

**Listening-Based Pedagogies:
Story-Listening and Other Educational Approaches Attuned to a
Critical + Indigenous + Clown Framework**

by

Rafael Pellizzer Soares

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Abstract

This transparadigmatic study is driven by the guiding curiosity *what could a listening-based pedagogy entail?* in addition to other research questions derived from it. The universe in which this project lives proposes a recognition of more-than-human voices and agency, wondering with(in) phenomena from which data may emerge and glow, and where epistemology emerges concurrently with ontology (knowing, doing, and being are inseparable).

The listening approaches selected for this research attend to relationality, silence, holism, culturally responsive practices, critical consciousness, future-oriented perspectives, vulnerability, collaboration, and playfulness. That way, listening becomes crucial in teaching and researching practices that work against single stories and other consequences of Western-oriented education. Also, how we listen to and engage with stories in educational environments are also dependent on power dynamics (and related to our endeavor to recognize these unbalanced structures and connections). Thus, this study advocates for the fluidity of knowledge as well as for the impact that varied forms of listening might have on accountable, reciprocal, and equitable relationships, which can support schools to become places where not only space but also power is shared.

The Critical + Indigenous + Clown (CIC) theoretical framework of this study comprises three main listening approaches: Dunker and Thebas' (2019) active + playful listening—which encourages cooperation over competition; Davis' (1996) hermeneutic listening—which is fractal-shaped and attempts to defy the taken-for-granted future; and Tupi's seven types of listening (Werá, 2016)—which resonates with Archibald's (2008) holistic education.

I designed the methodology of this research supported by the CIC theories. My goals were to create a respectful gathering for welcoming more-than-human affordances, to co-

construct relational and reciprocal knowledge, and to promote self- and other-awareness through vulnerabilities and openness. The uniqueness of this research is this: if the content might not be unprecedented, the approach stands out as completely different from all of the previous ones. By braiding Critical, Indigenous, and Clown perspectives, I created guidelines, protocols, witnessing opportunities, as well as data analysis approaches that might support a new understanding of listening in academia and schools.

Regarding methods of assembling data, I designed three theory-informed listening encounters to listen to five secondary school teachers from Edmonton, AB. These conversations, alongside a constant ethical and reciprocal engagement, helped me create space for (self- and other-) contemplation and respectful dialogues about beliefs, hurdles, and previous experiences in relation to an education for reconciliation and for a culturally responsive future.

As a final discussion, I argue that due to its fluidity and adaptability, listening approaches both shape and are shaped by relationships and context. As such, they cannot be inadvertently relocated or replicated. It is not a practice to be scaled-up (scaling-across would be more relatable). Listening-based educational practices are certainly something to be shared and learned from one another, but they remain open to be molded to/by each group, context, audience, relationship and purpose.

In conclusion, I believe that listening-based pedagogies can promote a nurturing learning environment, where teachers can create opportunities for students' voices to be heard and respected, where everyone has the sense of community, and where students' culture is welcomed and valued as a key part of their learning. Furthermore, this study contributes to the assemblage of a *story-listening* way of researching, teaching, and learning.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Rafael Pellizzer Soares. I conceptualized, designed, conducted, analyzed, and represented the research following guidance from my supervisor and building on the support of many who will be recognized in the Acknowledgements (forthcoming).

This research project, of which this thesis is part of, received a certificate of approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board 1 on July 15, 2022. This study was registered by the aforementioned ethics board under the ID “Pro00121158” with the name “ACTIVE LISTENING-BASED PEDAGOGIES: Is there a link between the art of listening and fruitful relationships in educational contexts?”

Dedication

This work is a celebration of everyone and everything that crossed my pathway until I got here. Holding the most special place in my journey of life, I dedicate this accomplishment through my greatest love to those who represent my past, my present, and my future: my grandparents, Rubens, Joanna, Ricardo, and Aurélia; my parents, Paulo and Vera; my brother, Caio; my wife, Clarissa; my daughters, Manuela and Valentina; and all of my beloved relatives. In addition, honoring the amazing experiences of friendship that helped me pursue and earn this degree, I thank all of my dear friends who supported and encouraged me to get here and never stop dreaming with other possible worlds.

A gratidão é alegria, repitamos, a gratidão é amor. Alegria soma a alegria: amor somado a amor. A gratidão é nisso o segredo da amizade, não pelo sentimento de uma dívida, pois nada se deve aos amigos, mas pela superabundância de alegria comum, de alegria recíproca, de alegria partilhada.

André Comte-Sponville

Acknowledgements

I begin by acknowledging the land that I am in, its long history that goes beyond European colonization, and its importance for Indigenous peoples who have been living here for millennia.

The following statement recognizes the traditional territory in which the University of Alberta is established, and I would like to use it as a way of expressing respect and gratitude for the time I have spent here as a graduate student and as a living being—always in a reciprocal relationship with other entities that cohabit this place alongside me.

The University of Alberta respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/ Sauteaux/Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community. (University of Alberta, n.d.)

I would also like to appreciate the contributions, stories, teachings, and shared emotions from all of the participants of this project. It was a huge privilege to know that you accepted me into your life for a few months, and it was a pleasure to witness and join both your personal and professional stories—especially the ones we assembled throughout our encounters. I am so grateful for your time, commitment, and partnership!

Furthermore, with the deepest gratitude, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Brooke Madden, as well as Dr. Marc Higgins, who acted as such during Brooke's medical leave. You were welcoming and compassionate right from the beginning up to the last minute of this

journey. You have been my inspiration and my guidance; more than that, you have also supported and cared for my family and me—a disposition I will never forget.

Finally and yet importantly, I am grateful for my whole family and their unconditional support. Pai, mãe, irmão, cunhada, sobrinho, tios, primos, e tantos outros que estão a mais de 10.000 km de distância de mim e nunca desistiram de demonstrar orgulho e apoio para que eu pudesse suportar esses dois anos sem eles. Além disso, minha esposa, Clarissa, e minhas duas filhas, Manuela e Valentina, merecem meu mais profundo apreço e gratidão por me apoiarem e me amarem mesmo quando precisei passar infinitos finais de semana sem vocês, lendo e escrevendo de manhã, de tarde, de noite, de madrugada, enquanto vocês dormiam, estudavam, jantavam, passeavam e brincavam—e eu muitas vezes não pude me divertir com vocês. No entanto, acredito que esta jornada nos ensinou a dar suporte uns aos outros ao escalar as montanhas mais altas e mergulhar nas águas mais profundas. Eu estive com vocês quando precisaram, e vocês estiveram comigo. Não apenas a minha, mas a nossa jornada nesses dois anos foi de superação, e eu tenho muito orgulho da força da nossa família! Espero que saibam que em cada frase desta pesquisa existe um pensamento de carinho e um sentimento de gratidão por vocês. I love you to the moon and back a thousand times!

I am indeed thankful for everyone and everything that, whether in the short or in the long run, has built a relationship with me. You are all part of who I am today: friends, books, professors, song playlists, classmates, moments of silence, my dog, my neighborhood, my necessary medicine, my laptop, social media, my ancestors, jumpy hares, academic assignments, the sunset, the feeling of walking on the snow for the first time, flowers blooming in spring, etc. I am in debt with you all.

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Chapter 1. Introduction and Research Situatedness

1.1. Context Overview

Western (or Eurocentric) education relies heavily on standardized tests, individual success and autonomy, a 19th-century curriculum, oppressive historical perspectives (De Line, 2016; Kress, 2000), and scientific approaches based on a dominant culture (Tallbear, 2014). This contributes to a single story of progress based on anthropocentric relations and knowledge (Adichie, 2009; Levi-Hazan & Harel-Shalev, 2019; Madden & McGregor, 2013; Snaza et al., 2014) that “reduces our world to a social world and neglects all other non-human forces that are at play” (Hultman & Taguchi, 2010, p. 539). For those of us who live in settler colonial nations, as well as European countries, this model has significant implications, which includes both symbolic and material consequences: “they flatten experience; obscure humanity; exploit difference; establish deficit views; negatively define and constrain who those at the center can become” (Madden, 2019a, para. 2). Snaza and colleagues (2014) suggest a paradigm shift from the dominant mainstream to a more diverse and relational worldview:

We have to pursue, instead, the task of wondering about the meaning of ourselves (no longer understood as humans) in relation to [a] myriad [of] other entities in the thick relations of being-with. As we pursue this task, we have to look beyond and outside of dominant Western European philosophies of knowledge to the indigenous, non-Western (non-Northern), non-white, non-masculinist, non-humanist, non-hegemonic ontologies and epistemologies that Western humanism has systematically attacked. (p. 51)

Schools immersed in this colonial format of teaching and knowing—based on Western and human-centred perspectives—have trained most of us to believe that “listening is synonymous

with being silent, obeying, and resigning alone” (Dunker & Thebas, 2019, p. 153). Going even further, within dominant Eurocentric approaches to teaching and learning, *listening* is exclusively a students’ task. Why is it that difficult for us, Western teachers, to break such an idea and listen *to* cultural specificities that go beyond Western cannon and *for* other possible worlds that support, for example, an ancestral future (Krenak, 2022)?

It is indeed difficult to listen to the more-than-human others when they are erased by colonization and single stories. According to Adichie (2009), one of the consequences of personal, collective, or structural single stories is that “it makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult; it emphasizes how we are different, rather than how we are similar” (14:03).

Furthermore, Chimamanda Adichie (2009) claims that “a single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete” (13:14), and she also reminds us that “it is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person” (Adichie, 2009, 13:48). It seems to me that listening to multiple stories is effectively linked to respectful relationships.

Still, how stories are told, who tells them, when they are told, and how many stories are told are deeply dependent on power (Adichie, 2009, 10:05). Besides, how we listen to and engage with stories in educational environments are also very much dependent on power dynamics—and I hope some of the practices and methods presented in this project can challenge them.

To support this engagement towards multi-storied narratives, many researchers—such as Archibald (2008), Kanu (2007; 2011), Madden (2019a; 2019b), and Smith-Gilman (2018)—are committed to proliferate Indigenous worldviews and practices related to education, storytelling,

reciprocity, and listening-based approaches, and how much they impact the relationship between students, teachers, knowledge, and environment. Kanu (2007), for instance, researched on First Nations' educational underachievement in Canadian schools focusing on how Aboriginal¹ students had the unfair decision between dropping out of school or surrender to the dominant culture (p. 58). According to her, "public education is to a large extent still failing Aboriginal youth" (Kanu, 2007, p. 21)². Furthermore, the major cause of failure among Aboriginal students in the Canadian public school system is the "cultural differences between the homes/communities of Aboriginal students and the school environment" (Kanu, 2011, p. 55).

Kanu's (2011) "call for the integration of Aboriginal cultural knowledge and perspectives into the curricula of Canadian public schools" (p. 21) has been modestly addressed through some of the Calls to Action on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC, 2015) final report. However, according to the Yellowhead Institute's (2022) report, only 13 of the 94 Calls to Action have been completed by now, and none of them is among the ones directly related to education (62-65). Thus, resonating with the Call to Action #63, which proposes, among other things, "[b]uilding student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect" (TRC, 2015, p. 7), this project attempts to challenge single stories and cultural oppression by focusing on beyond common-sense forms of listening³.

¹ In this text, after Kanu (2007), I will use the terms Aboriginal and Indigenous interchangeably to refer to individuals who report themselves as direct descendants of pre-colonization peoples, such as First Nations, Inuit, Maori, Tasmania, Yanomami and Tupi-Guarani, that used to live in and cultivate lands that today are called, for instance, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Brazil. I acknowledge that all of these peoples have their own specific features and culture, but they also have some similarities and, more importantly, they fight together for a decolonized, cultural-based form of education through reciprocal, respectful, and restorative relationships such as human-human, human-land, and human-ancestors.

² The 2002 Manitoba Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat "indicate[s] a dropout rate of 66% among Aboriginal students compared to 37% for non-Aboriginals" (Kanu, 2007, p. 21)

³ For this research, examples of common-sense forms of listening are: students quietly obeying teachers' instructions, a conversation in which both participants 'just hear' the other without intention or care, or even an ear-based listening that does not involve other senses, emotions, body gestures, spirituality, etc.

Listening-based educational approaches, which will be further discussed, attend to relationality, silence, holism, culturally responsive practices, critical consciousness, future-oriented perspectives, vulnerability, and education for reconciliation. Therefore, *beyond common-sense listening* is crucial in teaching and researching practices that work against single stories and other oppressive consequences of Western education. This study, then, advocates for the fluidity of knowledge as well as for the impact that varied forms of listening might have on accountable and reciprocal relationships, which will support schools to become nurturing and welcoming spaces for everyone.

Without attuning to listening, taken-for-granted approaches⁴ often overtake classroom relationships and student-led experiences. Listening-based pedagogies might promote a cooperative learning environment, where everyone feels free to speak at their own time, where the teacher provides opportunities for students' voices to be heard and respected, where everyone has the sense of community, and learners feel safe and not anxious about being inside their schools.

To set out the stage for this multi-layered conversation of which roles listening could sustain in education, it is worth noting that several languages, such as English, Portuguese, and French, make a distinction between the ability to hear (*ouvir, entendre*), that is, the sensory ability to identify variations in sounds, and the act of listening (*escutar, écouter*), that is, to process and connect senses and concepts, to empty out, to reverberate the inner into the outer world and vice-versa, and to empathetically invite others to participate in one's own re-creation. According to Murphy (2020), a journalist that researched on listening practices, "it's important

⁴ Britzman's (1989) cultural myths in the making of a teacher ("teacher as expert", "everything depends on the teacher" and "teachers are self-made") relate to these approaches.

to emphasize that hearing is not the same as listening, but rather its forerunner. Hearing is passive. Listening is active. The best listeners focus their attention and recruit other senses to this effort” (p. 24). Brent Davis contributes to this conversation by saying that listening goes beyond hearing because “it is orienting (we listen *to* something) and oriented (we listen *for* something). Hearing, in contrast, lacks such intentionality” (Davis, 1996, p. 46, emphasis in original). This differentiation between listening *to* and listening *for* will be further discussed in chapter 4 alongside Davis’ (1996) hermeneutic form of listening (besides, there is also an idea of what listening *with* can be, but this is still a work-in-progress for a forthcoming study).

Even though there are several inter-connected terminological branches emerging from different fields and studies on listening (e.g., active listening, evaluative listening, deep listening, responsive listening, empathetic listening, hermeneutic listening, dialogical listening, etc.), you will perceive that I will often use the general term ‘listening’ when the intention is to represent all of these possibilities.

Active, hermeneutic, and holistic ways of listening will in fact take key roles in both theoretical and practical approaches suggested by this study, such as enacting, witnessing, engaging in, connecting with, honouring, interpreting, and co-generating stories. My trajectory from the active to the hermeneutic idea of listening is also relevant as it turns a present-oriented action into a future-oriented intention: whereas an active listening affords an action of “open[ing] oneself to an experience, accepting the vulnerability and the contingency in which it places us” (Dunker & Thebas, 2019, p. 64), the hermeneutic listening suggests “a participation in the unfolding possibilities through collective actions” (Davis, 1996, p. 53). In addition, the holistic form of listening encompasses multiple and uncommon ‘ears’ and purposes, as it resonates with Archibald’s (2008) storywork for an education that relies on the body, mind, heart, and spirit.

Her understanding of storywork interrelates storyteller, story-listener, story-context and story itself:

People keep the spirit of a story alive by telling it to others and by interacting through and with the story. People interrelating with each other through story bring a story to life as they relate story meaning to their lives in holistic ways. (Archibald, 2008, p. 149)

I designed this study upon Critical, Indigenous, and Clown worldviews, which led me to those aforementioned three listening approaches. They not only constitute and support both the theoretical framework and research methodology, but they do support relationship-oriented ways of being, teaching, researching and learning. Relying on Glanfield and colleagues (2020), I believe that listening and being relational is a two-way avenue:

when we live relationally we learn the value of listening. Listening is critical in being in a relation. The Blackfoot concepts of aoksisawaato'p (visiting/renewal of relations), aokakio'ssit (be wisely aware; pay attention), and aatsimaak'ssin (responsibility to balance giving/taking reciprocity) inform our practice as culturally responsive. (Glanfield et al., 2020, p. 86)

This overview, which recognizes the value of listening and supports, for instance, relationality, attention, and reciprocity, does resonate with the Critical + Indigenous + Clown (CIC) framework. While working as a teacher-clown (yes, I used to teach High School Math with a red nose!), for instance, I learned to be more attentive to the nuances and benefits of listening *to* students and *for* relationships.

With regard to listening skills and characteristics, Davis (1996) believes that:

[i]mportant qualities of listening, then, are that it [must] be active and participatory, and an immediate implication is that the listener cannot be held silent. (He or she may choose not to speak, however.) In the process of listening, one questions, challenges, smiles, frowns. We often characterize such interactive action as a ‘forgetting of self’ —an intriguing notion, but one that I believe misdirects our attention. Listening more involves a dissolution of static notions of the self, permitting a re-membering of inter subjective awarenesses, a ‘joining of minds’. (Davis, 1996, p. 38)

Therefore, if those types of listening can be thought of as a practice of ‘dissolving a static notion of the self’, it suggests the possibility of turning the question ‘*what does this person want to tell me?*’ into ‘*how does this person affect me while they say, what they say, and how they say?*’ In that way, both speaker and listener seek mutual affection and a dynamic commitment to each other.

1.2. Research Overview

This study was driven by the guiding curiosity “*What could a listening-based pedagogy entail?*”, and research questions include:

- i) What are the contextual factors that contribute to and constrain listening as pedagogy?
- ii) How does listening shape human and other-than-human relationships in educational contexts?
- iii) What role can story-listening play in researching, teaching and learning?

I recruited five secondary teachers to collaborate as participants in this research. They maintained direct contact with the researcher for three months during the data assemblage period,

which included three phases: individual conversations, playful encounters, and a focus group. The intention was to listen to and honour the participants' stories, allowing them to share their experiences in a storytelling format. I developed methods for gathering (with) and analyzing data upon the unique combination of Critical + Indigenous + Clown (CIC) lenses. In addition, this study's discussions and emerging ideas shall contribute to invoke and provoke a hope for a playful, holistic, collaborative, cultural and future-responsive education.

After delivering a little bit about my personal journey, this thesis will address five main chapters comprising a review of the literature, the interrelatedness between theories + practices, this research's methodology + axiology, data analysis + discussion, and synthesis + further explorations on listening. Besides, I allocated some space in each chapter to comment on the learnings I had during this research through sharing curious stories.

Hereafter, I hope you join me in a journey of collaboration, co-thinking, and re-configuring our common-sense understanding of listening approaches, especially in educational contexts. For this, I will bring together theories and perspectives, based on CIC worldviews, that comprise the theoretical foundation of this research—a framework that will encourage connections towards the self, the other, and the universe in the context of listening.

I will often interact with you, reader-listener, by asking inviting questions throughout and across the chapters so that you will feel part of this dialogical conversation. Moreover, I will initiate most of the 'theorizing the practice' sections by addressing a provocative or even a

throughline (den Heyer, 2009)⁵ question that enables us to think differently about the role of listening in different contexts and through different lenses.

1.3. Paradigmatic Orientation(s)

The fact that listening-based research is mostly spread across post-positivist, humanist, and post-structural (both in the internal psychoanalytic and external discursive sense) paradigms encouraged this study to speak about how listening is under-researched on posthumanism, which supported a fulsome scan that might interrelate this viewpoint to other paradigms. This means that there will indeed be several contradictions in this regard (e.g., between hermeneutic and post human forms of listening). However, contradiction is a teacher if we are open to listening and learning about it. When it comes to this project's paradigms, I would say that there are *many clowns in the clown car*, who are squeezing themselves to fit in and also deciding who should be front-seated in each part of the voyage.

Thus, this study is *transparadigmatic*: Indigenous, humanist and post humanist orientations co-exist in this research. The universe in which this study lives recognizes more-than-human voices and agency, producing phenomena from which data may emerge and glow, where epistemology emerges concurrently with ontology.

I also scaffold this thesis in *animated* orientations (Fidyk, 2013a; 2016) due to its organic dimensions (Fidyk, 2013a, p. 387). Through this viewpoint, “knowledge is not confined to the

⁵ According to den Heyer (2009), throughline questions have an ethical purpose and “serve a more open-ended and, thus, democratically-inviting enactment of education” (p. 32). In a classroom situation, for instance, they invite students to a 3S understanding, which “consists of *selves/students* using *subject matter* to interpret their diverse and multiple relationships to their *social*” (den Heyer, 2009, p. 30). To that purpose, throughline questions support educational research and pedagogical approaches that facilitate “meaning making in a context of active democratic learning” (den Heyer, 2009, p. 30).

individual” (Fidyk, 2013a, p. 398; also see Wilson, 2008, p. 38); actually, desire, uncertainty, other-than-human agency, and ethico-onto-epistemology (Barad, 2007) take key roles in both theory and practice. According to Fidyk (2013a), “this animated world is organic, paradoxical, in flux, discontinuous, intentional and inclusive of its own values” (p. 386) and this context reinforces the desire to open space for unique encounters, connections, and reciprocal relationships to emerge.

Furthermore, ethico-onto-epistem-ologically speaking, ethical actions not only shaped these research methodologies, but also impacted my understanding of educational curriculum and teaching practices. Davis (2004) wonders:

[h]ow could it be that a cultural institution that defines itself in terms of preparing for the future could have so tenuous a connection with the present? Part of the answer, I believe, is that schooling has been oriented by matters of practical action, not ethical action. (...) *Knowing, doing, and being are inseparable.* (p. 176, emphasis added)

Ontology and ethics should not be thought of as a binary. Beyond common sense listening is an action that demands an ethical context: according to Dunker and Thebas (2019), listening “is not just a technique or a method or a skill, it is ethics indeed” (p. 157).

Because of that, the Critical perspective in this research is a space created for *conscientização* (Freire, 2021) to be fostered, *power dynamics* (Foucault, 1979) to be questioned, and the *not-yet* world (Gadotti, 2007; Aoki, 2005) to be imagined. A shared respectful space for everyone to contribute and criticize. However, this Critical framework is not enough to open this discussion to the infinite possibilities that emerge from relationality, beyond-human agency (Barad, 2007), contextual knowledge’s fluidity (Wilson, 2008), and data assemblage (Nordstrom,

2015). According to Barad (2007), “[t]he point is that it is the intra-play of continuity and discontinuity, determinacy and indeterminacy, possibility and impossibility that constitutes the differential spacetime-matterings of the world” (p. 182), and this idea wonderfully represents the fluid universe in which we—a researcher encountering an agential research—permeate.

In addition, it is worth noting that, in this research, data is *wonder*, which is an “entangled relation of data-and-researcher” (MacLure, 2013, p. 228):

Ultimately, we cannot know where wonder resides—not simply “in” the data; but not only “in” us either. (...) Perhaps the best way to think the wonder of data then, in their capacity to enter into relation with researchers, is as an event. (MacLure, 2019, p. 231)

Furthermore, MacLure continues by citing Deleuze, “[t]o the extent that events are actualized within us, they wait for us and invite us in”, which means that we must be attentive and open to recognize and accept the invitation. And, “once invited in, our task is to experiment and see where that takes us” (MacLure, 2019, p. 231). It seems like we have a *wonder*-full journey ahead!

1.4. The Geometry of Listening Differently to Difference(s)

In addition to Donald’s (2013; 2020), Madden’s (2019a; 2019b), Strong-Wilson’s (2007), and Adichie’s (2009; 2014) theories and practices regarding how multiple stories can dismantle stereotypes created by single stories and the ongoing process of colonization, the history of Mathematics—and Geometry, in particular—may be useful to depict the importance of multiple perspectives in order to open new understandings and worldviews. The following story aided me

in setting the directions for this research in agential, fluid, limited-though-not-finite ways and, more importantly, it depicts the broader structure of this project: a non-Euclidean Geometry.

Mathematicians over the past three millennia have studied possible ways of connecting Mathematics' ontology and epistemology and, for that, they have tried different interpretations to better understand these connections. Euclid was a Greek mathematician who, more than two thousand years ago, produced thirteen books about Geometry, which still undergirds most of the Western elementary and secondary geometry classes. Right in his first book, Euclid posited five postulates about straight lines, angles, and intersections. He called them 'postulates' because, according to his understanding, they were just something to be accepted (and not proved). However, until the 18th century, other great mathematicians tried—with no success—to find proof for Euclid's fifth postulate, wondering whether it should become a theorem or remain a postulate. Then, near to 1830, two mathematicians, Russian Lobachevsky and Hungarian Bolyai, listened to the historical issues and contradictions of Geometry with a different attunement: instead of trying to demonstrate the fifth postulate, they attempted a distinguished approach to open new possibilities for it. This had a great impact in Mathematics and, due to this shift, a completely new branch of Geometry was born.

I dare say that, to some extent, whereas the Euclidean Geometry was a single-story of this world, the non-Euclidean Geometries allow multiplicity and wideness. They have, by the way, many practical applications today, such as airplane routes' design and astronomy studies. Einstein's general theory of relativity is also a good example of a theoretical development of non-Euclidean Geometries. Nowadays, Euclidean Geometry is not considered a comprehensive understanding of the universe anymore—this narrowed worldview was sufficient to explain the world until the beginning of the 19th century, though. The bad news, though, is that the

Euclidean Geometry still is the main Geometry of many K – 12 educational curricula (such as both in Alberta and in Brazil). According to Davis and Sumara (2000),

[t]he influence of Euclid is perhaps most obvious in homes and offices, in rectangulated cities, in linearized conceptions of time and development, and so on. In schools, Euclid is present in the grids used to lay out curriculum, order the school day, organize learners in rooms, structure their experiences, mark their progress, and so on. So dominant is this geometry that the unruly and organic are often surprising and even unwelcome. What tends to be preferable are narratives of control, predictability, and efficiency. (p. 824)

Because it is ‘dominant’, ‘predictable’ and ‘rectangulated’, this geometry does relate to an oppressive perspective of education. In opposition to it, the non-Euclidean Geometries are multidirectional, crooked (especially when compared to Euclid’s patterns), fluid, and uncertain.

One branch of this field, for instance, frequently represents the universe within a circle, in a manner that its boundaries (the circumference) would represent the unattainable border of it. Escher’s 1958 art Circle Limit I (Fig. 1) represents how this universe is infinite and limited at the same time.



Fig. 1: Circle Limit I, M.C. Escher, 1958

This non-Euclidean world definitely brings this research’s context to life. Listening through non-Euclidean Geometries is a great example of listening *for* the difference beyond the differences that are usually or historically recognized/imagined. On a narrower point of view, though, we can find the linear, the common sense, the replicable listening theories and practices.

I promise I will circle back to it later! For now, I recommend we just welcome and enjoy this awry perspective of listening!

I invite you to jump into the next section with curiosity and an open mind. It will set the stage for the upcoming performances by presenting my personal experiences and connection to the art of listening through unique viewpoints. According to Dwayne Donald's teachings, "if you're going to understand what I'm saying, you have to know who I am; you have to understand my stories, then you'll understand better why I say what I say" (Donald, 2020). Furthermore, let us keep in mind that "listening is not a solitary act; it is a reciprocal engagement" (Davis, 1994, para. 70). Do you accept to join this storyline alongside me?

Chapter 2. How Did I Get Here? An Autobiographical Connection to the Art of Listening

Wilson (2008) suggests that “[r]elationality requires that you know more about me before you can begin to understand my work” (p. 12; see also Donald, 2020). Thus, to better engage with this thesis, you might want to know how I got here and which experiences support my current study.

This chapter comprises three short sections: the first one regarding my Clown experiences; the second one relates to my connections to Indigenous perspectives; and the third section speaks about how Mathematics has scaffolded my openness to new learnings. All of these experiences are surely meaningful to support the conversations we will hold in the upcoming chapters.

2.1. Don’t Be Such a Clown!

Jogando no Quintal (Playing in the Backyard) was a Brazilian artistic game-show in which clowns created fun improvised scenes from audience’s ideas and suggestions—oh, how I loved them! There was something within these shows that inevitably set me in motion. The audience used to be a key part of the presentation by engaging with the clowns, picking up themes, and voting for the best performances. As clowns, by the end of the show, there was no celebration of the winning team; instead, both winners and losers were equally awarded with a pie attack!

When these people from the *Jogando no Quintal* started some weekend-long workshops for people interested in the benefits of the clown language, I went down for it without any other intention rather than just to be there. Those emerging skills and fresh mentality happened to

become part of my pedagogical approaches as I started recognizing that being creative and open, as well as feeling comfortable to acknowledge my errors and inconsistencies, were definitely an asset for me as a teacher. I learned to be fiercely vulnerable and spontaneously connected to my students. My teacher-clown character indeed triggered a desire to remove my outer layers in order to search for the ‘real’ me. Today I know that deconstruction is a transformation that happens without control or intentions, “it’s not up to us to let deconstruction happen or prevent it from happening”; rather, what we can do “is to show, to reveal, or (...) to witness the occurrence of deconstruction” (Biesta, 2009, as cited in Higgins et al., 2015, p. 256). Entering this clown world was a chance for me to witness my own deconstruction, to rethink my old beliefs, to unleash some tethers, and to challenge some institutionalized power patterns. Indeed, it was “the overturning and displacement of a structure so that something different can be thought/done” (St. Pierre, 2011, as cited in Higgins et al., 2015, p. 269)—looking back, it seems to me as an interesting link between being a clown and an “antistructuralist” (Derrida, 1988) discourse.

It is worth noting that this Clown training dismantled my previous understanding of not only what a teacher is, but also what one can be in an ever-changing relationship with oneself and with others. During the last ten years of my life, I struggled with some serious health-related issues, and I appealed to skills I learned as a clown to overcome some of these hurdles. As of today, I am still treating a rare inflammatory syndrome related to my immune system, and it keeps inviting me to wonder about the relationship between my body’s struggles and my clown self. I have never realized, by the way, that an immune system is indeed full of clown characteristics. Davis and Sumara believe that this system offers a constant transformation of itself due to its self-awareness that permits us to stand up after a stumble—just as clowns do. According to them, the human immune system:

is a complex one that learns, forgets, hypothesizes, errs, recovers, recognizes, rejects and projects in a complex dance with other (bodily and non-bodily) systems. As well as part of its functioning, the immune system is constantly transforming itself. Neither fully autonomous nor a mere mechanical component of a larger whole, one's immune system is related to oneself in the same way that the individual is related to the collective. (Davis & Sumara, 2000, p. 836)

The idea of comparing the relationship of the immune system and oneself to an individual within a collective is also fruitful in each and every worldview that supports this research. Furthermore, linking our organs and body systems to our skills, learnings, and difficulties is indeed a way of discussing embodiment and more-than-mental cognition. My body is always telling me something and I perceive that by listening *to* it I am also listening *for* who I want to become. These learnings, for instance, later on, took an important role in my decision to delve into this tortuous journey of being a Master student in a foreign country.



Fig. 2: Whether in a classroom, hospitalized, or on stage: clowning is how you live in this world!

During that time, I was also part of a group of teachers (who in Portuguese we call ‘*professores*’) that created an Improv show aiming at fund-raising to support a not-for-profit educational project in which we were volunteers. We insightfully named it PI - *Professores Improvisando*, and our mark was the irrational number π (pi), which was quite relatable! In a 5-year span, we presented up to ten shows to around 300 people each and raised enough money so that our not-for-profit organization could keep supporting hundreds of Brazilian teenagers' educational dreams year after year.

However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, I decided to leave my home country alongside my family to restart my career—and my life, in some ways. It was a huge challenge indeed, and it required vulnerability to understand myself as a beginner again. This journey demanded a deeper acceptance of my own uncertainties and flaws; awareness of and openness for the different structures, beliefs, and relationships I would face; resilience to manage my emotions and to acknowledge I was indeed leaving many things behind; and eagerness to unlearn and relearn. Thankfully, with the aid of the amazing Brazilian clown from *Jogando no Quintal*, Claudio Thebas, I was able to connect all of my senses in order to tackle such challenges by using humour as a critical weapon and listening as a bridge to self-recognition. With him, I started understanding what it is like to be a clown, a story-listener, a wanderer, a loser. As he states in one of his books alongside Christian Dunker,

[w]e are [all] psychoanalysts and clowns, in short, losers, because during our journey we are inevitably leaving things behind. Projects, ideas, experiences, lovers, memories of life, and even dreams. (...) The recognition of this gives enormous power to the one who acknowledges himself as a loser. (...) It is from this state that the clown exercises his

listening to the other and to the world. An unshielded state of power. *'I'm here, as a whole, open and available'*. (Dunker & Thebas, p. 80, emphasis added)

That was great learning indeed. Shifting my understanding of what 'being a loser' could mean did transform how I approach life: always as a whole, aware of what I was leaving behind and available to what might be emerging around me.

Circling back to the impact of those clown shows and training in my self-understanding as a teacher, my endeavours to work with a red nose within classrooms was not how I imagined at first. I definitely did not have an easy task in linking these worlds: clowning + education. Clowns usually have a hard time being taken seriously, especially within places where we all have to supposedly 'behave' and obey the rules of a dominant system, such as schools and hospitals. We have to fight for our space. I felt that teacher colleagues and school leaders, due to the embedded institutionalized power imbalance we are usually forced to abide by, were always judging me and complaining through their stares: 'don't be such a clown! This is a serious place!'. Gladly, kids were pretty open and connected to this other way of teaching and learning: a teacher-clown who was there to cultivate relationships, to learn rather than to (just) teach, to be a step behind instead of trying to be a step ahead of students. In such a context, for several times the unlikely happened: a child who was facing an emotional or pedagogical struggle accepted the risk of this adventure by holding the clown's hand and joining forces to overcome their obstacles. By reinforcing what they know in advance, kids were actually helping the clown to deal with his own uncertainties and stumbles—a learning experience for both of us.

2.2. A Door to the Indigenous World

It was August 2021 and, in one month, I would be leaving my home country to start a Master program in foreign lands. As I knew in advance that my supervisor, Dr. Brooke Madden, used to research and teach focusing on Indigenous knowledge and approaches, I decided to attend an asynchronous course: *Indigenous Canada* (a certificate issued by the Faculty of Native Studies of the University of Alberta through the web-based platform Coursera). That was a great first opportunity to find out that there was much more to learn outside of the Eurocentric educational mainstream.

The second time that I had a close contact with Indigenous peoples' knowledge and culture was when I started working as a Graduate Research Assistant with my supervisor. Her ongoing Truth and Reconciliation Education project includes participants that are either Indigenous or settlers—teacher candidates, practicing teachers, and teacher educators. Through my duties and tasks in this project, I was exposed to their stories and scholarship that helped me understand a little bit more about Indian Residential Schools, intergenerational trauma, cultural genocide, difficult knowledge, as well as Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous oral traditions, Indigenous land-based learning, and Indigenous successes.

I was born and educated as a settler, though: I am part of the offspring of an Italian family that migrated to Brazil a hundred and fifty years ago to benefit from its lands and natural wealth. There, in a city with an Indigenous name—Jundiaí⁶—though with one of the largest Italian communities in the country, I built a solid career in education, likely taking advantage of

⁶ “The name Jundiaí [originally Jundiahy] has a Tupi origin and comes from the word ‘jundiá’, which means ‘catfish’ and ‘y’ means ‘river’. Some scholars also consider the term ‘yundiaí’ to mean ‘wetlands with lots of foliage and dry branches’ ” (Prefeitura de Jundiaí, n.d)

my White privileges to thrive. I decided to come to Canada as a beginner and a loser (Dunker & Thebas, 2019), though. Acknowledging that my settler status still defines who I am today, I am indeed trying to connect my family to this place and to the original peoples that have been living in this land since time immemorial—which helps me connect to South American Indigenous peoples too. Nowadays, our home library is getting full of Indigenous books: from kids' Medicine Wheel Education collection (which includes, for instance, Jaadee's (2016) *Raven's Feast*, Larsen-Jonasson's (2016) *The Sharing Circle*, and Webstad's (2019) *Phyllis's Orange Shirt*) to, among others, *Island of Decolonial Love* (Simpson, 2015), *ORÉ AWÉ ROIRU'A MA: Todas as Vezes que Dissemos Adeus/Whenever We Said Goodbye* (Werá, 2002), and *A knock on the door: the essential history of residential schools* (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada & Fontaine, P., 2016).

Furthermore, an interesting link that helped me braid some clown perspectives and Indigenous knowledge was presented in Dunker and Thebas' (2019) book about how listening might provide us with different relationships and approaches. In one of the chapters of this book, the authors (a psychoanalyst and a clown) speak about their learnings from Kaká Werá, a South American Indigenous writer and activist. According to their interpretation of Werá's knowledge, the importance of listening to Tupi peoples is reflected in the term they use to designate their chief: *Acanguatara*. This word means 'Good Listening Head' (Dunker & Thebas, 2019, p. 166). Tupi-Guarani is one of the most important remaining Indigenous languages in South America and the Tupi people hold a general rule of listening, the *perspectivism* (i.e., my listening must acknowledge the others' perspective—in which I am included—recognizing my position in their point of view), which resonates to what Dunker and Thebas (2019) call "empathetic listening"

(p. 164)—despite their different approaches regarding the use of our senses: visual in the case of the *perspectivism* and auditory in the empathetic listening theory.

Gladly, nowadays I am still pleased to look for Indigenous writers that approach Indigenous Education. This is, for instance, the first section of any bookstore or library that I go to as these books often invite me for new dips! There is *still* so much more to learn about it!

2.3. Have You Ever Noticed the Many Faces of Mathematics?

Mathematics and Natural Sciences was the core of my teaching trajectory in Brazil. Even though I fell in love with broader educational practices and studies a few years ago, I had never forgotten my time as a high school student deciding whether I wanted to be either a lab Geneticist or a pure Mathematician.

Despite my deep appreciation for this field of studies, my contact with Mathematics in the University of Alberta was scarce—but indeed relatable. Gladly, right in the beginning of my program, I met Brent Davis' work in Dwayne Donald's Curriculum Foundations course. I was presented to two of his pieces—*Inventions of Teaching: A Genealogy* (2004) and *Mathematics Teaching: Moving from Telling to Listening* (1994) —and both of them were impactful enough in my process of coming up with my research topic. His listening approach to (Mathematics) teaching was undoubtedly key in my decision to research listening-based pedagogies. As a fruitful consequence, I had always kept Davis' ideas close to me and, during my last course as a Master student (Kent den Heyer's Curriculum Inquiry), I was asked to write an assignment about the work of a selected theorist in the field of contemporary curriculum studies, and Davis was my certain pick.

By reading tens of his pieces, I was immediately impacted by, among others, his 1996 book, *Teaching Mathematics: Toward a Sound Alternative*, in which he suggests listening-related approaches in order to develop a “hermeneutic listening” (Davis, 1996, p. 53) as a pedagogical practice—which is one of the three key listening theories discussed in this research.

Lastly but not least, I came to know another great and interesting picture of Math in a course with Dr. Florence Glanfield: *Research Issues in the Teaching and Learning of Mathematics*. During these classes, I learned about Indigenous and Culturally Responsive ways of teaching and researching Math. Those learnings had a significant impact in helping me understand that what I had been teaching for two decades was actually what the Eurocentric schools told me so. Mathematics is not that rigid, it is not context-free, it is not a field by itself, it is not just ‘pencil and paper’, nor restrict to mental cognition; rather, it is fluid, completely context-based, entangled to all fields and forms of knowledge, and it also comprises land-, oral- and body-based learning. Culturally Responsive Education is indeed relevant in the journey of listening, and this is why I wanted to bring this theme here before starting the main chapters of this thesis.

Chapter 3. Setting the Stage: What Have People Been Studying and Saying About It?

Listening and its wide range of interpretations and applications have been studied for a long time. Several distinguished fields have been paying great attention to listening (or story-listening) since the beginning of the 20th century: communication in business environments, neuroscience and medicine, English as a second language, music and other arts, media reporters and journalism, education, among others. Most of them, though, present only guides, systematic directions, and statistics-based propositions for people (or groups of people) who want to improve their listening skills.

At this point, you may have already perceived that this research does not reverberate such a positivist paradigm. There are also several articles and research regarding listening in the social sciences, arts, and education (some of them I will briefly present below) that were developed either through a humanist worldview or a discourse-based analysis. However, the Western dominant academic mainstream has still shaped most of these studies' methodologies and findings, neglecting other forms of knowledge. I feel that most of us, graduate students, professors, and scholars who work for Universities in the Western world are still pushed (overtly or covertly) to, most of the times, provide written dissertations instead of artistic and more open-ended/creative ones and to believe that there is no 'formal' knowledge in oral- and auditory-based cultures, for instance.

In order to question and challenge this belief that 'it has always been that way', I have been indeed interested in learning from Indigenous peoples' knowledge and culture, and one day be able to perhaps live the entanglement of cultures and forms of knowledge within Indigenous communities and hopefully everywhere else. By learning from Indigenous traditions, I am now

becoming aware that, even though some Indigenous scholars have published relevant work indeed, there is actually a lot of Indigenous research that has not been published due to their storytelling way of sharing knowledge and to the exclusion imposed by the dominant system upon them. Furthermore, according to Archibald (2008), “the text limits the level of [the listener’s] understanding because it cannot portray the storyteller’s gestures, tone, rhythm, and personality” (p. 16) —which suggests that listening is its own promising form of multiliteracy.

Clowning in higher education is even more underrepresented, I think. Whereas the percentage of Indigenous scholars is still small, the number of clowns walking through universities’ hallways trying to integrate their/our perspectives into academia tends to zero. However, nowadays many of them have other ways to share their knowledge: shows, podcasts, workshops, in-street activities, or YouTube channels. Thereby, I understand (though with resentment) the fact that I found no relevant academic research focusing on a clown standpoint to analyze listening pedagogies. Gladly, I can rely on some Brazilian books and practical learnings from great clowns in order to develop this perspective here.

That is the uniqueness of my research: if the content might not be quite novel, the approach stands out as completely different from most of the previous ones. Braiding Critical, Indigenous, and Clown perspectives, I designed guidelines, protocols, data witnessing contexts, as well as research approaches that might spark new possibilities of listening in education.

3.1. Research and Literature on Listening

For this review of the literature, I selected relevant articles, research, and books that link listening to education, relationships, and/or this research’s framework (Critical, Indigenous, Clown theories). These studies relate to listening as a methodology, content focus, theoretical

approach, or in-school practice. I will try to connect and compare them, which might help the reader to have a good overview of this field of study.

From a humanistic standpoint, McCann et al. (2019) enunciates six levels of listening determined by the teller's goals: (a) passive listening (the least amount of effort); (b) responsive listening (minimal comprehension level); (c) selective listening (paying attention to what concerns us); (d) attentive listening (we seek further information from the speaker); (e) active listening (it involves emotions and an attempt to make the speaker feel heard), and (f) empathic listening, in which “story listeners can help provide storytellers the space to feel heard, thus enabling them to be challenged to reflect from multiple perspectives” (McCann et al., 2019, p. 478). Due to the lack of consensus regarding this terminology, I will bring different perspectives throughout the upcoming chapters, as well as other terms related to listening in order to expand our possibilities and likely applications (I do like McCann and colleagues' descriptions, though).

McNaughton et al. (2008), similarly, understand that active listening is “as a multistep process, including making empathetic comments, asking appropriate questions, and paraphrasing and summarizing for the purposes of verification” (p. 224). They also conceptualize empathic listening as “a key communication skill for developing effective collaboration” (McNaughton et al., 2008, p. 225)—which is slightly differently from McCann and colleagues' (2019) proposition: whereas one focuses on collaboration, the other aims at empathetic relations.

When it comes to Clown perspectives, the greatest reference for me is Claudio Thebas, one of the writers of *The clown and the psychoanalyst: How listening to others might transform lives* (Dunker & Thebas, 2019). As there is no English translation for this book, for this thesis I translated every quotation or idea that I pulled out from it. Even though their ideas will be

present throughout the whole project, in this literature review I will display one of their most relevant contributions to listening-based relationships.

Dunker and Thebas' (2019) suggestion for a respectful and active listener comprises the 4Hs of listening for fruitful relationships: Hospitality, Hospital, Hospice, and Host. This framework supports dialogical approaches, a cooperative mode of educating, and a playful way of listening. It can enrich teachers' cauldron of pedagogies as it encourages multiple forms of relating to the students. During the next chapter—in which I theorize the practices for this research—I will further discuss this 4Hs framework alongside other Clown features, such as humour and playfulness. Dunker and Thebas (2019) say that:

[l]earning the art of psychoanalytical interpretation involves three skills that the clown has by vocation: humour with words, comic with gestures, and grace with spirit. It was from these three elements that we came up with the idea of playful listening developed in this book. (p. 243)

Ballas (2021), who worked alongside Thebas in the *Jogando no Quintal* clown game, interviewed Varlei Xavier, a great Brazilian teacher-clown, for his podcast show. There, Xavier explained why he started applying his clown skills within his classes: “I saw a sick school, I perceived sick relationships, I didn't feel there was space for the inadequate, I saw the not-knowing being used as a final diagnostic, and learning as a no-effect remedy, a placebo” (Varlei Xavier in Ballas, 2021). And after researching about it, he developed an approach that uses his mistakes as a clown to foster kids' learning, which comprises three key points: (a) the error must be contextualized, it needs to be part of students' reality; (b) the error must be identifiable—a step behind so that the student can perceive it; and (c) the error must be solvable, so that there

will be learning (Varlei Xavier in Ballas, 2021). Clowning (and playing, and listening, and being relational) does seem to be a fair remedy to such a sick school.

From a completely different perspective, Rankin, in his educational research from 1928, troubles the attention and effort given to the development of writing, reading, and speaking skills in educational contexts in detriment to listening ones. He used his article to promote a discussion regarding the necessity of renovating Language Arts curricula. Even in a positivist, industrial-focused educational environment, Rankin (1928) concludes that, among other things, “the evidence points to the probable need of greater attention in the school to oral language, and particularly to the ability to comprehend oral language, here called listening” (p. 630).

Through graphs and many statistics, Rankin was advocating for an educational curriculum that helped kids to be better listeners, without even mentioning that teachers and curriculum makers should also broaden their understanding and improve their capacity of listening. It is much more than just infusing new desired abilities and competencies in a curriculum whereas the broader context remains the same.

Still in a Western-based, humanistic world, Beall et al. (2008) categorizes listening approaches and addresses teachers’ “frustration that comes from the need to explain ideas numerous times or to repeat essential material because students did not understand it the first time it was presented. The amount of wasted classroom time is exasperating and usually unnecessary” (Beall et al., 2008, p. 124). Simply put: his nonconformity is about how teachers want students to listen to them even though their teaching approaches and in-class relationships remain the same: speaking-based. Listening can be much more than just a pill to soften teachers’ frustration and lack of openness to their own vulnerabilities and possibilities. Listening can be,

indeed, a deeper way of being respectful and reciprocal to oneself, to students, to education, to the past and to the future.

Attempting to meet different perspectives on listening (a more critical one, in this case), I selected one other research—Levi-Hazan and Harel-Shalev (2019)—that aimed at discussing the dynamic roles of activist women and uncovering knowledge regarding their forms of resistance in militarized societies. Through a Critical lens, the authors’ “analysis of women’s voices and activism sheds light on the concepts of agency, silence and voice in the context of hegemonic masculinity and conflicts” (Levi-Hazan and Harel-Shalev, 2019, p. 398). They also use a feminist, psychological analysis method—Carol Gilligan’s (2003) ‘Listening Guide’, which took on a more significant role in my research’s methodology after this reading—to help them “hear the multiple and complex voices, particularly when the subject of study is silenced, taboo or otherwise difficult to discuss” (Levi-Hazan and Harel-Shalev, 2019, p. 398), which resonates with the Critical branch of the theoretical framework proposed in my research.

Another great influence in my research—now linked to the Indigenous lens—is Jo-ann Archibald’s (2008) book about Indigenous storywork and how sharing stories actually educate for the mind, heart, body, and spirit, which contrasts to the Eurocentric type of education that usually separates mind and body (and disregards spirit and heart) when it comes to cognition and learning. In this book, she describes her journey alongside “Coyote the Trickster to learn about the ‘core’ of Indigenous stories from Elders and to find a respectful place for stories and storytelling in education” (Archibald, 2008, p. ix). Indeed, it is a research with listening-related teachings and approaches that will undergird the holistic form of listening in this thesis.

One of the things she learned when listening to Elders was that, in order to prepare herself to become a story-listener, she needed patience, trust, reciprocity, cultural responsibility, and reverence. According to her, “[l]istening involves more than just using the auditory sense. We must visualize the characters and their actions. We must let our emotions surface” (Archibald, 2008, p. 8). Furthermore, she says,

[b]ringing heart and mind together for story listening was necessary if one was to make meaning from a story because often one was not explicitly told what the story’s meaning was. Linking how we feel to what we know is an important pedagogy. (Archibald, 2008, p. 76)

Whereas Archibald’s (2008) study was fully located within Indigenous communities, Kanu’s (2011) one is related to pedagogical practices with Indigenous students within the dominant educational mainstream. She argues that different “approaches to learning have far-reaching consequences in the formal education of Aboriginal students, particularly in view of the fact that the formal education system almost always favours those who are highly verbal” (Kanu, 2011, p. 68) in detriment of the auditory or the visual ones. In the same study, during the focus groups, all students pointed out that teachers’ “talk approach” sometimes became a “verbal saturation” that “inhibited classroom learning” (Kanu, 2011, p. 67). This does resonate with Archibald’s importance of a context in which story-listeners and storytellers all have agency to create, interrogate, relate and learn from stories. Thus, in order to support and better understand Indigenous students’ struggles, I invite you to listen to these students’ voices through the next excerpts (all included in Kanu’s [2011] study), which reflect some cultural differences that are limiting Aboriginal students’ academic improvement in Canadian public schools.

In the community, you are doing it for the community or their approval, so everyone is supportive and pitches in to help or encourage you. In school, although you know the teacher and the other class members, you are on your own. You are doing it for your own education as an individual. (Student 1, in Kanu, 2011, p. 69)

At home and in my community, I know and trust people, so I just blabber away without fear of making mistakes or being criticized. But when school starts, I don't speak, so they leave me alone. (Student 2, in Kanu, 2011, p. 69)

It's like you are not there [in the classroom], so I stopped trying [to raise my hand and participate], there was no point. (Student 3, in Kanu, 2011, p. 79)

[They should be] treating me like I already have something the teacher respects—like my culture and my own way of doing things; not trying to control my behavior all the time. (Student 3, in Kanu, 2011, p. 80)

It is as simple as valuing and understanding me as a person. Like, just teach the way you want to be treated, (...) you know, teach with respect for us as individuals and do not treat us like all Indians are the same. (Student 4, in Kanu, 2011, p. 81)

These voices are an invitation to listen to how these students are listening to their teachers, classmates, textbooks, and relationships. Feelings of invisibility and segregation are a clear consequence to the oppressive, dominant, teacher-centred pedagogies, whereas listening, respect and collaboration (over competition) are likely solutions to their struggles.

Whereas these researchers have strong bonds to Indigenous peoples, Smith-Gilman (2018), on the other hand, is a non-Indigenous researcher learning to research *with* Indigenous

peoples. She developed for her study a methodology of listening while leading a project in partnership with a childhood centre situated in Mohawk territory. Even though she did not begin the research with a listening approach, “it [became] clear that the pedagogy of listening happened because [this is] the core value of genuine partnership. (...) We were committed to listening to each other and learning from one another” (Smith-Gilman, 2018, p. 346). Listening is indeed a commitment in being together, researching together, and learning together. A teacher-listener and a researcher-listener are humble learners eager to *know with* instead of to *know of* something/one. In addition, she understands that her practices as a researcher happen through an active listening process, by contemplating her own weaknesses and strengths in order to present herself fully (and empty) to the process of researching. She also acknowledges the necessity and importance of being thoughtful about what was being shared in order to build trustworthiness and respectful relationships with the community. This methodology does resonate with the story-listening way of researching, which I will deepen along this current project especially in the last chapter of this thesis.

Smith-Gilman also refers to the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy of listening throughout her work. As a Western-based format of education, this listening perspective is rooted in a conventional, dominant understanding of children’s development. It has its first traces in Italy in the mid-nineteenth century, and is based on “the image of a child with strong potentialities for development and a subject with rights” (Reggio Children, 2022, para. 1). According to Smith-Gilman (2018), this philosophy understands that the pedagogy of listening is “an evolving process (...) [of] dialogue, sharing, and listening” and is related to the teachers’ and learners’ “pursuit of meaning and understanding through project-based approaches combined with careful listening to one another” (p. 346). Even though both Indigenous and Reggio Emilia

education privilege respectful, relational, and collaborative listening as an approach to learning, they do differentiate in some aspects: whereas the Reggio Emilia educational approach is child-centred, frequently promotes hands-on activities, and can be replicated in different locations, Indigenous education resonate with a storytelling way of sharing knowledge and is usually land- and community-based (which makes it unique in each location and within each group of people).

Finally, another crucial book that helped shaping this research was Davis' (1996) *Teaching Mathematics: Toward a Sound Alternative*, which delivers the idea of hermeneutic listening as an approach that supports the multiplicity of counter-stories and the plurality of other possible worlds in detriment of single-stories and one predetermined future. According to Davis (1996),

[o]ccurring somewhere between the surety of the known and the uncertainty of the not-yet-known, the act of listening is similar to the project of education. It is, after all, when we are not certain that we are compelled to listen. Our listening is always and already in the transformative space of learning. (Davis, 1996, p. xxiv)

Uncertainty, transformative processes and spaces, and the *not-yet* are key features of this form of listening—which resonates with the Critical worldview of this research. Besides, many of the aforementioned concepts and research will reappear throughout the upcoming sections and chapters of this text. By now, we have created an initial picture of the possibilities for listening in educational contexts and their resonances and dissonances with this research's framework.

3.2. What Limits and What Supports Listening Approaches in Education According to a Review in the Literature

There are indeed several constraints to listening in all educational contexts. I selected and will discuss some of them henceforth, regarding teaching approaches, systemic barriers, and individual human characteristics, among other topics.

According to 1994's Davis work, there are some important aspects that militate against listening practices within classrooms, such as (a) the arrangement of desks that promotes individual work instead of fostering relationships; (b) rigid concepts that are not context-related (or exclusively related to a dominant worldview) and are thus uninteresting for many students; and (c) the position of authority that most teachers assume in order to control students' behaviour. Navigating through other paradigms, though, I am inclined to say that other relevant aspects are also barriers to listening in education. For instance, as per my understanding, these are additional constraints for listening pedagogies: (d) educators' lack of capacity to dwell in the unknown; (e) the hardship in recognizing that objects, relationships, and the ecological environment have their own agency; and (f) the belief that knowledge only exists in humans, which despises other forms of knowledge that emerge from ancestors and land.

The overfilled, content-based educational curriculum is indeed an issue for teachers and students from many Canadian provinces and other Western countries, which is obviously another constraint to listening approaches (as it usually compels teachers to resort to lectures and presentations instead of promoting dialogical and conversational activities). As den Heyer (2021) would say, "[w]hether teachers learn to deliver curriculum as just a body of facts, attitudes and skills or whether they see themselves providing students opportunities to encounter new

possibilities matters enormously” (para. 8). Do you believe this concerns the format of the curriculum we are usually pushed to follow, or is it a matter of how we teach it? Perhaps, if the curriculum (the document itself) does not resonate with the education we support, the only way of making changes is through our pedagogies, right? Still, we could try to understand that both curriculum-as-encounter and curriculum-as-thing (den Heyer, 2009) can co-exist. The first one indeed encourages a knowledge that is more dynamic, lived and organic, in which we could “learn *from* rather than merely *about* knowledge” (den Heyer, 2009, p. 28, emphasis in original), whereas the second is just a program of studies and expected consequences, which addresses “the content students should acquire, what techniques assist in this acquisition, and ways we might measure student acquisition” (den Heyer, 2009, p. 28)—and one does not negate the other. However, these types of curriculum enable (at least) two different formats of listening approaches: one that is welcoming, relational and cooperative, and other that is usually related to obedience, control, and individualism. Interestingly, I believe that the curriculum-as-encounter brings possibilities of education related to Barad’s (2007) suggestion that we shall use ‘entanglements’ rather than ‘learning’, as it is more relational and allows us to perceive how everything is indeed enmeshed.

Within the curriculum whose focus is not on relationality and reciprocity, Madden and colleagues (2013) believe that frequently non-Indigenous teachers “blame Indigenous students and their families for the ongoing [academic and cultural] discrepancies” (p. 218). They also complain about the ‘infusion’ or ‘incorporation’ of Indigenous knowledge and cultural teachings within the current curriculum, as if these were the main reason why they cannot perform different pedagogies. “The resulting implicit or explicit position by many non-Indigenous educators is that Indigenous cultures produce Indigenous peoples who ‘do not value’ Education

and/or ‘cannot comprehend’ [it] in schools due to the mismatch in worldviews” (Donald, 2011, as cited in Madden et al., 2013, p. 219). This misinterpretation from non-Indigenous teachers paint a picture that Indigenous students ‘do not listen properly’ or ‘do not behave’ or ‘do not acknowledge the teacher’s effort’ and is indeed part of the stereotypes created by the dominant, colonizing, Eurocentric, single-storied worldview. In addition, Madden et al. (2013) address, based on stories/theories of de/colonization and Whiteness, which are the barriers that still prevent Indigenous community members from engaging—and thus listening and learning, I would say—when in an Eurocentric education: (a) unwelcoming schools, which this research endeavours to tackle; (b) professionalization of classroom teaching, which seems to me as a promotion of practices that lack relationality; (c) colonized classrooms, where silence is synonym of obeying and behaving; and (d) unilateral decolonization, through which non-Indigenous teachers exempt themselves from the work of listening to difference towards reconciliation and decolonization.

For a teacher, according to my own experiences and observations, it is comfortable and almost inevitable to maintain the usual relations of power through which, in a Eurocentric model of education, we want to control the class, the students, the voices, the silences. I used to replicate this model as a teacher because that was how I learned education should be. At most, what I used to do as someone who wanted to do something different was to *give students a voice*. However, by doing this, I was not listening but actually perpetuating my biased perspective, my expectations, my power over the students’ stories and desires. Despite many researchers and scholars, such as Athie Martinez (2020) and Kashin (2014), also speak about *giving students a voice*, I would rather say that our approaches should be properly listening to, honouring, and amplifying students’ voices, though.

Without listening-based pedagogies, teachers usually see kids who do not ‘have a voice’ (or do not frequently share their ideas, doubts, and contributions) as students who cannot do/learn what they are supposed to do/learn (Hunter et al., 2020, p. 150). Over time, we begin to understand that these quieter kids are actually either healing a trauma; overcoming a disturbing family issue; feeling oppressed, exposed or disrespected; or even just being the way they are as introverts, for instance. That is why this project supports an active + holistic + hermeneutic form of listening in education, which encourages counter-stories and a nurturing, reciprocal, safe educational environment instead of replicating single stories and maintaining the ‘stereotypification’ of students and peoples. This form of listening contributes to (and is supported by) a Culturally Responsive Education, in which:

teacher and student relationships are open, caring, and reciprocal. In this relationship, students and teachers can communicate what they are thinking and how they are feeling without being criticized or judged. At the same time, the power is shared and in addition, both care for each other personally. But also, the teacher cares about students, which prompts high achievements in education. (Gay, 2002b, cited in Athie Martinez, M. J., 2020, p. 50)

Another limitation for listening is language. It occurs, for instance, to both Indigenous and international students that have to adapt to a different culture and educational context—my daughters’ experience during their first weeks in Canada was way too tough regarding communication, sense of belonging, and learning.

Things get even more complicated when you try to communicate with someone who grew up speaking a different language from yours. Then you get into linguistic relativity,

also known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which holds that a person's native language influences how they see or experience the world. (Murphy, 2020, pp. 121-122)

With regard to the Indigenous peoples in Canada and the public school system's (lack of) support to these children, Kanu (2011) says that it is not that Aboriginal students are incapable of learning in this system. Rather, she "draw[s] attention to the fact that teachers must be assisted to recognize and attend to the particular strengths and needs that non-dominant cultural groups may have in relation to unfamiliar instructional strategies" (Kanu, 2011, p. 75). To be more attentive to these needs, teachers should recognize students' home cultures and languages as "strengths upon which to build, rather than deficits for which to compensate" (Gutstein & Peterson, 2013, p. 3, cited in Nicol et al., 2020, p. 20).

Honouring and welcoming students' home language is one great listening approach that praises and respects their knowledge and ways of being. Language is one of the main features of any peoples' culture as it is "our verbal, written, symbolic, spatial, and temporal form of communication" (Thom, 2020, p. 245), but it is also how people relate, understand, and refer to each other, to nature, and to ancestors.

Furthermore, I would like to pinpoint Indigenous worldviews and methods of teaching and learning as another meaningful contributor to listening-based pedagogies. To delve deeper on these possibilities, Kanu's (2007) study compared two Grade 9 Social Studies classrooms with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and their academic development and achievements. One classroom followed the conventional curriculum through conventional teaching methods, whereas the other was 'enriched' by Indigenous perspectives and approaches,

such as storytelling, learning by observation and modeling, community support, Aboriginal content, and respectful relationships.

Regardless of the focus on ‘academic achievements’, which can be related to having good grades in standardized educational assessments (also examples of barriers to listening), Kanu’s study, with effect, provided interesting findings. One of them is that the classroom that was “enriched by the integration of Aboriginal content, resources, and instructional methods and interaction patterns identified as successful with Aboriginal students” (p. 26) promoted higher rates of achievement and satisfaction among *all* students in comparison to the regular classroom. Students in the enriched classroom attributed their good achievements to the inclusion of Aboriginal history and future expectations to their classes, as well as counter-stories and other strategies such as talking circles, listening to native Elders, and field trips to communities. An Aboriginal student shared: “I feel respected in this class. [The teacher] always insists that we listen to each other and respect what each of us has to say” (Kanu, 2007, pp. 37-38), agreeing with a non-Aboriginal friend that said “I have learned more by listening to what [Aboriginal people] feel when they are stereotyped” (p. 38). Kanu also states that this particular student had “experience[d] a level of cognitive dissonance from, and uneasiness with, some stereotypical views he had carried about Aboriginal peoples” (Kanu, 2007, p. 38), which enabled him to dismantle his previous biased perspectives and develop a better understanding of both the content and the context, as well as Indigenous ways of being and relating. This is indeed an example of how listening-based pedagogies can promote respect, relationality, and openness to a more responsive and collective learning.

To support the continuity of such approaches and collective academic satisfaction, Kanu (2011) suggests that teachers create a nurturing learning environment (p. 56) where everyone

feels free to speak at their own time, the teacher creates opportunities for students' voices to be heard and respected, everyone has the sense of community, and learners feel safe and not anxious about being within their schools.

In order to finish this section, I would like to present what Dunker and Thebas (2019) call '*The abominable unlisteners*'. It is a fun way of discussing, through a clown + psychoanalytic perspective, personal characteristics that messes with our listening endeavours, actions, and approaches. According to them, there are twelve types of '*unlisteners*', and all of them represent personal/human limitations for listening. Which one do you most identify with?

1. The Abominable 'Clone': this creature always starts his sentences by saying 'if I were you...' and stands out for truly believing they have the solution you are looking for.

2. The Abominable 'My Worst is Better than yours': there is no way your pain is worse than his. This creature tries to soften your suffering by telling HIS unbearable experiences.

3. The Abominable 'Pollyanna': "this being simply refuses to recognize that life can be full of meaningless holes and suffering for which there is no practical solution possible. (...) This creature, deep down, is not listening to you because he is not listening to himself either" (Dunker & Thebas, 2019, p. 205).

4. The Abominable... 'What about me?': often confused with the Abominable 'My Worst is Better', this creature, however, tends to show up even when you're happy. His stories are always more relevant.

5. The Abominable 'Stats Human': the master of statistics. Trying to help you, he brings numbers and data to show that someone is (or many people are) way worse than you.

6. The Abominable 'Accuser': a person who always says 'I told you so', as if that would help with something.

7. The Abominable 'Very Empathetic Person': a human being who attended several non-violent communication courses, though has never really understood the real purpose of it.

8. The Abominable 'Telepath': a creature who does not consider it necessary to listen until the end of the sentence; he/she always tries to guess what the other is going to say.

9. The Abominable 'Caveman': when he feels upset, he runs away to his 'cave', reacts more defensively, and is even spoiled for not wanting to continue the conversation.

10. The Abominable 'Reader of Faces and Expressions': "while the Telepath person tries to guess what you are going to say, the Reader of Faces and Expressions 'scans' and 'deciphers' your micro movements. The peculiarity of this creature is that, while all the others listen too little, this one listens too much" (Dunker & Thebas, 2019, p. 209)

11. The Abominable 'Categorizing Addicted': puts people into predefined categories, as if this would support or help the conversation to progress. "Everything someone says will be translated and reduced to the fact that that person has a trait that defines and collectivizes them" (Dunker & Thebas, 2019, p. 210)

12. The Abominable Google-Man: a person who thinks he knows everything, knows all the answers and solutions. "He has powers to make the other 'omni-silent', that is, to silence him in his insignificant ignorance" (Dunker & Thebas, 2019, p. 211)

I am pretty aware that I am a mix of the Abominable Accuser and the Abominable Cavemen. What an awful combination, isn't it? I am now wondering how my friends, relatives, daughters, and students can stand me at all. Thankfully, it does not prevent me from learning and training to be a better listener, though. I hope your type of '*unlistening*' is not as awful as mine!

Chapter 4. Round-Table Conversations: Theorizing the Practice of Listening

4.1. Theoretical Framework

To illuminate the driving inquiry ‘*what could a listening-based pedagogy entail?*’ (and its derived questions), this project’s theoretical framework was structured upon selected Critical + Indigenous + Clown (CIC) theories.

Undergirded by these theories, this chapter will deliver a collection of ethico-onto-epistemological (Barad, 2007) perspectives and possibilities for listening (active, hermeneutic, and holistic) through different lenses—or should I call them *auditory attunements*? These perspectives are supported by other theories and worldviews that will enhance our conversation; for instance: improvisation, future-oriented thinking, dialogical relationships, more-than-human kinship, playfulness, and culturally responsive pedagogies.

This chapter’s goal is to theorize the practice that will be crucial when discussing this research’s methodology. I designed this research’s methods rooted on the CIC theoretical framework in order to create a respectful gathering for welcoming more-than-human affordances, and to co-construct relational and reciprocal knowledge.

I do not intend to bring answers or solutions here. Rather, I am inquiring what a listening-related pedagogy can be, and how it relates to educational relationships. Therefore, to work with(in) the uncertainty of asking questions without looking for answers, I decided to split the theoretical part of this project into interrelated themes (or round-table conversations) to help the reader get engaged into this knowledge and into what might emerge and glow afterwards. Thus, the following subsections (4.2. Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit; 4.3. Educating

Through Vulnerability, Relationality, and Collaboration; 4.4. Educating for Other Possible Worlds; and 4.5. The Role of Silence in Listening) discusses forms of education through which some listening-based approaches can be sustained. Enjoy!

4.2. Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit

How might a more-than-human relational perspective and a beyond-common sense listening approach aid teachers to promote and enact a holistic education?

Such a question can be more fruitful if jagged into small chunks: initially, I am going to suggest a conversation about possibilities for beyond-common sense listening. Afterwards, I will bring some perspectives about more-than-human relationality, which is quite tough to contextualize through a Eurocentric worldview—and this is why some Indigenous perspectives will be key. Finally, I will present an idea of what listening could be within such a context in which learning dwells in a holistic⁷ form of education.

Although listening seems to be an innate skill, there is a lot more about this sensory act that could promote different types of connections and understandings about the world. For instance, let us try to differentiate some actions such as reading and listening when it comes to purpose.

When it comes to comparing listening and reading, even though both are crucial to critical and culturally responsive forms of education, one of them seems more relational than the other. Nicol et al. (2020) says that they are part of a process of understanding (reading) and

⁷ Holism, for some Indigenous peoples, “refers to the interrelatedness between the intellectual, spiritual ..., emotional, and physical ... realms to form a whole healthy person. The development of holism extends to and is mutually influenced by one’s family, community, band, or nation” (Archibald, 2008, p. 11).

intervening (writing) in the world through critical or interpretive approaches and practices. Furthermore, listening adds another layer to such a context: it “bring[s] student and teacher in reciprocal relationships of co-learning” (Nicol et al., 2020, p. 20). Thus, I do believe that listening is paying attention to the inside in order to perceive the outside, it is connecting our emotions to our perceptions, and understanding not only how to affect but also how to be affected by what might be around.

Thus, I support the idea that listening to someone or to something is presenting myself as an open and vulnerable actor, with responsibilities, desires, flaws, and malleability. Listening happens in real-time and through multiple sudden connections—with myself and with the world. Moreover, listening is being aware of our own void space, which begs for the not-only-human other to participate in our learning process. Listening is relational, it asks for reciprocity, respect, and accountability. Listening is essential in culturally responsive and reconciliatory forms of education.

Let me try to go beyond common sense now. Do you believe that listening is restricted to the ear or is it an embodied co-action? According to Dunker and Thebas (2019), “there are people who listen with their ears, others who are able to listen with their eyes, still others make their entire body a listening organ” (p. 114)—which is a Clown belief that resonates with both Indigenous and Critical ways of understanding listening as a whole-body action/perception. As this research attempts to deliver, listening can be much more than hearing voices, sounds, and noises. Listening is a complete attunement to our inner selves, to others, to ancestors, to land, to the cosmos, and to everything that might be around us. I usually get exhausted when I do it. Not that it is a bad thing, but it drains my energy to set my whole body available to listen.

Indigenous writers and knowledge keepers from all around the world have been offering their understandings related to, for instance, ancestry and relationality, which can be fruitful and essential to our future on this planet. Ailton Krenak, an Indigenous reference in South America, defends that our future is ancestral (Krenak, 2022). He speaks in his stories about his community's connection to (and learnings from) the *Rio Doce* (Sweet River), "which we, the Krenak, call Watu, our grandfather" (p. 40). Krenak (2020) also claims that this river "is a person, not a resource as the economists say. He is not a thing that one can appropriate; it is part of our construction as a collective that inhabits a specific place" (p. 40). This reminds me of Dwayne Donald, during one of his River Valley walks with students, saying that we actually ARE the river: the water that runs within our bodies is the same water that has been flowing for millennia on the rivers that share the land with us. Krenak (2022) insightfully speaks about the "we-river" and our more-than-human listening-based kinships to other natural beings:

On silent nights, we hear his voice and speak with our river-music. We like to thank him, because he gives us food and this wonderful water, expands our worldviews and gives meaning to our existence. At night, his waters run fast and noisy, whispering down through the stones and the water involves us in such a wonderful way that allows us to conjugate the 'we': *we-river, we-mountains, we-land*. We feel so deeply immersed in these beings that we allow ourselves to leave our bodies, this anthropomorphic sameness, and experience other ways of existing. (pp. 13-14, emphasis added)

I believe that Donald would also agree with Krenak (2022) when he says that even though we have always been close to water, it seems we have learned very little from the sayings of rivers. Furthermore, "this listening exercise to what the watercourses communicate produced in me a kind of critical understanding of cities" (Krenak, 2022, p. 13). That is why he calls us all to listen

to the voice of the rivers, “because they speak. Let us be water, in matter and spirit, in our motion and ability to change course, or we will be lost” (Krenak, 2022, p. 27). It is indeed a necessary force to contest our current Eurocentric relationships to nature, to the cosmos, and to our own future.

Listening-based pedagogies, then, might be one likely chance to scaffold this ethical-onto-epistemological shift. It can be, for instance, part of an education for both Reconciliation and future-oriented actions. Listening approaches can serve to accommodate conversations regarding truth-telling and the history and legacy of Canada’s Indian Residential Schools (Madden, 2019b)—listening as witnessing and healing—as well as to promote activities that encourage students to imagine not only probable future scenarios but also preferable ones (den Heyer, 2017)—listening as *conscientização* and *praxis* (Freire, 2021). Listening-based pedagogies shall attend to a wide range of educational necessities as it might promote a healthy, safe, and fruitful environment for teaching and learning to happen.

Notwithstanding, to enter the last part of this conversation—which will finally drive us towards an idea of an education for the body, mind, heart, and spirit—I would like to initially address possible understandings of spirituality. I acknowledge this is not a simple term for me, who was born and educated through an anthropocentric and individualistic education. In fact, it seems to me that we, Western teachers, exclude spirituality from education at all. Furthermore, according to Wilson (2008), this exclusion (which is similar to the exclusion of other personal characteristics, such as sexuality, language, and gender) prevents us from recognizing the total other, as well as the complexity of the connections and relationships among us (p. 56).

Spiritual dimensions, in turn, can manifest through art, music, ceremonies, relationships, silence, prayers, storytelling, and many other ways through which humans endeavour to understand and make meaning of life (not necessarily their own, but in an overall sense). It relates to the search for a purpose for what happened, is happening, or will happen (Oliveira, 2023), and it relates to fully welcoming and appreciating our emotions and feelings as well.

That is an important reason why some Indigenous beliefs are included in this research. I do want to (or feel like needing to) break down dominant paradigms by using some of these methods as a catapult to different onto-epistemologies through a multi-layered axio-methodology. I do hope that this Critical + Indigenous + Clown framework enables me to make that leap.

This conversation between paradigms invites us to compare, for instance, how storytelling (and, in consequence, story-listening) work in each worldview. In effect, teaching through storytelling is a key factor in many Indigenous peoples' ways of sharing knowledge, but it holds a quite different understanding in non-Indigenous contexts. For instance, according to Archibald (2008), most Indigenous storytellers only select a story after connecting to their audience. They have to understand which story will promote unique and fruitful feelings, wonders, bonds, and interpretations for this particular group of people (because no story has a single outcome; it varies depending on the teller, the listener, and the relationship between them). Western storytellers, on the other hand, are usually lecturers or people who expect that others just pay attention and listen to their story, which has a single (either known as 'correct' or 'the speaker point of view') interpretation.

It is now time to delve into the understanding of the first listening-based approach selected for this research. The following perspective shall be helpful for teachers to broaden their understanding about holistic (body + mind + heart + spirit) listening. According to Werá (2016), who also provided us with the conceptualization of '*perspectivism*'⁸, the Tupi peoples from South America also honour and promote the seven types of listening, which are:

- 1) Right ear (WaK'Mie): related to the purposeful, active and impulsive attitude
- 2) Left ear (Kat'Mie): related to openness and welcoming, a filter-free listening
- 3) Earth ear: body-based listening, which includes the perception of the environment. More tactile and concrete than the ear-based listening
- 4) Water ear: listening to affections, emotions and feelings. A type of listening that flows like water: sometimes as waterfalls or turbulent rivers, other times as calm lakes or relaxing rain
- 5) Air ear: reflective or philosophical listening that cares for the soul. It helps create possible futures and unforeseen stories
- 6) Fire ear: related to intuition and curiosity, it invites us to wise decision-making processes and actions. It also promotes community engagement towards collective goals
- 7) All ears integrated: broad and whole listening that involves cooperative movements towards a joint transformation

⁸ According to Werá (2016), the idea of *perspectivism* takes place when my listening acknowledges the others' perspective—in which I am included—recognizing my position in their point of view.

Isn't it an interesting orientation? It might support teachers and researchers who want to develop and enhance, alongside their students and participants, listening activities, approaches, abilities, and connections to everyone and everything. There is no single way of applying these Indigenous seven ears in a classroom; nevertheless, they are quite inspiring and representative of a way of focusing on awareness/purposes of listening.

This listening framework is the first one (out of three) that played an important role in designing this research's methodology—as I will further exemplify in the upcoming chapters.

4.3. Educating Through Relationality, Vulnerability, and Cooperation

What makes a clown so interesting and likely to be included in the “diverse range of ideas that First Nations associate with the Trickster” (Archibald, 2008, p. 5)?

I started this conversation using this clown + Trickster question to briefly wonder about the relationship between not only these two ‘characters’, but also between Clown and Indigenous worldviews. This section will also raise discussions regarding other relevant topics to listening, such as vulnerability, interrelatedness, relationality, and cooperation. To wrap up this thread, I will provide a listening framework that supports a context in which these features can co-exist and mutually sustain each other.

As ‘doing’ figures, both clown and Trickster appeal to humour and other playful approaches to connect with other entities to teach and to learn. They insightfully teach us, for instance, that humour is a deep relational process that begins with listening—because that is the way they ‘do’ relationships⁹. From different perspectives, whereas Archibald (2008) believes

⁹ A Trickster is pretty similar to a clown in regards to the way they learn, the way they teach, and the way they connect to their world. They share characteristics and beliefs, actions and purposes. A Trickster is, according to

that “humour has a healing aspect for both the storyteller and the listener” (Archibald, 2008, p. 68), the journalist Kate Murphy links humour to listening skills, improvisational comedy, and collaborative environments:

Shared humour is a form of connectedness born out of listening. It’s a collaborative dynamic that involves the exploration and elaboration of ideas and feelings. The same improvisational interplay is required for any cooperative endeavour, which is why listening is so crucial in the modern workplace. (...) Intimacy, innovative thinking, teamwork, and humour all come to those who free themselves from the need to control the narrative and have the patience and confidence to follow the story wherever it leads. (Murphy, 2020, p. 113)

I love this idea of freeing ourselves from the necessity of controlling the narrative and start following the thread of a story. This is indeed a ‘clowny’ critical way of criticizing the dominant worldview/story that has been dumped upon people since the start of European colonization. Indirectly and subtly, improvisation comedy adds criticality, collectivity, and cooperation to a capitalist world—an environment that usually encourages dominance, individual success, and competition. The following excerpt deepens the conversation on the entanglement between improv training, listening, and collaboration—which Murphy (2020) learned after several

some Indigenous perspectives, “a transformer figure, one whose transformations often uses humour, satire, self-mocking, and absurdity to carry good lessons” (Archibald, 2008, p. 5) —just like a clown. In his book, *O livro do Palhaço* (The Clown’s book), Claudio Thebas bring how clowns perceive and understand themselves: “be attentive and be listening to the world and to others” (Gabriel Guimard, clown Extrabão, as cited in Thebas, 2009) and “be without the obligation to be. It is simply ‘doing’” (Allan Benatti, clown Chabilson, as cited in Thebas, 2009). In regards of Trickster, Archibald (2008) says that “the notion of the Trickster as a ‘doing’ rather than a ‘being’ fits with how I have come to appreciate the process of learning through Trickster stories. The Trickster as a doing can change and live on through time as people interact with the Trickster through stories: one does not have to be too concerned about what the Trickster looks like if she/he/it is a doing rather than a being” (p. 6).

conversations and practices with improv experts, such as Matt Hovde, the artistic director of Chicago's Second City:

To be successful at improvisational comedy and also the improvisation that is your real life, listening is critical. Controlling the narrative and grabbing for attention make for one-sided conversations and kill collaboration. Rather than advancing your agenda, it really holds you back. The joy and benefit of human interactions come from a reciprocal focus on one another's words and actions, and being ready and willing to respond and expand on every contribution. The result is mutual understanding and even appreciation. (Murphy, 2020, p. 111)

Does 'controlling the narrative' look like 'single stories' to you? They both kill collaboration by blocking mutual appreciation and respect. Listening actions can be fruitful to reciprocal interactions both for improv performers on stage and for teachers/students in an educational setting.

The art of listening (Thebas, 2020), which also encourages cooperation over competition, supports a process of self-awareness, of listening *to* our own void and *for* emptying out. According to Dunker and Thebas (2019), the void is an inner space that takes us out of place and allows movement: “[t]he void is what remains when we remove our clothes, our roles, our identities. The void that manifests itself as silence or uncertainty is both the starting and ending point for the other's speech” (p. 103). They magnificently conclude that “the void is first and foremost a place offered to the other so that he may inhabit you. When you listen to the other, you are saying to them: ‘*I have a place for you in me*’” (Dunker & Thebas, 2019, p. 103, emphasis in original).

Recognizing our inner void is a first step to accepting our vulnerabilities. Listening is a surprising possibility towards relationality and self-awareness. In a conversation with the dancer and choreographer Monica Bill Barnes, Murphy (2020) heard her saying that “listening with her ‘whole self’ made her feel vulnerable” (p. 74). Moreover, Monica “think[s] it’s an issue of trusting that you can be imperfect in the conversation. Listening is a matter of you deciding you don’t need to worry what to say next”, which opens your “border defenses” (Monica Bill Barnes, as cited in Murphy, 2020, p. 74) to the other’s contributions. How many times have you caught yourself thinking about a response or a personal story to add to a conversation even before effectively connecting with the other’s story/question? Have you ever tried to open your borders and vulnerabilities and invite the other to your inner and most hidden world so that a deeper connection would be created? Does it scare you?

Dunker and Thebas (2019), in turn, believe that vulnerability is “the exposure of the unique combination that each one makes, with their way of conducting their inconsistencies, dealing with their own dispossessions, and facing their losses” (p. 80). Furthermore, self-awareness is indeed important in this pursuit for real connections through vulnerability, because “[i]t’s hard to develop sensitivity and respect for another person’s vulnerability without knowing what it’s like to be vulnerable yourself” (Murphy, 2020, p. 220).

Jo-ann Archibald, who affirms in her 2008 book that vulnerability, humility, and patience is crucial to a listening context, learned that “[c]reating time to listen and having patience to learn what storytellers are sharing and teaching are fundamental to establishing respectful relationships” (Archibald, 2008, p. 108). Even though this can be easily compared to the importance of kids working on their patience and listening skills in order to better listen to (and learn from) their teachers, I do encourage you to think otherwise: we, teachers, are the ones who

should be working on being open and allotting some time to properly listen to our students. We are responsible for initiating this caring relationship—and that is part of teaching by example. That is the only way of getting respect and attention back, of promoting reciprocity and interrelatedness. If we do not listen to our kids properly, our relationships will be, to some extent, based on control, power imbalance, and adult-centred needs. On the other hand, when all of us listen to each other (and to what is around us) in a holistic way, the relationship actually becomes kinship—which will scaffold the development of a safe, cooperative, and playful educational environment. For that to happen, respect, reciprocity, vulnerability, shared hope, and collectivism are key. According to Evelyn Steinhauer, as quoted in Wilson’s (2008) book,

[r]espect is more than just saying please and thank you, and reciprocity is more than giving a gift. According to Cree Elders, showing respect or *kihceyih towin* is a basic law of life. Respect regulates how we treat Mother Earth, the plants, the animals, and our brothers and sisters of all races. (...) Respect means you listen intently to others’ ideas, that you do not insist that your idea prevails. By listening intently, you show honour, consider the well-being of others, and treat others with kindness and courtesy.

(Steinhauer, 2001, as cited in Wilson, 2008, p. 58, emphasis in original)

Steinhauer does make me think that I still need to improve my more-than-human sense of relationality. Not that I am not respectful to plants or animals, or reciprocal to what land provides, for instance. It seems just like an ‘attachment’ to my contract of living on this planet, though; it is not a ‘basic law of life’ for me *yet*. My educational journey based in European values trained me to believe in a ‘sanitary life’¹⁰, a term coined by Krenak (2022) that still

¹⁰ According to Krenak (2022), a sanitary life is “the formation, over decades, of a mentality in which children should not touch the land so they would get their hands dirty” (p. 109). It supports buying ‘clean’ vegetables at the

constrains my kinship to Mother Earth, to land, and to nature to some extent. Even though, after entering adulthood, I did connect myself (as a person and as a teacher) to nature more than I used to do as a kid, it is still hard for me not to tell my daughters things like ‘don’t jump in that muddy water or you’re gonna get dirty!’ or ‘grocery store’s blackberries are sweeter than those ones in the tree’. No reciprocity or honour to nature at all, right? Such a relationship is a work-in-progress for me (as it may be for most Western people). I am thankful for this research to effectively open my eyes, ears, heart, mind, and spirit to recognize these difficulties and biased connections to Mother Earth. Just a first step, though.

In the last part of this section, I will promote a comparison between cooperative and competitive educational environments, which will take us to a listening framework that supports (and is supported by) a collaborative and playful education. According to my understanding, Indigenous peoples encourage their community members to focus on the collective (instead of on the individual), which seems to me much more related to collaborative than to competitive actions. Krenak (2022) summarizes and deepens my perception by saying that Indigenous peoples,

who persist in a collective experience, do not educate children to be champions in something, but to be partners of each other. (...) The foundation of education is created in friction with everyday life. A child's eventual leadership will come from the daily experience of collaborating with others, not competing. (p. 115)

grocery store and not community-based agriculture, for instance. He claims that educators should have been defying this way of understanding land and nature as a warehouse that only feeds us and sustains our human-centred necessities. It is a living being that should be respected and honored as we are all related.

This partnership between members of a community (or a classroom) is different from the Aboriginal speeches that we previously witnessed on Kanu's (2007) research with Indigenous students within non-Indigenous classrooms (see page 31). In this regard, Ailton Krenak believes that what sustains a cooperative community is the ethical relationships and the respect for differences and particularities. Krenak (2022) talks about the concept of affective alliances, "which presupposes affections between different worlds" (p. 82) and does not claim equality; rather, "it recognizes an intrinsic otherness in each person, in each being" (p. 82). Donald (2009), in resonance, in a conversation about honouring treaties and other historical relationships between European Settlers and First Nations, adds that:

[e]thical relationality is an ecological understanding of human relationality that does not deny difference, but rather seeks to more deeply understand how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other. This form of relationality is ethical because it does not overlook or invisibilize the particular historical, cultural, and social contexts from which a particular person understands and experiences living in the world. It puts these considerations at the forefront of engagements across frontiers of difference.
(p. 6)

Donald's belief that an ethical relationality supports 'engagements across frontiers of difference' does resonate to what I stated in the first chapter of this thesis: through a non-Euclidean orientation, listening for the difference beyond the differences that are usually or historically recognized/imagined is an approach to challenge single stories, to promote cooperation, and to encourage more-than-human relationships. Being relationally ethical is indeed an endeavour to 'understand how our different stories and experiences position us in relation to each other' — which also resonates with Tupi's idea of *perspectivism*.

On the contrary, in a Eurocentric educational culture, there seems to be no such ethics, no (or little) cooperation, no (or little) collective engagement. In such a context, we are supposed to believe that students (alike actors, basketball players, and social media influencers) will only be valued if they work on a life trajectory to become protagonists (of whatever: their own experiences, their own business company, their own show, their own team, etc.). On the one hand, according to Dunker and Thebas (2019), being a protagonist in this competition-based culture is occupying the center of attention, it is to resist releasing the microphone to the point of taking it home, and to seem that all conflicts can be solved (or perhaps hidden) by oneself—the ‘savior’; on the other hand, being a protagonist in the culture of cooperation “is being, according to the etymology of the word, the one who, by containing the conflict, also propagates and represents it. Protagonist comes from [greek’s] *proto* (carrier or forerunner) and *agon* (conflict)” (Dunker & Thebas, 2019, p. 155, emphasis in original).

This comparison enables an interpretation that the problem is not the desire to become a protagonist itself; instead, it is an issue of how we are immersed in a competitive rather than in a cooperative environment. With effect, whereas Eurocentric education systems follow the thread of hiding and segregating what is conflictual or rowdy, in addition to valuing and shining light on what is ‘the norm’, the symbol, the ma(i)n character, this Critical + Indigenous + Clown framework supports that conflicts and differences should be valued, respected, and propagated.

Activities that promote dialogues, for instance, encourage students to aggregate instead of convincing each other, to compose and not to oppose, to understand rather than to defeat the other. This is key to recap and deepen Dunker and Thebas’ (2019) 4Hs of listening. According to the authors, through a Clown + psychoanalytic attunement, this framework encompasses:

i) Hospitality: accepting what the other says in his language and in his own time. It is centred on the receiver and the pact that he/she establishes and reformulates each time he/she meets with the sender.

ii) Hospital: taking care of what was said and of the relationship between those who are weakened. It is guided by examining the message, the signs and regularities it proposes, its effects of repetition or estrangement, welcoming the feelings within what is said.

iii) Hospice: allowing ourselves to be who we are, opening ourselves to the foreigner, the stranger, in us and in the other, with all inconsistencies and contradictions. It revises and reinvents the codes and channels in use, corrupts current meaning and common sense, creating new uses and relationships between words and body signals.

iv) Host: carrying, sharing and transmitting the lived experience. It turns to the fact that the one who was once a receiver will also become a sender, transmitting the received message and by recontextualization (Dunker & Thebas, 2019, p. 52 and p. 97).

To clarify this discussion and take it to a listening + educational context, Dunker and Thebas (2019), depict the following approaches and features of both a competitive and a cooperative mode of a conversational engagement—which I put in a visual format to facilitate our understanding and further discussion (see Figures 3 and 4).

As we are going to see later on in this text, some teachers do believe that they are designing listening-centred activities by promoting debates between students or groups of

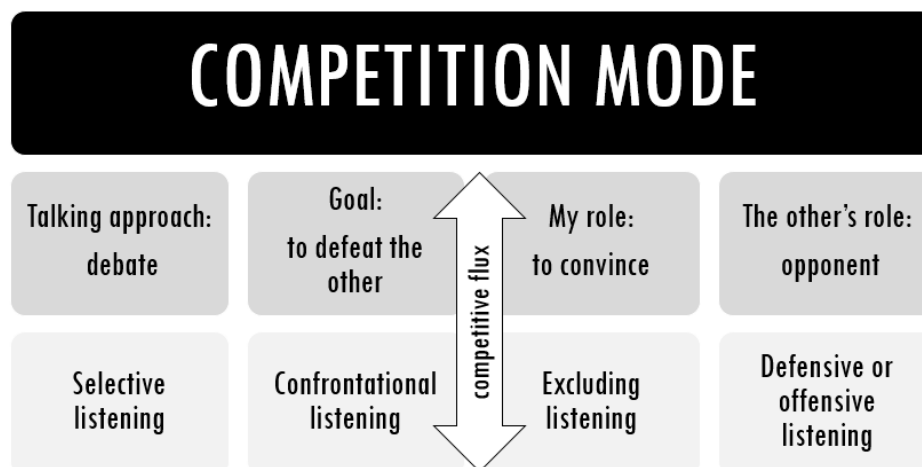


Fig. 3: Modes of engagement, according to Dunker and Thebas (2019) - Competition Mode

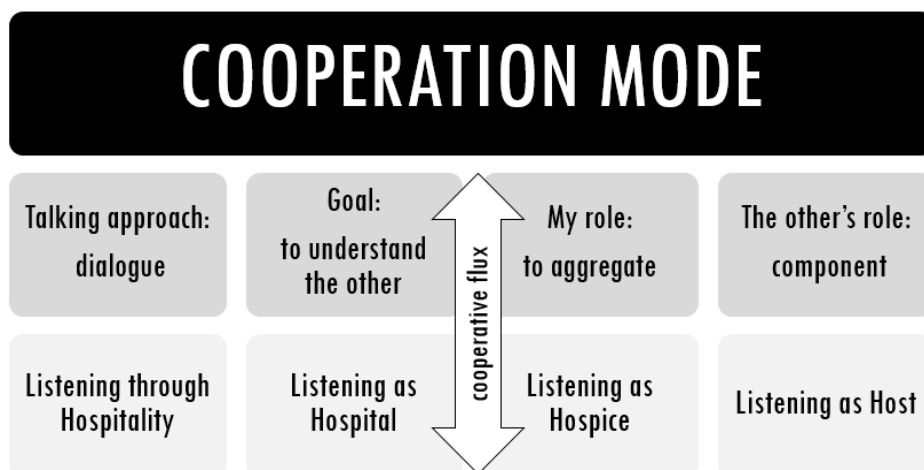


Fig. 4: Modes of engagement, according to Dunker and Thebas (2019) - Cooperation Mode

students hoping that they will be actively listening to each other's speech. Which kind of listening are they encouraging, though?

This active listening framework can be complemented with an additional modality of listening that can also contribute to the disruption of such a competitive mode of teaching and research towards a more cooperative one: Dunker and Thebas (2019) advocate for a 'playful listening', which messes with the hierarchy of roles and functions, subverting communication,

and promoting a more joyful and collaborative space. The active + playful listening is also in resonance with fruitful, inviting, and soothing silence—which will be further discussed in section 4.5. As Dunker and Thebas (2019) state,

[t]he silence of hospitable and hospital listening softens the readiness with which we are used to state questions and answers, problems and solutions, offers and demands. It is a silence robust enough to neutralize the antibodies of denial and listen to what the silence of the other, which infiltrates in the middle of his words, may be telling you. (p. 102)

The 4Hs of listening support and are supported by this ‘infiltrative and telling silence’. Are you usually comfortable in spending a long time beside someone in silence? Is it a barrier between people or a way of showing love and care? For me, the ideal date, conversation, or class happens when we are open to “stay there, together, in a complete silence. Don’t even know for how long. And before we go away, we both say: thank you for listening to me” (Thebas, 2022).

This approach to listening is the second of the three key modes of listening applied in this research methodology. One more to go before entering the conversation about the relationship between silence and listening.

4.4. Educating for Other Possible Worlds

To what extent are listening-based approaches supportive to dialogue and counter-storytelling towards students’ future-oriented educational commitment?

In any educational environment, there is listening happening indeed—with distinguished intentionalities, though. Yet, some of these types of listening do not reflect the criticality, the relationality, and the holistic format of teaching and learning that this text intends to deliver,

which means that the pursuit of such a promising and contextual listening-based pedagogy needs a purpose and a pathway. This trajectory now comes to the point where I must be critical when facing the present in order to foresee and work towards a better—or at least a different—future.

Conscientização (Freire, 2021)—or critical consciousness/reflection—is a sociopolitical, educational tool that helps people question the world and encourage relationships that minimize oppression and defy larger structures of power. hooks (1994) states that thinking critically about the self in relation to the understanding of liberation struggles is the initial stage of social transformation. She also reminds us that Freire had never spoken of *conscientização* as an end itself; rather, it should always be “joined by meaningful *praxis*” (hooks, 1994, p. 67, emphasis in original).

Praxis, according to Freire (2021), is reflection and action, is knowing and doing, is theory and practice. It is transforming the world through ethical and accountable actions. In ancient Greece, the word *praxis* referred to activity engaged by free men, whereas Karl Marx suggested that *praxis* is itself the goal of philosophy and it designates the creative practice through which human beings make and shape their world. “Building on Marxism, critical social theory generally defines praxis as a type of critical self-reflective action—action that informs, transforms, changes, or makes [us] aware. It is a set of practices or customs that is distinguishable from theory” (Donald, 2021, para. 3). *Praxis* suggests that, in fact, we must act beyond our simple preoccupation with thinking and theorizing; we must engage in an energized movement toward transformation and liberation (from oppressive and dominant cultures, systems, and worldviews). According to Freire (2021), in such an education as a practice of freedom, “its dialogicity begins not when the educator-student meets the student-educators in a

pedagogical situation, but rather, when he asks himself about what he will dialogue with them” (Freire, 2021, p. 115).

Although I believe that people usually speak about dialogue as synonym to non-aggressive, soft conversations, Dunker and Thebas (2019) think that “a good dialogue happens when people do not understand each other perfectly, that is, when they mistrust each other by saying what they say, or questioning what the other has said” (p. 75). I dare say that, relying on Freire, Dunker, and Thebas, a dialogue thus supports an encounter in which both sides are teachers and learners at the same time, just exchanging the role of protagonist on ‘who is carrying (and caring) the conflict by now?’ In such an encounter, “there is no absolute unlearned man, no absolute wise man: there are men who, in communion, seek to know more” (Freire, 2021, p. 112). Therefore, active listening emerges as a means to engage in dialogic conversations.

Murphy (2020) otherwise relies on Carl Rogers, the psychologist who coined the term active listening, to state that “listening to opposing viewpoints is the only way to grow as an individual” (p. 86) —which can be crucial to self-awareness regarding personal strengths and difficulties. This must be part of a collective relational construction, though. (I do not believe in ‘growing as an individual’ if that suggests that individuality is over collectivity).

From this viewpoint, the use of and interaction with counter-stories¹¹ can be crucial to such a purpose of listening to multiple viewpoints. Nonetheless, “[t]he pedagogical challenge is that counter-stories have [historically] been forgotten or suppressed” (Strong-Wilson, 2007, p.

¹¹ It is worth noting that, according to Madden (2019a), there are four types of counter-story narratives: stories of refusal, of resistance, of resilience, and of restorying/resurgence. This whole package indeed delivers a possibility of confronting single stories and stereotypes by promoting multiplicity and a broader point of view that does not speak only about struggles, but also about successes.

124), which is indeed related not only to the lack of knowledge, but also to the resistance to knowledge. Therefore, as a possible solution, Strong-Wilson (2007) suggests that non-Indigenous teachers need opportunities to, among other things,

experience “counter-stories” that challenge the “master story” implicit in their touchstones and the “cauldron” of stories. For teachers to genuinely appropriate the learning process as their own and instigate change/decolonization, they need to produce a “story of confrontation”, which is a story about *their* confrontation of their storied past. Such a story would represent the beginning of a shifting of horizons. (p. 124)

The idea of ‘story of confrontation’, which might instigate a ‘shifting of horizons’ reminds me of Davis’ comparison between listening *to* and listening *for*. According to Davis (1996), whereas the idea of *listening for* “hints at the inevitability of approaching interactions with a particular set of expectations or biases” (Davis, 1994, para. 55) and it is clearly revealed through a tension, a natural constraint that needs to be acknowledged and solved in order to dive into the other’s world; *listening to* suggests an intentionality of merging two different objects into a common perspective, which allows who listens and who speaks to be “intertwined in our being and our becoming” (Davis, 1994, p. 48). Thus, I would say that, after Strong-Wilson (2007), when we listen *to* counter-stories and stories of confrontation, we are actually listening *for* a shifting of horizons, a possibility to overcome White teachers’ resistance.

Within this context of listening *to* counter-stories and *for* confronting White resistance, Madden (2019b) believes that the various forms of counter-stories support, among other things, (a) an integration of multiple representations of identity (in her work she specifically talks about Indigeneity) that challenge existing stereotypical images, (b) critical consciousness about

relations of power in situated contexts, and (c) a confrontation to Western and White privilege and views of Indigenous peoples and other considered minorities, which might help us, white teachers, to better understand “how individuals are produced within and reproduce interconnected systems of oppression” (Madden, 2019b, p. 297).

In this section, I am tailoring a thread that started with possible understandings and actions regarding critical thinking and dialogic actions, followed by a push to overcome teachers’ and students’ resistance for changing the current dominant narrative. This thread, which is basically the construction of a theoretical bedrock to support my third listening approach, will now open the doors to other possible worlds through future-oriented educational thinking.

Teachers who consider themselves educators for other possible worlds must be aware that their goal should be “to educate for the emergency of what still isn’t” (Gadotti, 2007, p. 189), or for the not-yet-imaginable (Davis & Sumara, 2007, p. 64). Foreseeing future scenarios is part of the work that these teachers should do *alongside* students. den Heyer (2017) argues that the historical interpretations that are used to distinguish and compare the probable and the preferable scenarios will encourage students to “articulat[e] their ethical commitments as agents of future social life” (p. 9).

den Heyer (2017) also states that students’ preferable future is not quite similar to what they believe is probable to happen, which shows a lack of clarity in what they could and should do in order to transform their current context and environment. Therefore, some scholars say we should educate “for the rupture, for the rebellion, to refuse, to say no” (Gadotti, 2007, p. 189) to what is currently preventing us from desiring and designing our preferable future. This refusal is

also an affirmation to the existence of other possible worlds. Through a Critical attunement within an Indigenous worldview, Tuck and Yang (2014b) believe that the refusal

expands the space for other forms of knowledge, thought-worlds to live. Refusal makes space for recognition, and for reciprocity. Refusal turns the gaze back upon power, specifically the colonial modalities of knowing persons as bodies to be differentially counted, violated, saved, and put to work. (...) Refusal generates, expands, champions representational territories that colonial knowledge endeavours to settle, enclose, domesticate. (p. 814)

Tuck and Yang's idea of refusal does open multiple branches for expanding our listening possibilities. For example, what are the differences between refusing to *listen to* and refusing to *listen for*? My understanding is that when we refuse to *listen to*, we are actually closing down possibilities to 'expand the space' for all forms of knowledge and for differences to prevail over norms. On the other hand, when we refuse to *listen for*, we are no longer 'making space for recognition and reciprocity' —which is crucial in respectful and cooperative educational relationships.

Nonetheless, what is it like to *listen to* refusal? What is it like to *listen for* refusal? Relying on Moacir Gadotti (who was a close friend of Paulo Freire and one of my professors at the University of Sao Paulo 20 years ago), I believe that if we *listen to* and *listen for* refusal, we are actually

educat[ing] for other possible worlds [, which] is to educate for the emergency of what still isn't, the *not-yet*, the utopia. Doing that, we will be taking history as a possibility and not as a fatality. Thus, to educate for other possible worlds is also to educate for the

rupture, for the rebellion, to refuse, to say ‘no’, to yell, to dream with other possible worlds. (Gadotti, 2007, p. 189)

Listening *to* the not-yet (Gadotti, 2007; Aoki, 2005) fascinates me! By doing that, we will be listening *for* uncertain, unknown, in motion, evolving worlds—which include more-than-human forms of kinship and fluid knowledge. In this regard, Krenak (2020) suggests that we pay attention to Alberto Costa’s idea of *pluriverses*, which “evoke[s] the possibility of worlds affecting each other, of experiencing the encounter with the mountain not as an abstraction, but as a dynamic of affections in which she is not only the subject, but can also have the initiative to approach anyone” (Krenak, 2022, p. 83). This dynamic more-than-human relationship indeed sustains the stories we tell, the stories we live. By the way, in these stories, according to Glanfield et al. (2020), we are not outsiders nor victims; rather, we are living a story that is ever unfolding as we make our world with one another all the time (p. 87).

To better engage with such stories, Davis (1996) suggests pedagogies that support the “hermeneutic listening” (p. 53) as an educational practice, which can (a) help teachers designing lessons and approaches that promote this conversation with multiple worlds, cultures, and perspectives; (b) encourage students to overcome the resistance to counter-stories; and (c) invite them to a future-oriented thinking. This concept involves who speaks and who listens in a shared project that is engaging, negotiatory, and messy. Besides, the hermeneutic listening “is an imaginative participation in the formation and the transformation of experience through an ongoing interrogation of the taken-for-granted and the prejudices that frame perceptions and actions” (Davis, 1996, p. 53). The importance of this type of listening is that it defies the taken-for-granted future that, using den Heyer’s (2017) words, “appeal[s] to one vision of the future rather than acknowledge its many potential paths and manifestations” (p. 5).

Hermeneutic listening is dependent on the nature of the relationship between those who speak and those who listen because “our listening is affected by the way that we are socially and physically situated in relation to one another” (Davis, 1994, para. 58). In fact, such a relationship is “enabled by who we are *listening to*, and constrained by what we are *listening for*” (Davis, 1994, para. 58, emphasis in original), which circles back to the idea that, by refusing to *listen to*, we disable difference- and conflict-based relationships; and by refusing to *listen for*, we disregard reciprocity and respect, which limits the possibilities of relational educational practices—and as such, limit cooperative learning.

Davis indeed advocates for this cooperative learning, a collectivity of students, in opposition “to a collection of assumed-to-be independent and isolated learners” (Davis, 2004, p. 182), which does resonate with recursive fractals and other multidirectional endless compositions usually seen in non-Euclidean Geometries. By the way, Davis and Sumara (2000) also promote the idea that educational curriculum should be structured in a fractal way, which is much more related to the flexibility of life, to emerging sensibilities, and to a more attentive habit of mind, than to the linearity, predictability, and rigidity of the Euclidean geometry that we perceive nowadays within educational documents. Effectively, Davis’ fractal-shaped curriculum and hermeneutic listening are quite related. The fractal-, web-like point of view is “not a renewed effort to colonize the disorderly, but an appreciation of the universe as complex, ever-unfolding, self-transcending, and relational” (Davis & Sumara, 2000, p. 827), whereas the linear, pre-formed (and not performed) standpoint supports “narratives of control, predictability, and efficiency, such as is demanded by Plato’s logic and embodied in Euclid’s images” (Davis & Sumara, 2000, p. 824).

Therefore, the complexity of such a geometric orientation serves to enhance our understanding of the hermeneutic listening, which is structured on the not-yet-imaginable shapes and geometries of education, as well as on the dialogic interplay between students, teachers, schools, curricula, and knowledge. With this form of listening, we can critically understand that “the worst is not the world that is already here; the worst is to think that this is the only possible world” (Gadotti, 2007, p. 32).

4.5. The Role of Silence in Listening

To what extent does silence shape the social and ethical interplay between teachers and students? Which role can silence play in between teachers’ listening approaches and students’ future-oriented learning?

Communication is neither restricted to the presence of sound, nor to written or spoken words. Silence can also send many different messages: if used as punishment, for instance, it will be a violent act indeed; if accepted as live and creative, it will be surely promising and future-oriented. Listening and silence are actually mutually responsible for each other; their kinship is at the same time creative and disturbing.

Silence is indeed a two-edged sword that can be either ‘manipulated’ or ‘welcome’. In an educational situation, I understand the former as a way of controlling and managing students’ minds (as empty vessels, for instance) and behaviours, knowledge as thing, and other-than-human artifacts as agency-free; on the other hand, the latter is based on relationality, it promotes knowledge-as-encounter (den Heyer, 2009; 2021), and is supported by ethical and future-oriented perspectives.

Most of the times, I will approach the discussions over silence's agency in this text as situations in which silence is valued and "experienced as active, generative, [and] creative" (Fidyk, 2013b, p. 114), even though I also acknowledge that this point of view is not too frequent in an Eurocentric education. According to Fidyk (2013b), although "[s]ilence in classrooms typically has existed as forced silence" (p. 116), which entails control, order, and obedience, "[s]ilence too exists as a form of classroom participation or even resistance, both of which cannot be read as a simple matter of power or lack of power, voice or lack of voice" (p. 116). Dunker and Thebas (2019) indicate that this kind of silence can take on many facets, such as the agonized silence of those who fill the void with anything, even empty words. There is also the embarrassed silence of those who do not know where to put their hands, as well as the silence that desperately asks 'what do they want to hear back?' Another form of silence (that maybe you have also gone through) is the empty silence that appears as a kind of blank, a thoughtless moment (p. 102).

Active listening-based pedagogies, by the way, are indeed connected to Fidyk's (2013b) wonderings about silence as a generative experience: being present, being vulnerable, being open, being relational. Silence, through its own spirit and connectivity, encourages teachers to reach a wider range of listening, a wider range of intelligences, a wider range of cultural connections with students.

The multilayered idea of story-listening supports an interesting way to analyze our inquiries regarding the partnership silence + listening. Sturm (2000), for instance, states that "people listening to stories often enter a qualitatively different state of consciousness (...) [and] can undergo a profound change in their experience of reality" (p. 287), almost like a "storylistening trance experience" that entails an "alteration in the overall pattern of mental

function” (p.288). This change of patterns, this shift in consciousness, might happen in the ground of silence (Fidyk, 2013b, p. 119), where people (particularly teachers, students, researcher, and participants) know that “their individual inward attention is part of what may emerge on any given day when one is willing to be vulnerable, take risks, and be present to what unfolds” (p. 119). Generative silence (Fidyk, 2013b) with its welcoming and agential features is both healing and constructive, and can be an essential part of creating a nurturing and caring environment for educational encounters and relationships. Nevertheless, being ethical in such an environment is necessary as it acknowledges education as a social gathering in which relationality and reciprocity are key to understanding that self and other are co-constructed and co-dependent. These examples of co-dependence resonate with Lewkowich’s (2015) idea of ‘the abject’¹², which, through its agency, suggests that ‘what it is’ and ‘what it is not’ shape both our self-perception and more-than-human relationships.

Thus, I argue that an ethical relationship between silence and listening is actually an abject-related one. Even though they might seem as not-too-close friends, they do affect and shape each other. To exemplify such a relationship, Lewkowich (2015) shared his experience entering a classroom with sweat rings around his armpits. Sweat is, for whatever reason, one of our abjects as human beings. Perhaps ‘sweaty vs perfumed’ is one of the simplest binaries if we think about other (invented) categorizations such as ‘abled vs disabled’, ‘healthy vs ill’, or ‘capitalist vs socialist’. My sweat is as much part of me as my brain synapses, my falling hair, or my political bias—and they all determine who I am and how I relate to myself and to the world.

¹² According to Lewkowich’s (2015), “the abject is often encountered where the borders between self and other are at their most moveable, tenuous and fragile” (p. 42). Furthermore, “it also challenges us to consider our permanent conditions of dependency and inadequacy; the abject therefore has a positive (or constituting) meaning, and a negative (or disruptive) one” (Lewkowich, 2015, p. 43).

It is not because my body is expelling some substances that they are not part of me. Actually, I dare say that perhaps these substances are expelling me as well; thus, I am an object of all of my own objects—we might understand ourselves as an intra-relational unit of multiplicity.

Lewkowich (2015) says that, due to his issues with “embodiments of authority” as a professor, he thinks that by appearing as a “sweaty mess”, or even just a flawed person, he feels able to claim that “at the very least, I have made myself into a kind of vulnerable subject” (Lewkowich, 2015, p. 43), which, according to him, might be a way of protecting himself from the kind of professor he does not want to be—even though he is afraid he has already become it.

That vulnerability in accepting our object and recognizing its effects in ourselves indeed resonates with a Clown self-awareness. Inspired by Claudio Thebas, as a clown I understand myself as flawed and inadequate. As an inadequate person in relation to a system in which we need to compete for every inch of ground, I work towards collaboration and relationships; as an inadequate person in relation to a system that has speech as a symbol of power, I support listening as a signal of one’s authority and reciprocity.

Silence and listening do shape each other, and relationships can mold both of them. Relationality, thus, is crucial to understand silence and listening as respectful, reciprocal, organic, and vulnerable actions—yes, actions, not nouns, because both of them are in constant flux: they promote (social) movement and (individual) transformation.

However, some teachers still rely on non-relational, static, and oppressive silences; moreover, these teachers seem to not be effectively listening to their students. They are actually reinforcing the power dynamics in which the teacher has the right to select who can say, when they say and more importantly IF they say—which is indeed a form of listening *for* the dominant

perspective, *for* the perpetuation of single stories. And I hope that this relational silence, through its own agency, can break this imbalanced relationship by "slow[ing] down" so that we can all engage and "feel the moment" (A. Fidyk, personal communication, March 9, 2022), and that is why I do support listening-based pedagogies and methods of research that are committed to expand and welcome possibilities and types of relationships.

Even though a critical framework is helpful to contest some situations, it is not sufficient to open a discussion towards the infinite possibilities that may emerge from relationality, beyond-human agency and creation (Barad, 2007), and contextual knowledge's fluidity (Wilson, 2008). According to Barad (2007), "[t]he point is that it is the intra-play of continuity and discontinuity, determinacy and indeterminacy, possibility and impossibility that constitutes the differential spacetime-matterings of the world" (p. 182), and this idea represents an agential universe in which we all, humans and nature, teachers and students, researcher and research, knower and knowledge, voices and silences permeate.

It is with(in) the so-called generative silence, which enables active, holistic and hermeneutic listening, that teachers support students towards their future-oriented learning, which scaffolds "students practice with articulating their ethical commitments as agents of future social life" (den Heyer, 2017, p. 9). Although this ethical commitment is a great example of something that is important to be listened *for* (if we want to dream and endeavour for other possible worlds), it is often suppressed by oppressive and forced silences. In addition, leaning on Truman, Wozolek and Delany, Weaver (2019) says that "these types of efforts (...) are not exercises in monologues, but rather prime examples of the polyvocal possible futures wherein all sentient beings, human and non-human, matter" (p. 11).

I do not believe that silence is the opposite/absence of sound or the opposite/absence of voice. Rather, I think it is always intentional (regardless of purpose), and it can also be a way of being present, ethical, accountable, relational, caring and creative. Fidyk (2013b) argues that

[s]ilence is a creative act and can arouse creativity for when the mind or voice grows quiet; a door opens to the unknown, to a place where things can emerge. (...) Silence basically represents a way of being with the interlocutor; it indicates a proposed interaction, an invitation to the development of a time-space in which to meet, or clash, in order to share in the challenge of growth. (p. 117)

Generative silence as a teaching approach promotes relationality and encourages students to dwell with(in) the conflict, to be relational to themselves and to their classmates, to be open and vulnerable, to welcome differences. It is surely a door to the unknown and a place to witness knowledge and relationships emerging.

Circling back to the throughline question that initiated this section, I can now reaffirm that a generative silence approach (in addition to listening-based practices) is indeed key in an education that challenges, using den Heyer's (2017) terms, either a taken-for-granted, or a tacit, or a token future. These futures "not only limit students' evaluation of their present social lives, but also their judgments about how the past they encounter in and out of schools informs present social choices and future preferable destinations" (den Heyer, 2017, p. 6).

In conclusion, silence can be either a sign of oppression and control or a possibility for students to design and distinguish between preferable, probable and possible futures. The roles that silence plays within the space between teachers and students are essentially dependent on teachers' social and ethical positionalities. If relational and generative, silence can be helpful and

supportive towards a “democratically-inviting enactment of education” (den Heyer, 2017, p. 32). On the other hand, a forced, imposed silence can be “a form of discipline, order, and obedience” (Fidyk, 2013b, p. 116). In this last case, silence reinforces the suppression of and despise for students’ voices, cultural knowledge, and need for a caring relationship, which sustain the maintenance of a dominant worldview based on rigid and oppressive knowledge.

4.6. Story time: What Have I Un/learned, then?

This chapter’s story linked my perceptions concerning the ‘what’, the ‘how’, and the ‘why’ of a listening-based format of education. The ‘what’ came along with issues and possibilities concerning a broader sense of cognition, learning, and knowledge, as well as an Indigenous all-ears-integrated type of listening; the ‘how’ emerged during an interesting conversation about cooperative and fruitful relationships alongside a Clown’s active+playful form of listening; the ‘why’ was forged to scaffold students’ process of going for a preferable future through dialogue, counter-storytelling, and a hermeneutic listening. Besides, this chapter also presented conversations about the roles that silence plays as either a partner of or a constraint to fruitful listening and relationships.

There were many interesting learning situations that I would like to share with you regarding the process of thinking and writing this chapter. I thus chose one quick story to represent all of my takeaways in this chapter’s journey. I hope you enjoy listening to it!

Sometimes I try to work, read my books, and write my papers in front of my kids, so that they notice how joyful I feel when doing these things (surely at other times I need some privacy and rest or nothing will come up at all). While I was writing one of the sections of this chapter, my oldest daughter (who is 10 years old) came to see some of the books that I was re-reading to

find specific quotations. This particular Brazilian book, *The Clown and the Psychoanalyst*, from Dunker and Thebas (2019), has a white cover with a red balloon tied up to a chair, which seems to be floating in the air. It eventually caught her attention and, by reading the title and other information in its first pages, she told me one interesting child-*ish* creative joke—which would go unnoticed if I was not attentive and properly listening to this interaction. In Portuguese, the word Psychoanalyst is *Psicanalista*, which sounds like *Piscina* (swimming pool). Noticing that, she asked me ‘why are you reading a book about a clown and someone who knows everything about swimming pools?’—which she called a ‘*piscina*-lista’ (or swimming pool analyst). I did think it was a joke, but it turned out to be an actual doubt, instead. I started laughing because of the ‘joke’, and then she started laughing because of me! She was not joking at all! She was just curious! We engaged in a joyful exploration of what a swimming pool expert could be and which issues he would be discussing with a clown. What was a smart fun joke for me, for her was definitely a moment of engagement with both the book and me; a relationship that just happened because she took the risk of asking a question and I was open to listening to her. It is worth noting that this conversation would not be possible if my daughter were talking to someone who does not understand Portuguese (as the similarities between the words ‘*psicanalista*’ and ‘*piscina*’ does not occur in English, for instance). Does that ring a bell regarding the importance of our home-language to the way we listen and relate to each other?

Chapter 5. Methodology and Axiology: a Framework for Beyond Common Sense Listening

5.1. Quick Recap: Theoretical Attunements in a short breath

This section addresses a brief overview concerning the three lenses (or auditory attunements) of this research—Critical, Indigenous, and Clown—and how they relate with data that glows. I will present a concise understanding of what, for me and for this research, those attunements embrace.

5.1.1. *To my Knowledge, What Represents a Critical Lens in this Research?*

Key words and ideas: *conscientização*, *praxis*, dialogue, anti-oppressive education, anti-coloniality, relations of power, awareness of the structures of power that rule most of our actions and intentions, liberation, transformation, decolonization, the not-yet, other possible worlds, refusal, political and social consciousness-raising, emancipation, feminist methodologies, multiplicity, amplifying counter narratives.

This auditory attunement is closely linked to relations of power (colonialism, gender, class, race). It would be key if we all could learn how to identify and trace how these relations shape identity, experience, voice, and beliefs, which happens often through reflexivity. In addition, in this paradigm, counter-narratives are also a platform to discuss data, knowledge, systems of power and general experiences of privilege or oppression experienced by certain groups of people.

Key theorists for my understanding of a Critical lens are: Adichie (2009; 2014), Davis (199; 1996), Fanon (2004; 2008), Freire (1970; 2021), Gadotti (2007), Greene (1986), hooks (1994), and Madden (2016; 2019a; 2019b).

5.1.2. To my Knowledge, What Represents a Traditional Indigenous Lens in this Research?

Key words and ideas: reciprocity and relationality, holistic education, accountability, spirituality, knowledge is relational, land and nature are both knowledge and medicine, cyclical knowledge, oral traditions, ceremonies, seven generations principle, medicine wheel, cosmos influence, language and culture are living processes, it takes a whole community to raise a child, respect, interrelatedness, *perspectivism*, and storytelling.

This orientation works in an onto-epistemological way of understanding data and knowledge as organically emerging from context and relationality. Besides, weaving together what we know and how we live are key in the pursuit for a good, respectful, and reciprocal life (with/in nature).

These are some key theorists/references that support my understanding of an Indigenous lens: Archibald (2008), Donald (2009; 2013; 2019), Kanu (2007; 2011), Krenak (2020; 2022), Tuck and Yang (2014a; 2014b), Werá (2016), and Wilson (2008).

5.1.3. To my Knowledge, What Represents a Clown Lens in this Research?

Key words and ideas: vulnerability, delivering the whole body to the conversation, self-awareness, flexibility, abdicate our own certainties, unselfishness, being a loser, openness, willingness to take risks, overt and covert criticality, humour, unlearn and undress the countless versions of yourself, emptying out, hospitality, not being a step ahead but rather a step behind, the void as a movement towards the other.

The Clown attunement supports a form of data analysis and knowledge construction that (a) defies power dynamics; (b) is relationship-based; (c) encourages self-reflection; (d) uses

humour to help people unlearn and undress previous assumptions and experiences; and (e) is related to improvisation and drama.

Key theorists, references and inspirations for my understanding of a Clown perspective are: Ballas (2021), Dunker and Thebas (2019), Johnstone (1999), Thebas (2009, 2020).

5.2. Theory-Informed Listening Encounters: a Methodological Overview

As a settler, an immigrant researching on this land, I knew I would have to assemble a contextual-based methodology that honoured cultures, knowledge, and habits that I did not know in advance. Therefore, based on the CIC theoretical framework and inspired by, among others, Smith-Gilman's (2018) listening-oriented research¹³, I used a theory-informed methodology (supported by Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) *Thinking with Theory*¹⁴) to design listening-based encounters.

Approaches such as Tupi's seven types of listening (Werá, 2016), Davis' (1996) hermeneutic listening, and Dunker and Thebas' (2019) active + playful listening are at the core of the process of designing data assemblage (Nordstrom, 2015)¹⁵ and analysis methods. The creation, adaptation and contextualization of such methods for this research in and for every stage was also scaffolded by theories such as Archibald's (2008) holistic education, Madden's

¹³The methodology of listening designed by Smith-Gilman (2018) is relational and reciprocal, and it comprises a “method of hearing, reflecting on, and attending to multiple perspectives in the research process” (p. 347). Furthermore, she advocates for a culturally sensitive approach that challenges Western practices and understandings: “relationships, conversations, and listening have to take on significant roles” (Smith-Gilman, 2018, p. 347) if we are looking for a re-signification of educational bonds outside of the single narrative based on a dominant Eurocentric worldview.

¹⁴As a researcher, I tried to engage in “reading-the-data-while-thinking-the theory” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) with the only difference that ‘reading’ is not the best word here—maybe ‘wondering’ or even ‘listening to’ would be better.

¹⁵According to Nordstrom (2015), data assemblage welcomes, among other things, conversational data in which both living, non-living subjects and objects fold together, as well as “*perhaps data*—data that I do not and may never know” (p. 167). Furthermore, she believes that “[t]hese folding, fibrous, and connective—rhizomatic—data create beautiful lines of thought that refuse categorization. ... These lines form an assemblage that I am still assembling even though I am no longer in the field, whatever and wherever that is” (p. 167).

(2019a; 2019b) counter-stories towards a Truth and Reconciliation Education, Fidyk's (2013b) generative silence, Dunker and Thebas' (2019) 4Hs of listening, and Freire's (2021) dialogical *praxis*. These methods and ethical attitudes have helped me create space for co-enactment and respectful dialogues about beliefs, hurdles, and previous experiences in relation to an education for reconciliation and for a culturally responsive future.

Weaver and Snaza (2017) also shaped my methodological intentions by encouraging me to think differently:

contemporary 'educational research' (...) spends too much of its energy on describing and fine-tuning methods that are wholly inadequate to the more-than-human world. What we need is a revolt against existing approaches, and the ways that our field fetishizes 'research methods' by taking them as the crucial—and almost only—indicator of the quality of scholarship. In order to experiment with new approaches, we have to stop believing in 'methods', we have to stop performing them properly. (p. 1056)

Thus, according to Weaver and Snaza (2017), methodocentrism has been institutionalized, which causes problems in most humanistic research methodology such as the favoring of seeing over other senses and how researchers construct and use data (p. 1056). Otherwise, they suggest that “[e]ducational researchers must come to invite the (previously) inaudible voices of non-humans into their discussions if we hope to have any relevance in our more-than-human world” (Weaver & Snaza, 2017, p. 1059). And I do support (and was impacted by) their encouragement to revolt against the capital-M Method and try new approaches that better resonate with our more-than-human world—though with caution as I have never done any of this before. As a counterpoint to the overuse of a visual sense (“coding act as a way of seeing”

data, for instance, which is “a remnant of positivism” [Weaver & Snaza, 2017, p. 1059]), Weaver and Snaza (2017) recommend listening approaches. According to them, these approaches might offer “a different way to know; one that is shared by other beings and objects, open and connected not only to human ways of knowing but also non-human ways of knowing” (p. 1059).

I needed to let go of the rigidity of ‘conventional’ methods and accept the challenge to make this process more fluid, more organic, and more imaginative. I tried to get familiar with different methods, from the positivist to the post-humanistic ones, with all of my senses and perceptions—and actually, not properly performing most of these conventional methods was both a refusal (to the capital-M Method) and an affirmation (to the more-than-human kinship I have been seeking).

Although several scholars believe that ‘interviews’ are a good method for listening-based research—Sturm (2000), for instance, used “[i]nterviews and observations at organized storytelling events [to] provide the data” (p. 287)—I avoided calling any of this project’s meetings an ‘interview’ due to its inclination to colonize the space (A. Fidyk, Feb 2022, personal communication). That is why I preferred *encounters* designed upon the CIC theoretical framework. Kuntz and Presnall (2012), for example, suggest a “wholly engaged encounter, a means for making accessible the multiple intersections of material [and immaterial, I would add] contexts that collude in productive formations of meaning” (p. 733), and that idea did help me forge the process of data assemblage.

Even though I will properly present the methods in a subsequent section, it is important to display (see Table 1) an overview of how they connect to the theories and listening approaches previously discussed.

Research stage	Name	Main listening-based approach(es)	Purpose
Data assemblage (phase 1)	Individual conversations	Active listening	To (re)ignite a joyful and welcoming relationship
Data assemblage (phase 2)	Playful encounters	(i) Tupi's Left, Earth, Water and Fire ears (ii) Playful listening	(i) to encourage an enactment-related approach as a way of listening to and feeling data emerging (ii) to confront usual relations of power in a research setting
Data assemblage (phase 3)	Focus group	Hermeneutic listening	(i) to incite collective learning (ii) to interrogate taken-for-granted assumptions (iii) to listen to, share, and imagine stories related to Indigenous, Clown, and Critical educational practices
Data analysis (phase 1)	Listening to the plots	Tupi's Left, Earth, Water and Air ears Holistic listening	To re-live the contextual conversations and particular nuances of each encounter
Data analysis (phase 2)	I-stories	Hospice and Host listening	To add a layer to my engagement with stories shared and the person behind the participant
Data analysis (phase 3)	Listening to critical voices	Hermeneutic listening	To listen to the multiple voices and themes that work for/against the research questions

Table 1: Listening approaches and their goals/applications

For either of these parts of the research, I acknowledge that my involvement cannot be neglected and that I must “make choices about points of view that highlight the details and voices experienced in the field” (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 101). This means that practicing reflexivity and being aware of my implication in the process of listening *to* participants’ encounters and listening *for* relational and contextual data support an enhanced perception of how my presence and positionality may have affected participants’ engagement and shared stories.

According to Fidyk’s *animated* orientation, “as things happen due to its own agency, it stays unfolding and emerging even after the actual encounter, so it's important for the interviewer to stay connected to the participants” (A. Fidyk, Feb 2022, personal communication). Thus, my intention was to keep proximity with the participants after the encounters (to stay connected to each of them, to accommodate those still palpable feelings and memories, or even to unpack some ideas and covert meanings), which indeed happened—though I had to be attentive so as not to overwhelm participants with too much information and excessive requests. Gladly, they were all welcoming and showing the intention to keep supporting this project even during the process of writing this thesis. Any different attitude or decision would spark a butterfly effect and create a wave of modifications across data gathering and analysis stages—and thus a different thesis would be born.

5.3. Recruitment of Participants

I recruited five secondary school teachers working for a Greater Edmonton school district to participate in this project—and there was no additional criterion. Although it was not a requirement, having a prior connection to the researcher was an asset as it would supposedly

accelerate the connections and deepen the conversations, encounters, and stories’ contextualization. As such, I began the recruitment process by inviting colleagues who were enrolled in (or had just graduated from) graduate programs in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. At the end of this process, I received four confirmations from former classmates who wanted to join the team of participants and, thankfully, another colleague that could not join the group (as she was about to give birth to her first child) suggested two new names—one decided to step back due to personal commitments, and the other one accepted the invitation. The team was thus assembled: four women (who were once my classmates in graduate school) and one man (who I did not have a prior relationship with) —all non-Indigenous teachers coming from diverse fields of study: Social Sciences, English Language Arts, or Chemistry and Physics.

The decision to include only secondary teachers as participants was due to my field of practical expertise and theoretical study. In addition, I believe that Junior High and High School represent the phases in which students start getting deeper into discussions that include or are related to, among other topics, Indian Residential Schools’ legacy, intergenerational trauma, as well as self-awareness, critical consciousness, and future-oriented actions. Also, relationships between students, teachers, and knowledge can start to crack or destabilize in these grades due to a natural teen-aging process and the tendency that some teachers have of controlling their classrooms (afraid of adolescents’ capacity of disrupting and recreating norms—which might be good or bad, depending on the viewpoint).

Given that each Secondary teacher took part in one individual meeting, one playful encounter, and one focus group, to have more than five participants would not be a feasible goal for a Master project (due to time restriction, first and foremost). Furthermore, a focus group with

five participants enables a more appropriate space and available time for each teacher to explore shared, and potentially contested, perspectives in a dynamic context that pursues creativity, relationality, and criticality. This sample size is consistent with qualitative research that focuses on improving self-awareness, critical consciousness, and reciprocal relationships, which generally privilege depth of analysis over number of participants.

All of the participants wittingly signed the provided Informed Consent Form that assured, among other things, that they had the right to withdraw from the study or certain parts of it without providing a reason, at any time, and without any negative impact for them.

I offered humble gifts of appreciation (e.g., a gift card, snacks, and car-park coupons) to each participant, as this is a practice that resonates with a respectful and reciprocal research protocol. More importantly, I constantly tried to honour and value, in many ways, teachers' shared experiences, stories, vulnerabilities, and knowledge.

5.4. Ethics and Other Axiological Orientations

Beyond all of the ethics-related topics approved by the Research Ethics Board (REB) of the University of Alberta, (e.g., confidentiality, artifacts collected, recruitment of participants, and risk assessment), this short section endeavours to briefly address the axiology of this project from a wider point of view.

With effect, I was impacted by Wilson's (2008) ideas, which support that "the shared aspect of an Indigenous ontology and epistemology is relationality (relationships do not merely shape reality, they are reality)" and, moreover, "[t]he shared aspect of an Indigenous axiology and methodology is accountability to relationships" (p. 7). He also encourages researchers to select research topics, methods

of data collection, and forms of analysis that are relationally accountable to participants, artifacts, knowledge, and land—which was a key orientation for me.

By choosing listening methods that honour distinguished forms of knowledge and multiple worldviews, I was actually “bring[ing] relationships together” (Wilson, 2008, p. 8), which means being reciprocal and accountable for the holistic more-than-human relationality in a humble and vulnerable way.

5.4.1. Naming Participants: an Ethical Consideration

To protect and care for the participants’ identities and shared stories, through the documents approved by the REB, I recommended that they should be identified through a pseudonym, which was in resonance with school districts’ requirements.

Therefore, to guarantee this confidentiality, I sought some studies that resonated with my project’s axiology and approached this topic. I selected Allen and Wiles’ (2016) article, which aimed at answering the question “[h]ow do researchers name people respectfully in research projects?” (p. 149), so that I could better attend to the participants’ preferences. Then, following the authors’ suggestions, even though I knew that I should have started this process of creating pseudonyms earlier on this project’s timeline, I still opted to involve participants in this process. Such a decision might psychologically, socially, and/or culturally impact them, and asking each participant to choose a nickname that best suits their identities was a form of being ethically respectful. After Allen and Wiles (2016), I agree that the use of pseudonyms in a research context has been turning into “a far more nuanced act of research, affected by issues of power and voice, methodological and epistemological standpoint, and considerations of the research consumers” (p. 153). This new orientation supports a “shift from ‘paternalistic’ researcher

allocating names to a more nuanced engagement with participants” (Allen & Wiles, 2016, p. 153).

Although I really wanted to talk to each of them face-to-face about this matter, due to my bad planning I ended up having this conversation via email after all of the encounters. In my opinion, this was a key factor to receive all-but-one answers alike: ‘I’m fine with you choosing my pseudonym!’ Although I do believe they did mean it, I acknowledge that it would be even better if I had done it otherwise: properly inviting them in advance to have ownership upon this issue would have been more respectful. Only one of the female participants, though, chose her own pseudonym (Dasha).

Knowing that “[t]houghtful naming is a way of acknowledging a relationship with our participants where there is ongoing contact” (Allen & Wiles, 2016, p. 162), I opted for new first names, which endeavours to bring vicinity and closeness back to the forefront, instead of using alphanumeric codes (such as P1, for participant 1) or disguised surnames (such as Mr. S, for participant Soares). Thereby, the male participant became Adam, and the four women are now Dasha, Anna, Emma and Patricia—names that were all approved at the end of the day.

5.5. Methods for Assembling, Gathering, Generating, Feeling, and Wondering (with and about) Data

The proposed research involved three encounters for generating, witnessing, gathering or feeling data—or, to cite Alexandra Fidyk (Feb 2022, personal communication), to “give room to let things happen”. The first one was a 1-hour conversation with each participant; the second phase took place a couple of weeks later and it was a 1.5-hour playful encounter; and the third meeting was a 2-hour focus group with all of the teachers together.

All phases occurred face-to-face in places selected by them. All encounters were audio-recorded and the focus group was also video-recorded to add another layer to what was emerging and unfolding among us all: gestures, reactions, silences, intentions, affections, uncertainties, etc.

I also asked the participants to select three photographs/pictures to represent their understanding regarding the connection between listening approaches and fruitful relationships within educational contexts. As a suggestion, they might have been related to a significant place to them as teachers/listeners, to represent an emotion that frequently stands out to them while teaching/listening, and to display a restriction for listening. School districts also demanded that photos being provided did not include any faces of individuals, so I asked teachers to pay attention to the not-only-human possibilities of listening (some of them preferred to pick free images on the internet instead of using their own photographs, which was also appropriate and good for a fruitful conversation). Although these photos are not a primary source of data, they were key as a warm-up conversation prior to our playful encounter enactment.

I designed the research questions¹⁶ and the encounters' prompts in a way that, following Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), they “could provide thematic [and relational] knowledge and also contribute dynamically to a natural conversation flow” (p. 158). It is important to assure that they were all planned and structured to welcome, inspire, and provoke participants' stories. Protocols and guidelines for these encounters are thoroughly presented on Appendix A (individual conversation), Appendix B (playful encounter) and Appendix C (focus group), but, at this point,

¹⁶ Quick recap:

- driving inquiry: What could a listening-based pedagogy entail?
- research questions: What are the contextual factors that contribute to and constrain listening as pedagogy? How does listening shape human and other-than-human relationships in educational contexts? What role can story-listening play in researching, teaching and learning?

I think it would be interesting to share with you some of these prompts and what they might have offered throughout the three phases of this research's data *wondering*¹⁷.

During the individual conversations, I tried to get ourselves involved in curiosities and inquiries such as (a) in educational contexts, who/what are you *listening to* and who/what are you *listening for*?; (b) would you please share a story about a moment where awkward silence took place in your classroom?; (c) may you please tell me a story to represent how you cultivate relationships with your students?; (d) how often do you and your students share your vulnerabilities, uncertainties, fears, or traumas with each other?; and (e) have you ever designed a lesson that centres listening?

The second phase was indeed the most powerful one for me. From its initial conceptualization until its final analysis, everything that emerged from it did impact me a lot. It was an opportunity to “stay true to the experiences, moments, feelings, and agency of other more-than-human interactions” (A. Fidyk, Feb 2022, personal communication). Each playful encounter was divided into three parts:

i. *Warming-up: situating the self*. Be aware of the inner-self, be aware of the outer-self, feel the connections, empty out, resonate with everyone and everything. This first part encouraged a conversation about the three photographs chosen by the participant, and I expected it to provoke dialogues regarding ‘why did you select these photos?’; ‘which emotions were involved in these

¹⁷ Wonder is “this liminal condition, suspended in a threshold between knowing and unknowing, that prevents wonder from being wholly contained or recuperated as knowledge, and thus affords an opening onto the new” (MacLure, 2013, p. 228). I will discuss this idea in more depth in the following pages.

situations?'; 'how do you use your own body as a listening device?'; 'which not-only-human relationships do you usually attend to?'

ii. *Enacting: the show*. Be present, be attentive, be respectful, be connected, be open, be in resonance. This activity aimed at enacting an educational situation and understanding the different outcomes that might unfold from contexts in which both active listening and Tupi's seven ears are present and encouraged. Both participant and researcher co-designed and co-enacted this five-minute scene, which led us to a conversation regarding relationality, openness, power imbalance, and embodied listening.

iii. *Wrapping-up: reflecting and recentering*. Listen to the environment, stay open, be grateful, stay self-connected, be changeable, stay in resonance. The last part of this encounter enabled us to recall some sayings, listenings, movements, possibilities, and other parts of the enactment so that we could connect the story-dots (what/how/why happened?). In addition, we tried to remember the feelings that took control of our bodies during the scene, moments of silence, and other agential artifacts that may have contributed to the story. By reflecting on the participant's choices and understandings, I was able to not only witness how listening could take place within this teacher's assumptions or practices, but actually co-participate in a collaborative listening situation.

The focus group occurred near one month after the end of the second phase of encounters and it was held in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta—a place that was familiar to all of the participants. In order to help create a safe space where everyone would feel comfortable to share uncertainties, perceptions, experiences, and contributing to each other's stories, I provided them in advance with a handout that included some excerpts of the Critical +

Indigenous + Clown literature review as well as the key prompts I would use to initiate our dialogical conversations. Those shared excerpts supported all of the discussions so that we could develop a collective understanding of them.

Some of the focus group conversations were sparked by invitations such as (a) does anyone have a story about student-led classes and activities which helped you experience the art of listening?; (b) do you have any stories about not-only-human encounters that could be conceived as fruitful, nurturing relationships in an educational context?; (c) have you ever witnessed or tried either of these perspectives (Critical, Indigenous, Clown) in an educational context/environment?

To engage with the multi-layered knowledge that emerged from encounters, enactments, and conversations, it was also important to support a welcoming and safe space—a container (Lossie, 2013; A. Fidyk, Feb 2022, personal communication). Silence was also a powerful tool for a reciprocal and respectful engagement: it was crucial to an ethical attunement. Silence is indeed a key part of the process of emptying out¹⁸—which resonates with both Clown perspectives (such as the process of recognizing and accepting our own void) and the animated orientation (Fidyk, 2013a; 2016) through which this research also navigates.

¹⁸ According to Lossie (2013), “emptying is so hard to define. It’s amorphous. It has no edges. It clearly falls into that category of “you just had to be there”. During this stage we—each person sitting in the circle—begin to put down our notions, our expectations, our judgments—all those things that keep us from being in community with this particular group of people. In essence, we toss our masks into the center of this growing safe container. There is a clear energy shift during this stage—a movement from the raucous, often rapid-fire voice of chaos, to a slower pace. Spaces actually start occurring between words, between speakers, between my thoughts. It becomes easier to breathe. I feel less afraid. And here I meet the Silence” (p. 131). This briefly represents my way of being present, ethical, respectful, reciprocal, and open to what might have emerged.

5.6. The Data Analysis Rollercoaster

During this data analysis journey, many questions kept on surrounding my head for quite some time, such as ‘should I transcribe the encounters?’, ‘how should I code the transcripts?’, or ‘how can I analyze data in a listening rather than a visible way?’ —but Weaver and Snaza (2017) were a resounding voice in my head: ‘you have to stop performing these inappropriate methods!’

With a plain experience on coding transcripts (a task learned as a Graduate Research Assistant), I initially assumed that it was the only possible option to analyze data. However, inspired by Kuntz and Presnall (2012), I started thinking about a way of engaging with, not against, data (p. 740). Thereby, I should “join a whole-body listening, a responsive listening” (Kuntz & Presnall, 2012, p. 740), or just “dwell in the purposeless, metaphorical process of *becoming with knowing*” (Kuntz & Presnall, 2012, p. 738, emphasis in original). Regardless of my fascination with this ‘becoming with knowing’ possibility, doubts were still smashing my thoughts: ‘how am I supposed to do it, then?’

That was when I came to meet the *Listening Guide*, from Carol Gilligan, through other scholars who used this method of analysis—Madden (2016) and Levi-Hazan and Harel-Shalev (2019), for instance. Also, Gilligan et al. (2003) helped me understanding that this guide

is designed to open a way to discovery when discovery hinges on coming to know the inner world of another person. Because every person has a voice or a way of speaking or communicating that renders the silent and invisible inner world audible or visible to another, the method is universal in application. The collectivity of different voices that compose the voice of any given person—its range, its harmonies and dissonances, its

distinctive tonality, key signatures, pitches, and rhythm—is always embodied, in culture, and in relationship with oneself and with others. (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 157)

Even though my perception of listening-based methods is that they should not be universal (because listening is contextual and relational, which asks for unique or at least re-re-re-adapted methods), this guide indeed inspired my project’s design of analysis—for instance, it supports a collectivity of different voices in each and every person, or a “tuning into the polyphonic voice” (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 157) undergirded by cultural and relational experiences, which does resonate with my intentions.

The *Listening Guide* suggests four steps of data analysis: listening for the plot, I-poems, listening for contrapuntal voices, and composing an analysis. Nonetheless, Gilligan et al. (2003) suggest that researchers who intend to use this method should “read the texts (...) through multiple times, with each listening tuning into a particular aspect” (p. 159), which is quite relatable. They explain that, even though researchers would be reading the transcripts, these are *listening* and not *reading* steps “because the process of listening requires the active participation on the part of both the teller and the listener” (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 159) —I did believe, though, that the CIC framework could still ameliorate these steps to better suit this project.

Acknowledging that “each listening is not a simple analysis of the text but rather is intended to guide the listener in tuning into the story being told on multiple levels and to experience, note, and draw from his or her resonances to the narrative” (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 159), I started forging my data analysis journey upon it. Then I perceived that what I was looking for was not necessarily (or exclusively) a listening methodology; actually, I was trying to listen *to* data and *for* what emanates from data—which relates to MacLure’s (2013) idea of ‘wonder’.

[Wonder] can be felt on occasions where something—perhaps a comment in an interview, a fragment of a field note, an anecdote, an object, or a strange facial expression—seems to reach out from the inert corpus (corpse) of the data, to grasp us. These moments confound the industrious, mechanical search for meanings, patterns, codes, or themes; but at the same time, they exert a kind of fascination, and have a capacity to animate further thought. (...) Wonder is not necessarily a safe, comforting, or uncomplicatedly positive affect. It shades into curiosity, horror, fascination, disgust, and monstrosity. (MacLure, 2013, pp. 228-229)

Furthermore, data as *wonder* is relational (MacLure, 2013, p. 229). Wonder flows and glows with “the movements of desire and intensity that connect bodies—human and nonhuman, animate or inanimate, virtual and actual, including bodies of knowledge—in/as an assemblage. We, and the data, do not preexist one another” (MacLure, 2013, p. 229). Actually, we forge each other.

Accordingly, the story-listening way of researching enacts Critical, Indigenous, and Clown perspectives and also engages with other post-human methodologies for gathering, generating, feeling, analyzing, and *wondering* with data. Therefore, the analysis process of this project includes, but is not limited to Kuntz and Presnall’s (2012) ‘becoming with knowing’; Gilligan and colleagues’ (2003) ‘Listening Guide’; and MacLure’s (2013) ‘wonder’.

As a graduate student, I am taking all parts of this research as an opportunity to learn, which means that I do not expect this thesis to be perfect or to provide the final answers for my own and others’ inquiries and uncertainties. Due to that, those three theories (‘becoming with knowing’, the ‘Listening Guide’; and data as ‘wonder’) were indeed helpful as they pushed me to

an all-senses engagement and dedication to see, read, listen, and relate to all kinds of data. This whole-self delivery also resonates with Tupi's seven types of listening (Werá, 2016), especially the Left Ear (openness and welcoming), the Earth Ear (whole body listening, which includes our senses and perceptions in relation to the environment), and the Air Ear (reflective listening that cares for the soul and spirit).

Through an understanding that transcripts, as a primary artifact of our encounters, “privileges a voiceless-voice, one that draws from an all-too-easy separation of the discursive from the material” (Kuntz & Presnall, 2012, p. 733), I often revisited “the recorded interview, [returning] to the sound of voices, laughter, pauses, footsteps, the noise of hallways, the wind, cars, and the movement of the microphone” (Kuntz & Presnall, 2012, p. 737). It is not that I completely abandoned the transcripts; rather, I tried to interact with all of the multiple sources and senses to ‘become with knowing’ (Kuntz & Presnall, 2012).

Therefore, to help me soothe those dizzying questions that were going round and round in my head, I rooted this project's data analysis in the *Listening Guide* (Gilligan et al., 2003), though with a few adaptations. The resulting method of analysis comprises:

i. *Listening for the plot(s)*¹⁹: instead of initiating by reading the text in order to listen for the context—as suggested by Gilligan et al. (2003)—I preferred to re-live the context by opening my Left, Earth, Water, and Air ears (Werá, 2016) to listen to the encounters' audio and video

¹⁹ After Gilligan et al. (2003), I “begin by first getting a sense of where we are, or what the territory is by identifying the stories that are being told, what is happening, when, where, with whom, and why. . . . In this plot listening, we also attend to our own responses to the narrative, explicitly bringing our own subjectivities into the process of interpretation from the start by identifying, exploring, and making explicit our own thoughts and feelings about, and associations with, the narrative being analyzed” (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 160).

recordings. This step does resonate with Archibald's (2008) holistic approach to listening as well.

ii. *I-stories*²⁰: based on the I-poem suggested by Gilligan et al. (2003), I read the transcripts and searched for participants' sentences starting with 'I' in selected stories so that I could better feel and connect with the person who was telling those stories. This step helped me understand "how the interviewees speak about themselves before we interpret [or engage with] their narrative[s]" (Levi-Hazan and Harel-Shalev, 2019, p. 398)—which resonates with both Wilson (2008) and Donald (2020) who, as previously mentioned, believe that relationality relies upon knowing more about who is speaking before engaging with their stories. Furthermore, this procedure was drawn upon Dunker and Thebas' (2019) third and fourth Hs of listening—Hospice and Host—which pay attention to participants' carried, shared and transmitted experiences and stories, inviting them to be who they are, opened to the foreigner and the stranger (in themselves and in the other), with all inconsistencies and contradictions.

iii. *Listening for critical voices*²¹: this stage "brings the analysis back into relationship with the research question[s]" (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 164) by listening to the multiple voices and facets of the stories while critically connecting these voices to either I-stories, research questions, and the CIC theoretical framework. I attended to this goal via either re-reading to transcripts or re-

²⁰ This step, which provided me with a 'poetic' listening-based story-line, is "a crucial component of a relational method in that tuning into another person's voice and listening to what this person knows of her- or himself before talking about him or her is a way of coming into relationship that works against distancing ourselves from that person in an objectifying way" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, as cited in Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 162).

²¹ Even though Gilligan and colleagues's (2003) third step was more related to counter-points whereas mine holds a broader critical viewpoint, both of these options focus on "leaving a trail of underlinings, notes, and summaries each time, the researcher now pulls together what has been learned about this person in relation to the research question. In essence, an interpretation of the interview or text is developed that pulls together and synthesizes what has been learned through this entire process and an essay or analysis is composed" (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 168).

listening to the recordings—depending on the participant, issue, or context. Ideas such as dialogical actions (Freire, 2021) and counter-stories (Strong-Wilson, 2007; Madden, 2019a, 2019b) support this analysis. The critical features of Davis' (1996) hermeneutic listening (interrogation, confrontation, imagination) were also key in this part of the process of data analysis.

In the first stage—*Listening for the plot(s)*—I listened to the recordings in a chronological order: individual conversations, then playful encounters, and, at last, the focus group. Doing so enabled me to compare different perspectives in each phase of data witnessing, which helped me plot the multiple plots as a joint collectivity of story-lines to support my overview of this journey.

After that, I roamed the second stage of analysis—the *I-stories*—through a different pathway, one that privileged participants over phases of encounters (thus five trains of thought). By doing so, I felt like I was able to understand a little bit more about each of them and how they connect to and situate themselves into their own stories. This stage did not intend to compare participants' *I-stories*; instead, I was only interested in joining each of their worlds.

Finally, during the third stage—*Listening for critical voices*—I opted to revisit the encounters backwards. The decision to start with the focus group enabled me to analyze the aftermath of teachers' voices throughout phases 1, 2 and 3. Going back to the second and first meetings was an opportunity to look for touchstones to support these processes of assembling their multiplicity of critical and counter-voices about listening-related approaches in educational contexts.

5.7. Story time: What Have I Un/learned, then?

The example I selected to represent my learning journey throughout this chapter's conception and writing relates to an obstacle that forced me to redesign one of my encounters.

It is indeed worth noting that I initially planned the second phase of data gathering to be a workday observation to witness how teachers translated their knowledge and perceptions regarding listening approaches into practice. However, due to remaining COVID-19 restrictions, one specific School Board for which most of the participants worked for asked me to reconsider this arrangement. It took me a couple of weeks to re-design this encounter and, at the end of the day, I was quite thankful. I ended up having a chance to create a playful encounter, which came to be much more creative, against the capital-M Method, and in resonance with my research framework. At the end of the day, all five participants (including those ones who worked for other districts) met me for this playful encounter—and I happily left the workday observation for another opportunity.

Curiously and timely, when I met Patricia for this encounter, she told me that she just got to know that she was about to leave her job as a teacher as she was invited to join another educational team—she was heading towards a new job: being an educational consultant within a tech company. Thus, both of us had a great chance to use our second meeting to talk about this novel perspective.

This whole situation showed me that I did not need to have all things perfectly arranged. It was certainly good to let some things go in order to accept unforeseen possibilities. I also learned that we, researchers, should not try to control either encounters or data that might be glowing. We just have to be there, feeling it, engaging with it, and welcoming the contributions

of the Universe. This entanglement with data, using De Line's (2016) words, is a representation that "[t]hings are forever in motion, things are forever changing. There is nothing certain. The only thing that is certain is change" (p. 2)—and I am just glad for researching in such an uncertain world!

Chapter 6. Analyzing Data Through Wondering: a Journey Undergirded by Listening

For this thesis, as I am engaging with data that glows, I will not show everything here; many other entanglements might keep glowing after this text is over, and they will certainly push me towards other academic publications. Therefore, for this one, I selected interesting branches of data to shed light on some stories linked to each listening-based attunement—hermeneutic, active + playful, and holistic. Thus, I opted to go deep down in analyzing chunks of my conversations with both Patricia and Emma, who provided promising topics (either in resonance or in dissonance with each other) related to listening and relationships in education. Other participants also contributed a lot to this project and they will appear in this text within particular examples or as part of a conversational thread.

Of course, every viewpoint shown here is shaped and impacted by all (a) Patricia's and Emma's experiences and cultural beliefs; (b) my own interpretation and background, as it does influence the conversations and analysis; (c) other participants' contributions and stories, as they co-generated the focus group discussions; and (d) what has been happening among us—laughs, noises, coincidences, comments, excesses, silences, e-mails, etc—since we all accepted to openly join this project.

In the subsequent sections, therefore, I will draw an overview of each of the three phases of analysis, present Emma's and Patricia's I-stories, as well as discuss three selected critical voices linked to the research questions and theoretical framework. In order to fully engage with the upcoming conversations, I invite you to slow down, feel the shared data-stories, let your inner voice dialogue with the text, analyze the excerpts alongside me, and be welcoming to what might be still emerging among and around us.

By reading this chapter, I hope you feel—just like I felt—that listening in this research assumed various forms: the medium and the message, the disruption and the container, the methodology and the content. Indeed a rollercoaster of intensities and intentionalities.

6.1. Listening for the Plot(s)

Through listening to the encounters' recordings, I was able to perceive how the environment still impacts my listening. First and foremost, it enabled me to carefully listen to both myself as well as the sounds (and silences) that I did not perceive in real time. Either in a noisy coffee shop or in a silent room in the U of A's Faculty of Education, there were many entities participating in our encounters.

Focusing on listening *for* the plots, I was actually listening *to* participants' stories and their relationship with their contexts, especially in the individual conversations. During the playful encounter, though, the enactment of our co-created story was basically the plot itself. In regard to the focus group, the plot came to be the interactions between participants(' stories).

Emma, during her first meeting, for instance, shared four stories concerning experiences related to (a) how fostering relationships kept the students coming back (she works at a public school that focuses on students who are typically over 18 years old); (b) uncomfortable silences and teacher exposure; (c) making mistakes and still being good as a person; and (d) the power of sharing vulnerabilities with students (which does resonate with Dunker and Thebas' [2019] idea of 'unshielded state of power'). All of them were related to her listening (or lack thereof) approaches. Patricia, on the other hand, shared two relevant stories, and both of them related to silence and power imbalance, according to my understanding. The first one concerned a moment in which she was speaking to students about a tough topic—such as holocaust—and having them

in silence (as they did not know how to react or what to add as counter-points); in the second one, Patricia told me about the many times that she felt silenced, usually in interactions with parents, which she linked to not being completely comfortable and allowed to say what she wanted to say due to the system's pressure and control (which might include educational boards, Western cultural beliefs, parents expectations, job contracts, Alberta Teachers Association's recommendations, among other 'ghosts').

Other educational issues that these particular teachers approached in their individual meeting with the researcher include, for Emma: the importance of a safe space for listening, care-based relationships, how key it is for teachers to understand students' background; and for Patricia: the role of gender in listening, consent-based and content-oriented relationships, teaching and clowning as performative actions. These themes are quite relatable to these teachers' personal I-stories and worldviews (as we will see throughout this chapter): whereas Patricia was always adding a Critical perspective to her sayings, Emma was more clown-*ish* by asserting that care, openness and vulnerability are key to her relationships and stories.

Regarding the second phase of meetings, as previously mentioned, participants were asked to suggest roles, themes, and places so that we could co-enact a scene related to listening (or lack thereof) in an educational context. Curiously (and gladly!) each enactment was pretty unique: Dasha designed a scene within a classroom in which I would play the teacher and she would be a student struggling to write a personal narrative; Anna suggested a situation in which she would be the teacher and I would be a textbook conversing with her during a lesson preparation; Adam, on the other hand, preferred a scene to represent a teacher-family conversation within a meeting room, in which I would play a student's father and he would be the teacher with whom this student had had some discordances. Did you perceive that these three

enactments coincidentally represent a conflictual situation? How would active or playful listening, for example, be useful in such situations? What about hermeneutic listening? Who is the protagonist in such situations? I invite you to sit with these questions and reflect about an experience of your own. How would you (re)act to a struggle through any form of listening?

Regarding the other two teachers, Emma opted to act as a student complaining about her current classroom teacher to me, who was playing herself—a teacher for academic support. She chose these roles because she “just thought it would be interesting to see what you would say [in my place]. (...) I was just curious [about] what someone else would say with your luggage instead of mine” (Emma, playful encounter, minute 46). Such an openness to the other was only possible due to her humble and vulnerable way of being relational.

Patricia, who was otherwise facing a different personal situation (she was about to leave her position as a teacher to work in an educational tech company), raised the possibility of enacting this upcoming difficult moment for her: speaking up to her students about her new career plans. We agreed that it would be great if I could play herself while she would embody her own thoughts. Interestingly, she seemed quite relieved to have a chance to vent her bubbling uncertainties: “I feel like, for me, like, it feels good to get my feelings out there” (Patricia, playful encounter, minute 57).

Finally, when it comes to the focus group, it is almost impossible to present what one teacher said without mentioning others' contributions. Differently from the other encounters, the focus group was basically a few multi-layered stories constructed by multiple voices, which were mostly entangled but other times divergent. With respect and curiosity for all micro-stories, we were all able to witness a great conversation that represented a hermeneutic engagement through

listening— though active and all-ears-integrated forms of listening had key roles in this encounter too. To exemplify this mixed approach to listening-oriented topics, I will highlight some sayings and conversations that support this perception. First, Patricia voiced that “we first need to listen to ourselves, in order to be able to actually listen to students or colleagues or even listen to the curriculum. I wonder what that could look like, as well” (Patricia, focus group, minute 10), which reflects both a wonder for what she does not know as well as an acknowledgement for the importance of self-attention. I perceive both Air and Fire ears here: while one is reflective and helps to think about unforeseen stories, the other is related to curiosity. Also, hermeneutic features indeed add another layer to Patricia's contribution if we recall some of Davis’ (1996) points of view, such as being imaginative and participative in both formation and transformation of our experiences.

Furthermore, the next thread is one situation that represents that aforementioned mix of listening-related conversations, and it started with Adam presenting a discussion regarding the many forms of listening:

there are different ways to listen, (...) [for example,] when you're kind of already thinking about what you're going to say, right? When you're trying to argue, when you're arguing your point, and you're already in your mind, like, ‘oh, no’, I'm gonna, like, attack this point and that point. And that's a very different type of listening than when you're trying to get the person's feelings or (...) where they're coming from, etc. And so I think in a class, you know, if you're doing some more debate type of things, or projects, there'd be different ways you could discuss listening to the students like, ‘how are we going to listen to this?’, ‘are we listening to it to come up with a response?’, ‘are we listening to it to see how they're feeling?’ (Adam, focus group, minute 10)

For this excerpt, aside from noticing that Adam was searching for listening approaches that would better support his in-class activities, we can also recall the comparison between the cooperative and the competitive mode of engaging through listening (see page 59). According to Dunker and Thebas (2019), educational approaches such as debates (as mentioned by Adam in the previous saying) promote competition and not cooperation, which means that everyone involved (including the teacher) is holding, at some point and to some extent, a position of power, control, and dominance while others are just passively listening, thinking about what to say next, or not engaging at all—which I do not believe that was what he meant to say, but perhaps it is something that we all unconsciously do oftentimes.

Right after Adam's contribution, Patricia added that she thinks that:

in education, we're still very much, like, working on the factory model, where it's like, students are sitting in rows and they're listening to a teacher but, like, are they really listening? Like, what does that even mean? So I think breaking it down into these, perhaps, different kinds of listening, you could not only, like, make better connections with your students, but your students would also be able to make better connections with each other—if they learned how to listen in different ways (Patricia, focus group, minute 12)

This adds a critical layer to the conversation by asking if the industrial educational model suppresses students' listening and how other forms of listening could break this oppressive approach and promote relationships that are more fruitful and respectful.

Later on, Dasha contributed with an interesting speech that actually invited me to think differently. It indeed encouraged me to move beyond my assumptions and superficial

understanding of this research's features such as 'being vulnerable'. Conversations like this usually put me back on track to be more attentive and empathetic to other people's impressions, multiple understandings, and feelings, as my perspective is surely distinguished from others'. Dasha shared, in this conversation, that she is quite tired and overwhelmed by people saying that

everyone has to be vulnerable, 'you should be so vulnerable!', that it's not safe for everybody to be vulnerable. And I don't think that that should come like not being vulnerable enough should come with this judgment, right? It's like that, 'but you're not vulnerable enough', 'you're not open enough', blah, blah, blah, like not everybody needs to be vulnerable and open. And not like, you don't always have to have those kinds of relationships with your students. Maybe they're not ready for that. (Dasha, focus group, minute 82)

This excerpt is defiant in terms of vulnerability and openness, which circles back to a Clown perspective that supports these features as a door for fruitful relationships. Questions such as 'is everyone ready to be vulnerable?', 'is it really necessary?', 'do we need to be deeply relational to our students at all times?' also brought the negotiatory and interrogatory characteristics of Davis' hermeneutic listening to challenge the fact that Dunker and Thebas' active listening is for everyone.

As another example of how participants were following the thread of each other's stories in a respectful and cooperative way, for almost 25 minutes they held a single conversation about more-than-human listening and relationships—a theme that, according to all of them, still is quite difficult for us, Western teachers, to experience and effectively understand. This thread started with Emma talking about teachers' relationships with her school's building (they were

moving from an old one, which was more welcoming, with collaborative spaces that were favorable to cultivate relationships, to a new building that seemed like a fish bowl, which made students feel more exposed and ashamed when looking for support). Anna continued the conversation by adding that her school building was from 1904 and it reminded everyone of an Indian Residential School (even though it was not one). Particularly for their many Indigenous students and some Elders who oftentimes joined some of this school's events, it was not just a "charming" (Anna, focus group, minute 67) building. Due to the (intergenerational) trauma and memories it triggered, relationality, care and openness to learning were not easy to access. It is indeed an example of the importance of listening to spaces, relationships and all of the affordances and restrictions that an architecture might promote in either a forceful or playful way—a discussion that relates to my first research question (concerning human and other-than human relationships).

After that, Dasha contributed by bringing up a discussion on how current classroom settings constrain listening and learning and how outdoor classes otherwise prompt students to be more open and engaged with each other and with the shared content. Finally, Adam added that he feels that collective spaces usually emerge more organically than those that are pre-planned and intended to attend to this purpose. According to him, sometimes "the way that people interact isn't what the architecture allows for" (Adam, focus group, minute 69), which is an interesting topic to spark fruitful discussions concerning if people should learn to listen to contexts and relationships before engaging in the field of education; otherwise, any outside-in approach, knowledge, or contribution would be supporting an only-human, individualistic, rigid education.

By the way, the participants of this project (which were all non-Indigenous) agree that not being culturally aware of what more-than-human relationships and spirituality actually mean is in fact a huge barrier to putting Indigenous forms of listening into practice, such as Tupi's seven ears. When it comes to the playful + active and hermeneutic types of listening, I perceived that most of them still do not find it easy to mess with in-school hierarchy, to promote cooperative instead of competitive activities, to allow joy to enter into (and take control of) their classroom, and/or to understand that future-oriented approaches are not just 'understanding the past in order to imagine the future'—it is actually educating for what 'still isn't' and for the 'not-yet-imaginable' (Gadotti, 2007; Davis & Sumara, 2007), which is quite different.

I am pretty sure that I am not prepared for all of these approaches either. Being aware of it, though, is a crucial first step; it is what makes me shift towards a pedagogy that listens differently *to* and *for* our students. And I believe that these five teachers feel the same way.

To finish this section, I will briefly say that, from my perception, this stage of data analysis did provide a great overview of the encounters' plots. Individual conversations, on the one hand, supported a recognition of our relationships researcher + participant as a work-in-progress, as well as a contextualization for all of us regarding the discussions we were about to deepen. On the other hand, the playful encounters provided me with a chance to live (through enacting) teachers' experiences, struggles, and wonderings; a chance I would not have if I had remained stuck or regretful in relation to the workday observations that I initially planned. These enactments also tightened our bonds by challenging the power imbalances and the colonized space usually held in conventional research interviews. In addition, the focus group effectively delivered a collective and cooperative story-listening experience that I will further discuss in the upcoming sections and chapters.

6.2. I-Stories

As previously articulated, the I-stories are a means to de-objectify the participants, inviting them to a deeper (though not direct) participation within this stage of the research. My task here was to improve my comprehension of their personal characteristics in order to better relate with their stories about listening in education. Not a poem, nor just a story: a poetic, *wonder*-full, I-oriented story line.

Through some of the stories mentioned in the last section, I delved deeper into both Emma's and Patricia's self- and listening-related perception. By highlighting sentences of these stories in which the participant used the word 'I' (and shared feelings, assumptions, uncertainties, experiences, struggles, and expectations), I tried to create another *wonder*-full storyline of who seem to be in relation to those stories. The *wonder* piece of this bond, resorting to MacLure (2013), enabled me to dwell in the "threshold between knowing and unknowing" this participant, which "thus affords an opening onto the new" (p. 228) relationship we were creating—which impacted our listening *to* each other and *for* reciprocity.

All of Emma's I-stories, by the way, relate to 'care'—a topic that emerged across all of her conversations with me. She put it loud and clear that it was key, in her opinion, to an active listening engagement (e.g., one of the pictures she brought to the playful encounter was of an eyeball, which she elaborated on telling me that she thinks that listening, caring, and dedicating full attention are co-participants in an all-senses, embodied way of communicating and engaging with the other). The following are two of Emma's I-stories that were pulled out from the first meeting. With them, you, reader-listener, are invited to *wonder* about the context of each shared story—which is indeed a calling for you to participate in this analysis.

1st Emma's I-story (Emma, individual conversation, minute 36):

I would imagine expanding
 I, just as a person
 what [do] I want, right?
 I want someone to, like, hear what I'm seeing
 I've had to say they understand where I'm coming from
 I matter
 I think it helps to relate [and] expand the relationship
 I'm sorry, that just isn't how things work
 I was having this conversation with my son
 I accidentally gave a test out with the answer key attached to it
 I always give them a test
 I did that
 I was so busy
 I didn't realize
 I approached this
 I thought, oh, my gosh, I gave him the answer
 I marked the test
 I'd ever had the student writing anything for me
 I really had zero idea
 I said, you know, I think that I included the answer sheet
 I cannot be sure
 I asked him to come in
 But I was sitting at home
 I can totally understand
 I don't know, like, I get it
 I don't know. I don't know. I don't know
 I was speaking to my son
 I said, you know, I'm sorry, but I really did
 I had to email this student again
 I said, you know, he's a good kid
 I was so glad that he had heard me saying that he is still a good kid

2nd Emma's I-story (Emma, individual conversation, minute 45):

I think you can see someone willing to open up
 I can share something with my teacher
 I'm not so scared to say something about my life
 I've mentioned that my parents weren't together anymore
 I hear where you're coming from
 I understand that
 I've had similar things in my life
 I don't think that's a bad thing
 I think it allows that relationship to come

These I-stories do relate to careful listening and to an open and vulnerable relationship with her students. In the first one, I can perceive her presenting herself as flawsome and self-aware (e.g., “I didn't realize”, “I don't know. I don't know. I don't know”) and in need of recognition (e.g., “I want someone to, like, hear what I'm seeing”, “I matter”), which does resonate with Dunker and Thebas' (2019) Hospice listening²². This humble approach to being relational does support a deeper connection between teacher and student, which indeed leads to self-awareness and willingness to learn. Did you perceive something different?

In Emma's second I-story, I witness Emma less vulnerable, though still open and eager to invite the other to complement her void (e.g., “I'm not so scared to say something about my life”). She was sharing experiences and struggles in order to invite students to share theirs, which relates to Dunker and Thebas' (2019) Host and Hospital listening²³. And that also resonates with Murphy's (2020) excerpt below, which addresses an understanding of the connection between topics such as openness, hospitality, and relationality:

When you reflect on what someone said, the person's thoughts and feelings take up residence in you. It's an extension of the idea of listening as a form of hospitality. You are inviting someone into your consciousness. And the conversations you care about are the ones you carry with you in memory. (...) Indeed, one of the most gratifying things you can say to another person is *'I've been thinking about what you said'*. (Murphy, 2020, pp. 212-213, emphasis added)

²² Inviting ourselves to be (and think about) who we are, open to the foreigner, in us and in the other, with all inconsistencies and contradictions.

²³ By welcoming what the other says in his own language, signals, and time, one who was once a receiver not only re-share listened stories, but also contributes in the story-thread as well.

It is interesting that this author also links listening as hospitality to an idea similar to Tupi's *perspectivism*, which happens when you 'invite the other into your consciousness'—or into your own perspective.

Patricia's I-stories, on the other hand, do not relate so much to 'care', but to 'consent' and 'content'—concepts that are much more relevant for this teacher's educational relationships and listening approaches. Her first I-story will set the ground for you, reader-listener, to have a better sense of this participant. The second I-story will otherwise deliver a more interesting picture of Patricia as it happened during the enactment of our scene, in which I played herself and she acted as her own thoughts—which did enable me to use it as an I-story because, according to her, "these are all the thoughts that I'm [indeed] having" (Patricia, playful encounter, minute 56).

1st Patricia's I-story (Patricia, individual conversation, minute 34):

I think that's kind of my approach to building relationships
 I teach 250 students
 I didn't get into education because I like kids, or because I like building relationships
 I feel like I built relationships through my love of my content
 I think students can tell when you're passionate about what you're teaching
 ...
 I don't know
 I think that relationships are, they're nuanced
 I think consent is one of those things [that are yet to be uncovered]

2nd Patricia's I-story (Patricia, playful encounter, minute 50):

I'll be my thoughts, I guess
 How am I gonna teach after this?
 I tell them at the beginning of the period, or should I wait?
 How am I going to teach them?
 I'm so thirsty right now my mouth is dry
 I can't breathe
 I don't want them to start freaking out
 I think that I'm just gonna tell them a joke
 I'm acting strange

I feel like I have to tell them right now
 I feel so bad for leaving them in the middle of the year
 I wish I could have [this conversation at] end of the year
 I feel like they already know that I'm leaving.
 I can't believe
 I'm abandoning them
 I feel really selfish right now
 I literally can't believe [name of student] is quiet
 I feel like I just have to spit it out
 How do I tell them though?
 I don't think I can. I don't think I can do this.
 I'm making a mistake, maybe I should stay
 I don't think I've ever had their undivided attention like this before—all of these little eyes on me

This enactment still gives me chills. I am still dwelling in its impact. Were you able to perceive that, despite starting with a concern related to content and not so much with the ongoing moment (e.g., “How am I gonna teach after this?”, “How am I gonna teach them?”), by the end of the scene she was much more relational and visiting her own void, dwelling in the unknown (e.g., “I feel really selfish right now”, “I’m making a mistake, maybe I should stay”)? That was pretty *wonder*-full as she was making meaning of data in real-time, she was “becoming with knowing” (Kuntz & Presnall, 2012), which allowed her to see that “[w]hat looks like a gap, then, finds voice in its affective potential” (Kuntz & Presnall, 2012, p. 738). And it invited her to engage in a self-focused whole-body listening process. So powerful.

6.3. Listening for Critical Voices

The critical interplay between plots/contexts, I-stories, and theoretical framework was what mattered the most for me in this stage of analysis. That is why, during the data analysis process, I had been attentive to Madden’s (2016) suggestion of being “[a]ttun[ed] to the voices, harmonies, and cacophonies [that] support listening for ‘nuance[s], for modulations and silence (such as where ‘I’ turns to ‘you’ or drops out completely), to resist binary categories, and to hear

complexity rather than flatten the data” (Gilligan, 2015, p 72 as cited in Madden, 2016, p. 88). These complex nuances of listening will be represented here through selected critical ‘voices’, which speaks to three main themes: silence, power dynamics, and performance *vs* performativity.

Silence is a topic that navigates across this research’s core questions, encounters, and thesis’ chapters. It indeed emerged, for instance, in Patricia’s encounters with me either as a theme or as an action. Beside the examples already mentioned in this chapter involving this participant, I would like to add that she was the only teacher that for a few times promoted moments of silence alongside me during the playful encounter’s enactment. After her I-stories, in which my perception was that she often practices self-reflection and respects others’ boundaries, I do believe that these silences were eventually intentional, productive, and necessary.

Even though they took no more than ten seconds each (for six times during the enactment, for instance), these moments of silence appeared alongside a deep breathing and a sensation of emptying out in order to prepare the next step. While re-listening to these moments, I understood them as generative silence (Fidyk, 2013a; 2013b)²⁴. Fidyk (2013b) also indicates that silence has its own agency, its own force, its own spirit: “silence is the necessary ground for building knowledge and relationships among self and others, animate and inanimate” (p. 116), which does resonate with what I felt being there alongside her and all of what was happening around us.

This type of silence seemed to me as a counterpoint to an awkward, unwanted type of silence, as it positively impacted our conversations, understandings, and *wonderings*; whereas the awkward one creates such an environment of ‘living on the edge of fear’. As a brief

²⁴ Being bodily, mentally, emotionally and spiritually present; being vulnerable; being open; being relational.

explanation of what this unwanted silence could be, Emma shared that, in such situations, she feels like “we don’t know how long is too long. We don’t want to be there doing nothing” (Emma, individual conversation, minute 19).

Circling back to Patricia’s playful encounter, differently from all other teachers’ enactment, this one was not initiated by anyone’s voice: crucial seconds of silence enabled us, Patricia and I, to connect to our inner selves and enter in a resonance mode—which links to the expected protocol designed for this specific part of the encounter: *be present, be attentive, be respectful, be connected, be open, be in resonance*. Even though her thoughts (played by herself) did not stop speaking for several minutes during the moments that preceded the ‘announcement of leaving’, right after I finally spoke up about it, thoughts became quiet in a way that promoted both respect and resistance. Patricia later told me that she perceived that, until that point, she was in control of the scene, but when the ‘announcement’ was released, she felt like she was not commanding it anymore: thoughts began to listen to and witness the *wonders* that emerged among us. Thoughts were resisting and refusing its own existence. I invite you to remember that, according to Tuck and Yang (2014b) a refusal opens space for recognition and for reciprocity. By turning the gaze upon criticality, it generates, expands, and re-affirms the existence of other possible worlds (Tuck & Yang, 2014b; Gadotti, 2007)—which does support relational and future-oriented listening. Her silence was indeed an example of this expansion and desire for a new world, a new reality, a new being.

Furthermore, as perceived by Emma (another teacher who promoted discussions about silence, despite not allowing it to take control of our conversation), silence can be either (a) related to a Clown way of being (and listening, as a consequence), or (b) a signal of not being

actively critical in regards to social issues—such as the, according to her, Black Lives Matter movement:

by not talking about things that are happening elsewhere, what I am saying? This silence can be very loud. What I am saying by not saying ‘this is not ok’. What message am I sending to people? What are my students hearing by my silence? It’s hard to sit with this silence. (Emma, individual conversation, minute 20)

There are indeed several types of and usages for silence. For me, as a former clown, it is indeed important to silently spend some time with myself before putting on the red nose and welcoming my clown character to use my body to live—in such a moment, silence is everywhere but within me. It looks like the world is in silent mode (and in slow motion) whereas, within me, emotions, organs, spirit, and brain are all erupting like a volcano. And Patricia, by the way, was the only participant who ‘invited’ me into this space to be with myself before ‘entering the stage’ alongside her—another reason why data emerged differently in her playful encounter. It is likely that I was the one who did not invite other participants to be silently dwelling with(in) themselves either; definitely something to improve for my next time as a researcher.

Silence actually participated in most encounters, either through small or huge contributions. When related to real-time reactions, it was indeed fruitful and inspiring (such as in Patricia’s enactment situation), whereas when related to an experience within a shared story, it was usually felt as an example of power imbalance, uncomfortability, or exposure (as cited by both Emma and Patricia in their stories).

Interestingly, Dasha, who is “very sensitive to sound” (Dasha, individual conversation, minute 46), remembered that when Elders come to tell stories to students or teachers in her

school, they never have to elevate their tone of voice because there is no chatting or lack of attention. Somehow silence was generated and encouraged by both their voices' rhythm and story's content: "there's silence because they [students and teachers] are so engaged in listening and imagining and feeling" (Dasha, individual conversation, minute 28) the story. Is it an asset of Indigenous storytellers that most non-Indigenous teachers do not hold? Or is it part of the idea that Indigenous storytellers promote an engagement with the story and story-listeners in a way that it invites everyone to be a protagonist²⁵ in this contextual relationship? Would you interpret Dasha's story differently?

With effect, according to this research's participants, silence is part of the list of contributions for listening-based pedagogies. For teachers who rely on relationality, self-awareness, and culturally responsive approaches to teaching—topics that indeed relate to listening-based pedagogies—silence is certainly generative and supportive. This form of silence was key in dismantling the power dynamics between researcher and participant in Patricia's playful encounter, for example. Accordingly, this research does understand this generative silence as a great contributor for a playful, caring, and relational form of listening.

On the other hand, for teachers who understand students' listening as a form of obedience or individual work, or even do not encourage critical dialogues about social issues, silence is also supportive, but towards the maintenance of oppressive listening, and systemic and relational power imbalances; it also encourages competition over cooperation and belittles other cultures and forms of knowledge that are not Eurocentric and White-oriented. Thus, silence always contributes to some kind of listening. Silence seems to be, then, a problem and a possibility at the

²⁵ According to Dunker and Thebas (2019), in the culture of cooperation (in opposition to a culture of competition), to be a protagonist is to carry the conflict forward, as well as to propagate and represent it.

same time—the lenses you see the world are what matters. One question remains, though: which type of silence do you support or promote? Does your silence encourage relational, culturally responsive, holistic and critical ways of listening? Or is it oppressive and a form of control?

Another important factor appointed by participants as supportive to listening-based pedagogies is exactly the endeavour to break the usual power dynamic between teachers and students (or researcher and participants). They cited that Tupi's idea of *perspectivism* indeed resonates with a teacher's effort to enter into students' worldview as well as allowing them to participate in ours. Conversing with the third research question (concerning the role of story-listening), Patricia added an interesting comment to one of Adam's stories, which started with examples of how he tries to enter into the students' perspectives: in a conversation with a student who had recently ended a relationship with her boyfriend, Adam told us that he was listening to this student sharing her broken-heart feelings, and then he thought that, even though it was a "silly issue", he tried to "see it from her perspective, to really enter into it, to understand [her world]" (Adam, focus group, minute 22). He added that he believes that "what [students] may be needing in that moment is [our] understanding; that's not necessarily a solution, but just a space to kind of hold for them" (Adam, focus group, minute 22).

To add a Critical perspective to it, Patricia resorted to the handout I provided with some Clown and Indigenous perspectives to splice that active + playful listening is a great example of breaking down the power dynamic between, like, teacher and student or like child and adult as well, if you are able to do that, like, instead of jumping in and trying to solve all their problems for them. Because that will just, like, reiterate the power dynamic that's already up in play. (Patricia, focus group, minute 24)

And, agreeing with her, I do believe that, by applying this idea to the context of this research, I was compelled to, as Emma, Patricia and Anna mentioned, break the power imbalance between researcher and participant and make it a safe, equal space for all of us.

To finish this section, the last critical voice I would like to articulate here is the one regarding the understanding of teaching and clowning as a performative act. It all started with Patricia, during her first meeting with me when she raised this point:

I think, as a teacher, education is very performative. Gender is also performative. And so a lot of what I do is performative, perhaps like a clown, in some ways. In order to teach, I think you do have to leave parts of yourself behind, I don't think you can be your full, like, true self, because of the constraints, especially that we're under this province to conform to, like, a neoliberal conception of the human. (Patricia, individual conversation, minute 49)

This excerpt raises questions regarding the difference between *performance* and *performativity*. I wonder (and invite you to wonder with me): did she speak about teaching as performative in relation to performance or to performativity? According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, even though the etymology of the word 'performance' usually relates to the accomplishment, completion of a task, it can be also linked to the result of 'acting', 'representing', 'creating' or 'coming true' (in a theatrical point of view). This makes me think that understanding teaching and clowning as 'performative' actions (related to performance and not to performativity) might represent another possible reality, or the lack of actions in one reality in order to create a different world—which seems pretty reasonable to me. And this is distinguished from Patricia's comparison to gender as performative, because in this case she seems to be talking about

performativity and not about performance (because it is much more related to identity than to positionality in the world, but it is not something crucial for this research right now).

I wonder if understanding clowning and teaching as a performance is either an act of resistance and refusal against the system or a way of hiding our own actual criticalities behind a red nose or a textbook. Short story: although not being too engaged in the politics and the social studies of education at that time, while teaching with a clown nose almost ten years ago, I felt I was more inclined to posit (and not hide) myself and my beliefs towards a critical, contrapuntal, future-oriented educational approach if compared to the classes in which I was not wearing that ‘red mask’. Therefore, I believe that this type of ‘performance’ does involve and encourage the multiplicity of counter-stories, a holistic learning, and a dialogical, active, and cooperative listening, which indeed contribute to listening-based pedagogies.

I also noticed that, in the same excerpt, Patricia recalls the clown idea of ‘being a loser’, of ‘leaving things behind’ —which was a topic discussed alongside participants during the three phases of data gathering. This idea supported her understanding of teaching as a performative (performance) act in a way that it enabled her to hide her vulnerabilities behind a ‘teacher disguise’ —or a clown’s red nose, in cases such as mine as a teacher-clown. She returned to this discussion in the playful encounter, when she questioned herself whether she should either just directly and emotionlessly announce in her classrooms that she was not going to be their teacher anymore, or be indeed vulnerable and true to her emotions and to her students by approaching this issue in a careful way.

Emma, differently than me who became another person when teaching (with a red nose), believes that she, as a teacher, holds exactly the same identity and positionalities as she does as a

person. This perception resonates with her I-stories as she depicts herself as caring, open and vulnerable in a way that she cannot help but be herself. In addition, for her, clowning is, in effect, a likely “unauthentic” (Emma, focus group, minute 30) experience—such as a character performing on stage. She clarifies that it is an interesting and positive asset (e.g., by creating a barrier to protect one’s vulnerabilities and positionalities) rather than a negative feature. Later, by the end of the focus group, both Patricia and Emma agreed that this ‘performative’ way of teaching is, from their Critical perspective, actually “a healthy way to deal with the system and the stuff that we’re under” (Patricia, focus group, minute 106).

What do you think about it all? Is teaching (and clowning) performative? How does it support either playful, active, hermeneutic, or holistic listening anyway? How does it contribute to or constrain listening-based approaches in educational contexts? —these questions do invite us to revisit this project’s research questions and further explore what will be *still* emerging during the next chapter.

6.4. Story time: What Have I Un/learned, then?

This journey of data analysis provided me with some great takeaways, such as a re-orientation to self-awareness as well as a significant improvement as a researcher. Although I am pretty aware of my lack of flow and vast vocabulary when speaking English phrases (differently from writing, reading or even listening, which allows me to do it slower, at my own pace), I did believe that, through a listening-oriented methodology, I would be able to balance this poor performance on speaking with other features. Sadly (albeit a relevant realization), during the process of listening to the audio recordings of individual meetings and playful encounters, I perceived that I voiced too much instead of relying on listening. Oftentimes I was overspeaking

by repeating what the participant just shared so that I could better assimilate their sayings. Not a good idea for a weak speaker, though. Honouring and promoting a (re)generative silence would be much better. Worse than that: I frequently over explained and over contextualized the interview prompts or follow-up questions. This happened perhaps due to the habits I developed as a Master of Ceremonies in both educational events and clown/improv shows. In these situations, I remember feeling the necessity of maintaining the audience engaged between scenes or presentations and, for that, I usually voiced too much resorting to jokes, comments, or stories (in Portuguese, of course). Language is indeed a key issue in the construction of our identity(ies). For instance, I still do not feel like myself when speaking the English language. It is not just a matter of communication; rather, it is a matter of identity (self), relationality (more-than-human other) and collectivity (cultural belonging).

My linguistic instability will decrease over time, I know. In the meantime, I am forging a new character, a new (ever-flowing) identity, which can perhaps replace the other one, or just add another layer to my multitude of identities. My listening skills, in this new context, are also at a beginner level. As a contextual-, cultural-, and linguistic-based feature, listening skills have to be re-learned often. I am indeed running this marathon again.

What soothes this pressure of wanting that old Rafael back (because the new one is still under construction) is revisiting my experiences, memories, and other things that can help me forge this additional layer of identity. This explains a lot about why I brought, for instance, some clown listening practices to these methods of witnessing data (e.g., co-enactment, saying *yes* to the other and to what is still to come, body language and embodied listening, vulnerability, humour, being a step behind and not ahead). Moreover, allowing myself to speak Portuguese sometimes (still knowing that no one here will understand me anyway) is definitely key to

showing people a different portion of who I am. And some of these participants had this opportunity to witness it in a few of our graduate courses' presentations in which I tried to mix languages. I believe that this experience was indeed supportive for all of us to deepen our connections and relationships. In one of these situations, I remember Emma telling me how amazed she was by perceiving the difference in my eyes' gaze, voice's rhythm, and body gestures when speaking Portuguese. Still and importantly, this process of self-understanding and self-listening does resonate with Patricia's belief, which was partially shared before, that

we need to listen to ourselves as educators. And I don't think that happens enough. (...)

And so, I would take this, kind of, in a different direction, and say that, like, we first need to listen to ourselves, in order to be able to actually listen to students or colleagues or even listen to the curriculum. (Patricia, focus group, minute 10)

As teachers, researchers or students, listening to ourselves, to our multiple identities, and to our own I-stories is crucial towards listening to and conversing with the world. As the last act of this chapter, I invite you to contextualize and analyze two I-stories of my own. The first one was generated from a personal story I shared with Patricia during our individual meeting, and my second I-story happened prior to my enactment with Emma. For this one, in particular, I invited the 'we' to the story because I perceived that I almost did not speak in first person at all during this meeting, which is quite relatable to Emma's belief of mutual caring, of 'there is no me without you' in such a moment. In addition, inspired by Kanu's (2022) idea of conjugating the verb 'we', such as in the *we-river*, *we-mountains*, *we-land* (in a sense that the river and us are entangled in an never-static relationship as living beings—see more on page 46), I would say that this is a WE-story though a WE-data contextualization.

1st Rafael's I-story (Rafael, individual conversation with Patricia, minute 26):

I remember one time, that feeling of not belonging
I cried in front of everyone
I was trying to do my best
I thought at that time, it could be perfect
I was expecting something from them
I was young, younger, much younger
Am I the one?
I don't know why, but **I** cried
I was ashamed of crying in front of everyone
I was, like, feeling
I'm not supposed to do this
I was supposed to do a different thing, but not this
I was not belonging
I ended up leaving
I don't know
I'm still also thinking about
Now I can see it

2nd Rafael's I-story (Rafael, playful encounter with Emma, minute 23):

I was trying for everybody to feel comfortable
We have to communicate through our bodies
We are on the stage
We sometimes don't have time to speak
We have to make signs
We have to know our friend
I learned
When we say yes, yes, yes
We're putting some gas there
I want you to recall any of your stories
We can make up another story together
I'm going to ask you some questions for us to build this atmosphere together
If we can
We can have a conversation
We're going to be reflective

Knowing a little bit more about me through sections like this one, which kind of data glows to you while reading Rafael's I-stories? Did being that vulnerable and open aid me balance the power dynamics with participants? Is this an unnecessary exposure or is it an example of

listening to myself through a Water+Air ear²⁶? How might this *wondering* of self-data help us engage with the further explorations that the next chapter will offer us?

²⁶ According to Werá (2016), whereas the Water ear relates to affections, emotions and feelings, flowing sometimes like waterfalls or turbulent rivers, other times as calm lakes or relaxing rain, the Air ear is more reflective and cares for the soul. It also helps us imagine possible futures and unforeseen stories.

Chapter 7. Listening-Based Pedagogies: What is *Still* Emerging

As previously mentioned, this study was driven by the guiding curiosity ‘*what could a listening-based pedagogy entail?*’, which led me to the following research questions: (a) what are the contextual factors that contribute to and constrain listening as pedagogy?; (b) how does listening shape human and other-than-human relationships in educational contexts?; and (c) what role can story-listening play in researching, teaching and learning? In this chapter, I endeavour to expand the conversation upon these questions, and bring my perceptions upon this research’s *wonderings*—not final answers, though, as I do not believe it would be fair in such a context.

A quick recap, first. After an initial contextualization and personal introduction, this thesis delivered a theorization of listening perspectives. I began by presenting what other studies, research, and books have been discussing around such a topic, concluding that, first and foremost, (a) Clown-oriented studies on listening are lacking in academia; (b) Indigenous scholars and Elders have been relying on storywork to research, share knowledge, and being relational (even though their oral traditions are yet not considered equally relevant if compared to Western-formatted academic papers and dissertations); however, (c) in regards to a Critical worldview, there are many studies about listening—even though most of them are based on quantitative research and/or humanistic orientations.

Then, on chapter 4, I delved deeper into the theories that support the listening framework of this research: Critical, with Davis’ (1996) hermeneutic listening; Indigenous, with Tupi’s seven types of listening (Werá, 2016); and Clown, with Dunker and Thebas’ (2019) active + playful listening. I undergirded these approaches by theories such as:

- Critical: Freire's (2021) *conscientização* and dialogue, Madden's (2019a; 2019b) counter-stories and relations of power, Gadotti's (2007), Davis and Sumara's (2000) fractal curriculum, and den Heyer's (2017) other possible worlds;
- Indigenous: Archibald's (2008) holistic education, Werá's (2016) *perspectivism*, and Krenak's (2022), and Donald's (2019) more-than-human relationships;
- Clown: Dunker and Thebas' (2019) vulnerability, openness, and cooperative mode of engagement, teaching and learning.

When it comes to methodology and methods, five participants joined me in this journey and they met me for an individual conversation (leveraged by the 4Hs of active listening), a playful encounter (potentialized by both playful listening and Tupi's seven types of listening), and a focus group (supported by hermeneutic listening). After these three phases of data assemblage, I adapted Gilligan and colleagues' (2003) Listening Guide so that I could suit it into my CIC theoretical framework. Thereby, I ended up applying three steps to *wonder* (MacLure, 2013) and 'becoming with knowing' (Kuntz & Presnall, 2012) upon data that has been emerging since this trip to the unknown began. The first step—Listening for the plots—was indeed linked to the Indigenous perspective included in the CIC framework as it was more holistic; the second one—I-stories—was supported by a Clown practice of self-perception and of respecting and recognizing the stranger in each one of us; and the third step—Listening for critical voices—attended to the criticality of silence, performative actions, and power dynamics.

Circling back to the research questions, even though I have never had any intention to provide any answers, I think it is fair to say that, after this whole year of dedication to listening to myself, to participants, and to stories, I do have some ideas to expand these conversations. Regarding the first question (related to constraints and contributions to listening), I would start

by saying that what supports one type of listening can defy another. A good example of it was given in the last chapter, in which generative silence was described as contributing to listening-based pedagogies that are relational, respectful, and culturally responsive, whereas the same type of silence usually defies the ‘common-sense’ listening approaches (which are usually oppressive and a form of showing who is in charge) by challenging power dynamics, positions, and relationships (see pages 116 and 117).

Having said that, I would say that some contributors to listening based-pedagogies—in the context of this research—are: generative silence; care for the other(‘s stories, background, and needs); openness to be flawed; Indigenous teaching and learning approaches (Kanu, 2007); and culturally responsive educational perspectives (Athie Martinez, M. J., 2020; Nicol et al., 2020). Examples of constraints, on the other hand, are: misusing, overusing, or belittling words and concepts such as vulnerability and humility; lack of awareness and proper knowledge regarding more-than-human relationality; not being able to (or not wanting to) teach for curriculum-as-encounter and getting stuck within a rigid document, rigid assessments, and rigid methodologies; colonized classrooms and unwelcoming schools (Madden et al., 2013); and personal characteristics such as *the abominable ‘unlisteners’* (Dunker & Thebas, 2019).

When it comes to the second research question (how does listening shape more-than-human relationships?), I do not think that this research delivered an interesting response for it—perhaps due to all participants and the researcher being non-Indigenous. Clearly, this was one topic that none of us knew how to approach in a reasonable way, and this issue was indeed voiced by the participants. However, some of my (still limited) explorations on Indigenous literature did help me develop an initial understanding of the links between listening and more-than-human relationships. Krenak (2020), for instance, taught me about the ‘we-rivers’ and how

we should listen to nature, whereas both Archibald (2008) and Wilson (2008) have spoken about Indigenous ceremonies as a means to, among other things, listen to spirituality. And these were some of the several learnings in this regard for me by now. Even though it is still a topic to be further researched (hopefully along with Indigenous teachers), it seems to me that this question would be more fruitful here if it were ‘how do more-than-human relationships shape listening?’ than the other way around.

The third question (the role of story-listening) will be further discussed soon: section 7.3. *Story-Listening as a Way of Researching, Teaching and Learning* (see page 134). In turn, I will approach the main guiding question (what could a listening-based pedagogy entail?) in this current chapter: section 7.1. *Further explorations on listening* (below) and section 7.2. *Listening-based pedagogies: is there a link between the art of listening and fruitful relationships in educational contexts?* (see page 131).

It is time to dig deeper into it.

7.1. Further Explorations on Listening

I do not believe that listening-based approaches to teaching or researching are replicable to other contexts, including this study’s methods and methodology (which resonates with post-qualitative forms of researching). Does that mean that listening-based approaches cannot be used anywhere else? —you might be asking. Yes and no. They can be used indeed, but not as a ‘copy and paste’ practice. This research actually suggests that educators *play with, reshape, re-contextualize* such listening-based research methods and teaching approaches (in)to their communities, classrooms, research or even to a particular situation. *Listening-based methods and pedagogies are definitely fluid, playful, relational, and contextual*, which means that they

encourage us to listen to ourselves in order to listen to the other and to the world in a relational, cooperative, holistic, critical and playful way. Everyone, everything, everywhere can benefit from these approaches, but they will never be ‘the same’ approach as contexts vary.

Therefore, the importance of this research is to open culturally responsive, respectful, and relational possibilities for these approaches, because they can indeed teach us, teachers and researchers, to be better learners through listening. I do not intend to define listening-based pedagogies, though, because “[t]he closer you get to defining something, the more it loses its context. Conversely, the more something is put into context, the more it loses a specific definition” (Wilson, 2008, p. 8)—and I would rather stick with the contextual format of listening.

As a context-oriented approach, listening cannot be, in fact, inadvertently relocated or replicated. It is not a single practice to gain scale. Actually we, educators, should aim at ‘scaling across’ instead of ‘scaling up’ such a pedagogy. Whereas, on the one hand, “*scaling up* creates a monoculture that relies on replication, standardization, promotion, and compliance” (Dawson et al., 2020, p. 177, emphasis added), on the other hand, “[*s*]caling across invites communities to learn from one another and solve their own problems in their own particular way” (Dawson et al., 2020, p. 178, emphasis added). Listening-based educational practices are certainly something to be shared and learned from one another, but they remain open to be molded to/by each group, context, audience, relationship and purpose.

Likewise, relying on last chapter’s discussions, the goal for listening (in an overall sense) in education can be multifold: from forcing student’s obedience to promoting teacher’s care; from learning the names of all students to encouraging contextual and collaborative learning;

from paying attention to the teacher's divagations to exploring more-than-human relationships; from utilizing capital-M Methods to engaging in playful and critical encounters.

Even though most of us, teachers and researchers, still perceive listening as a student-only needed skill or a synonym to hearing back participants' answers in an interview setting, by expanding our horizons we can aggregate new possibilities, new skills to better engage with ourselves, with students, with participants, with knowledge, and with stories. This occurred to most of this project's participants who, for instance, expanded their point of view concerning these possibilities as encounters advanced.

To picture one of these expansions (or actual shifts, for some of them), I will recall Patricia's first meeting, in which she shared that she used to promote 'chaotic' activities so that students can speak and listen to each other—which sparked, according to her, people's belief that in her class there was no listening at all. In this example, both Patricia and these 'people' were focusing on students' listening. The difference is that, whereas 'people' expect students to sit still and silently listen to—or actually obey—the teacher, she prefers to see this listening engagement in a conversational, dialogical way. Both of these views are focused on the students, anyway. In the second meeting, though, despite an initial saying that a teacher listening to students is not a 'typical' way of listening, later she shared that participating in this study “opened up doors to think about what could be possible in education if we listen to each other” (Patricia, playful encounter, minute 30). And I was indeed able to notice her eagerness to novel possibilities.

Within this research's context, the CIC framework provided me with three main forms of listening (hermeneutic, holistic, and active + playful, respectively) that supported me in designing goals, methodologies, and discussions. Likely, other listening-related frameworks and

approaches would generate different great discussions around other sets of data and relationships—as there are infinite possibilities for engaging with listening (and silence) in educational settings. But, where did this CIC journey lead me to, then?

The fractal-like tree below is one of my most welcome learning throughout this journey; and it just came to me when I was preparing for my Master thesis defense. It represents some of the main topics/themes related to listening as a fractal (simply put, a figure where the total and its parts regenerate each other in an infinite process of recurrence).



Fig. 5: This project's Geometry of Listening

Well, I invite you to explore what I am understanding *by now* about listening-based pedagogies and story-listening methods of research, teaching, and learning. The next section thus promotes further considerations about last chapter's stories and possibilities for listening-based pedagogies.

7.2. Listening-Based Pedagogies: Is There a Link Between Beyond Common-Sense Listening and Fruitful Relationships in Educational Contexts?

One first question that emerges within this section is: what does it mean to engage in a fruitful relationship? By talking to five participants in this project, I perceived five different types of ‘preferred’ relationships, which seems quite obvious, after all. However, as a former teacher, I dare say that we usually have the sense that what we believe to be a good way of being relational is actually the only way—or at least the only way we can offer. Whereas Anna, for example, likes to promote a safe atmosphere for safe relationships to emerge in her classes, with mutual respect and openness to talk about diverse issues (such as mental health, which seemed important for her), Adam prefers an environment where he can joke around with students (it does not mean that it is an unsafe space; it is just a matter of how he likes to be with them, though). Otherwise, whereas Emma relied on the word ‘care’ to describe her connections to students (and she demonstrated that she also wanted people to care for her too), Patricia affirmed that building relationships is not her primary concern—actually, she supports a form of relationships through the love for the content, which is what she feels like offering to her students.

And where does listening enter in this conversation? As previously mentioned, there are infinite possibilities for listening (as well as for relationships), so the most important thing, in my opinion, is that teachers have to add to their tool belt as many different listening approaches as possible—and that is when the ‘beyond common-sense’ factor emerges. These additional approaches will help educators to better connect with each and every student in a different way, thus promoting individualized fruitful relationships—which literature suggests, such as in Kanu (2007), that it can scaffold a more significant learning not only for each student, but for the collectivity. And this is indeed an expansion of the teacher's cauldron of relational pedagogies

since teachers would not be promoting one single, one preferred, one ‘common-sense’ connection with all students.

What I also came to perceive through this research is that teachers usually make deeper connections with students that have the same preferences, regarding relationship style, as theirs. For example, Dasha, who loves reading and uses silence as a door to self-connection, appears to hold deeper relationships with students who enjoy the 10-minute silent reading that she promotes every day. Likewise, Anna tries to be someone that students would rely on to open their vulnerabilities and to share their fears, because that was what she expected from her teachers in her high school time. My own story says the same: I used to have deeper relationships with students who engaged in my clown-*ish* way of teaching, regardless of their position in such a context: either contributing in co-acting improv scenes in the final minutes of our classes or just being such a good audience to these short shows—which also led them to be more open to un/learn and recognize their own flaws and vulnerabilities. I used to have trouble connecting with those students who were affectionate to studying all the time and were only looking for good grades (even though I used to be one in my adolescence... Things change!).

I am not saying that teachers should be able to develop deep relationships with all students. As a former teacher, I must acknowledge that it is indeed impossible due to many factors, such as classes with +30 students, time constraints, or personal limitations. What I am indicating, though, is that we, teachers, should be aware of the contextual power of listening (in ourselves first, and in our relationships in consequence) so that we can either potentialize our current relational approaches or even be more open to be molded by students’ cultural and social preferences. That is one reason for all of the teachers that participated in this project to be pretty

excited about different types of listening (such as Tupi's seven ears), even though they seemed cautious about putting these approaches into practice.

For me and in the context of this research, I perceived that all three main listening approaches from the CIC framework were relevant, but in different ways: the active + playful listening provided me with tools to deepen my relationships with participants (my vulnerable relation with people around me); the hermeneutic listening was more related to self- and other-awareness, *conscientização*, and transformation (my critical relation with the social world); on the other hand, the selected Indigenous perspective of listening (all-ears-integrated) encouraged me to enhance my relationality with nature, land, spirituality, sounds, silences, and environments (my holistic relation with the more-than-human world).

In short, according to my understanding, the question 'is there a link between the art of listening and fruitful relationships in educational contexts?', which was my inspiring inquiring for this project, does have an answer: YES. And this 'yes' is an Improv/Clown 'yes': one that moves the scene forward, that opens possibilities and supports the other's intentions. Saying 'yes' in an improv show is showing that you are not only listening to the other, but you also welcome what they are offering you. Responding 'yes' to that question, therefore, is understanding that there will always be forms of listening to link with different forms of fruitful relationships. Furthermore, saying 'yes' is moving forward in self- and other-awareness, it is welcoming differences and valuing everyone's background. And that is what a teacher-/researcher-listener can offer in a classroom/research setting: to welcome and honour students'/participants' experiences, unique cultural perspectives, and previous knowledge; care for them by offering either content or personal support; select or create approaches/methods that are respectful and reciprocal; be open to un/learn and recognize personal flaws and

vulnerabilities; let go of certainties and welcome novel perspectives; say ‘yes’ to ourselves and to the more-than-human other; and make our whole body, mind, heart and spirit available for listening.

7.3. Story-Listening as a Way of Researching, Teaching and Learning

Among many possibilities of listening-based pedagogies, I pinpoint story-listening as a unique opportunity to shift our focus as educators towards a playful, holistic and critical form of engaging with not-only-human actors in educational contexts. Story-listening invites and welcomes a multiplicity of actors to the game: students, teachers, researchers, participants, content, assessment, learning, stories, knowledge, land, etc. While it dwells on the ongoing relationality that usually permeates the encounters between these entities, it might also give birth to deeper (and maybe unforeseen) relationships and formats of learning.

Although it is quite easy to assume that, in a place where there is someone telling a story, there must be a listener, a story in-between, and a context all around, this might not be that obvious for everyone. Nowadays, the internet and related devices/apps have opened up several new possibilities of conversations, classes, lectures, debates, dialogues, etc. However, if we take as an example the asynchronous online type of courses (which are pretty common nowadays), it is easy to perceive that the focus is usually on the teller—unless the instructor makes a huge effort to do it otherwise. By the way, I attended two of these programs in my journey to Canada before starting this current graduate route: one of them was offered by a Brazilian university, a specialization about ‘modern education’ (this was the name of the program, by the way), which included one specific course that is slightly related to this thesis’ topic: *Hollywood meets Harvard: new media and storytelling in education*. As you might have perceived, there was no

mention to this course's learning throughout my thesis despite *delivering* hours of content about storytelling. Would you wonder why?

The other asynchronous course I attended two years ago was a Canadian one: as I mentioned earlier, it was a certificate issued by the Faculty of Native Studies of the University of Alberta through a web-based platform. This one, *Indigenous Canada*, indeed helped me better situate whose land I was heading to and how to respectfully engage with such a field of studies—which became a significant ladder for assembling the Indigenous perspective for this project. What are the main differences between these two courses? —you could ask. Well, whereas the former one was focused on the teller of the stories (how to tell good stories, for instance), the latter aimed at creating a reciprocal relationship between the instructors who were narrating *their* stories and the students who were listening *to* and *for* them: storytellers + story listeners + stories. Yes, even in an online format, it was possible to feel this relationality emerging, because their focus was sharing their peoples' stories so that all of us, Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, could benefit from this course's learnings.

What I am arguing is that, according to this research's literature review and conversations with participants, if not all, at least most of the Eurocentric storytelling-related approaches focus more on the teller than on the relationship storyteller + story listener + story context + story itself. From my point of view, this perspective is quite different from the Indigenous way of understanding these issues, which sometimes relates to a Clown way of listening: this research showed me that this *Indigenous Canada* course's methods of teaching indeed resonate with the 4Hs of listening: Hospitality, Hospital, Hospice, and Host (e.g., accepting what the other says in their language, taking care of what is said, welcoming the feelings within this relationship,

opening ourselves to the foreigner, transmitting the lived experience) —and maybe that was a key asset of it.

In effect, story-listening should (even though many times it does not) walk hand in hand with storytelling, constituting what Archibald (2008) calls *storywork*. Simply put, storywork relies on stories, respect and relationality to research, teach, learn, share, communicate, educate, raise individual awareness, and cultural collectivity. As two pieces of the same puzzle, to my knowledge, storytelling is based on oral approaches/traditions and focuses on the teller/teacher sharing the knowledge, which they learned through practice, experience, stories, research, theory, as individuals, a collective of individuals, or a community (depending on the context or purpose). Complementary, I understand story-listening otherwise: an all-senses approach in which individuals within a collective/community co-generate experiences, practices, research, theories, stories so that knowledge could emerge. Of course, a story-listener does not exist alone: there must be a context, a story, and a storyteller; the interesting point is that they might exchange positions, there is no rigidity in these roles (linked again to the Host listening: the one who was once a receiver will also become a sender; furthermore, the story has potential to become the context and vice-versa—I dare say).

Sadly, within Western contexts, I perceive a different situation: there are plenty of storytellers *without* story-listeners. Besides, functions/positions are much more static, which might lead to an egocentric reverberance of sayings and ideas in a not-too-reciprocal way. And I wonder: is it what social media has been also inviting us to do? Talking to ourselves with no active listeners to effectively engage with us? Does that lack of listeners empower fake-news, hate discourses, and misinformation? That is something for all of us to sit with and think a little bit more about it.

As previously discussed in chapter 4, in such a Eurocentric worldview, storytellers usually assume the role as protagonists themselves in a competitive way, i.e., they tend to hold the microphone so that others will not have a chance to speak; whereas in a cooperative mode, like Indigenous or Clown collectivities, being a protagonist is carrying forward the conflict, it is engaging through relationality and reciprocity towards a collective soothing or resolution. Furthermore, according to Dunker and Thebas (2019), shifting from the competition mode to the cooperative mode, that is, “moving from ‘being an opponent’ to ‘being a component’ is the task of the listening journey” (Dunker & Thebas, 2019, p. 157).

Following this idea of cooperative gathering, this research does attempt to link secondary teachers to stories that, in the Canadian context, are:

inspired by the treaties, which teach that we are called to work together in ways that bring benefits to all people who live on the land together. These teachings place emphasis on learning from each other in balanced ways and sharing the wisdom that comes from working together in the spirit of good relations. If more teachers knew stories like this, perhaps Aboriginal perspectives would be considered less as an exercise in incorporation and infusion and more as an opportunity for relational renewal and enhanced understanding. (Donald, 2013, para. 10)

‘Learning from each other in balanced ways’ and a constant ‘relational renewal’ are key in storywork contexts. In that sense, we would be able to better engage with(in) story-contexts through humility, curiosity, and respect; we would also be more prepared to both listen *to* treaties and *for* truth and reconciliation.

In such an engagement, stories take a key role because, according to Archibald (2008), they “have the power to make our hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits work together. When we lose a part of ourselves, we lose balance and harmony” (p. 12). Thus, the harmonious interaction storyteller + story listener + story context + story is what gives meaning to storywork. Relying on Archibald (2008) one more time, “[p]eople interrelating with each other through story bring a story to life as they relate story meaning to their lives in holistic ways” (p. 149). And these stories’ lives contribute to and strengthen the spirituality of this community as well.

As an example of this interrelatedness through stories is Patricia’s analysis of our co-enactment. Due to our prior relationship as graduate school classmates, she took this opportunity to actively listen to her own thoughts because, differently from other people with whom she was speaking about it (such as her mother and her boyfriend), alongside me she took a new opportunity to think about it:

as a fellow graduate student, as a teacher, I feel like you have a whole, you bring a whole other understanding to what I’m going through, which is really powerful to me, because it feels like a moment where, like, I can be seen and how difficult this actually is for me
(Patricia, playful encounter, minute 57)

This was indeed meaningful to me, both as a friend trying to support her ongoing emotional struggle and as a researcher trying to promote reciprocity. I was there not to benefit myself from her knowledge and experiences; rather, *we were there for each other*. Gladly, I feel like everyone in this journey (including myself) was encouraged to re-think about both our inner selves and our perspectives regarding listening, teaching, learning, and relating to everything that was among us, which is indeed a key part of the story-listening way of researching. Patricia also shared, by

the end of her playful encounter, some takeaways and how she felt about this journey, and it includes breaking barriers of the usual power dynamics in a researcher-participant context—which resonates with her I-stories and personal characteristics:

I feel like, I don't know, I just feel like, I am empowered in this research context with you. Like me being my thoughts, I felt like I had the upper hand there. And I do feel like you were, that we were co-constructing this together. But I did also feel like some of my thoughts, like you mentioned, impacted what you were doing. And then just like the general context of the last meeting, like, I do feel like you've really, like, put in steps to kind of make sure that it feels like a safe and equal environment for me. And I appreciate that. (Patricia, playful encounter, minute 75)

This is another fundamental topic to story-listening: participants/students need to feel empowered by knowing that their actions, sayings or even thoughts indeed impact the researcher's/teacher's knowing, doing and being. In addition, as previously mentioned, the safe space that Patricia mentioned is also necessary for story-listening purposes.

Still from a Critical perspective (and impacted by the critical voices of the previous chapter), it is crucial to discuss how silence partakes in story-listening. Supported by the theoretical thread that I braided on chapter 4, as well as by both Emma's and Patricia's stories, I recall that there are multiple types of silences, and each one has its own agency, its own impactful consequences. In this regard, Dunker and Thebas (2019) believe that "it is very important not to confuse the silence of disinterest, indifference or disapproval with the silence of attention and acceptance. *The silence of listening is active, pulsating, vigilant, and full of interpolations*" (p. 101, emphasis added). More than emphasizing a few characteristics of silence

in listening (more specifically in active listening encounters), these authors state that we should notice—and thus accept—it as part of being attentive and, surely, reciprocal. This type of silence is indeed valued in story-listening contexts.

Using the nuances that I perceived (either in advance or in real-time) in Emma’s identity/I-stories, I can affirm that, with her, my dialogical listening²⁷ had to be filled with care and mutual appreciation—because I felt that this was key for her in regard to relationships. By the end of our conversation, she confirmed that this approach ensured comfortability and a safe connection. After I asked her what she thought about my participation in our co-enactment (an action that, by the way, is a simple example of *perspectivism*: I was trying to understand her perspective in which I was included), Emma responded:

Interesting, again, because I think you were very understanding and caring and, like, your tone of voice, you as a human being, you were delightful. And you were always so caring and thoughtful. (...) And so like, I know, that came across in the way that you're speaking to me when I was pretending to be a student, you were pretending to be the teacher. You were delightful. (...) But, yeah, so I bet as I did feel, like, worthy as a person. Like, it genuinely seemed like you cared. (Emma, playful encounter, minute 47)

Drakeford (2020) supports the idea that ‘care’ is indeed a crucial piece of story-listening, which he understands as a space created when one genuinely cares for the other in a way that listening becomes “a mental eagerness to learn” (p. 17). He also says that, through a story-listening

²⁷ I am using this term based on Freire’s (2021) idea of dialogue: a conversational mood that welcomes conflicts, unlearning, and communion.

pedagogy, teachers should abdicate their lecturing and professing in order to create a respectful space for students to tell their own stories in a place where listening is valued and expected.

Whereas Patricia wanted to feel empowered so that she could better listen to her own thoughts, Emma wanted to be cared for and valued as a human being—just like she acts with her students. In other words, both of them wanted to be listened *to*, even though my listening *for* should have had different purposes. Both of us, researcher and participant, needed to be humble towards ourselves and each other; otherwise this purpose of ‘listening for’ would not be attached to my ‘listening to’ actions—an attachment that demands slowing down and openness to fluidity.

This relationship between ‘listening to’ and ‘listening for’ does resonate with a dialogical form of listening, which is quite related to this research’s framework—despite not being one of the three selected listening approaches. According to Freire (2021),

[d]ialogue, as a meeting of men for the common task of acting, breaks down if its poles (or one of them) lose humility. *How can I dialogue if I alienate ignorance, that is, if I always see it in the other, never in myself? (...)* How can I dialogue if I close myself to the contribution of others, which I never recognize, and even feel offended by it? (...)

Self-reliance is incompatible with dialogue. (Freire, 2021, pp. 111- 112, emphasis added)

The humility and ignorance that I tried to demonstrate throughout this research (by presenting myself as a beginner, as a loser, as a bad English speaker, as an Abominable Caveman) was a way of inviting the contributions, vulnerabilities, and ‘ignorances’ from both participants and readers. This was indeed helpful to maintain this dialogical conversation through stories.

Listening is indeed a dialogical, playful, multi-layered, whole-body-based journey. In such a process, all of us, story-listeners, face uncertainties, un/learn from both inside-out and

outside-in, connect to other people as well as to stories and their contexts, welcome the opportunity to re-think our own practices and beliefs, learn with (instead of from) participants/students, and dialogue with data and knowledge that glows. This is, in short, *my way* of describing this story-listening process of researching, teaching, and learning through wondering, caring, and (hermeneutic + playful + holistic) listening.

7.4. Possibilities Not-Yet-Explored

This research's first focus was Dunker and Thebas' (2019) active listening only. During the conversations with participants, I realized that (a) there was no consensus for what this term could mean; (b) there were other terms—such as deep listening—that, for some of them, could be used interchangeably with active listening; and (c) I needed to learn other ways of listening in order to better engage with knowledge, data, encounters, methods, artifacts that were still co-creating this research alongside us. These realizations were pushing me to reshape these research questions and enhance its methodology. Thus, I kept on exploring other theories and related methods that would maintain the research process as a fluid work-in-progress. Even though I would never be able (nor did I desire) to integrate all of the infinite different listening approaches, I came down to a few of them that did resonate with the context we were navigating. Furthermore, for each participant, for each encounter, for each chapter, there were several different combinations of these forms of listening that could take control of how I would join and enjoy what was organically emerging. That means that the number of possibilities for listening indeed tends to infinity: hundreds of different preconceived forms of listening *times* billions of people around the world *times* zillions unique more-than-human types of relationships *times* contexts *times* purposes *times*...

Having said that, I suggest that, despite this huge amount of different listening possibilities, many of them offer commonalities, overlaps, and intersections—even when these intersections do not seem to exist. Nonetheless, sometimes we, educators, are too used to replicating the same approaches, lessons, assessments, and we end up forgetting to look at a bigger picture of our classroom’s relationships and environments.

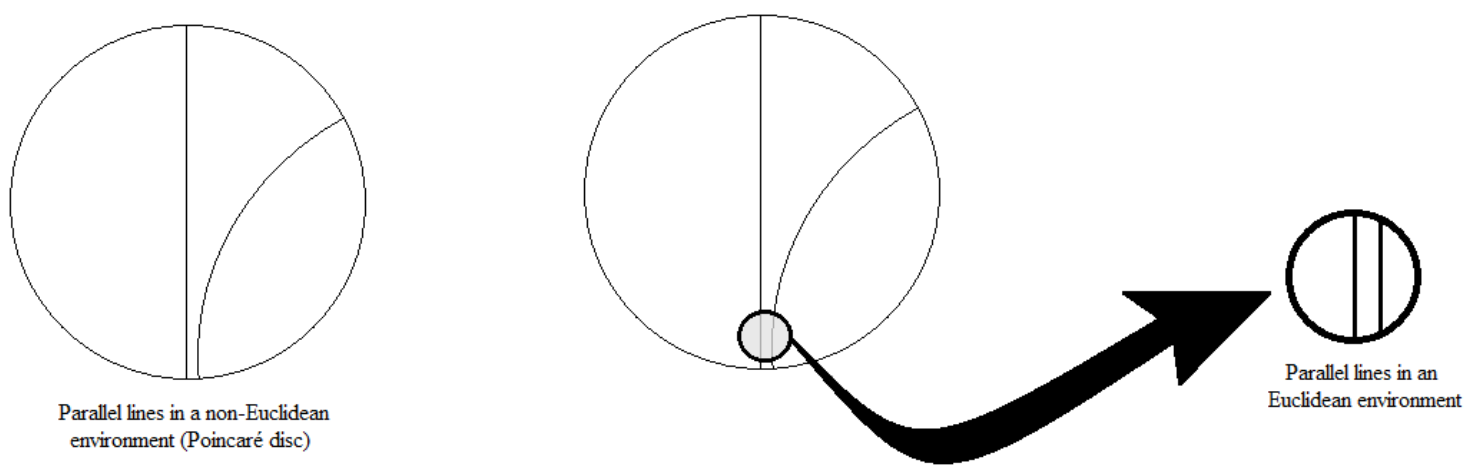


Fig. 6: Parallel lines in two different geometrical contexts

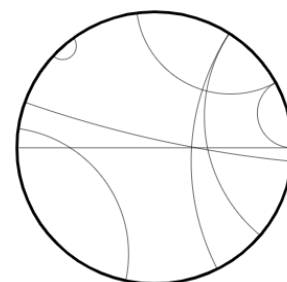
Circling back to the non-Euclidean world, where I situate this research, I would like to deepen a conversation I started in chapter 1 about the relationship between these types of geometries and listening. Figure 5 shows a comparison between a non-Euclidean perspective (represented by the Poincaré disc model on the left, which inspired Escher’s Circle Limit I presented in the first chapter) and an Euclidean, much narrower point of view (on the right, as the result of zooming in the Poincaré disc).

It is important to note that these environments (non-Euclidean and Euclidean) hold different definitions and properties (because it is all about the context they are in!), and this is why that ‘curve’ on the first picture is in fact considered a straight line on that specific model.

Despite these differences, what I am trying to argue here is that our ‘real world’—which seems to be geometrically Euclidean to most of us—can be actually just a narrow perspective of a whole new, broader, larger, infinite universe (which is indeed non-Euclidean, as already discussed by many renowned physicists during the last century, such as Albert Einstein).

Thus, I am inviting teachers, researchers, and other people related to the educational field, to expand our viewpoint for an infinite number of listening and relational possibilities that our contexts daily invite us to delve into. I presented three of them (hermeneutic, active + playful, and holistic) here through a unique framework that includes Critical, Indigenous and Clown theories/practices. Which other theories or paradigms would you like to add to this expansion of worldview for listening? Which approaches presented in this research most resonated with you? Did any of them push you towards an unknown, uncertain pathway? Which shared stories made your body, mind, heart and/or spirit move, shake, or dance?

This movement towards the unknown can be scary sometimes. Inspired by Dr. Brooke Madden, who once told me that she understands pedagogy as a dance, as a living being, I also feel listening the same way—and this may help you tackle this fear. In a dance, sometimes I am the one leading it, other times I am led; sometimes I stumble and need someone else’s help to get on my feet again; sometimes I cannot follow the rhythm and other times I am the rhythm. More importantly, in a dance we are never alone: we are surrounded by music, emotions, partners, audience, liberation, mistakes, ancestors, etc. And, in this non-Euclidean listening universe, all of these participants, such as relationality, vulnerability, dialogue, land, cooperation, *conscientização*, *perspectivism*, holism, and playfulness, can be represented as ‘tortuous straight lines’ that



intersect and affect each other oftentimes (on the border of this universe, if they are parallel, or anywhere else, at any time, if concurrent). And they do dance.

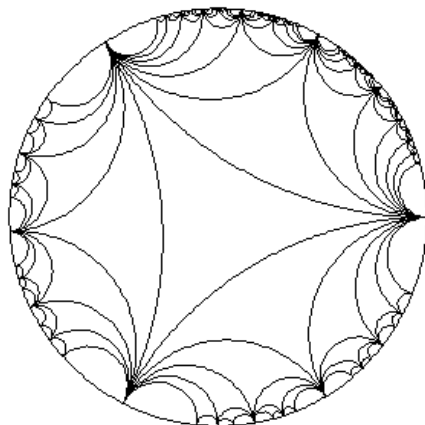


Fig. 6: The dance of parallel lines in a non-Euclidean universe. Figure retrieved from

<https://mathworld.wolfram.com/PoincareHyperbolicDisk.html>

Where to, then?

By listening to these infinite possibilities, I selected one route to keep on exploring listening struggles and potentialities. I am starting a PhD program at the University of Alberta this Fall and, under the guidance of Dr. Marc Higgins, I plan to examine new questions that emerged during my current research, such as (a) (how) do Indigenous approaches to teaching Natural Sciences resonate with listening-based pedagogies?; (b) (how) are these approaches supportive for students who are grappling with anxiety in Mathematics' learning?; (c) to what extent does the field of Arts (including enactment, storytelling, improvisation, and other expressions of voice, body, and nature) scaffold K-12 students' learning STEM knowledge?; and (d) what are the geometries of teaching and learning Math?

One goal is to practice different forms of education and research as it will foster the possibilities of contesting usual dominant curricular/scientific ideas, such as *what 'counts' as*

science and stereotypes of who counts as a 'real' scientist. In addition, I wonder how the link between STEAM²⁸ and Truth and Reconciliation Education might also challenge dominant educational perspectives that have been excluding Indigenous (and other) forms of Science from the Canadian educational mainstream for a long time.

7.5. Story time: What Have I Un/learned, then?

According to Archibald (2008), “the effects of colonization, assimilation, and acculturation, predominantly through schooling, have left many people unable to engage in story listening and to make story meaning, unless directly guided” (p. 112); however, through her research, she “ha[s] learned that the traditional ways favour no or very little direct guidance from the storyteller” (Archibald, 2008, p.112). I understand this ‘very little direct guidance’ in Indigenous traditions as a more conversational storytelling, with an open-ended ending—so that the listeners can make meaning by themselves and take the learning they need at this point in time.

However, I also believe that it is important for teachers and students to reflect together on what has been shared, just like a final dialogue (in which conflictual conversations are welcomed) in a process of co-constructing collective meaning and knowledge. A good balance between open-ended stories and final dialogical conversations would be great.

Therefore, as this is the final act of this storied thesis, I will try to do it and promote both of these viewpoints and, without direct guidance, I invite you to share your final perceptions, remaining inquiries, and possible un/learnings accomplished through this text. For this to

²⁸ STEAM is an acronym for Science, Teachnology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics.

happen, I will share a last super-quick story, which includes a few questions for both of us, writer-listener and reader-listener, to *wonder* with and about.

In one of the conversations with my supervisors, Dr. Brooke Madden (Master, current) and Dr. Marc Higgins (PhD, future), when I was about to start writing this thesis, they asked me two crucial questions: ‘*which story are you trying to tell?*’ and ‘*what are you listening to and listening for in such a research?*’. I guess these questions indeed got me thinking and helped me better situate my perspectives and un/learnings throughout this process.

Yes, I do want to listen to your thoughts about it. This blank space on the next page is an invitation for you to share (with yourself, with me, with the cosmos) your takeaways regarding me, as a storyteller; this study, as a story; and yourself, as a story-listener. With it, my endeavour is also to connect with you through Tupi’s *perspectivism*: I would love to listen to your perspective in which I am included. Furthermore, as I do not want to shape your thoughts and understandings, you shall add your perceptions first, and right after that I will share mine as well (which I believe and hope would get re-shaped and transformed by all of the readers-listeners’ responses).

Which story did you think I was trying to tell? What was I listening *to* and listening *for* in such a research?

By now, as I am finishing this text, I believe my response to these questions are: I am indeed *listening to* relationships and their welcomed consequences so that I can *listen for* culturally responsive ways of researching, teaching, and learning. The story that I am telling is the one that has *conscientização* and *praxis* both as a ladder and a purpose; it is a story that encourages *humility*, *vulnerability*, and *openness* to take risks and challenge our current personal beliefs. This story suggests *collaborative*, *playful*, *dialogical*, and *more-than-human relationships* and promotes *counter-stories* as a refusal to stereotypes; it supports (and is supported by) pedagogies and methodologies that respects the *plurality of cultures* and the multiple ramifications of the *non-Euclidean infinite knowledge*. Moreover, this story aims at promoting multiple and reciprocal ways of researching, teaching, and learning; at supporting an education for the heart, mind, body, and spirit; at deepening our bonds to Mother Earth; and at playing with our own inner worlds as children play with their favorite toys. It also endeavours to challenge small and large relations/systems of power and to listen to the multiplicity of other worlds to come. This story essentially invites us all to learn what it is to listen *to*, *for*, and (why not?) *with* our not-only-human relationships, our educational purposes, and our future as a *we-planet*.

The higher point of listening involves a high capacity to retain silence and work with the void, to prepare hospitality for the arrival of the unexpected foreigner, but also the moment in which insanity, as a game between meaning and meaningless, gives its contribution.

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Appendices: Encounters prompts, guidelines and protocols

Appendix A - Individual conversation inspiring prompts

- What is the role of listening in a learning process?
- In educational contexts overall, who are you listening *to* and what are you listening *for*?
- How do you understand the role of silence in schools?
- Do you believe that silence could be constructive or productive?
- Would you please describe one moment where unwanted silence took place in your classroom?
- How would you describe your approach to cultivating relationships with students?
- What role does listening play in expanding or limiting relationships?
- How often do you and your students share your vulnerabilities, uncertainties, fears, or traumas with each other?
- Have you ever designed a lesson that centres listening?

Appendix B - Playful encounters insights

Enactment as a way of witnessing and listening: this journey starts by connecting our inner senses to who/what is around us. Next, we increase awareness that we are co-acting and co-existing on a stage where happenings are being observed, illuminated, and co-constructed in real-time. Finally, we leave the main stage and allow ourselves to register our feelings and organize them alongside other inputs and understandings. Then we deepen our learnings by linking memories, perceptions, facts, and thoughts. This encounter was planned for both participant and researcher to understand (and experience) Tupi's seven types of listening (Werá, 2016).

Warm-up: situating the self. Be aware of the outer-self, be aware of the inner-self, feel the connections, empty out, be a loser, be in resonance.

Perceptions of the environment; set stage boundaries; listen to the audience; listen to the backstage silence; be attentive to one's energy; listen to my own body; prepare myself to be always ready and open to the other; let go of all accomplishments, fears, and certainties in order to give a step ahead.

- Activity: free conversation inspired by the 3 photographs chosen by the participant: one of a significant place to them as a teacher, another one that represents an emotion that frequently stands out while teaching, and a last one that represents a restriction for listening.
- What to expect/provoke:
 - > Why did the teacher select these photos?
 - > Which emotions were involved in these situations?

- > How do teachers use their own bodies as listening devices?
- > Which not-only-human relationships do they attend to?

The Show: beyond common sense listening. Be present, be attentive, be respectful, be connected, be open, be in resonance.

Body-communicate with everyone on stage and with the audience (eyes, arms, feet, movements...); say YES to what is to come, accept and welcome whatever may be offered to the 'scene'; transform sensations into creativity; be attentive to what may impact (positively or negatively) the whole 'scene' and the actors' relationships; use body language to show support and gratitude.

- Activity: simulating an educational situation in which active listening skills are not only present but also necessary and encouraged. This enactment aims at showing how/why/where listening skills are usually developed or perceived.
- It starts by offering the participant options such as:
 - > What are our roles? Students, teachers, principal, textbooks, or (other roles suggested by the participant)
 - > What is the main theme? Patterns and sequences, the new curriculum in Alberta, Brazilian politics, the soccer world cup, or (other theme suggested by the participant)
 - > Where are we? Classroom, school hallways, field trip, school office, or (other places suggested by the participant)

> What is the context? Class, casual conversation, formal meeting, content-based, relationship-based, or (other contexts suggested by the participant)

> What will your approach be? Lecture, slideshow, debate, one-on-one conversation, hands-on activity, group assignment, or (other approaches suggested by the participant)

- The scene is co-designed from the start to its end (3 - 5 min)
- What to expect/provoke: Relationality, Openness, Saying YES, Body language, Creativity, Co-control, Mutual engagement, Embodiment of listening.

Wrap-up: reflecting and recentering. Feel the environment, stay open, be grateful, stay self-connected, be changeable, stay in resonance.

Recall main 'scenes' and connect the story-dots (what/how/why happened?); understand how the relationships created/supported/constrained the process of building that unique reality (which we were all part of); remember the feelings that took control of our bodies during a 'scene', a moment of silence, or an emotional connection (an applause, a laughter, a booing, or an idea)

- Activity: reflecting on the participant's choices and understanding why they were selected over other options.
- What to expect/provoke:
 - > Why that theme? Role? Place? Context? Approach?
 - > How did you feel during the enactment?
 - > Was it different from your common in-school experiences? Why? How?

> How did we manage this previously unforeseen situation that suddenly became our reality in our enactment?

> How did we approach relationality, reciprocity, accountability, openness and vulnerability? Did you feel/see that happening?

Appendix C - Focus group dialogical topics

- From your point of view, to what extent do these Indigenous perspectives (Acanguatara - *Perspectivism* - Seven types of listening) resonate with, or distinguish from, or could potentially shape your current approaches as a teacher?
- Do you have any relevant stories about student-led approaches and activities that helped you experience the art of listening?
- How are such stories related to a lived, self-driven curriculum, which values autobiographical, historical, political, philosophical, and cultural experiences?
- If improved, changed, or fostered, would any of these relationships²⁹ allow teachers to be better listeners? Do you have any stories about not-only-human encounters that could be conceived as a fruitful, nurturing relationship in an educational context?
- Have you ever witnessed or tried either of these perspectives (in an intentional and purposeful fashion) taking place in an educational context/environment? Is there space for them to become a pedagogy that promotes anti-oppressive, critical and culturally responsive educational approaches?
- (How) Do any of these beliefs resonate with your teaching style?
- Which experiences in this study so far have stood out to you since Phase 1? Why? What would you like to share that perhaps I was not able to perceive?

²⁹ Spirituality+community, principal+school building, textbook+teaching approaches, Indigenous students+place, learning+desks and classrooms, land+knowledge, individual achievements+standardized tests, curriculum+teacher, content+context.

Appendix D - Expectations and Reciprocity to School Districts

All of this project's participants, by the beginning of the data assemblage journey, were working for either the Edmonton Public Schools Board or the Elk Island Public Schools District.

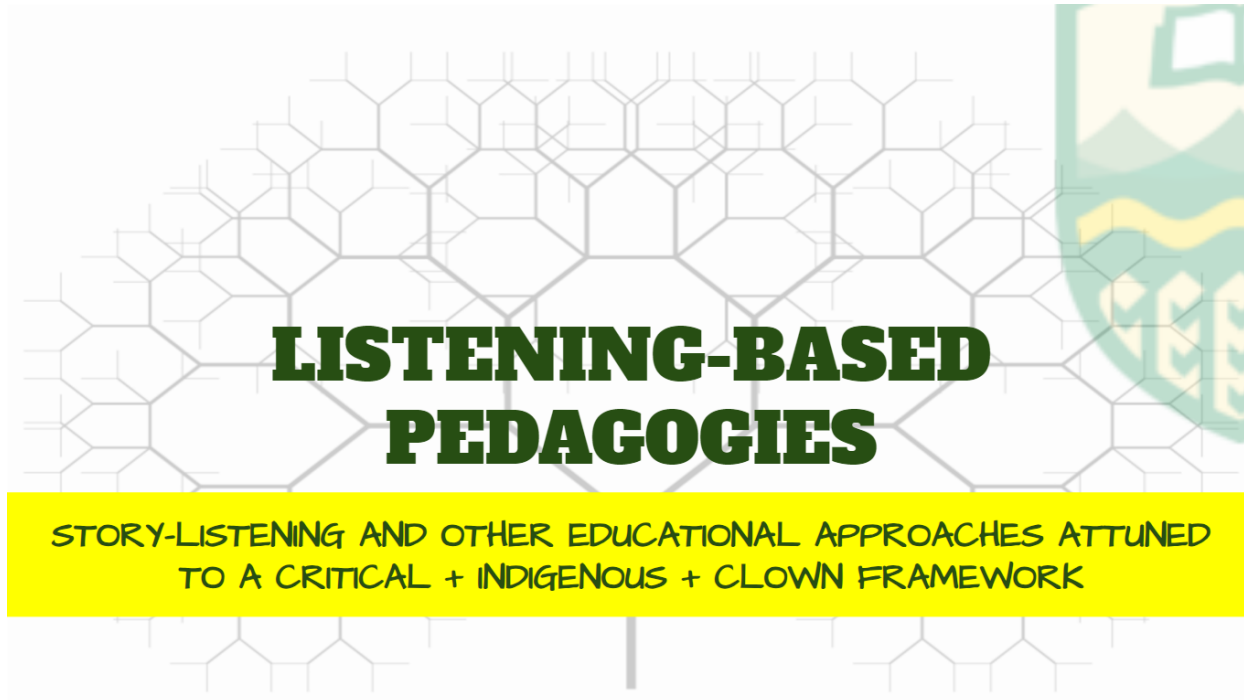
There is indeed an alignment between this study and Edmonton Public Schools' 2022-2026 priorities #1 and #2, which are, respectively, to "[b]uild on outstanding learning opportunities for all students", and to "[a]dvance action towards anti-racism and reconciliation". Following their goals, notably to "recognize and support the diverse learning needs of all students" (Edmonton Public Schools, 2022), this research unfolded the multiple possibilities that listening-based pedagogies may assume towards anti-oppressive and cultural-informed types of education, such as Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) and Truth and Reconciliation Education (TRE).

Regarding the Elk Island Public Schools' 2022-2026 priorities, such as to "[p]romote growth and success for all students", and goals, such as "self-identified First Nations, Métis and Inuit students [should be] engaged in holistic, lifelong learning that is culturally relevant and fosters success" as well as to provide educational environments that "are welcoming, caring, respectful, safe and foster student and staff well-being" (Elk Island Public Schools, 2022), also impacted this study's purposes.

The following outcomes were included in the Cooperative Activities Program (CAP) Questionnaire as likely forms of how I could get back to the school boards to address what might contribute to and what is currently limiting the endeavours of using listening-based pedagogies as a means towards a nurturing and fruitful learning environment within their schools.

- The findings of this research might inform and support various stakeholders (e.g., school district administrators, teacher educators, school staff) regarding the encouragement sought by teachers who are integrating reconciliatory ways of knowing and learning in their practice;
- Once the research is complete and findings disseminated, the school district will benefit by accessing a research study that documents the perceptions, preparedness, and priorities of practicing teachers who negotiate knowledge and practices associated with active listening and fruitful, respectful relationships;
- The school board can also be directly benefited through possible administrative workshops, professional development activities with teachers, and/or school staff training regarding active-listening strategies and approaches that could support the construction/maintenance of a healthy and respectful educational environment.

Appendix E - Slides Used to Clarify Some of this Study's Main Ideas (During Master Thesis' Defense)



**LISTENING-BASED
PEDAGOGIES**

STORY-LISTENING AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES ATTUNED
TO A CRITICAL + INDIGENOUS + CLOWN FRAMEWORK

**MAIN
GOAL:**

To support teachers, professors, and researchers in their process of assembling and/or improving their tool belt of pedagogies and methodologies through raising awareness of some listening-based approaches towards a more relational, culturally responsive, multi-storied, fluid, non-Euclidean format of education.

This project aims at challenging single stories and cultural oppression by encouraging the usage of beyond common-sense forms of listening towards more accountable and reciprocal relationships, which might transform schools into a joyful, nurturing and welcoming spaces.

These listening approaches can also accommodate conversations regarding truth-telling and the history and legacy of Canada's Indian Residential Schools, as well as leverage activities that encourage students to work collaboratively towards other possible worlds.

LISTENING-BASED PEDAGOGIES

Why?

Educating for Other Possible Worlds

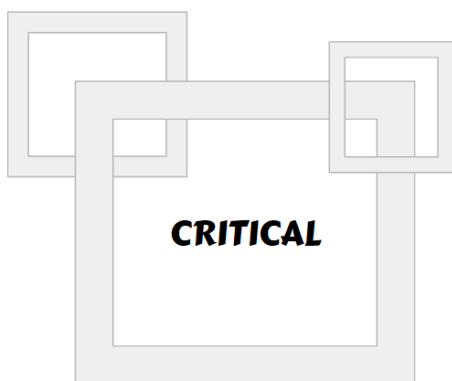
What?

Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit

How?

Educating Through Relationality, Vulnerability, and Cooperation

AUDITORY ATTUNEMENTS



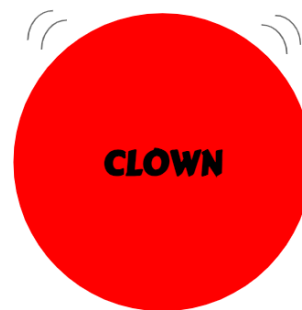
CRITICAL

Windows to probable, possible, and preferable futures (though lacking colors)



INDIGENOUS

Multi-layered culture with an additional dimension (more-than-human)



CLOWN

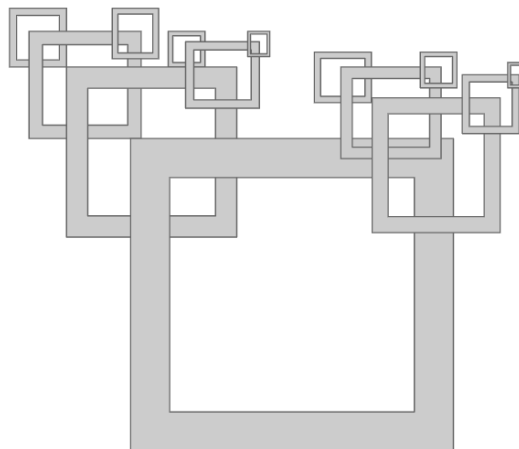
Playfulness, humour, and movement (towards the self and the other)

HERMENEUTIC LISTENING

The **fractal**-, web-like educational approach is “not a renewed effort to colonize the disorderly, but an appreciation of the universe as **complex, ever-unfolding, self-transcending, and relational**” (Davis & Sumara, 2000)

It defies the taken-for-granted future, which “appeal[s] to one vision of the future rather than acknowledge its **many potential paths and manifestations**”

(den Heyer, 2017, p. 5)



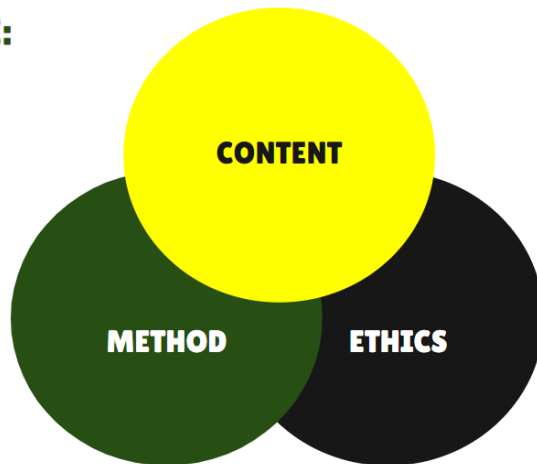
STORY-LISTENING IS A MULTIPLICITY OF NEW PERSPECTIVES THAT ARE ONLY POSSIBLE THROUGH A WHOLESOME ENGAGEMENT:





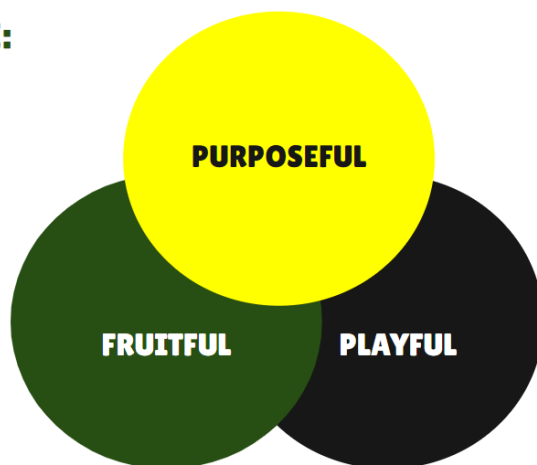
AS RESEARCHERS...

LISTENING CAN BE:



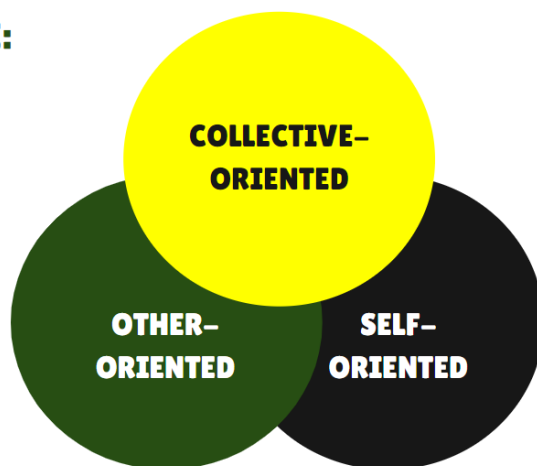
AS TEACHERS...

LISTENING CAN BE:



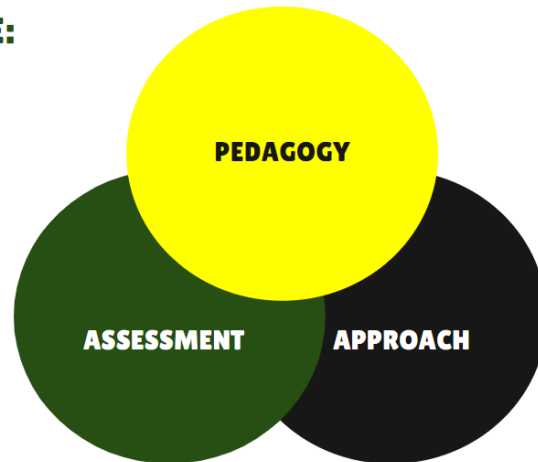
AS STUDENTS...

LISTENING CAN BE:



AS PROFESSORS...

LISTENING CAN BE:



AS PARENTS...

LISTENING CAN BE:



HURDLES*That invited me to move beyond*

Being indirectly encouraged to accept that this study was not about to solve all problems in education.

“And I don’t think that that should come like not being vulnerable enough should come with this judgment, right? It’s like that, ‘but you’re not vulnerable enough’, ‘you’re not open enough’, blah, blah, blah, like not everybody needs to be vulnerable and open” (Dasha, focus group, minute 82)

HURDLES*That invited me to move beyond*

Perceiving that participants had a preconceived notion about clowns being ‘performative’ and ‘unauthentic’.

Which encouraged me to go further into the comparison between performativity and performance so that I could better understand not only what they meant, but actually what I thought about it.