address my research problem of everyday literacy practices, professional identity formation, and institutional power dynamics within post-Brexit educational contexts. My conceptualisation of literacy practices as sites of identity formation and resistance illuminates how migrant educators navigate post-Brexit professional spaces. I employ a scalar transition from micro-interactions to macro-geopolitical forces, circumventing event-centric thinking and additionally revealing structural continuities in anti-migrant sentiment and institutional racism, while emphasising "spacetime-mattering" (Barad, 2007): the ongoing reconfiguration of power relations across multiple temporal and spatial dimensions. I understand identity formation, institutional power, and resistance as relational processes,

creating new directions for analysing how marginalised subjects navigate and transform institutional spaces. Modelling autoethnography as "vulnerable methodology" or the willingness to expose personal experiences of harm with the intent of enhanced analytical insight provides a framework for other migrant educators to transform their experiences into sites of knowledge production and resistance.

5.4.1 Zero to Brexit Hero Phenomenon

While the preceding analysis focused on classroom-level interactions, these microdynamics cannot be understood in isolation from broader geopolitical forces. The "Zero to Brexit Hero" phenomenon that follows demonstrates how individual encounters between teachers and students are always already shaped by national immigration policies, economic restructuring, and imperial histories. This shift in analytical scale reveals how seemingly personal interactions are embedded within what Barad terms "spacetime mattering" - ongoing reconfigurations of power that operate across multiple temporal and spatial dimensions.

This 'a rhetorical event' explores the subjectification (intra and inter-subjective) processes of the emergence, persistence, transformation, and contestation of gendering and racialising forms of identity positions in relation to whiteness myths. The "Zero to Brexit Hero" emerged from Brexit as a geopolitical transformative episode erroneously treated as isolated rather than interconnected.

The composite dialogue below is made up of three composite voices: the first voice is women contesting the "Hero's" gendering and racialising forms of relating, the second voice is the "objective voices" responses, consisting of the "culture" or the "society": first responders, colleagues, management, acquaintances, institutions, etc. The third voice is a composite academic commentary. The dialogue is followed by an analysis. I interweave three voices; collective observations to make sense of the abusers' behaviours.

THE FIRST VOICE

THE SECOND VOICE

THE THIRD VOICE

...Mason asked me whether I would marry him for a passport ... First, I informed Mason that his comment was "disgusting." He responded by stating that it was a joke and that a woman had asked him whether he would marry her for a passport the previous day

**It was only a joke.
It is salacious to talk about sexual harassment.
Maybe you misunderstood the situation, or perhaps you're just too sensitive.**

Institutions often respond to complaints using various strategies and managerial tactics to protect their image and discourage further complaints. These include encouraging complainants to resolve disputes informally or warning complainants about the costs of complaining.

... However justifiable Mason's oversight might be, it is part of the educational level required of a manager that they will be aware that employees should refrain from making similar "jokes" with people likely not to appreciate them.

**Institutional reputation and public image are far more important than your personal grievances.
It's much easier to just ignore the whole thing and move on.
Everyone else does.**

Institutions may normalise harmful, traumatising cultural narratives, question complainants' credibility, and silence them to protect institutional image and financial interests, perpetuating a cycle of harm and vulnerability.

I would like you to ensure that Mason is aware of his conduct in the future and that we have a working environment that encourages personal and professional respect.

**You have to think of what it might do to his career.
You made him feel uncomfortable and scared. So, maybe consider how your complaint might impact others before you make it public.
You might think you're the victim, but what if you're actually just part of a trend that's getting out of hand?**

Symbolic violence is a form of harm that is exercised through language and discourse, often used to enforce dominance over women, in the context of gender-based violence.

Mason was a white British male English teacher and a colleague in Nella's new workplace. Nella was constructed as an immigrant, a specific immigrant with a need or a desire for an object: a British passport. The joke punch line was (an ideological) promotion of Western masculinity as an opportunity for identity transformation. The joke omitted the macro-discourses of sexual politics, sexual exploitation, border

violence, and the reproduction of 'white mythologies' (Hesse, 2007). This incident reveals the intersections of male supremacy, white supremacy, and rape culture. The interpretation of whether the 'rhetorical event' was a joke or a (micro)aggression and whether a subsequent complaint was legitimate or unreasonable was determined by a consensus of "objective voices". I argue that the interpretive dynamics are mired in Whiteness.

When Nella was asked to marry for a passport, she was socially differentiated and racialised so that her non-Western whiteness was inferior to Western whiteness. The modalities in which racial capitalism functioned included Western masculinity and the construct of the Eastern European female body (hierarchies of whiteness), border violence (passport), sexual politics and sexual exploitation (the historical gendered exploitation and sexualisation of Central and Eastern European (CEE) women), rape culture (sex in exchange for Western whiteness) and the reproduction of whiteness (an opportunity to transform her identity and move up on the hierarchy of whiteness).

This critical incident is an example of what has been termed the "Zero to Hero" phenomenon (Appleby, 2013): white masculinity struggling to meet the phallic standards and being relatively unremarkable (in their home countries) but becoming a superhero in a specific context of (white or embodying whiteness) Western native speakers in English education, as described by Holloway and Holloway (2002). The term specifically refers to Western men who "misuse [their] rise in status and behave badly in Japan", i.e., in ways that they wouldn't get away with in their own countries" (Holloway and Holloway, 2002:11), including developing "an overrated opinion of themselves; displaying "insulting and degrading behaviour towards women in public-particularly Japanese women; inability to work cooperatively with women superiors in the workplace; and engaging in ...complicated webs of infidelity" (Holloway and Holloway, 2002:11). I use the "Zero to Hero" phenomenon in the context of British education: English for Speakers or Other Languages (ESOL) FE courses, Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and Functional Skills English courses (FSE). In the Japanese context (Holloway and Holloway, 2002), Western women often describe their male counterparts as "general losers" who "consciously or subconsciously... come over here [Japan]... because they can't really find a relationship at home" (Holloway & Holloway, 2002: 13). This characterisation finds a

compelling parallel in the British FE context, specifically in my critical incident micro-context, where educational relationships became sites where British male teachers could leverage their “differential positioning” (Anthias, 2013) to assert symbolic (Bourdieu, 1991), epistemic (Fricker, 2007), racialised proximity to the normative citizen-subject) and gendered and sexualised power. Differential positioning refers to the dynamic, unequal, and context-dependent ways individuals are located across intersecting social hierarchies—such as gender, race, class, and nationality—shaping their simultaneous experiences of power, exclusion, and belonging. The final illustration of gendered and sexualised power encompasses boundary-blurring conduct shielded by institutional roles, exemplified by the deliberate choice of sexually charged subjects, such as “sexual promiscuity”, without critical consideration of the students’ backgrounds, cultural sensitivities, and potential psychological impacts. Here, the “desire for the West” (Holloway & Holloway, 2002) manifests as a desire for cultural, social, economic and legal capital (Bourdieu, 1986) amongst predominantly Central and Eastern European (CEE) migrant women enrolled in functional skills courses. The power asymmetry inherent in teacher-student relationships is further complicated by intersecting hierarchies of nationality, economic status, and immigration status, where British teachers hold institutional authority while simultaneously embodying access to British social networks and legal status. This dynamic mirrors the Japanese context, where Western men gained elevated status despite being “relatively unremarkable in their home countries” (Holloway & Holloway, 2002), as British teachers may be positioned as desirable not for their attributes but for their symbolic representation of belonging and citizenship rights. The combination of institutional authority and symbolic capital (British citizenship and passport access, native English language skills, understanding of British systems and networks and institutional authority within the classroom) creates opportunities for exploitation.

“Zero to Hero” has been portrayed in a satirical comic strip as “Charisma Man”, appearing in *The Alien* (later *Japanzine*) from 1998 to 2006. The strip humorously critiques male Western expatriates who, despite being unremarkable in their home countries, perceive themselves as highly desirable and influential in Japan. The protagonist transforms from a 'loser' in the West to a 'superhero' in Japan, embodying exaggerated confidence and attractiveness, satirising the inflated

self-perception of some expatriates. The “Zero to Hero” and “Charisma Man” phenomena can be observed in other non-British contexts outside Japan. Charisma Man embodies an ironic self-positioning of Western masculinity, dependent on and accountable to the female gaze (Garscadden, 2022).

In the UK national context, a significant proportion of FSE learners are ESOL learners. According to a report by the Education and Training Foundation, approximately 92% of providers surveyed reported having learners with ESOL needs in their Functional Skills English classes. Of these, 29% reported a high number of learners with ESOL needs (over 60% of their Functional Skills English learners) (Roden and Osmaston, 2021). Notwithstanding the available data on higher education staff (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2024), there is a notable lack of specific information regarding the linguistic backgrounds of FE lecturers. This discrepancy highlights the need for more extensive research to enhance understanding of the composition of the FE teaching workforce. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to infer that a notable number of FE lecturers may have English as a second language. This means that English is being used as a lingua franca or “a form of language serving as a means of communication between speakers of different languages” (Swann et al., 2004), many viewing English as “a potential source of universal empowerment” (Crystal, 2003). It is also reasonable to infer that FSE lecturers who have English as a second language may be impacted by the “deficit view” of non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs)- as demonstrated in my “Letter” critical incident. Similar to the NNESTs (internalised) deficit views, vocational lecturers may also be affected by what Medgyes (1983) identified as “schizophrenia” or an “inferiority complex” (Medgyes 1994 in ProQuest, 2017) and “I-am-not-a-native-speaker’ Syndrome” (Suarez, 200 in Selvi, 2011). Therefore, the “Hero to Zero” phenomenon is also present in the UK context. Bakhtin's carnival resonates with Burke's concept of comic frames as a rhetorical strategy that reframes targets as foolish rather than evil. In feminist autoethnography, comic frames can be employed to expose the illogical nature of the “hero” phenomenon.

5.4.2 Post-Brexit Vulnerabilities

The post-Brexit landscape has intensified structural vulnerabilities for Eastern European migrant women in FE contexts, creating what Kilkey and Ryan (2021)

describe as "Brexit anxieties" through the recalibration of legal, social, and affective terrains. The rescission of automatic residency rights afforded by EU membership required the navigation of the EU Settlement Scheme, introducing ontological insecurity. This bureaucratic uncertainty was compounded by the emergence of a "hostile environment" that legitimised xenophobic and racialised narratives, highlighting the mutable nature of racialisation processes and the conditional inclusion of Eastern European migrants within the UK's socio-political fabric (Rzepnikowska, 2018).

The Brexit context has created additional layers of vulnerability regarding professional boundaries through dependence on teachers and institutional staff for guidance on immigration matters and educational evidence required by the Home Office. Power dependencies may intensify as institutional relationships become increasingly vital for sustaining legal status, with students' increased dependency on educational institutions for immigration advice and assistance.

The gendered exclusions from access to legal residence and social rights of European Union (EU) migrant women in the UK in the context of Brexit constrain the autonomy of EU migrant women (Shutes & Walker, 2017), particularly at the intersection with increased domestic violence and exploitation risks during periods of legal uncertainty (Anitha et al., 2025). This legal precarity creates not only economic dependency on (ex)partners but also institutionalises a gendered hierarchy of citizenship (Shutes & Walker, 2017), producing conditions for exploitation by those in institutional or bureaucratic authority as gatekeepers to forms of security and belonging available in a post-Brexit Britain.

The assumption that all Eastern European women in FE contexts are equally susceptible to manipulation through relationships with British men reflects what Anthias (2013) critiques as "categorical thinking" - the tendency to treat diverse groups as homogeneous based on shared characteristics. In reality, CEE migrant women have differential positioning in their encounters with British educational institutions and interpersonal relationships.

Introducing the term "unsettling events," Kilkey and Ryan (2020) analyse three geopolitical transformative moments: the 2004 EU enlargement, the 2008-09

economic recession, and Brexit. The 2004 EU Enlargement enabled freedom of movement and triggered anti-EU migration sentiment; the 2008-09 economic recession intensified anti-immigrant sentiment in public discourse as unemployment increased; Brexit represented the culmination of accumulated tensions and increased hostility toward EU migrants rather than a sudden shock.

Autoethnography provides a methodological framework for critical analysis of the individual migrant experiences in relation to structural-level geopolitical transformations, such as Brexit, contingent on diverse social positioning. Situating Brexit within a continuum of interrelated and "unsettling events" (Kilkey & Ryan, 2020), specifically the 2004 EU expansion and the 2008-09 economic recession, allows the delineation of the ideological continuity and the escalating hostility toward EU migrants' entanglements.

As Kilkey and Ryan (2020) demonstrate, this interconnectedness indicates that Brexit cannot be analysed in isolation; it is the most recent catalyst in a succession of shifts that have shaped migrant experiences over the past 15+ years.

Understanding migrants' unique responses to "unsettling events" necessitates examining the intricate interplay between personal biographies, historical context, place-based relationships, varying social positioning, and material, relational, and subjective (affective) dimensions- elements that simplistic economic models fail to encompass. For example, age and life course positioning affect social networks, primary integration strategies, and "migrant capital" (Erel, 2010), which refers to the accumulated knowledge of British systems, established social networks, and greater awareness of rights. The educational background creates employment opportunities and may provide protective factors, such as a situated gaze informed by professional expectations and awareness of institutional hierarchies, that may protect against certain forms of exploitation.

Emphasising "situated gazes of differentially positioned social actors" contests universalist notions of migrant vulnerability, challenging "neoclassical models of migrants as rational, individualised, economic actors" (Sjaastad, 1962; Todaro, 1969; Borjas, 1987 in Kilkey and Ryan, 2020). It recognises migration as "embedded in

broader networks of intensive social change” (Papadopoulos and Tsianos, 2007 in Kilkey and Ryan, 2020).

Understanding these differential vulnerabilities requires what the knowledge base terms a "holistic approach to understanding border(ing)s, which is embedded in everyday life" - recognising that the borders between vulnerability and agency, dependency and choice, are constantly negotiated through the situated gazes of differentially positioned social actors rather than predetermined by categorical identities.

The heightened vulnerabilities created by Brexit necessitate recognising that traditional power dynamics between teachers and students are amplified when students' legal status and future security may depend on their educational success and integration into British society.

5.4.3 Institutional Responses and Nonperformatives

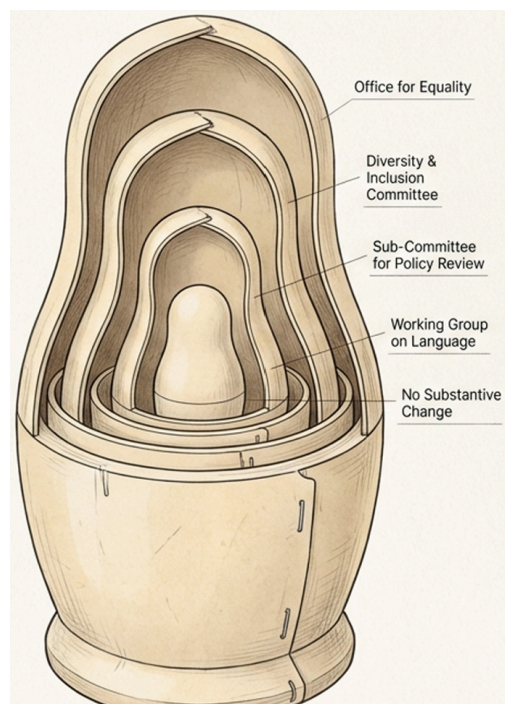


Figure 30: The Nonperformative

Institutions often respond to complaints using strategies to protect their image and discourage further complaints. One common tactic of these "institutional mechanics" is nonperformatives. Ahmed's original concept of nonperformatives pertains to an institutional speech act, such as a policy or a procedure, which does not bring into effect what it names (Ahmed 2021: 51).

Ahmed notes, "... Complaint can be a way of apprehending what is around you: so much appears if you make or try to make a complaint that would not otherwise appear.... Then making a complaint changes your sense of self, it changes your sense of the world" (Ahmed 2021: 37-38).

An institution may have a policy against harassment but fail to enforce it or cite the policy's existence as evidence that harassment does not exist as a method of silencing complainants and invalidating their experiences. This exemplifies the nonperformative nature of many institutional policies.

Institutions may also use various managerial tactics to discourage complaints. These include encouraging complainants to resolve disputes informally and procedural and institutional fatalism or warning complainants about the costs of complaining and the ramifications complaining may have for their careers. Ahmed also lists using nonverbal communication, such as nodding to appease the complainant without addressing their concerns or ignoring and 'blinking' the complainant. Institutions may also employ 'strategic inefficiency', which pertains to 'not just the failure of things to work properly but is also how things are working' (Ahmed 2021: 129). These systematic delays are precisely how the complaint process is intended to work and were designed to wear down complainants. These tactics are particularly effective against people who lack the time and resources to pursue a complaint.

Beyond these direct tactics, institutions also employ more subtle forms of power through symbolic violence. Symbolic violence, unlike physical and emotional violence, is an intangible mechanism used to enforce dominance and inflict harm on marginalised groups (Morgan & Björkert, 2006; Schubert, 2008). It is exercised symbolically through language and discourse. In the context of gender-based violence, symbolic violence manifests through the normalisation of rape culture, which facilitates the systematic silencing of women's expressions of unsafety. This silencing often takes the form of institutional gaslighting, where concerns about credibility are weaponised to undermine their experiences (Morgan & Björkert, 2006; O'Neal, 2017 in Brooks, 2020). Such symbolic violence can be as harmful and traumatic as physical violence, particularly when women face repression and censorship for reporting personal violence or challenging oppressive institutional

norms (Bourdieu, 1977, in Brooks, 2020). Ahmed identifies institutional practices that sustain symbolic violence, including gaslighting and shaming within official records and interpersonal interactions in response to feminist complaints (Ahmed, 2018, in Brooks, 2020).

Viaene & Tom (2023) utilise autoethnography to analyse institutional complicity in “academic incest” as sexual-power gatekeeping in academia, highlighting the importance of survivors' voices and collective observations in understanding systemic abuse patterns. They employ autoethnographic methodology to create composite characters: Star Professor (central figure, protected despite sexual misconduct against PhD students); Apprentice (a senior researcher, the Star Professor's intellectual aide and his successor) and Watchwoman (a gatekeeper managing information access). Viaene & Tom (2023) reveal institutional protection, gatekeeping and complicity, enabling theory development through experiential knowledge. Their analysis resonates with Daniels' (2025) institutional logics insofar as both frameworks allow me to articulate the progression of the masculine redemption arc through whiteness laundering. The Apprentice self-identified as Afro-descendant and weaponised recent police violence incidents in the area to strategically position himself as a victim of racism, escaping the place of oppressor and delegitimising an Indigenous sexual violence victim by positioning her as white and winning public support (Viaene & Tom, 2023).

Whiteness laundering is a logic enabling a racial performance (claiming and reassigning race) to neutralise sexual accountability by deflecting from sexual violence allegations to racism. It is an institutional affordance that individuals may engage in, contingent on institutional demand and desire for (white) innocence. The process enables the manipulation of social justice movements for self-protection when accused of misconduct: selective anti-racism is institutionally permitted when it protects male power and stabilises gendered violence within white institutional logics.

The motivation behind these institutional responses is predominantly image-driven. Institutions carefully craft and commodify their public image, treating it as a valuable asset that must be safeguarded at all costs (Benoit, 2006). Regardless of the complainants' intentions, their complaint or statement challenges the institution's

carefully curated image, prompting the institution to undermine the complainants' valid truth and, at times, to aid and abet the perpetrators to protect their recruitment strategies and financial interests (Ahmed, 2018, in Brooks, 2020).

Consequently, institutional responses often prioritise organisational interests over justice. An institution may respond in ways that protect its interests rather than the interests of the complainants -publicly deny a complaint, question the complainant's credibility or attempt to silence the complainants with institutional threats, leaving complainants feeling unheard, disrespected, and even more vulnerable.

Ahmed's framework of nonperformatives and institutional mechanics reveals how complaints are systematically managed and suppressed through various tactics ranging from procedural inefficiency to symbolic violence, all designed to safeguard institutional image while neglecting legitimate grievances.

The attempt to understand the rationale and logic behind the subjectivity phenomena demonstrates that subjectification processes are not a private, individual structure in the practitioners' minds but are constructed at the intersection between the situated historical, social, and cultural contexts in relation to the multiple identities that emerge in a relationship. The immediate environment produces identity options, and individuals position themselves and their interlocutors, and both are positioned by others in relation to multiple identity categories available to them. Some categories are visible (e.g., gender, race) or audible (e.g., accent), while others are less visible (e.g., socioeconomic status, educational background, marital status) (Zimmerman, 1998, in Appleby, 2013). The affirmation of each identity varies according to context, time, and power dynamics. The decisions to perform and maintain emergent identities encompass the negotiation of individuals' (gendering and racialising) needs and desires, which may be compromised by an environment that facilitates restricted and unviable identity options. Therefore, individuals may construct their identity by rejecting or defending themselves against the identity positions that cause them anxiety or fear.

5.4.4 Hierarchies of Whiteness

My identity as a white woman is located within systems of white domination and racial discourses; my critical focus in this incident was intra-racial hierarchies or the hierarchies within whiteness. Refusing to engage in and comply with the dynamic of this intra-racial hierarchies leads to the “hero's” disorientation with a potential to reconfigure (the “hero's”) subjectivity and affective relations to either “narcissistic” or to co-emerge in other racial and gendered affective dimensions.

Particular possibilities for (intra-)acting exist at every moment, and these changing possibilities entail an ethical obligation to intra-act responsibly in the world's becoming. This relational understanding of subjectivity has implications for resistance and transformation. Ruth (1988) asserts that oppressor groups (in this context, the “hero” groups) are unlikely to have much experience dealing with oppressed people who act with self-confidence (in this context, women refusing to engage in and comply with the intra-racial dynamics). Consequently, the attitude of the oppressed toward oppressor groups as one of independence can often be an identity-destabilising and challenging experience for the oppressor. Confronting complicity in violence is an example of a shift and ambiguity that may manifest as splitting (Erikson & Friedrich, 2013), suggesting that “decolonisation” may require creating new identities. In this context, “splitting” refers to “hero” subjectivity reconfiguration to either “narcissistic” subjectivity or ethical co-emergence with the “non-I” target of the “joke”.

Andrews (2016) argues that Whiteness, as a system of power and oppression, is a process deeply embedded in the social structure. This process has the potential to induce a form of psychosis framed by its irrationality beyond any rational engagement. Psychosis is a term used to describe a mental state in which a person experiences a disconnection from reality, often accompanied by hallucinations and delusions. Andrews contends that films that present distorted narratives about transatlantic slavery and distance Britain from its horrors serve as hallucinations that reinforce the psychosis of Whiteness. Whiteness exists as a psychosis to deal with the dissonance between what Hesse (2007) calls ‘white mythologies’ and the reality that Western capitalism is built on and maintained by racial exploitation. Western masculinity and ‘the construct of the Eastern European female body’ could be

considered as further illustrations of psychosis-reinforcing discourses that play into power dynamics between the global North and Global South- and the Global East (Muller and Trubina, 2020) as spaces that defy the global academe's easy classification into these hemispheric categories.

During a collaborative discussion, an academic seemed affronted by my claim that "the literature on settler colonialism has so far ignored the case of the Soviet Union. Yet Soviet settler colonialism offers a unique opportunity to study non-capitalist colonialisms and their mode of domination, violence and racial hierarchisation" (Kassymbekova and Chokobaeva, 2023). They were also affronted when I mentioned that CEE and Roma people are invisibilised as "white", concealing a specific racialisation process in the UK. I asserted that my contentions are substantiated by the academic contributions of CEE scholars, which they countered with their autoethnographic data detailing their racialisation experiences in the US and UK contexts as authority, remarking: "I wonder what black scholars would think of CEE scholars".

In her paper "Surviving Hating and Being Hated: Some Personal Thoughts about Racism from a Psychoanalytic Perspective", White (2009) critiques the tendency to compete over whose persecution is worse, described as a "conversation about hatred [that] goes like this: My experiences of being hated are more interesting, damaging, pernicious, catastrophic, and worthy of comment than yours" (White, 2009: 402). Instead, she promotes a "joining conversation" (White, 2009: 403)- a methodology that emphasises identifying commonalities across diverse experiences of hatred instead of contesting the severity of various persecutions, competing over whose persecution is worse. "Their persecution is their persecution, our persecution is our persecution; they don't compete" (Chein in White, 2009: 403).

The academic's dismissive response, invoking their experience as epistemic authority, epitomises what Hendl et al. (2024) identify as "westsplaining", reinforces the flawed civic-ethnic nationalism dichotomy, marginalises post-socialist scholarship and reveals the limitations of postcolonial and Black feminist frameworks that overlook the racialised hierarchies within Europe itself (Tlostanova, 2012; Turda, 2023). As Bat-Ami Bar (1993) cautions, standpoint theory can become exclusionary when epistemic privilege is moralised and idealised, flattening the complexity of

marginalised lives and reinforcing binary notions of power. These dynamics emphasise the need for more relational, regionally attentive, and pluralistic approaches to global racial formation.

I found little evidence of postcolonial and decolonial scholarship's integration of postsocialist perspectives on global power dynamics. There is limited literature on black feminist critiques of Eastern Europeanism as a form of racism and flattening of differences by homogenising individuals, groups, and regions within Central and Eastern Europe. There is also limited literature on black feminist critiques of the racialisation of "White Eastern Europeans" and the connection between eugenics and the socio-historical racialisation, discrimination and systematic exploitation of white Eastern Europeans within Europe (Turda, 2023). As defined by Kalmar (2023), the notion of "Eastern Europeanism" pertains to the construction and perception of Eastern Europe as an idea or identity, often in opposition to Western Europe. Comprehending how stereotypes, narratives, and historical contexts have influenced the construction of Eastern Europe's identity as distinct from the West is central to this notion.

There is evidence of "westsplaining" in the work of Hendl et al. (2024) and evidence of selective anti-imperialism and decoloniality within the global left, including contributions from black scholars such as Audre Lorde, Angela Davis and W.E.B. DuBois (Hendl and Durdiyeva, 2025). The critiques can be contextualised through Mladina Tlostanova's framework of post-Soviet epistemic marginalisation, revealing how US and Western-centric theoretical models have proven inadequate in engaging with the complexities of European racial hierarchies (Hendl, 2024), thereby perpetuating what Tlostanova formulates as the radical question: "Can the post-Soviet think?"

"Westsplaining" refers to "the unending stream of Western scholars and pundits condescend[ing] to explain the situation in Ukraine and Europe's East, in ways that commonly disregard voices from the region." It represents "epistemic superimposition, or "the methodological error of overlaying abstract theories onto unique historical and political contexts, which can lead to poor engagement with empirical evidence or to ignoring empirical evidence altogether" (Dutkiewicz & Smoleński, 2023: 619 in Hendl et al., 2024). This practice treats affected populations

“objects rather than subjects of knowledge production (Fricker, 2007; Kurylo, 2023 in Hendl et al., 2023) while Western academics claim epistemic imperialism or authority over contexts “about which one knows little or nothing” (Sonevitsky, 2022: 22 in Hendl et al., 2024).

Examples of westsplaining are evident in the analyses of occupied Ukraine by Judith Butler and Jasbir Puar in Hendl, 2024), characterised by epistemic injustice attributed to the neglect of local scholars and the reliance on US-centric racial frameworks instead of local frameworks and categories relevant to European social structures, racial hierarchies and relations (Kóczé, 2009; Parvulescu, 2015; Lyubchenko, 2022; Schmidt & Jaworsky, 2022; Lewicki, 2022; forthcoming in Hendl, 2024). Inadequately examined in Puar's talk (2022), Western media's portrayal of Ukrainians as “white, blonde, and blue-eyed” conceals the enduring legacy of imperial oppression and the racialised socio-economic East-West divide dichotomy that defines Europe and its labour market (Yurchenko, 2018; Katona & Zacharenko, 2021; Lewicki, 2022; in Hendl, 2024). The stereotypes erase the heterogeneity of Ukrainian society, comprising of Indigenous Crimean Tatars (Latypova, 2022ab; Engelhardt & Shestakova, 2022 in Hendl, 2024), the Roma (Minority Rights Group, 2022; CoE, 2022 in Hendl, 2024), Jews (Belam, 2022; BBC, 2022b in Hendl, 2024), and other populations who have faced intensified intersectional difficulties when seeking asylum in Europe (Ataii, 2022; Fremolva, 2022; Latifi & Haris, 2022; Latypova, 2022a; Ryšavý, 2022; Schmidt & Jaworsky, 2022 in Hendl, 2024).

While many Western values may have aided the decline of oppression in the West, they may sustain it elsewhere and fail to align with or correspond to the realities and needs of people in non-Western societies (Khader, 2018). Moreover, Bat Ami Bar (1993) critiques feminist standpoint theory's propensity to attribute “epistemic privilege in the identity and practices” of marginalised subjects. This model idealises marginalisation as inherently more ethical and politically conscious, flattening the complexity and diversity of marginalised lives while prioritising abstract ideals over messy, complicit or ambivalent realities. It also conceptualises power as vertical and totalising, positioning oppressors at the top and the oppressed at the bottom, thereby erasing the contradictions and agency in lived experience.

Homi Bhabha's (Easthope, 1998) initial formulation of "not quite; not white" challenges the binary understanding of race by exposing the complexities and contradictions within racial categorisation and emphasising the fluidity and ambiguity of racial identities within the colonial discourse. Holt's (2022: 17) assertion that "race is something black [people] have; ethnicity belongs to white [people]" underscores the need to critically examine our understanding of the boundaries of race and ethnicity. A key analytical limitation in race scholarship has been the external imposition of frameworks that ignore CEE's specificity. Baker et al. (2024) expose the theoretical blind spots that categorise CEE as a space of "ethnicity" while confining "race" to Western contexts (Rucker-Chang in Baker et al., 2024: 294), failing to account for how racial ideologies operate locally. This erases Eastern Europe from the global history of racial formation. Even eminent race scholars have contributed to this erasure. For example, Stuart Hall's framing of the Balkan wars as ethnic conflict neglected to consider how ethnicised symbolic boundaries became sites of racialisation, producing dehumanisation and hierarchies of primordial superiority (Bjelić in Baker et al., 2024: 341).

CEE simultaneously experiences exclusion from complete European whiteness while locally performing whiteness against racialised others, creating what scholars term "peripheral whiteness" (Baker et al., 2024). This dual positionality reveals a structural ambivalence: The "peripheral whiteness" phenomenon manifests as an anxious pursuit of Western European recognition while maintaining domestic racial hierarchies.

Baker et al. (2024) highlight that CEE is not a passive recipient of Western racial constructs but actively shapes and redefines them within its unique historical and socio-political contexts. This perspective aligns with academic critiques of the rigid civic-ethnic nationalism dichotomy, which often fails to account for the racialised dynamics embedded within ethnic categorisations (Souleimanov, 2015).

Nevertheless, this distinction proves analytically inadequate when examining historical processes as ethnicity in CEE "essentially does the work of race" (Rucker-Chang in Baker et al., 2024: 294). In other words, ethnic categories carry implicit racial hierarchies and biological assumptions about difference, functioning as racial work.

The racialisation of Slavic peoples emerged as a systematic endeavour in European identity construction. It strategically positioned Western Europe as the apex of civilisation while relegating Slavic populations to intermediate racial categories between "civilised" Europeans and "primitive" non-Europeans. This historical process illustrates how scientific racism operated not via isolated theories but through interdisciplinary and transnational networks (Schmidt & Promitzer, 2023). These racial logics continue to shape contemporary expressions of peripheral whiteness.

The persistence of racial hierarchies under formally anti-racist regimes reveals the ideological elasticity of racism. For example, Gradskova's analysis of Soviet anti-colonialism reveals how racial stratification persisted under the guise of equality, resulting in what Matusevich defined as "colourblind internationalism" (Gradskova in Baker et al., 2024: 199). Similarly, political elites in post-Soviet states have instrumentalised ethnic identities to consolidate power, racialising cultural and linguistic differences and employing them as indicators of inherent inferiority or foreignness, thus justifying the exclusion and marginalisation of minority groups under the pretext of national unity.

This ideological contradiction allowed racial hierarchies to persist and operate within supposedly homogeneous populations while denying their existence. Although the "formal socioracial categories of 'white' and 'black' may not be used" (Ohueri in Baker et al., 2024: 149), national, linguistic or religious identity markers "index notions of whiteness and blackness" (Ohueri in Baker et al., 2024: 149) and operate as racial proxies, functioning to classify and stratify populations in racial terms and forms of racial belonging in the region.

Today, systemic racialisation continues by deracialising historical legacies of oppression and framing them as behaviour deficits. For example, Roma people are pathologised as inherently predetermined to criminality, deceitfulness, and indolence, sustaining racial exclusion while concealing racial logics. Similarly, Hanebrink illustrates how Hungarian Christian nationalism racialises religion with calls to defend Christian civilisation, previously targeting Jews and, today, Muslim migrants. This demonstrates the temporal flexibility of racialisation shifting targets while preserving the hierarchical structures of exclusion (Hanebrink, 2018, in Baker et al., 2024).

Eastern Europe has not been peripheral but constitutive to global racial formation. Mark illustrates how "at moments of highest-flying [colonial] fantasy, self-determination in Eastern Europe could be imagined as redeeming a whiteness besmirched by the violent practices of Westerners overseas, thus saving the European colonial project from itself" (Mark in Baker et al., 2024: 260). This redemption fantasy illustrates how Eastern Europe reproduced colonial ideologies and positioned itself as their moral corrective.

Despite claims of "racelessness," CEE exhibits enduring racial logics evident in Roma marginalisation and migration hierarchies, with some groups marked as permanent outsiders. These exclusions are sustained by racial capitalism, producing CEE economic dependency, with EU expansion maintaining the region as a source of cheap labour and consumer markets. This is not an episodic exploitation but a structural condition.

These material conditions are mirrored in symbolic economies, where CEE becomes a site for white nationalist projection and a terrain for laundering white innocence. In this dynamic, the West projects racism eastward while the East projects colonial guilt westward in a process of mutual projection. CEE's claims to "racial innocence", founded on its perceived non-participation in transatlantic slavery or Western imperialism, is historically untenable as Baker et al. (2024) demonstrate that from the mid-19th century onward, whiteness was actively constructed and deployed in CEE nation-building projects and European belonging claims.

This dynamic enables what Krivonos (in Baker et al., 2024: 287) critiques as the "shorthand East/West distinction" that casts postsocialist countries as illiberal, 'more racist', and the opposite of the 'superior moral' West" while failing "to acknowledge the fact that the region's political practices can be situated within a Western episteme and the norm of European racial whiteness" (Krivonos in Baker et al., 2024: 287).

Post-imperial continuities reinforce this structure, revealing Europe's "internal colonialism". Imperial classification systems that emerged from colonial settings became institutionalised through education, bureaucracy, media, and legal frameworks, gaining scientific legitimacy and objectivity and making them transferable across different political contexts. Gradska (in Baker et al., 2024)

argues that these infrastructures created “invisible rules” of racial hierarchy, encoded within systems that ostensibly operated through nationality.

While CEE embodies peripheral whiteness, it is not peripheral to global racial formations. Instead, it reveals how whiteness operates as a flexible, aspirational category that maintains hierarchies within and between regions, contributing to the global maintenance of white supremacy (Baker et al., 2024). This challenges any analytical separation between race and ethnicity or between Eastern European and global racial formations.

Intra-racial screening of the less racially salient “Other” has a different logic and historical legacy than the one informing white racism against black people. Racism is conceptualised as an oppressor-oppressed dyad maintained by a power imbalance between two ethnic groups and the perpetrators' ideology. White people need to understand and contest all ontological forms to understand the intersections of white privilege and white disadvantage produced by whiteness and white supremacy. Whiteness is conditional and can harm white individuals who do not conform to societal expectations, as evidenced in historical contexts such as the eugenics movement. White disadvantage does not negate white privilege but co-constitutes it.

The logical conclusion, then, is not to quantify, compare, rank and exaggerate oppression or to minimise and deny anti-black racism. Nor is it to compare professional and student experiences of oppression. The aim is to understand how different forms of oppression co-constitute one another. That is, to understand how ethnicity or nationality are not separate entities from race, but how nationalism or ethnic discrimination are ontologically connected to racism.

The racialisation of CEE people includes both discrimination and privilege. Despite anti-Slavism (Boatcă, 2023), Roma slavery (Turda, 2023), Russian imperialism, the inter-imperiality between Western Nazism, labour exploitation, the gendered exploitation and sexualisation of East European women (Andrisajevic, 2007; Safuta, 2018; Yurchenko, 2018; Sojka, 2019; Krivonos & Diatlova, 2020; Katona & Zacharenko, 2021; Lewicki, 2022; in Hendl, 2024), white CEE and Roma do not stand outside of racism with many opting for “integration through racism” (Kalmar, 2023). The phenomenon of illiberalism in Central Europe as “a misguided reaction

against Eastern Europeanism” or ‘Western superiority over, and domination of, Eastern Europe; a revolt that is itself racist’ (Kalmar, 2023) tests the intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) of our feminist and anticolonial politics.

I argue that it is productive to talk about the different logic behind other forms of racialisation and how they co-constitute one another. Seeing racism and racialisation of diverse global populations only through the lens of degrees of violence does not allow us to examine how these communities can be positioned and racialised in relation to each other, sometimes following different and diverging racial capitalist logics, which yet unfold at the same time (Krivonos in Kalmar et al., 2023).

My methodology is relational and qualitative, employing PhE materialist flat ontology; it must not be misrepresented as comparative or quantitative. Anti-Black racism, anti-Slavism, Roma enslavement and Soviet imperialism in Eastern Europe represent distinct systems of oppression. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) asserts that intersectionality requires comprehending the interactions across diverse systems of oppression, avoiding reducing one to another or establishing hierarchies of suffering. For solidarity movements, this entails creating what Sandoval (2000) terms "differential consciousness"- the capacity to navigate multiple modes of resistance and solidarity contingent on context instead of rigid ideological positioning.

My contribution does not aim to quantify, compare or rank oppression (Hill Collins, 2002). The aim is not to extract from Black feminist scholars or to exaggerate the racism experienced by Central and Eastern European migrants in an attempt to prioritise Russian and European politics over the existential conditions of Black people (Drew 1991: 188 in Hunter & Van der Westhuizen, 2022). Rejecting whiteness, which can only be conferred conditionally and partially (Nachescu, 2022), while accepting my whiteness as a morally compromised identity one has not chosen (Baldwin in Brown, 2021), I aim for transformative resistance to whiteness and the emergence of solidarity that “connects with impoverished people and people of colour everywhere, from the First World to the Third” (Nachescu, 2022). My work emphasises white people’s responsibility to understand and contest racism in all its ontological forms since “the first thing fascists seize is the curriculum” (Braidotti, 2019: 141) and white anti-racism and self-education are essential anti-fascist efforts.

The "Zero to Brexit Hero" phenomenon should be recognised as not inherently linked to aspirational sexual relationships; rather, it may exemplify what Heron (2007) terms "white saviourism"- even when enacted by professionals from non-white backgrounds, since whiteness is "a social creation, not a biological fact" (Frankenburg, 1993; Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 1991 in Leonardo, 2009). "White" is not a natural or biologically bound entity but a social category with meaning in particular social contexts. "White identity formation is more of an enculturation process than a skin colour" (Brooks and Welsh, 2004: 42 in Leonardo, 2009).

This understanding opens space for individuals from non-white backgrounds to adopt whiteness as an ideology and achieve conditional acceptance within white supremacist structures, for example, "honorary whiteness" or "probationary whiteness" (Mills, 1997: 80-81). "There are many ways to be White" (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1998: 8 in Leonardo, 2009). Although whiteness "benefits whites in absolute forms", "Blacks, Latinos and Asians participate in whiteness" (Leonardo, 2009). Bonilla-Silva's prejudice research (2003: 173) found that "blacks are almost as likely as whites to believe many of the anti-black stereotypes". This ideological infiltration of "colour-blind racism" into black people's political consciousness hinders the development of an all-out oppositional ideology for fighting contemporary white supremacy. Thus, because so many blacks are swayed by elements of colour blindness, the struggle against colour-blind racism will have to be waged not only against colour-blind whites... but also against the many slightly colour-blind blacks (Bonilla-Silva, 2003: 172).

Heron (2007: 40) argues that contemporary humanitarianism operationalises colonial continuities whereby truly white" (male, European) bourgeois identities (defined by property ownership, orderly family life, rationality, and self-mastery) were historically constituted through their opposition to racialised "Other", reinforced by expressions of sympathy, benevolence and charitable acts towards "Others he wished not to be like" (Heron, 2007: 40). This legacy persists today in the form of a moralised, racialised, and gendered imperative among white, middle-class Northerners, whose perceived "entitlement and obligation" to alleviate global suffering reproduces "bourgeois subjectivity in the era of empire" (Heron, 2007: 44-45).

The performative nature of orchestrating a "spectacular rescue"- facilitating the release of a male student from (Brexit) immigration detention while revelling in the ensuing adulation and the student's boundless and public gratitude- illustrates this "instant celebrity" "Hero" phenomenon. Heron (2007) contends that such interventions are designed to serve the saviour's psychological needs rather than address systemic inequalities.

This dynamic is particularly insidious in post-Brexit educational contexts where "intersectional vulnerabilities" (Yuval-Davis, 2011) create conditions where migrant students may mistake performative rescue for genuine support, potentially increasing their dependency on unreliable sources of assistance rather than developing sustainable networks of mutual aid and collective resistance. The post-Brexit FE landscape exposes acute contradictions between institutional inclusion rhetoric and migrant educators' material realities. The "Zero to Brexit Hero" phenomenon, emerging at the intersection of xenophobia and misogyny, illustrates citizenship status mobilisation within educational institutions to reinforce hierarchical power structures. Peripheral whiteness operation as a flexible category, contingent on political expedience, exposes how post-Brexit conditions activated latent xenophobic attitudes intersecting with gendered forms of discrimination. These dynamics provide empirical validation for anti-racism theoretical frameworks that emphasise the importance of critical racial literacy competencies within education.

Nonperformatives (Ahmed, 2021) highlight institutional mechanisms' failure to protect and bureaucratic incompetence's operation as a sophisticated form of discrimination that places additional emotional and intellectual labour on migrants navigating post-Brexit Britain's hostile environment, creating a hidden curriculum of institutional violence that is absent from professional development discourses but central to lived experience.

Migrant educators' professional identity formation emerges through a continual negotiation between visibility, safety, belonging, and authenticity. My autoethnographic documentation of these competing demands challenges dominant narratives about professional development and institutional inclusion, enabling the transformation of personal narrative into an analytical framework and generating possibilities for strategic intervention; although, individual resilience and personal

transformation emphasis may eclipse structural change urgency for frameworks that amplify (migrant) FE voices while challenging the systemic conditions that compel resistance, as the responsibility for transformation does not centre on marginalised individuals: transformative solidarity requires moving beyond allyship toward institutional power relations, policy frameworks, and pedagogical practices reconfiguration and accountability mechanisms prioritising tangible change over institutional reputation management, ensuring that FE adheres to its social justice commitment and stops performing inclusion while perpetuating exclusionary practices.

5.5 Serendipity: From Potestas to Potentia

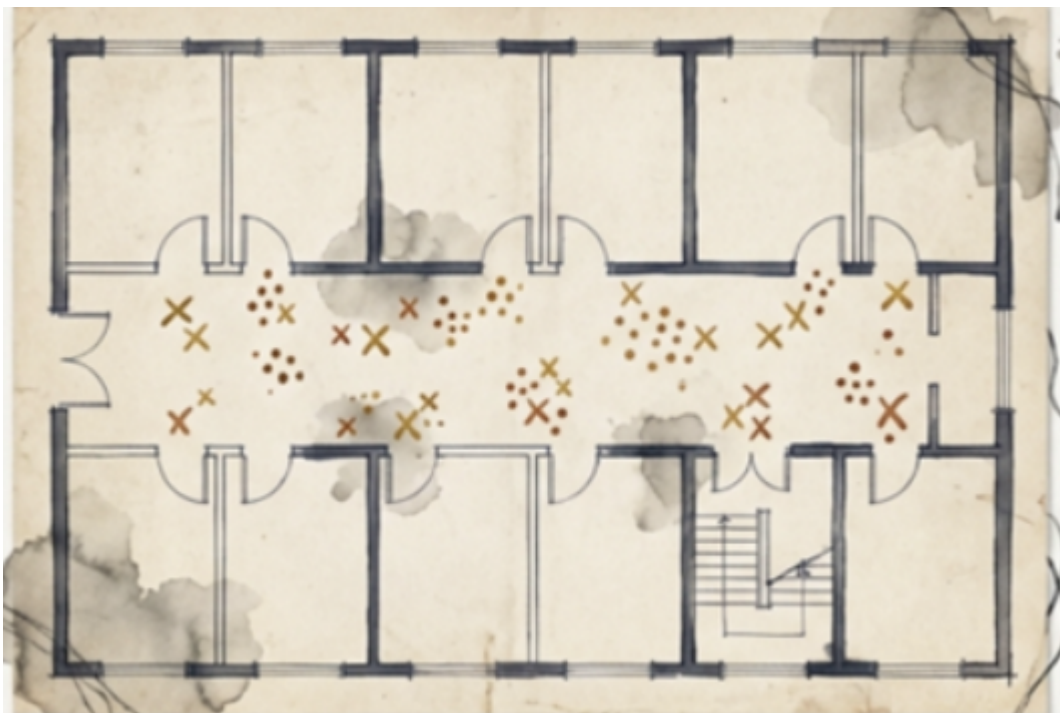


Figure 31: Serendipity in the gaps of the institutional framework

In this chapter, I examine the personal literacy practices, professional identity formation, and institutional power dynamics intersection via the action research (AR) methodology employed at FE College in the South East of England, an institution serving approximately 12,500 students and employing approximately 180 teaching practitioners, utilising the iterative cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1981). The AR cycles reflect how (migrant)

educators navigate and negotiate their professional identities through everyday literacy practices. The concepts of serendipity and Randomised Corridor Trials (RCT) are introduced to demonstrate how informal, spontaneous interactions, often erased from formal institutional accounts- and parallel to everyday literacy practices- become sites of professional identity formation and institutional transformation. Serendipity and RCT practices highlight the pedagogical and political significance of the everyday and the unplanned in shaping professional subjectivities. Potestas (institutional power and control) to potentia (collective empowerment and ethical action) transition is linked to challenging dominant discourses and empowering others; it illuminates how everyday literacy practices can resist hierarchical institutional structures, create "joyful affects," and increase the collective capacity for action and transformation.

5.5.1 Action Research Cycles and Institutional Change

The journey was encapsulated in a cyclical, iterative process that involved repeated planning of the Practitioner Research Track, creation of resources, implementation of my plans, observation and reflection cycles. This iterative process allowed continuous improvement, responsive adaptation to evolving circumstances, and real-time feedback. The iterative framework, the Action Research Cycle, differentiates action research from traditional research methodologies.

The Action Research Cycle allowed me to manage stakeholders, set and track milestones, plan contingencies, create new tasks, and incorporate unplanned, spontaneous meetings with stakeholders into my plan. The Action Research Cycle resonates with the Project Life Cycle and Quality Improvement PDSA cycle. Project Life Cycle is a project management tool that posits that, like living creatures, products have a life cycle (Vernon, 1966). PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act) cycle could be conceptualised as a Quality Improvement Project Life Cycle. Walter Shewhart and Edward Deming's articulation of iterative processes-the four stages of PDSA-has a genealogy in the industrial sector (Deming, 1986). PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act) cycles provide a framework for iterative testing of implemented modifications to improve system quality.

The four phases of the action research cycle and the PDSA cycle align with the scientific experimental method (Speroff & O'Connor, 2004) of hypothesis formulation,

data collection to test the hypothesis, analysis and interpretation of the results, and inferences and conclusions to iterate, modify, and refine the hypothesis. The Action Research and PDSA cycles offer a pragmatic scientific method for testing changes in complex systems (Moen & Norman, 2006). This contrasts with randomised controlled trials and conventional research methods using predetermined interventions to eliminate or control for variation. Action research and the PDSA cycle emphasise the predictions of outcomes from action/change tests and qualitative or quantitative measurements to evaluate an intervention's impact on processes. Thus, learning is facilitated through interventional experiments to assess a change/ action. Continuous data measurement is a valuable tool for identifying the inherent system variations, increasing awareness of other factors that may affect outcomes or processes, and comprehending the impact of an intervention in complex and variable settings/ institutions.

In the planning stage, clear goals and deadlines were established in the planning phase to ensure a structured approach. The primary objective was to determine key performance indicators (KPIs) for the program's effectiveness and develop action research training materials for practitioners. It was imperative to inform stakeholders about action research as a model of inquiry-based CPD approach. Additionally, contingency plans were outlined to mitigate potential challenges during the implementation phase. "Do", or the implementation phase, initiated the process of organisation-wide training. The effectiveness of the training was assessed and recorded using KPI data and quantitative methods, i.e. staff feedback obtained via surveys and questionnaires. This enabled the collection of real-time and immediate information to evaluate the immediate impact. Any deviations from the initial plans were documented so that contingencies could be addressed promptly. In the study phase, the collected data were assessed in relation to the established KPIs. Review meetings were convened to deliberate on the outcomes and identify any challenges that emerged during the execution phase. This phase was critical for identifying program elements that were working effectively and determining the areas that required adjustments. The final phase entailed making essential modifications to the model in response to the feedback obtained. Additional support was provided as necessary to ensure a comprehensive understanding and execution. Communication strategies were revised to effectively address any resistance. Changes were

implemented extensively, and their impact was continuously evaluated. The insights generated from this strategy are utilised to continually enhance and improve the model, ensuring an iterative cycle of development and improvement.

I consistently applied action research principles, using iterative cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1981) to test and improve my training materials. This real-world testing provided invaluable insights that informed the final revisions. Plugging-in various theories, I adopted 'a thousand tiny methodologies' (Lather 2013: 635 in Le Grange, 2019: 6).

The first phase, planning and design, was theoretical and practical. Aligned with backwards design principles, which advocate for identifying the desired results before determining the means to achieve them (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998), this approach ensured that the training materials I created were focused on practical outcomes that educators could immediately apply to their classrooms. The training materials' development phase required careful consideration of the cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988), emphasising the need to present manageable information for the learner's cognitive processing capacity. By simplifying complex concepts and using visual aids, I aimed to facilitate better understanding and retention of information.

Phases 2, 3 and 4 highlighted the importance of cultivating serendipity and psychological safety in organisations. The notion of institutional serendipity denotes unexpected discoveries and unintentional learning, leading to unexpected, positive outcomes (Busch, 2024). Serendipity is a process that involves creating an environment that encourages curiosity, flexibility, and social interactions. By promoting psychological safety, an organisation can capitalise on unplanned moments and transform them into significant innovations and improvements. Psychological safety is 'the belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes, and that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking (Edmondson, 1999). Psychological safety creates a culture of learning and development (Montgomery et al., 2024) and could mitigate the negative impact of resource constraints, highlighting its importance in challenging environments (Bahadurzada et al., 2024).

5.5.2 Randomised Corridor Trials and Affective Leadership

In these phases, I implemented a modified version of a Randomised Coffee Trial (RCT), which I termed a 'Randomised Corridor Trial'. A Randomised Coffee Trial (RCT) is a social experiment that randomly pairs participants for coffee meetings to promote serendipitous connections, knowledge sharing, and relationship building in a casual setting. The idea originated with Pedro Medina and was further refined by Michael Soto and Jon Kingsbury at Nesta UK in 2013 (Nesta, 2013). Subsequently, other organisations, including the UK Cabinet Office and the National Health Service, have implemented RCTs to enhance workplace collaboration and creativity. The initiative has been implemented globally, encompassing several sectors, from government to corporate institutions. A Randomised Corridor Trial leveraged serendipitous meetings in the corridors of BDC by ensuring my presence, visibility and willingness to promptly address impromptu enquiries. Randomised Coffee and Corridor Trials legitimise random, non-work-related, pen-ended, agenda-free conversations, often leading to direct benefits for institutional projects. They encourage spontaneous and beneficial work-related discussions, dismantling silos within the organisation. They allow staff to connect with colleagues they may not typically interact with, promoting collaboration and revealing organisational connections.

When measuring a rhizome with a logical, hierarchical framework, we may miss, misunderstand, and mismeasure what it means and feel like struggling as a college, a department, a teacher and, by extension, a struggling student. Nevertheless, embracing affective leadership (Munro and Thanem, 2018) may transform these negative feelings into a sense of ease and increase our capacity to act. This transformation can be integrated into our policies, frameworks, and discourses, providing a pragmatic response to the difficulties we encounter.

Institutions engaging in action research may embody affective leadership.

Spinozian ethics conceptualise fear, shame or despair as sad or passive affects, contrasting with joyful, active ones (Spinoza, 1670 in Munro & Thanem, 2018). Affects or affective intensities are forces that 'move and/or immobilise bodies' (Leander & Rowe, 2006:433). Joyful affects increase our potentia or the ability to take actions based on collective reasoning, freedom, and shared decision-making

processes. Potentia represents an immanent and constitutive collective power of a multiplicity that amplifies freedom, personal agency, autonomy and ethical capacity for action (Spinoza, 1670 in Munro & Thanem, 2018). Joyful affects increase our potentia by enhancing our capacity to act, to affect and be affected. Potentia is contrasted with potestas, which is defined as the power of authority, command, and control exerted by leaders or rulers derived from institutional positions.

Understanding the distinction between potestas and potentia is essential for enacting affective leadership in organisations. Affective leadership entails the active avoidance of 'sad passions' as they negatively impact the collective powers of action by impeding collaboration and decision-making. In contrast, affective leadership promotes joyful encounters and collective reasoning for ethical leadership. Ethical leadership should prioritise the multitude's affective capacities and collective powers. This approach challenges traditional leadership assumptions and redirects attention from hierarchical authority and top-down control to collective empowerment and ethical action, promoting inclusivity and a sense of belonging within a CoP.

While we recognise the historical power of the 'institutional gaze' (Foucault), we are not dependent on its legitimisation as its perspective carries the weight of the colonial history of harmful research practices, elitism, power imbalances and hierarchies, emphasising the need for a decentred and decolonised doctoral/institutional/ research pedagogies (Hyatt & Hayes, 2020) and a radically transformed academia.

In the performative educational paradigm, difference is understood as a practice rather than defining identity in relation to another (Ringrose, Warfield, & Zarabadi, 2020). It was introduced by Deleuze and Guattari (1987 in Østern et al. 2023) as critical for performative, non-representational thinking and paradigm shift. Deleuze and Guattari (1987 in Østern et al. 2023) present the concept of difference contingent on a flat one-world ontology devoid of structures, essences, or hierarchies that extend beyond our immediate perception. Deleuze and Guattari understand knowing and becoming as 'a plane of immanence that is always differentiating, always becoming, never static (Østern et al. 2023: 279)

Difference refer[s] to other differences which, unlike dualism or essentialist ontologies, never identify it but rather differentiate it" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, in

Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012: 130). It produces, alters, transforms, creates, and invents an ongoing metamorphosis (Braidotti, 2019, in Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012; Ringrose, Warfield, & Zarabadi, 2020: 107). A performative analysis is directed towards and produces differences that make a difference (Østern et al. 2023).

5.5.3 Rhizomatic Thinking and Educational Assessment

Within the Ofsted education inspection framework, we conceptualise a linear, sequential, logical timeline with a starting point, an endpoint, and a measurement point. We assess an intervention's effect on enhancing the staff member's performance following a specific intervention. In a rhizome, we are compelled to think wider than a timeline, examine the social frameworks surrounding individuals, and understand how and to what extent these structures constrain those individuals' possible future development. Action research, which serves as a model of inquiry-based CPD, forms part of this complexity. Within this philosophical framework, what change has taken place that is causal to our action? And where, when, what, and how do we measure to account for any change? The rhizome is interconnected, evolving, and ever-influencing. It can describe a community, a 'struggling' college or staff member, an institution, or something more extensive and complex.

The rhizome, in its unpredictability, grows in various directions and forms surprising connections. This unpredictability is a key feature of rhizomatic thinking, which is unexpected, creative, and transformative. It challenges us to think beyond the expected and embrace the potential for new and innovative solutions. We have two entities with radically disparate structures: our classical hierarchy and organic multiplicity. The rhizome does not erase quality assurance. Instead of measuring a tree, we wish to measure the rhizome.

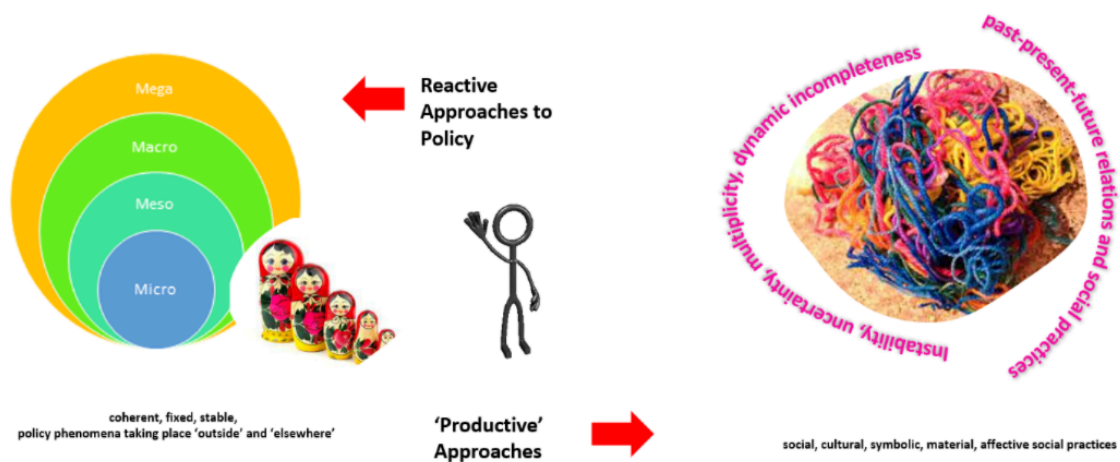


Figure 32: Policy Approaches

My metaphor for reactive and proactive policy engagement paradigms. Reactive approaches to constructing policy through a hierarchical, nested framework are visualised as Russian matryoshka dolls, with policy elements structured across micro, meso, macro, and mega levels, characterised by clear boundaries and predictable relationships between levels. Productive approaches are visualised as a complex web of entangled elements, resistant to fixed categories, and creating new possibilities. The paradigms differ in their epistemological assumptions about the nature of policy and in how the relationship between policy, practice, and lived experience is situated, influencing how interventions are envisioned, analysed, and implemented. The latter conceptualises policy as a coherent phenomenon that exists 'outside' or 'elsewhere'. This externalisation separates policy from those who engage with it, privileges stability and coherence over contingency and complexity, and creates an impression of order in understanding how social interventions function. The former disrupts the containment logic. It demands engagement with ambiguity and emphasises dynamic incompleteness, instability, and uncertainty. Policy is integrated into social, cultural, symbolic, material, and affective practices. Within this paradigm, policy emerges relationally, through ongoing negotiations that traverse past, present, and future. Policy is not something that happens "elsewhere" but is situated within the everyday. Building the capacity to move critically between these paradigms and engaging with these tensions productively creates spaces for subversion and resistance, opening possibilities for agency within contradictions.

The tensions between reactive and productive approaches to policy highlight the dynamics of reactive versus productive policy approaches.

Reactive approaches emphasise coherence, hierarchy, and externalisation, and mirror the institutional logics of KPIs, Ofsted inspection frameworks, and project life cycles that structure professional practice in FE. These systems position policy and improvement processes as external objects imposed upon practitioners, privileging order, predictability, and containment. In contrast, the productive approaches resonate with the practices of action research, serendipitous encounters, and Random Corridor Trials described here: professional identity emerges relationally through lived experience, affective intensities, and everyday literacy practices. Moving from potestas (institutional command and control) to potentia (collective empowerment and ethical action) can be interpreted as a movement from reactive containment to productive entanglement. It highlights the pedagogical and political

significance of ambiguity, improvisation, and relationality and emphasises the capacity of professional subjectivities and institutional life to transcend the limits of hierarchical governance.

5.6 Chapter Summary

Traditional approaches to educational racism often fall into what Barad (2007) identifies as the "representationalist trap"-treating individual prejudices and structural inequalities as separate phenomena. This chapter demonstrates how the case studies operate as interconnected "phenomena" revealing how racism emerges across multiple scales simultaneously. Applying Barad's agential realism and Ettinger's matrixial theory, I argue that understanding educational racism necessitates a "rhizomatic systemic analysis" traces how individual encounters are entangled with broader geopolitical forces, institutional assemblages, and historical sedimentations.

Concepts like "quality," "professionalism," and "academic integrity" become instantiated through specific material-discursive practices that consistently disadvantage racialised subjects across micro, meso, and macro levels. The Crystal Ball Worksheet reveals how Eva Justin's 1944 Nazi research sediments into contemporary classroom materials, demonstrating that "the past is never left behind" (Barad, 2007: 181). The legal fiction of *Mother v The Matrixial* as positionality establishes how institutions simultaneously embody care and violence. Across all cases, inclusive exclusion emerges as the defining pattern: policies claiming equity while reproducing racial hierarchies. Quality assurance systems, complaint procedures, and language assessments form an interconnected "apparatus of institutional whiteness" (Ahmed, 2006) that consistently disadvantages racialised, multilingual, and economically precarious subjects.

Yet the cases equally reveal resistance flows operating across scales: individual acts of refusal, collective letter-writing, and the development of matrixial pedagogical alternatives. Transformation requires multi-scalar intervention, from classroom practice to institutional policy to new theoretical frameworks. When addressing educational racism, educators' positionality is not that of external observers but of active participants in ongoing world-making. Educators may reproduce inequalities or enact "response-able" practices that create more just educational futures. The rhizomatic thinking suggests that everyday literacy practices may serve as catalysts

for creating more inclusive educational environments and positions educators as agents of change who embody (non-deficit) difference as practice.



Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

Across the case studies, ostensibly neutral educational practices consistently function as racialising technologies-apparatuses that actively produce and stabilise racial categories while concealing their operative role in this production. This pattern unfolds through three interrelated mechanisms: the performativity of neutrality, the emergence of counter-apparatuses, and the necessity of institutional transformation.

Institutional discourses around academic integrity construct Standard English as the invisible norm, rendering other linguistic practices intelligible through deficit or deviation. The policy analysis demonstrates how this implicit linguistic hierarchy masquerades as neutral while performing regulatory functions that marginalise multilingual and non-standard language users. Similarly, the multimodality case participates in naturalising cultural hierarchies, embedding whiteness and Western aesthetics as the unmarked standards. The “Zero to Brexit Hero” case study reproduces assumptions about linguistic competence and reinforces linguistic neutrality illusions.

Racialising technologies operate by disarticulating present inequalities from their structural conditions: disparities are retroactively assigned to individual or cultural 'deficits' anchored in the past. Amelie’s linguistic “errors” (Policy and Affect case

study) are attributed to her educational background, while institutional incapacity to recognise and accommodate linguistic diversity remains invisible. The "crystal ball" worksheet positions Roma culture as anachronistic, rendering it a historical curiosity while erasing its living, contemporary reality. Mason's racialised "joke" (Zero to Brexit Hero case study) is similarly perceived as an isolated incident, while its relationship to an institutional affective economy that permits and sustains everyday racialisations is obscured. Each case study illustrates how educational practices regulate affect, shaping what students know and how they feel about themselves and others. The legal fiction positionality case study illustrates how racist imaginaries-such as a Mother's eliminationist fantasy-generate institutional climates in which racialised bodies are rendered objects of disgust. The crystal ball worksheet invokes an exoticising gaze, positioning racialised people as mystified and distant Others. Racist complaints function as affective interventions aimed at producing atmospheres of exclusion, marking certain bodies as alien within institutional space. Despite the pervasive force of racialising technologies, each case study also reveals emergent practices that may be conceptualised as counter-apparatuses-forms of praxis that interrupt the logics of exclusion and open space for ethical and political transformation. Counter-apparatuses shift from individualised responses to collective mobilisation. The open letter in the Multimodality of Whiteness case study rearticulates racist students' complaints as indicators of systemic institutional failure, reframing accountability. The action research methodology (Serendipity case study) enables collective inquiry, resisting neoliberal tendencies to locate educational 'problems' and 'solutions' within individual practitioners. In the cultural disaffiliation "Unbecoming" case study analysis, identity transformation emerges through relational processes that decentre the autonomous subject, advocating situated, collective re-imaginings of belonging. Effective counter-practices attend to the inseparability of material and discursive dimensions. The policy analysis reveals how assessment rubrics and dominant linguistic ideologies are co-constitutive, mutually reinforcing the production of exclusion. In the multimodality analysis, modes operate in tandem to stabilise cultural normativity. The Zero to Brexit Hero demonstrates how educational encounters are entangled with geopolitical events, illustrating the inseparability of affective, material, and discursive forces. Counter-apparatuses resist linear narratives of progress or remediation, enacting what Barad (2007)

describes as alternative spacetime matterings. The legal fiction format enables the coexistence of multiple, intersecting temporalities, disrupting conventional cause-and-effect sequences. Composite dialogue layers experiential timescapes as polyvocal and non-linear renderings of educational subjectivity. The action research process privileges emergence and iterative transformation over pre-determined outcomes.

The case studies demonstrate that individual pedagogical reflexivity is insufficient in the absence of institutional change. This third pattern highlights the structural embeddedness of racialising technologies and the limitations of relying on individual agency alone. The “Zero to Brexit Hero” case highlights the bounded agency of individual educators. Even when motivated by justice, individualised responses to racism can inadvertently reproduce the very logics they seek to dismantle, particularly when structural critique or collective mobilisation remains absent. The policy analysis and Zero to Hero case studies reveal how institutional responses to injustice frequently operate as what Ahmed (2021) terms nonperformatives or statements that fail to enact the change they claim to effect. These responses offer symbolic equality while leaving intact the material and discursive conditions that sustain inequality. The multimodality case demonstrates how awareness of stereotypes, when not supported by structural change, proves insufficient to interrupt their circulation and sedimentation.

Nevertheless, the case studies also offer examples of institutional transformation catalysed by collective action. The open letter in the Multimodality of Whiteness case study models alternative modes of accountability, challenging dominant governance structures. The action research methodology illustrates how educational institutions might encourage relational forms of authority anchored in collaboration, care, and co-production.

These three patterns (the performativity of neutrality, the emergence of counter-apparatuses, and the necessity of institutional transformation) collectively articulate a critical framework for understanding how racialising practices are reproduced and resisted within educational contexts. These patterns call for a move beyond individualised reflexivity towards relational, systemic, and materially attuned forms of praxis capable of enacting meaningful transformation.

6.2 Key Contributions to Knowledge

Addressing the central research question: "How do my everyday literacy practices within educational spaces reflect and shape my professional identity as a migrant educator in inner London, and how can these practices reveal and challenge dominant discourses and institutional power dynamics to empower others?", I demonstrate that my everyday literacy practices function as dynamic sites of identity formation and tools of institutional transformation. My research reveals that literacy practices are not neutral technical skills but operate as "material-discursive practices" (Barad, 2007) that actively constitute professional identity and institutional reality. As a migrant educator, my everyday encounters with texts, policies, and institutional documents become sites where my professional identity is continuously negotiated, challenged, and transformed while simultaneously revealing and disrupting the power dynamics that govern educational institutions.

My positioning as a migrant educator creates particular conditions that shape everyday literacy practices in ways that assert the validity of embodied knowledge while challenging institutional demands for objectivity and neutrality. Through autoethnographic analysis, I reveal how professional identity emerges through literacy practices that refuse the separation between personal experience and theoretical understanding, creating possibilities for collective transformation and institutional change. I demonstrate how everyday literacy practices become sites of resistance where individual experiences connect to systemic patterns, generating analytical tools and creative strategies that empower others to challenge dominant discourses and create more equitable educational practices.



Thread 1

How Do My Everyday Literacy Practices within Educational Spaces Reflect and Shape My Professional Identity

My case studies demonstrate how everyday literacy practices function as sites where professional identity emerges through continuous negotiation with institutional power structures. When students complain about lecturers from "certain nationalities," my professional identity crystallises through these encounters as active resistance to being positioned as a "space invader" (Puwar, 2004). These moments reveal how literacy practices become tools for asserting legitimate

belonging within educational institutions. The policy analysis case study demonstrates how engaging with academic integrity policies positions me within complex institutional hierarchies. Reframing Amelie's linguistic practices challenges deficit assumptions while simultaneously exposing my precarious position as a non-native English speaker teaching English to native speakers. This literacy practice transforms potential vulnerability into professional strength by asserting multilingual competence as sophisticated rather than deficient.

The "Zero to Brexit Hero" case study illustrates how professional identity forms through critical literacy practices that expose racialisation. The analysis of this incident as part of "apparatuses of racial violence" demonstrates how professional identity is constituted through practices of critical analysis that reveal systemic problems. The crystal ball case study demonstrates professional identity emerging through theoretical engagement with everyday educational materials. When a professional asks, "What other jobs do gypsies have?" my literacy practice of analysing the worksheet as a "material-semiotic actor" that participates in ongoing racialisation transforms the affect of personal discomfort into a collective understanding of how educational materials participate in ongoing racialisation processes.

The multimodality case study demonstrates how professional identity develops through collaborative literacy practices and collective responses. Drafting the open letter demonstrates how literacy practices transform individual experiences of racism into collective analysis and action. This collaborative approach distributes agency and builds collective capacity, showing that professional identity formation occurs through relational processes rather than individual reflection alone.

The legal fiction "Mother v The Matrixial" exemplifies how creative literacy practices actively shape professional identity by transforming individual lived experience into theoretical insight. The creative use of legal discourse to analyse primal racism reflects that a refusal to separate personal experience from political and theoretical understanding is an essential element of a professional identity of refusal to separate personal experience from political and theoretical understanding. The action research case study demonstrates how literacy practices create new possibilities for professional identity through "randomised corridor trials" and an emphasis on "serendipity". This approach shapes professional identity around emergence rather

than control, prioritising collective inquiry over individual expertise, and positions action research methodology as an apparatus for creating conditions for unexpected learning and new forms of educational practice. Composite dialogues reveal how creative literacy practices shape professional identity by creating space for multiple voices and temporal experiences to coexist. Professional identity emerges through literacy practices that layer different moments and reveal connections between individual experiences and historical patterns, demonstrating the inseparability of intellectual work from affective engagement. These literacy practices consistently demonstrate that professional identity as a migrant educator transcends passive reflection and emerges through active engagement with institutional structures, collaborative resistance, and creative transformation of experience into collective knowledge.

My everyday literacy practices reflect my positioning within regimes of whiteness, performativity, and epistemic authority, shaping my professional identity as I navigate institutional structures.



Thread 2

How Literacy Practices Reveal Dominant Discourses and Power Dynamics

My everyday literacy practices function as analytical tools that expose how seemingly neutral educational practices operate as "racialising technologies." The policy analysis case study demonstrates how an engagement with academic integrity policies reveals their function as boundary-making practices that position multilingual students as inherently deficient. The data demonstrates that academic language is constructed as neutral while other linguistic practices are marked as deficient, exposing the racialised assumptions underlying institutional policies. The crystal ball case study analysis demonstrates how educational materials participate in ongoing racialisation processes. Recognising the worksheet's "thing-power" and its capacity to evoke affective responses demonstrates how literacy practices reveal the material effects of seemingly neutral educational artefacts. The analysis exposes how visual representations naturalise cultural hierarchies while masquerading as representations of pre-existing differences.

My literacy practices consistently reveal how institutional responses to racism prioritise institutional image protection over harm redress. The collective resistance in the multimodality case study or the Zero to Hero case study reveals what Ahmed (2021) terms "nonperformatives" or policies that fail to enact what they claim. The data illustrate how institutions may reframe racist complaints as "exam unfairness, staff favouritism and level setting", demonstrating how institutional discourse obscures rather than addresses racism. The "Zero to Brexit Hero" case study illustrates institutional complicity in creating conditions that allow harassment to happen, treats harassment as an individual pathology instead of an institutional failure, and positions racism as an aberration concealing its systemic element of institutional culture. This literacy practice connects geopolitical events to differential vulnerabilities that institutions systematically fail to address, revealing how Brexit policy changes create opportunities for certain forms of masculinity to assert dominance within educational contexts, resulting in exploitative conditions within educational relationships.

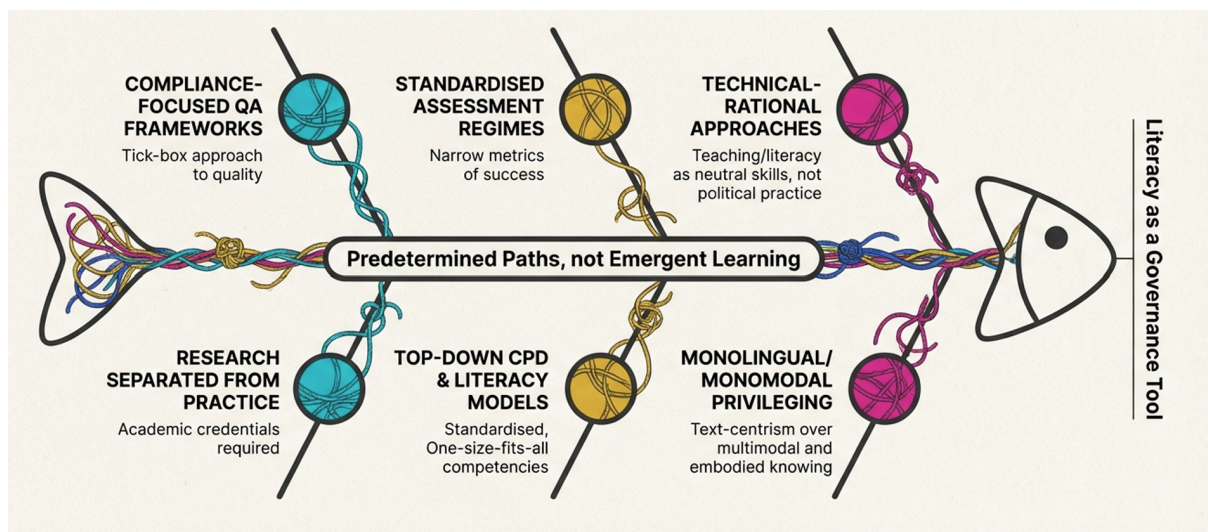


Figure 33: Fish Bone Root Causes

The figure above demonstrates how literacy practices function as material-discursive apparatuses that reveal and reproduce power: the hidden referent remains white, middle-class institutional norms. Every "neutral" practice is revealed as ideological, challenging the autonomous literacy model (Street). The fishbone diagram, or Ishikawa diagram (1990), is a quality improvement technique designed to identify

and systematically address the root causes of a problem. In this context, it has been applied to explore how literacy becomes an ostensibly neutral disciplining tool of governance and concealing its role in reproducing racialised and epistemic violence. This method enables the categorisation of potential causes, facilitating a comprehensive understanding and more targeted, granular interventions for producing literacies as sites of ethical agency and resistance. The fishbone diagram revealed several factors that may have contributed to the problem by highlighting the various challenges contributing to everyday literacies' function as regulatory instruments. This tool was selected for its visual appeal and ability to capture and effectively communicate complex phenomena.

Literacy is inherently political, actively constituting who counts as competent, credible, and educable. Literacy practices make agential cuts that co-constitute subjects. The Crystal Ball Worksheet does not represent Roma people: it produces them as exotic, pre-modern, and eliminable. Academic Integrity Policies do not measure pre-existing competence - they constitute multilingual students as deficient. Quality Assurance systems do not assess pre-existing quality: they enact racialised boundaries of legitimacy. Assessment rubrics make cuts that separate "academic" from "non-academic" language; produce "native speakers" and "non-native speakers" as distinct categories of legitimacy and competence, and co-constitute binary positions simultaneously- they cannot exist separately.



Thread 3

How Literacy Practices Challenge Power Dynamics

My literacy practices challenge dominant discourses by creating counter-narratives that reframe individual problems as systemic issues requiring collective solutions.

The legal fiction demonstrates how creative literacy practices challenge dominant educational discourses by creating alternative frameworks for understanding responsibility and accountability. The Court's finding that primal racism operates through "trans-subjective" processes challenges individualistic approaches to addressing racism. The composite dialogue in the Zero to Hero case study creates counter-narratives that reveal the affective dimensions of institutional oppression,

making visible experiences that dominant discourses render invisible or illegitimate. These creative practices create opportunities for alternative interpretations and responses to institutional violence.

The collective resistance in the multimodality case study demonstrates how literacy practices challenge institutional power dynamics by constructing alternative accountability mechanisms. The open letter strategy directly challenges institutional framing of racist complaints as individual problems by reframing them as institutional failures to maintain professional standards, creating conditions for shared analysis and action that disrupts hierarchical decision-making processes. The literacy practices in my case studies challenge dominant assessment approaches by revealing their function as racialising technologies. The policy analysis demonstrates how recognising Amelie's linguistic competence challenges deficit approaches to multilingual students. Implementing "translanguaging" pedagogy creates alternative assessment approaches that value multiple ways of knowing and communicating. Translanguaging pedagogy creates different possibilities for student becoming by producing multilingual competence as a resource instead of a deficit.

Action research approaches challenge traditional research methodologies that position participants as objects of study. Action research emphasises collective inquiry and emergent outcomes that challenge dominant professional development approaches centred on individual skill acquisition. The emphasis on "serendipity" and unexpected learning encounters demonstrates how transformation emerges through creating conditions for emergent possibilities instead of implementing predetermined plans. Action research as resistance to top-down CPD models creates different possibilities for professional becoming.

Every literacy event challenges power dynamics by becoming a political encounter of identity construction, power enactment, and ethical implication in the world's literacy practices, contributing to the creation or closure of possibilities and futures. I characterise literacy as a political practice that situates literacy historically as a persistent technology of governance. I trace literacy's function from monitorial schooling's disciplinary logic to contemporary neoliberal performativity regimes. I then provide an ontological account of literacy and argue that literacy practices co-constitute reality via agential cuts that govern what becomes intelligible. Finally, I articulate an ethical matrixial dimension, framing literacy encounters as sites of

co-emergence of subjects and meanings. I position literacy as a materially, ontologically, and ethically consequential practice for power, subjectivity, and responsibility reconfiguration. Resistance emerges from reconfiguring borderspaces and creating alternative relationalities.

These are some of the “differences that make a difference” (Barad, 2010) to my resistance:

1. Refuse deficit framing
2. Produce counter-narratives
3. Amplify and protect voices (do not replace them with yours)
4. Redistribute agency back into the field
5. Prevent narrative closure
6. Force institutional re-reading of the event
7. Introduce friction into a process designed to move smoothly towards procedural closure
8. Do not just resist: repattern the flow while it is still forming.
9. Bend the trajectory away from predictable institutional reflexes
10. Prevent the institutional account from becoming the only intelligible reality



Thread 4

How These Practices Empower Others

My literacy practices consistently create conditions that position students as active knowledge producers. The policy analysis demonstrates how recognising Amelie's linguistic competence creates success conditions while validating diverse linguistic practices. The cultural disaffiliation “Unbecoming” case study demonstrates how literacy practices create space for students to navigate complex identity processes while respecting their self-determination rights and cultural renegotiation processes.

The case studies demonstrate that literacy practices build collective rather than individual capacity for resistance. Facilitating collective response empowers others by demonstrating that individual experiences of racism form part of systemic patterns requiring collective solutions. The action research case study illustrates how literacy

practices create conditions for institutional transformation by moving from “potesta” to “potentia”: from power over to power with dynamics and collaborative innovation.

Analysis of institutional responses to racism empowers others by making visible patterns that might otherwise remain hidden and provides tools for others to recognise and challenge similar dynamics in their contexts. The integration of personal experience with theoretical insight demonstrates how effective resistance requires literacy practices that connect individual experiences to systemic patterns and analysis.

My project demonstrates that professional identity constitutes an ongoing process of becoming that emerges through everyday literacy practices. My positioning as a migrant educator creates particular opportunities and constraints that shape professional identity development through encounters with texts, policies, and institutional practices. These literacy practices reveal that professional identity formation emerges through what Ettinger terms "co-emergence" as processes where individual and collective subjectivities are mutually transformed through encounter. Collaborative writing practices, theoretical engagements and creative interventions demonstrate how professional identity emerges through relational processes that transcend individual boundaries.

Literacy practices constitute collective practices that actively participate in institutional transformation. Everyday encounters with educational texts and policies become sites where institutional reality is either reproduced or transformed through the particular ways professionals engage with these artefacts. Collective literacy practices demonstrate how institutional transformation requires transcending individual approaches toward collective capacity building. Challenging dominant discourses requires creative and theoretical literacy practices capable of revealing and disrupting implicit assumptions. The integration of personal experience with theoretical insight may empower others by providing analytical tools and creative strategies for challenging institutional power dynamics.

Everyday literacy practices within educational spaces are never neutral and always participate in either reproducing or challenging dominant power relations. As a migrant educator, my professional identity emerges through literacy practices that consistently work to reveal and challenge institutional racism while creating

conditions for collective transformation. These practices build capacity for institutional change, empowering others to challenge dominant discourses and create more just educational practices that extend beyond individual professional development to encompass institutional transformation and social change.

The driver diagram below is an effective tool for generating a testable hypothesis for positioning educators as transformative knowledge producers with agency to develop sociocritical literacy practices. The process entailed collating the identified desired changes and evaluating improvement proposals. The driver diagram aimed to address the issues identified in the fishbone diagram in thread 2 through six primary drivers: Knowledge Production Systems; Institutional Structures; Professional Identity Formation; Pedagogical Approaches; Trans-Subjective Relationship Development and Shadow Value Integration. This tool was selected for its visual appeal and ability to capture and effectively communicate complex phenomena. My findings resist oppressive institutional logics by:

- Advocating for Matrixial Pedagogy and Relationality: pedagogies and institutional practices that centre vulnerability, relationality, and the recognition of individuals' full humanity.
- Critiquing racialised technologies, demonstrating how "neutral" institutional technologies (e.g., assessment, surveillance, data collection) are used to normalise control.
- Conducting affective and relational analysis to demonstrate how institutions misread and pathologise distress, rendering it incompatible with institutional belonging while prioritising reputation over wellbeing

The driver diagram models structural, self-reflexive analysis with the aim of:

- Historicise Practices: Reveal how current routines are rooted in histories of exclusion and power. This step empowered practitioners to ask: Where did policies, discourse & routines come from? Whose interests did they serve? How have they changed (or not) over time?
- Surface Hidden Logics: Make visible the assumptions and values (e.g., whiteness, performativity) that shape what is perceived as normal, credible, or risky. This step empowered practitioners to ask: What are the hidden referents or norms? Who is the imagined "ideal" subject? What gets coded as risk,

deficit, or excellence?

- Target Racialised Technologies: Identify how “neutral” policies and technologies systematically disadvantage minoritised groups. This step empowered practitioners to ask: Who is advantaged or disadvantaged by a policy, discourse or process? What forms of knowledge, language, or behaviour are privileged?
- Enable Genuine Change: Move beyond “tick-box” compliance to address the root causes of harm. This step empowered practitioners to use autoethnography, action research and collaboration with critical friends. This step empowered practitioners to ask: Who holds power? How are decisions made? What counts as evidence of change?

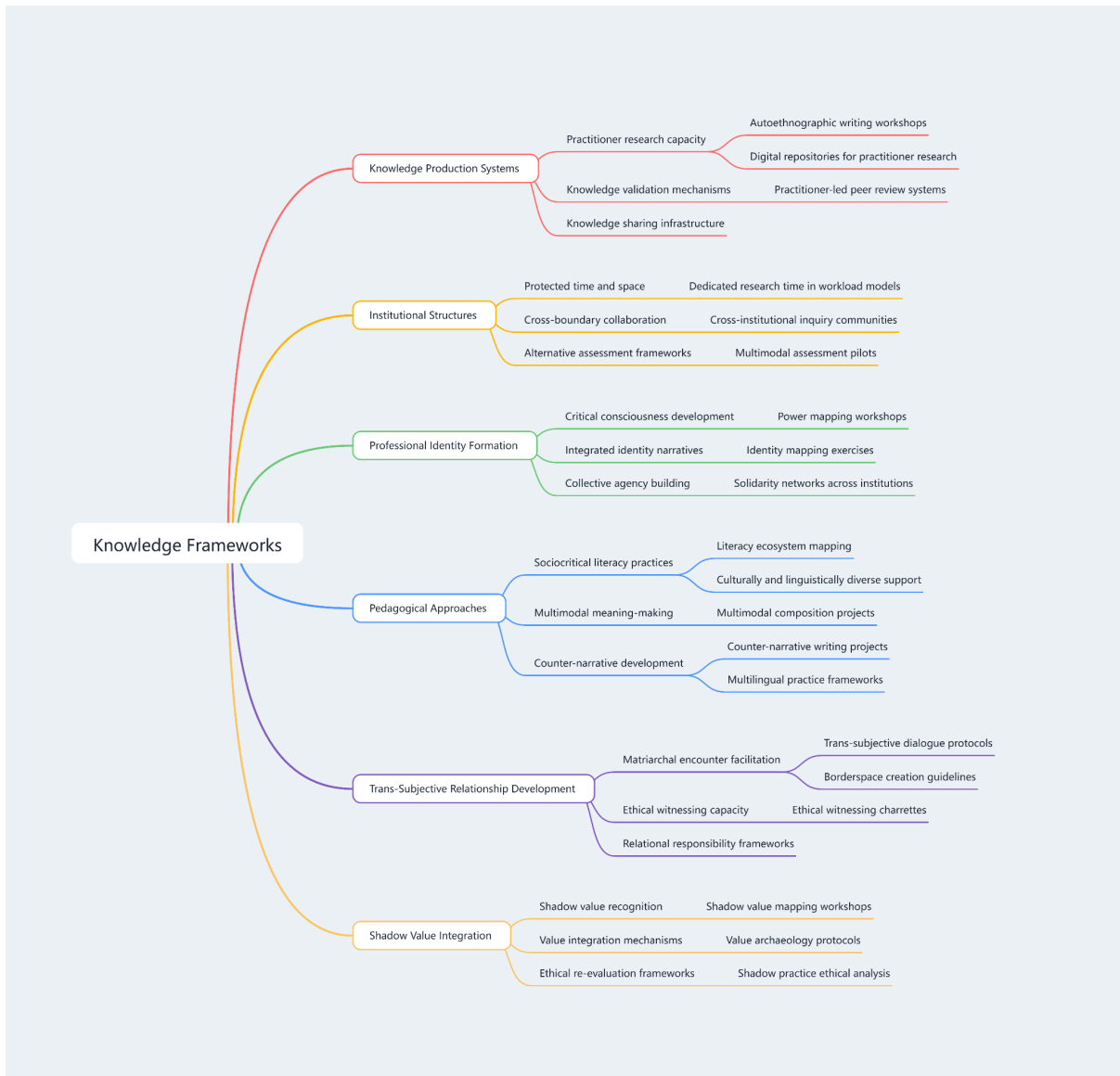


Figure 34: Driver Diagram- Educators positioned as transformative knowledge producers

6.3 Implications for Practice: PhEmaterialist Matrixial Pedagogy

The implementation of PhEmaterialist matrixial pedagogy represents a reimagining of educational practice that moves toward radical engagement with how knowledge, identity, and power are co-constituted through pedagogical encounters.

Implementing matrixial pedagogy entails redefining an educator’s role and educational encounters to reconceptualise teaching from the transmission of knowledge to passive recipients to embracing Barad’s (2007) "material-discursive

practices" that actively constitute reality, rather than represent it. This transformation requires moving toward the complex inquiry "How are racialised subjects and knowledge being enacted through our classroom interactions right now?" This reorientation requires educators to develop "material-discursive literacy" or the ability to recognise how seemingly neutral pedagogical choices actively participate in boundary-making practices and enact "agential cuts" (Barad, 2007) that separate and connect different phenomena, creating the boundaries through which student identities emerge. This requires developing observational practices that attend to moments when students resist or exceed the subject positions offered to them, documenting these instances as valuable data about the ongoing reconfiguration of classroom assemblages.

PhEmaterialist matrixial pedagogy emphasises collective "response-ability" -a term Barad (2007) uses to describe our obligation to be accountable for how our practices participate in the world's ongoing reconfiguration. This shift from individual to relational accountability requires educators to replace cultural competency training with ongoing collective inquiry into how power operates through educational encounters. Educators must develop practices for examining how institutional arrangements create differential vulnerabilities for students and how pedagogical choices participate in either reproducing or disrupting these patterns. The implementation of relational accountability involves creating regular spaces for practitioners to engage in collective material-discursive analysis and examining classroom artefacts (worksheets, policies, and assessment rubrics) as "material-semiotic actors" that actively shape reality. Through this analysis, educators understand how seemingly objective educational materials participate in racialising processes and develop alternative approaches that create different possibilities for student becoming.

Creating "matrixial borderspaces" (Ettinger, 2006) as educational environments characterised by vulnerability, trans-subjectivity, and ethical encounter, rejects neoliberal instrumentalism by emphasising aesthetic-ethical praxis over measurable outcomes, creating conditions for what Ettinger describes as "co-emergence" instead of predetermined learning objectives. The creation of matrixial borderspaces requires educators to embrace what Ettinger terms "self-fragilisation" or a willingness to be vulnerable and open to transformation through encounters with students. This

involves modelling intellectual uncertainty and sharing processes of unlearning instead of positioning oneself as an expert. Educators must develop the capacity for "not knowing" as a productive pedagogical stance, creating space for emergent insights. Central to this approach is the practice of "wit(h)nessing" as a form of ethical attention that involves listening without seeking to fix or categorise student experiences. Wit(h)nessing requires holding space for contradictory feelings and experiences without rushing to resolution. It demands attending to liminal spaces and what emerges in the "in-between" spaces of classroom encounters, challenging conventional pedagogical approaches that seek to resolve ambiguity and provide clear answers.

The practical implementation of matrixial borderspaces involves designing activities where the teacher's and students' subjectivities undergo mutual transformation. This might involve "rhizomatic discussion formats" that replace linear "share your culture" activities with mapping exercises that trace unexpected connections between student experiences. Educators might implement "diffractive reading" practices that explore how different texts and experiences intersect and transform each other, or create "assemblage mapping" activities where students trace the multiple historical, material, and affective forces shaping their educational experiences.

Implementing matrixial pedagogy involves disrupting "racialising technologies" of institutional practices that appear neutral but actively participate in creating racial hierarchies. Academic integrity policies function as apparatuses that position multilingual students as inherently deficient, highlighting the need for innovative approaches to linguistic diversity. Translanguaging approaches represent a concrete strategy for disrupting these racialising technologies. Educators must adopt what Flores (2020) terms "language architecture" frameworks that presuppose students already possess the linguistic resources necessary to engage in cognitively demanding tasks. This involves creating "new listening subject positions" that attend to meaning-making beyond standard English and designing assessments that value multiple ways of knowing and communicating. The practical implementation of these approaches requires educators to explore how different linguistic practices create different possibilities for thought. This might involve using students' full linguistic repertoires as resources for learning, documenting how raciolinguistic ideologies operate through seemingly neutral language policies, and developing assessment

practices that recognise the cognitive sophistication of translanguaging practices. Students and professionals navigate cultural identity through complex processes, including the right to reject, abandon, and disaffiliate from toxic cultural inheritances. Matrixial pedagogy supports these processes while avoiding the essentialising tendencies of traditional multicultural education. This requires educators to recognise "cultural hybridity" as creative and transformative, creating space for students to negotiate generational power dynamics on their terms. Educators must offer multiple ways for students to engage with identity-related content without requiring disclosure. The practical implementation involves designing projects that explore "becoming" rather than "being" particular identities, supporting students in creating new forms of cultural belonging through collaborative inquiry. This might involve creating opportunities for students to examine how cultural practices function as "material-discursive practices" that actively shape possibilities for identity formation, viewing culture as dynamic processes of becoming.

Post-Brexit educational contexts reveal how geopolitical events create differential vulnerabilities for migrant students, requiring educators to develop a sophisticated understanding of how structural forces shape individual experiences. Matrixial pedagogy attends to these differential positionings while avoiding categorical thinking that treats diverse groups as homogeneous. This requires educators to understand how "migrant capital" or accumulated knowledge of systems, established social networks, and awareness of rights, creates different protective factors for students. The practical implementation involves creating protective conditions through clear boundaries around professional relationships, providing institutional support for immigration-related concerns instead of relying on individual teacher relationships, and developing collective advocacy practices that address systemic vulnerabilities. The "Zero to Brexit Hero" analysis revealed how power asymmetries can be exploited in educational contexts, requiring educators to develop awareness of how their positioning as "native speakers" or institutional authorities can create opportunities for exploitation. Matrixial pedagogy includes strategies for recognising and disrupting these dynamics while supporting students' agency and self-determination.

Matrixial pedagogy requires institutional transformation. "Affective leadership" provides a framework for moving from what Spinoza terms "potestas" (power over)

to "potentia" (power with), creating conditions for collective capacity building. This may involve implementing action research approaches that position practitioners as knowledge creators, creating "serendipity" conditions through informal learning opportunities, and developing "psychological safety" practices that support risk-taking and innovation. The practical implementation may involve "randomised corridor trials" that create unexpected encounters between staff members, capturing emergent insights and decision-making processes based on "collective reasoning". The "open letter" strategy provides a model for collective resistance practices that encourage collective responses to institutional racism, make visible patterns of exclusion, position resistance as aligned with professional values and student welfare, and produce "rhizomatic" connections that circumvent hierarchical structures.

The implementation requires developing alternative assessment frameworks that measure collective capacity for ethical relationality and transformative encounter. This may involve documenting moments of "co-emergence" and mutual transformation, tracking the development of "response-ability" in classroom communities, and assessing the creation of conditions for "metramorphic" identity transformation. These assessment approaches attend to the collective capacity for holding complexity and contradiction, evidence of students and teachers being mutually transformed through encounters, and the development of collective practices for addressing injustice.

Matrixial pedagogy requires ongoing professional development that moves beyond traditional training models toward collective inquiry practices. This involves creating cross-institutional networks for sharing matrixial pedagogy experiments or developing mentorship relationships based on mutual vulnerability. The practical implementation involves developing ongoing inquiry questions for practitioners: "How are we participating in world-making through our pedagogical choices? What boundaries were drawn and redrawn in our classroom encounters? How are institutional practices creating differential vulnerabilities for our students? What evidence do we have of mutual transformation and ethical co-emergence?" These inquiry practices require institutional structures that create time and space for collective reflection, provide resources for experimentation with alternative pedagogical approaches, and recognise the value of this work within existing

accountability frameworks. Matrixial pedagogy inevitably encounters resistance from institutional structures designed around different assumptions about learning and accountability. When stakeholders demand evidence of effectiveness, educators must document collective capacity building and ethical transformation, share student testimonies about increased sense of agency and belonging, and demonstrate connections between matrixial practices and institutional goals related to equity and inclusion.

To scaffold autonomy, the implementation strategy may involve starting with small-scale experiments and documenting emergent insights, focusing on practical benefits such as increased student engagement or networking with others committed to social justice in education. Student resistance may emerge when students expect traditional pedagogical relationships. The implementation requires respecting students' rights to privacy and non-disclosure, transparency about pedagogical approaches and their rationale, creating multiple entry points for engagement that do not require immediate vulnerability, and modelling learning relationships.

PhEmaterialist matrixial pedagogy constitutes a reimagining of educational practice that recognises the co-constitutive nature of knowledge, identity, and power. This approach requires educators to develop new forms of material-discursive literacy, relational accountability, and ethical response-ability that enable them to participate more consciously in the ongoing reconfiguration of educational worlds.

The practical strategies I outlined provide concrete entry points for educators committed to transformative practice. The implementation constitutes a material-discursive practice that actively shapes the realities it aims to address, requiring an attention to the emergent affects of pedagogical choices and collective commitment to ethical transformation. Through the creation of matrixial borderspaces, the disruption of racialising technologies, and the development of collective capacity for response-ability, educators can participate in what Barad terms "the ongoing reconfiguration of the world" in ways that honour the complexity of student experiences while working toward more just educational futures. This work requires courage, vulnerability, and sustained commitment to collective inquiry, offering the possibility of genuinely transformative educational encounters for all participants.

6.3.1 Matrixial Literacy

By integrating “grammar of affect” into my findings, I conceptualise “matrixial literacies. Matrixial literacies extend Deleuze and Guattarian “becoming” by integrating shared vulnerability, co-affectivity, and unconscious resonance.

Matrixial literacies extend Vygotskian sociocultural models by recognising that becoming literate, professional, excellent, etc., involves movement across zones of proximal development and competence and entering shared psychic spaces of meaning-making where identities are co-constituted through resonance and wit(h)nessing. Literacy becomes a site of symbolic practice, affective negotiation, ethical psychic encounters and co-emergence, engaging the cognitive and conscious in tandem with unconscious dimensions of meaning and subjectivity. Literacy is reconceptualised as a matrixial space of becoming-with, where language, meaning, affect, and relation are inseparable from subjectivity's psychic and ethical dimensions.

Trans-subjective (Ettinger, 2004) and Freirian perspectives reframe Ball's fragmentation and “values schizophrenia” as dialectical spaces for transformation, where educators can reclaim critical agency through dialogue, reflection, and the re-articulation of practice as Really Useful Knowledge. Complementing this approach, Mignolo's (2009) “epistemic disobedience” invites professional resistance that refuses recognition within colonial knowledge hierarchies. Mignolo (2009) reminds us that “the colonial matrix of power cannot be 'observed' from the outside because there is no outside: we are all a part of it” (Mignolo, 2009). Ball and Picot (2021) argue that acknowledging fear of annihilation instead of pathologising it can open relational space for a ‘nonpsychotic reality’ anchored in mutual fragility and a non-goal-oriented mode of relating. Reclaiming consciousness or recovering from the (shared) “psychosis of whiteness” (Andrews, 2016) and values schizophrenia (Ball) thus requires giving up the illusion of whiteness as caring, accepting mutual vulnerability and the innate fear of annihilation, enabling an integrated, ethical (white) identity that can contain contradiction without collapse (Miller & Josephs, 2009). This process becomes an anti-narcissistic gesture of re-humanisation, resisting the atomised neoliberal subject.

When applied to institutional whiteness, accepting the ontological insecurity (Ball) can generate the capacity to self-define and encourage ethical relationships, not institutional domination. In this context, Ettinger's (2004) matrixial theory helps conceptualise this shift by offering an alternative to fragmented, narcissistic subjectivity; an ethical subjectivity anchored in co-emergence, compassion, and awe or "fascinace" in the presence of difference. Ball and Picot's (2021) non-goal-oriented mode of relating, potentially negating the need for an altered state (i.e., psychosis) by creating safety in response to threats experienced during interpersonal interactions, resonates with Ettinger's (2006) concept of "wit(h)nessing". Wit(h)nessing emphasises co-experiencing and shared vulnerability and involves a partial merging with the other's experience without completely assimilating it.

Matrixial pedagogy demands a reconceptualisation of educational assessment that centres relational transformation, ethical capacity building, and collective emergence. Applying Bracha Ettinger's matrixial theory and Karen Barad's agential realism, I propose a framework for evaluating pedagogical success through these transformative dimensions.

Traditional educational assessment operates through what Barad (2007) terms "representationalist" logic, viewing knowledge as a commodity to be acquired and measured through standardised instruments that assume stable, bounded subjects engaging with discrete objects of study. This approach misaligns with matrixial pedagogy's understanding of learning as an iterative process of co-emergence between partial subjects in shared borderspaces. As Ettinger (2006) argues, the matrixial borderspace constitutes "the psychic sphere which is trans-subjective on a sub-subjective partial level," where transformation emerges through encounters that transgress individual psychic boundaries even if and when awareness arises in the field of the separate individual subject. If subjectivity itself emerges through relational encounters rather than existing as a pre-given foundation for learning, then success cannot be measured through individual achievement metrics that assume autonomous subjects acquiring external knowledge. Instead, assessment must attend to the quality and transformative potential of relational encounters, the development of ethical capacity for engaging with otherness, and the emergence of

collective possibilities for action that exceed individual capabilities. This transformation requires evaluation approaches that attend to the ongoing dynamics of becoming rather than static states of being. Such assessment recognises that the most significant transformations in matrixial pedagogy may be invisible to traditional measurement tools, emerging in the pre-cognitive, affective dimensions of encounter that Ettinger identifies as foundational to ethical subjectivity formation.

The first criterion for successful matrixial pedagogy is the emergence of "matrixial borderspaces" as pedagogical environments where the boundaries between self and other, teacher and student, known and unknown, become permeable without collapsing entirely. These spaces are characterised by what Ettinger describes as "borderlinking," a process that "is not a cognitive act" but instead is "accessed by aesthetical and ethical joining-in-differentiating and working through" (Bickel & McConachy, 2013: 142). Evidence of successful borderspace creation appears in my data in various manifestations. The unplanned and unstructured serendipitous corridor encounters that emerged during the action research project exemplify how institutional spaces can be transformed into sites of unexpected collaboration and mutual learning. Similarly, the collective letter-writing process that transformed racist student complaints into shared institutional analysis demonstrates how matrixial borderspaces enable new forms of collective agency that exceed individual capabilities. The assessment of borderspace emergence requires ethnographic attention to spontaneous interactions, documentation of boundary-crossing moments, and analysis of how hierarchical relationships are suspended without abandoning ethical responsibility. Assessment approaches must attend to relational quality and transformative potential.

The second criterion centres on the development of what Ettinger terms "wit(h)nessing" as a form of ethical attention to otherness that involves "deep listening, compassionate conjointment, and artistic artworkings" (Walsh and Bickel, 2022). Wit(h)nessing differs from both empathetic identification, which risks appropriating the other's experience, and analytical distancing, which maintains the subject-object divide that matrixial theory seeks to overcome. Successful wit(h)nessing capacity is evidenced through sustained attention to others' experiences without appropriation, affective attunement to pre-cognitive dimensions of encounter, and creative response to difference. In my data, this capacity appeared

most clearly in the response to students' disclosure of hidden Roma identity following anti-racist intervention. The response involved creating space for students' meaning-making processes while remaining accountable to the systemic dynamics of racialisation and concealment that shaped their experiences. The development of wit(h)nessing capacity also requires what Ettinger calls "self-fragilisation" or the willingness to be changed by encounter with otherness while maintaining ethical responsibility instead of maintaining a defended position of expertise or authority.

The third criterion applies Spinoza's distinction between *potentia* (collective capacity for action) and *potestas* (power over others), focusing on whether matrixial pedagogy enhances participants' collective capacity for ethical action. This criterion moves beyond individual empowerment narratives to assess whether pedagogical encounters generate new possibilities for shared agency that could not emerge through individual effort alone. Evidence of enhanced collective *potentia* appears through collaborative problem-solving that generates previously unimaginable solutions, shared decision-making processes that honour difference while enabling coordinated action, and mutual support networks that sustain difficult work over time. The action research project data exemplifies this dynamic, as individual practitioners' struggles with institutional constraints were transformed into collective analysis and coordinated intervention that achieved institutional changes no individual could have accomplished alone. The assessment of collective *potentia* involves orienting towards network formation, documenting collaborative actions and their outcomes, and analysing how shared agency emerges from and transcends individual contributions. This requires approaches that can track relational dynamics and collective emergence over time.

The fourth criterion addresses participants' capacity to work with the non-linear temporality that characterises matrixial encounters, where past, present, and future are enfolded in current pedagogical moments. This temporal sophistication involves recognising how historical sedimentations manifest in present practices, the capacity to interrupt the iterative re-enactment of violence, and creative engagement with inherited trauma and possibility. My research demonstrates this temporal sophistication through connections between historical events (Eva Justin's 1944 racial research) and contemporary classroom materials that reproduce deficit ideologies, understanding of Brexit as a continuation of historical "unsettling events",

and analysis of primal racism that reveals possibilities for ethical transformation. This temporal work requires what Barad (2007) terms "response-ability" or accountability for how present actions participate in ongoing historical reconfigurations instead of understanding the past as completed and the future as predetermined. Assessment of non-linear temporality may involve a historical analysis of how past violence manifests in present practices, a genealogical mapping of inherited patterns and their disruptions, and documentation of how participants understand and engage with temporal complexity in their pedagogical practice.

The fifth criterion addresses the capacity to engage both aesthetically and ethically, recognising their inseparability in transformative practice as the medium through which ethical capacity develops. Evidence of successful aesthetic-ethical integration manifests through creative practices that generate ethical insights, promote aesthetic sensitivity to complexity in challenging situations, and employ creative expression as a non-representational ethical response. My research demonstrates this integration through the legal fiction format, multimodal approaches to understanding whiteness or composite dialogues as analytical tools that can access affective dimensions unavailable to conventional academic discourse. The assessment of aesthetic-ethical integration may require project-based learning approaches or reflective analysis of how creative processes generate ethical insights.

My multidimensional assessment framework captures the complexity of these criteria while maintaining flexibility. It attends to transformation across individual, relational, institutional, and societal levels.

Criterion	Individual Level	Relational Level	Institutional Level	Societal Level
Matrixial Borderspaces	Personal boundary flexibility and capacity for vulnerability	Spontaneous collaborations across difference	Cross-departmental projects and policy innovations	Community partnerships and public engagement
Wit(h)nessing Capacity	Self-fragilisation practices and ethical attention to otherness	Deep listening skills and compassionate response	Institutional vulnerability and accountability processes	Public responsibility and cultural transformation
Collective Potentia	Participation in shared decision-making and mutual support	Network formation and collaborative problem-solving	Collaborative governance and resource sharing	Social movement engagement and policy influence
Temporal Sophistication	Historical consciousness and future-oriented action	Intergenerational dialogue and trauma-informed practice	Policy genealogy awareness and institutional memory	Cultural memory work and historical accountability
Aesthetic-Ethical Integration	Creative-analytical practice and embodied engagement	Creative collaboration and aesthetic sensitivity	Institutional aesthetics and creative policy development	Cultural transformation and conferences engagement

Table 3: Matrixial Pedagogical Assessment Matrix

This matrix enables assessment that honours the complexity of matrixial transformation while providing practical guidance for evaluation and development. The criteria are not discrete measurable outcomes; they are dynamic processes of

ongoing pedagogical practice.

Participatory evaluation involves co-researchers in defining and assessing success rather than imposing external criteria. This aligns with matrixial theory's emphasis on co-emergence and shared agency while generating assessment processes that are themselves pedagogically transformative. My data demonstrates this approach through collaborative reflection on the action research process or community validation of impact and significance. The implementation of matrixial assessment criteria has several challenges that must be addressed. The first challenge involves reorienting from outcome metrics to process indicators and measuring what traditional frameworks consider unmeasurable: the quality of attention, capacity for complexity, and relational transformation that characterise matrixial success, necessitating new forms of evidence that can capture subtle transformations. Institutional resistance presents another challenge, as educational institutions are often embedded in accountability systems that require standardised metrics and measurable outcomes. Action research projects provide a hybrid approach that satisfies institutional requirements while maintaining matrixial integrity and demonstrates practical impact in terms that institutions can recognise and value, incorporating creative elements and peer review processes that incorporate matrixial criteria. Educational transformations may remain invisible until after formal pedagogical encounters have ended, requiring non-linear evaluation approaches that account for delayed and unexpected impacts. This may require anticipatory assessment and iterative evaluation processes that adapt to changing circumstances and emerging possibilities.

The criteria and framework have implications for educational practice and policy development. At the practical level, the framework suggests the need for creating regular opportunities for spontaneous encounters, developing wit(h)nessing practices in daily interactions, documenting process while embracing uncertainty as a pedagogical resource, and integrating aesthetic practices with analytical work. At the institutional level, these criteria highlight the need for policy changes that support collaborative work, allocate resources for creative-analytical projects, promote professional development that embraces autonomy, complexity and vulnerability, and adopt leadership practices that model the matrixial capacities they aim to develop in others. The action research case study demonstrates how individual pedagogical

innovation can generate institutional transformation when supported by appropriate policies and resources. At the societal level, matrixial assessment criteria create alternatives to neoliberal accountability systems that reduce education to economic productivity by defining educational success in terms of ethical capacity, collective agency, and cultural transformation, aligning with educational justice and offering practical tools for implementation.

From the Mechanics' Institutes to contemporary FE colleges, from monitorial schools to data-driven performance management, from the Chartists' "Really Useful Knowledge" to contemporary critical pedagogies and action research, and from colonial subjectivity to decolonial resistance, my literature review outlined a constant tension between emancipation and control, between education as a tool of domination and education as a practice of freedom.

As a response to 'the colonised other' (Murriss, 2018), using literacy to create lines of flight- challenging hierarchical and oppressive structures (Bloome et al., 2019:19-20)- the state attempted to striate smooth spaces (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) by replacing literacy with morality thus "changed forever the relationship of the majority of the population to their own talents for learning and for literacy" (Cook-Gumperz, 1986:32 in Bloome et al., 2019:20). Whoever controls the representation of the imagined ideal, final form (Hall, 2012), holds the power to define valid literacy practices and the right, moral choices leading to success (Bloome et al., 2019). Nevertheless, users of literacy are not concerned with only the instrumental and autonomous uses of literacy. Literacy can be used for nomadic thought, 'multiple connections and novel becoming' (Leander & Rowe, 2006). The rhizomatic connections present sociocultural development and ontogenesis as a cartography without the external parameter of timescales or benchmarks, for a "rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987:25).

By understanding this history and its current continuities, educators can more effectively navigate these tensions and work toward socially just pedagogies. Trans-subjectivity, posthuman identity, action research, and autoethnography open space for a research praxis that resists the closure of fixed categories and embraces

the complexity of educational life. They invite us to think and feel otherwise, embrace the messiness of professional becoming, and reimagine inquiry as an ethical, situated, and transformative encounter. In such a framing, knowledge is not a product to be extracted but a process of entanglement of sensing, responding and co-emerging with the world. These orientations offer resistance to the reductive demands of neoliberal performativity and the possibility of cultivating more compassionate, just, and reflexive educational futures.

The design principles table below translates the theoretical framework of matrixial literacies into actionable guidance for educational practice. These principles are generative orientations that educators can adapt to their contexts while maintaining fidelity to the core commitments of PhEmaterialist matrixial pedagogy.

Liminality & Opacity	Protect in-between spaces where identities can shift. Value informal encounters and shield them from surveillance.
Affective & Unconscious Dimensions	Work with emotions and embodied responses. Address fear/shame while cultivating joy and solidarity.
Diffraction Analysis	Read across perspectives to generate new insights. Focus on patterns of difference, not single truths.
Multiple Ways of Knowing	Value embodied, lived, and cultural knowledge alongside academic forms. Use diverse modalities and feedback.
Trans-subjective Relationships	Build relational, ethical connections beyond fixed identities. Encourage vulnerability and witnessing.
Institutional Power (Creative Engagement)	Exploit institutional 'weak spots'. Use subtle resistance and repurpose systems for transformation.
Radical Temporality	Challenge linear progress. Engage past-present-future interplay and enact desired futures now.
Counter-narratives	Amplify marginalised stories. Use diverse formats and support risk-taking cultures.
Collective Agency	Prioritise collaboration over individualism. Build networks and spaces for experimentation and iteration.
Ethical Materiality	Recognise materials and environments as active. Design spaces and tools that support transformation.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

My autoethnographic project's analysis of my experiences as a migrant educator in inner London's further education sector creates inherent limitations in generalisability. The subjective nature of autoethnographic methodology offers experiential insights that may restrict generalisability beyond my specific circumstances. A key analytical gap is the limited ability to compare my experiences with those of other migrant educators, constraining pattern recognition. My dual role as a researcher and a research subject creates epistemic gaps, as I cannot fully distance myself from my experience to examine it objectively. The case study approach does not provide a comprehensive documentation of everyday educational encounters, which may not capture the full complexity of migrant educator experiences or institutional responses.

My identity as a white, European migrant with a specific immigration status and educational background shapes the forms of marginalisation and resistance explored in this study. This introduces an analytical gap, as my findings are shaped by configurations that may obscure experiences shaped primarily by other factors, such as race, gender, or class. These configurations guide unique encounters with institutional power that differ from those of migrant educators with other backgrounds. The analysis reflects my professional identity formation within UK educational institutions and may not represent the diverse experiences of other migrant educators. The temporal specificity of these case studies, i.e., Brexit and the shifting immigration policies, further defines the scope and context of the institutional responses examined.

6.5 Suggestions for Future Research

Collaborative autoethnographic approaches involving multiple migrant educators could reveal patterns in professional identity formation while maintaining experiential value, directly addressing generalisability limitations. Participatory research examining students' experiences of learning with migrant educators may reveal how professional identity formation influences educational relationships and outcomes. Similarly, investigating how social connections outside institutions influence

professional choices and resistance strategies could address the limitation of an institutional focus. Comparative studies could identify patterns of adaptation or resistance, and cross-national studies examining employment, professional development, and career progression policies may reveal how national policies and cultural contexts influence professional identity.

Research examining intersections of race, gender, age, and class with migrant status represents a critical gap. Studies focusing on migrant educators from specific communities, for example, refugee backgrounds, could illuminate forms of marginalisation outside my experience. Intersectional analysis also addresses identity and temporal boundaries. My suggestions could contribute to a comprehensive understanding of migrant educator experiences, while maintaining the experiential element that makes autoethnographic research valuable for academic and practitioner communities.

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APPENDICES

Mapping Findings & the 30 Patterns of Harm

This table maps the 30 Patterns of Harm (Daniels, 2025) across seven institutional logics (Entry, Epistemic, Reaction, Internalisation, Discipline, Expansion, Closure) using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to demonstrate the cross-sectoral, systemic nature of racialised harm and to validate my methodological and theoretical contributions. The table maps:

1. Logic: Organises patterns by the institutional logic through which harm is enacted: Entry, Epistemic, Reaction, Internalisation, Discipline, Expansion, Closure (Daniels, 2025)
2. Pattern Mechanism: The underlying sociological/institutional mechanism (e.g., Denial, Silencing, Tokenisation) that best explains how the pattern operates in FE as the conceptual "engine" of the harm.
3. Field: What institutional action or process is being organised (e.g., hiring, complaints, budgeting).
4. Tenor: How power relations and social roles are configured (e.g., who has authority, who is subordinated, what assumptions govern interactions).
5. Mode: How meaning is fixed, circulated, or erased through language, documentation, or silence (e.g., policy documents, PR statements, absence in records).
6. Racialised Effect / Identity Outcome: The material and subjective consequences for racialised subjects (e.g., non-credibility, exhaustion, erasure, criminalisation).
7. Findings: Links patterns to my findings (mechanisms, discourses, or practices)

Table 5: Mapping Findings & the 30 Patterns of Harm

Logic		Pattern of Harm (Daniels, 2025)	Pattern Mechanism	Field (What action is organised)	Tenor (How relations & power are configured)	Mode (How meaning is fixed/circulated)	Racialised Effect / Identity Outcome	My Findings
<p>Entry</p> <p>Entry is conditional; whiteness is the invisible standard against which all candidates are measured, making racialised difference a deficit.</p>	1	<p>Recruitment assumes whiteness as neutrality</p>	<p>Denial</p> <p>Neutrality as Denial</p>	<p>Refusal to recognise racialised barriers in hiring; whiteness as unmarked default</p>	<p>Institutional authority defines competence through proximity to white norms</p>	<p>Formal job descriptions, "cultural fit" discourse, neutral-sounding criteria</p>	<p>Racialised candidates rendered less credible or "not quite right"</p>	<p>"Space invader; "native speakerism"; "White bourgeois male as norm"; "hidden referent"; deficit discourses; "Standard English"</p> <p>Institutional Whiteness (Ahmed, 2006)</p>

	2	<p>Vetting defines risk in racialised terms</p>	<p>Conditional Credibility, Threshold Laundering & Delay</p> <p>Vetting processes for racialised candidates are often prolonged, with additional checks, requests for documentation, and bureaucratic slowdowns that white candidates don't face. This creates exhaustion and attrition.</p>	<p>Demanding excessive proof; racialised risk assessment</p>	<p>Presumption of suspicion toward racialised applicants</p>	<p>Background checks, social media screening, "character" assessments</p>	<p>Racialised subjects constructed as inherently risky; unequal burden of proof</p>	<p>QA and academic integrity as "racialising technologies"</p> <p>"BAME students are overrepresented in academic misconduct proceedings" (Rendell, 2021: 183, 201); "audit culture" and "surveillance" of minoritised educators.</p>
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	3	Appearance is conditional upon conformity	Fragmentation & Pattern Blindness Racialised subjects must fragment their identities to conform to white aesthetic and linguistic norms; non-conformity is read as unprofessionalism.	Policing of appearance, accent, dress, and cultural markers	Loss of bodily autonomy and narrative authority over self-presentation	Dress codes, hair policies, accent monitoring, "professional appearance" standards	Identity fragmentation; assimilation pressure; structural harm obscured	Pressure to perform whiteness; accent/language as proxies for legitimacy "Fabrication" (Ball, 2003); "values schizophrenia"; pressure to perform whiteness;
Reaction Reaction logic governs how institutions respond to complaints, dissent, or challenges to authority.	4	Complaints demand translation to be believed Complaints are recognised only when stripped of affect and context, forcing complainants to translate their harm into the institution's preferred register.	Silencing/ Disbelief & Auditioned Harm The emphasis is on managing institutional risk and reputation rather than addressing the root causes of harm or achieving justice.	Questioning testimony; demanding proof Harm must be translated into institutionally legible forms to be recognised; voices are excluded from processes or included performatively	Voice and narrative authority removed from the harmed person; presumption of dishonesty; racialised voices are positioned as unreliable. Exhaustive waiting is imposed on	Sceptical modality (e.g., "alleged," "claimed") circulates in institutional discourse. Formal complaint forms, procedural templates, requirement for	Racialised doubt; complainants are discredited. Epistemic erasure; lived experience rendered unintelligible	"Testimonial injustice"; open letter case study; institutional nonperformatives

			Complaints from racialised subjects are met with scepticism; their testimony is questioned, and they must provide excessive evidence to be believed. This is the core mechanism of disbelief.	as procedural tokens without epistemic authority or material influence.	the marginalised individual, creating a power asymmetry.	"objective" evidence Documentation is deferred, delayed, or lost, creating bureaucratic attrition.	Attrition through fatigue	
	5	Referral replaces repair	Deflection Cases are passed between units or externally referred, ensuring that no one is responsible for repair and harm is indefinitely deferred.	Redirecting responsibility to other bodies or departments; repair is replaced by procedural referral.	Collegial loyalty overrides accountability to those who have been harmed. Power displaced; no single actor accountable	Internal memos, "escalation" procedures, inter-departmental referrals shield perpetrators of harm from accountability	No accountable actor; institutional impunity Process replaces justice	"Nonperformatives"; "strategic inefficiency" in complaints

	6	Misconduct resolves risk, not injustice	<p>Normalisation</p> <p>Misconduct processes focus on mitigating reputational or operational risk rather than achieving justice or accountability for those harmed.</p>	Harm treated as routine risk to be managed	Affective numbing-harm expected and tolerated; ethics subordinated to institutional self-protection	<p>Recurrent templates and standardised responses circulate.</p> <p>Disciplinary procedures, risk assessments, incident logs</p>	<p>Chronic inequality normalised; harm managed, not repaired and rendered unremarkable</p>	QA as risk management; "fabrication" and "opacity"
	7	Strategic communications manage image not truth	<p>Reputational Defence</p> <p>Communications strategies are designed to protect institutional reputation, not to acknowledge harm or hold power accountable.</p>	Image protection prioritised over truth-telling	Institution-centred concern overrides accountability to those harmed	PR-style discourse, press releases, "no comment" statements, media management	<p>Harm subordinated to optics; truth obscured; harmed individuals are discredited</p>	"Fabrication; Image management; symbolic violence"

	8	Public narrative performs trust without accountability	Moral Inversion/ Institutions publicly frame their actions as caring, protective, or benevolent (e.g., "safeguarding," "supporting," "listening") while avoiding accountability or structural change.	Trust performed symbolically without substantive change Harm reframed as care	Institutional authority unchallenged; institution positioned as benevolent	PR-style discourse (e.g., "we take all concerns seriously," "committed to diversity") circulates. Safeguarding rhetoric, "we care" statements Public statements, diversity commitments, "listening" events, performative apologies	Accountability evaded; harm obscured by performative gestures	"Nonperformatives"; "fabrication" "institutional mechanics" (Ahmed, 2021) Psychosis of whiteness (Andrews, 2016)
	9	Community engagement secures calm not change	Tokenisation Engagement is used to manage relations and prevent escalation, not to redistribute	Symbolic engagement to pacify dissent	Power retained by institution; communities consulted but not empowered	Consultation events, advisory panels, "co-production" rhetoric without	Dissent contained; transformation deferred	"Tokenistic multiculturalism"; "culture day" refusal

			power or transform structures.			power-sharing		
<p>Epistemic</p> <p>Epistemic logic governs what counts as knowledge, evidence, and truth, and who is authorised to produce it.</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>Quantification converts harm into metrics</p> <p>Data creates the appearance of institutional awareness while obscuring the structural causes of harm. Measurement substitutes for transformation</p>	<p>Minimisation & Epistemic Non-Uptake</p> <p>Harm is abstracted into numbers, losing its lived reality and making it easier to manage rather than address structurally.</p>	<p>Downplaying severity by reducing harm to data points</p>	<p>Affective and relational dimensions dismissed as subjective</p>	<p>Spreadsheets, dashboards, statistical reports, "evidence-based" discourse</p>	<p>Harm reframed as trivial; systemic patterns erased</p>	<p>"Audit culture"; "metrics as proxy for quality"; "fabrication"</p>

	1 1	Disproportionality is tracked, not transformed	Individualisation Institutions document racial disparities but refuse to interrogate or change the structures producing them, framing the issue as individual-level.	Isolating disparities from structural causes; tracking without action	Problem located in racialised individuals, not systems	Psychological or behavioural framing (e.g., "attitude problem," "lack of resilience") circulates. Equality monitoring reports, "gap" analysis, demographic breakdowns	Systemic racism denied; individuals pathologised	"Audit culture"; "illusion of legitimacy" in QA and policy
	1 2	Data dashboards simulate progress, not shift	Proceduralism Dashboards and metrics give the appearance of transparency and progress while leaving power structures and decision-making processes intact.	Rule-following and metric-tracking prioritised over structural change & ethical judgement Compliance substitutes justice.	Ethics subordinated to compliance; appearance of action valued over substance Relational accountability is foreclosed.	Policy citations and procedural language dominate institutional responses. Interactive dashboards, traffic-light systems, KPIs	Illusion of legitimacy; moral evasion	"Audit culture"; "illusion of legitimacy" in QA and policy

	1 3	Crime is counted, not structurally mapped	Decontextualisation/ Fragmentation Institutions count discrete events but refuse to analyse the systemic conditions (poverty, policing (pedagogic) practices, historical inequality) that produce them.	Removing social and structural context from incidents Events are split into isolated cases	Structural factors erased; events isolated Loss of narrative authority; an individual's coherent account is dismantled.	Incident reports, crime statistics, event-only accounts Case splitting into multiple files or categories destroys the systemic pattern.	Gatekeeping practices that fragment identity and narrative coherence Patterns remain unmapped; root causes ignored; racism rendered invisible	My root cause analysis Trauma misrecognition adultification
Internalisation This logic reframes structural harm as individual development needs.	1 4	Racism reframed as development, thus coaching replaces consequence Racism is treated as a skills deficit or cultural misunderstanding rather than a justice issue. Those harmed are offered "support" while those	Pathologisation & White Ignorance Responses are medicalised or framed as developmental deficits: harmed individuals are positioned as unstable or deficient.	Medicalising or developmentalising racism as a skills deficit	Institutional authority defines what is "normal" or "healthy"; racialised subjects are positioned as deviant or in need of correction; suspicion intensified	Development plans, coaching sessions, "reflective practice," capability procedures Clinical or behavioural registers (e.g., "intervention," "support	Structural racism denied; individuals responsibility Racialised subjects are constructed as irrational or incompetent	"Objective voices": pressure to tolerate misconduct and prioritise the perpetrators' wellbeing Autoethnography as "narcissitic"

		causing harm face no consequences			under guise of support	plan") circulate		
	15	Progression rewards similarity, not impact	Compliance Reward Career progression is reserved for those who conform to dominant (white, middle-class) norms, not those who challenge structures or advocate for change.	Obedience and conformity valorised over challenge or transformation	Conditional legitimacy granted to those who assimilate	Promotion criteria, "leadership potential" assessments, "team fit" evaluations	Assimilation pressure; transformation foreclosed	Fabrication
	16	Training is used as a cure for racism (FE: wellbeing programmes, Employee assistance, resilience training as a cure for burn out or systemic issues)	Proceduralism Training is offered as a solution to racism, allowing institutions to claim action without changing policies, practices, power, or resource allocation.	Rule-following (attending training) substituted for structural change	Ethics subordinated to compliance; training as box-ticking	Unconscious bias training, diversity workshops, e-learning modules, attendance records	Structural harm remains; training becomes performative compliance	Top down CPD Action research as resistance

	17	Black officers (professionals) carry visibility, not protection	Tokenisation Black staff are made visible in promotional materials and events but are not protected from harm, given decision-making power, or structurally supported.	Hypervisibility in public-facing roles without structural support or safety	Structural factors erased; individuals positioned as exceptional or symbolic	Diversity imagery, public-facing roles, "role model" discourse, promotional materials	Tokenism; burden of representation without agency or protection	The open letter
Discipline Discipline logic governs how racialised bodies are surveilled, controlled, and subjected to force. Blackness is constructed as inherently suspicious or threatening, justifying disproportionate	18	Stop and search enforces suspicion as routine	Surveillance & Gaslighting Stop and search practices normalise suspicion of Black people, making racialised surveillance a routine, everyday part of public life.	Routine monitoring and intervention normalised	Suspicion intensified toward racialised bodies; presumption of guilt	Stop and search records, "reasonable grounds" justifications, data tracking	Criminalisation; psychological harm; routine suspicion normalised Gaslighting involves undermining someone's reality and making them doubt their own experience. In stop and search,	QA and academic integrity as "racialising technologies"; racialised students are overrepresented in academic misconduct proceedings & compulsory education exclusion data relative

intervention and violence.							<p>Black people are told their experiences of racial profiling are "coincidence," "procedure," or "for their own safety," even when the pattern is clear.</p>	<p>to local population (Llyod, 2024)</p> <p>carceral logics</p>
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	1 9	Risk logic frames Blackness as pre-threat	Risk Reversal & Safeguarding Inversion Blackness is coded as risk by default; racialised people are treated as threats before any behaviour or evidence justifies such treatment.	Blackness constructed as inherently dangerous before any action	Institutional self-protection overrides care or proportionality	Risk assessments , threat matrices, "gang" databases, pre-emptive flagging	Racialised threat construction; pre-emptive criminalisation	"Deficit discourses"; "raciolinguistics"; "native speakerism" as proxy for risk
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	20	Use of force reads distress as defiance	Escalation & Gaslighting Emotional or physical distress is misread as non-compliance or aggression, justifying escalated force and further harm.	Increasing sanctions and force in response to distress or vulnerability	Punitive authority exercised disproportionately; distress criminalised Affective domination; racialised subjects made to doubt their experience and emotional reality Disproportionate punishment; bodily harm justified; distress misread as aggression	Use of force reports, body-worn video (selectively released), incident justifications Contradictory records, "it's policy," "you're overreacting"	Psychological harm; reality destabilised	"Affective governance"; "affect as discipline"; "sad affects"
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	2 1	Missing persons decisions ration urgency by race	Temporal Distortion & Under-documentation Decisions about urgency, resources, and response times in missing persons cases are influenced by racialised assumptions about risk, worth, and "lifestyle."	Reordering priorities and timelines based on racialised assumptions	Institutional narrative control over whose life matters and when	Missing persons reports, resource allocation decisions, risk categorisations: selective authority determines what is recorded	Responsibility blurred; racialised lives deprioritised	Trauma misrecognition Missing from education data Strategic absence
	2 2	Strip search converts doubt into domination	Over-documentation / Invasive Control Strip searches are used disproportionately against Black people, converting institutional suspicion into physical domination and humiliation.	Invasive procedures weaponise institutional doubt and suspicion Child Q	Affective and physical domination exercised over racialised bodies	Strip search authorisations, custody records, justifications citing "safety"	Bodily violation; dehumanisation; exhaustion as control	"Epistemic injustice"; "testimonial injustice"; "fabrication" and "opacity" Safeguarding reviews: child Q and MVPA

	2 3	Adultification makes Black childhood an impossibility	Decontextualisation / Escalation Black children are perceived and treated as older, more responsible, and more threatening than white peers, denying them the protection of childhood.	Childhood denied; Black children treated as older and more culpable	Racialised maturity imposed; innocence foreclosed	Behavioural incident reports, exclusion records, police interactions Behavioural coding (e.g., "aggressive," "non-compliant") circulates.	Black children's innocence erased; subjected to adult consequences	"Adultification" parallels in FE: "deficit" framing of minoritised students Pathologising differences
Expansion	2 4	Algorithmic policing automates racialised suspicion	Expertise Capture Algorithms encode existing biases, automating racialised suspicion and making it faster, wider-reaching, and harder to challenge or contest.	Automation embeds and scales bias; technical systems override lived knowledge	Epistemic hierarchy privileges algorithms and "data-driven" approaches over lived experience	Technical language (e.g., "risk scores," "predictive analytics") circulates; automated flagging Plagiarism detection bias	Racialised knowledge devalued; harm scaled through technology	BKSB initial/diagnostic assessments "Data-driven exclusion"; "digital divide"; "audit culture"

	25	HR automation encodes racial bias	Policy Fetishism/ Laundering HR systems automate bias in recruitment, vetting, and progression, embedding discrimination in seemingly neutral, "objective" processes.	Automated systems embed discrimination; policy and tech replace judgment	Rule-based logic overrides relational ethics and contextual decision-making	Quotation-heavy texts and automated systems circulate Applicant tracking systems, automated screening, AI-driven assessments, keyword filtering	Care foreclosed; bias systematised at scale	"Managerialism"; "fabrication"; "audit culture"
Closure Closure logic governs how institutions close down accountability and transformation	26	Power stays white even when the labour is Black	Exceptionalism Even when Black people perform the work, decision-making power, authority, and institutional protection remain concentrated in white hands.	Harm framed as anomaly; white authority retained despite racialised labour	System absolved; white power preserved even when diversity increases	Organisational charts, decision-making structures, "diversity" roles without power	Pattern denial; hierarchies of whiteness maintained	"Peripheral whiteness"; "conditional whiteness"; "hierarchies of whiteness"

	27	Culture plans promise 'inclusion' but avoid repair	Closure Without Repair Institutions produce plans and statements that promise inclusion but avoid the structural changes (power redistribution, resource reallocation) required for repair	Symbolic inclusion without structural change; cases closed administratively	Institutional finality asserted; ongoing harm ignored	Culture change plans, diversity statements, action plans, "completed" status	Ongoing harm ignored; transformation deferred	"Tokenistic multiculturalism"; "nonperformatives"; "fabrication" of inclusion
	28	Strategic plans multiply tasks but defer change	Compliance Reward / Proceduralism Plans generate endless tasks, meetings, and reports, creating the appearance of action while deferring substantive change and protecting existing power.	Activity proliferates without transformation ; tasks substitute for structural change	Conditional legitimacy granted to compliant actors; obedience valorisation; busyness valued over impact	Action plans, working groups, task forces, progress reports, "delivery" metrics	Assimilation pressure; choreography replaces confrontation	"The domino effect" "Speed" as affective control (Hunter, 2015b)

	2 9	Authorised language strips systemic racism of its meaning	Affect Stripping / Language Control Terms like "systemic racism" are replaced with softer, depoliticised language, stripping them of their structural and political force and making challenge harder.	Language sanitised to protect institutional comfort	Authority over what can be named; detachment enforced Emotional responses are delegitimised and pathologised	Policy documents, internal communications, euphemistic terminology, mitigating language & Neutralised register (e.g., "isolated incident," "minor concern" unconscious bias", "cultural differences", "remain professional, " "objective assessment") circulate.	Structural harm rendered unspeakable; clarity punished; relational harm erased	"Affective governance"; "affect as discipline"; "sad affects"
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	3 0	Budgets fund optics not outcomes	Reputational Defence / Resistance Punishment Budgets prioritise initiatives that enhance institutional image (e.g., diversity marketing, events) over those that address structural harm (e.g., pay equity, accountability).	Resources directed toward appearance; challenging narratives sanctioned	Institution-centred priorities override substantive change; authority reasserted over dissenters	Budget allocations, funding for PR/comms vs. structural interventions, "diversity" marketing	Harm subordinated to reputation; resources misdirected; dissent silenced	Audit culture Fabrication Psychosis of whiteness
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