To what end?
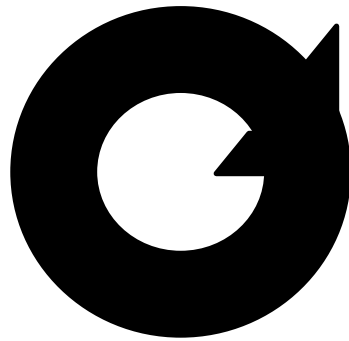
an analysis into the relationship between neoliberalism
and desire in education

"Develop action, thought, and desires by proliferation, juxtaposition, and disjunction, and not by subdivision and pyramidal hierarchiza-tion." (p. xiii)

- Michael Foucault
Preface of *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983)

Abstract

Twentieth century post-structuralists Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari provide a lens by which desire and its role in education can be analyzed. This analysis is done in the hope of understanding some of the ways by which our desires are manufactured, singularized, and then leveraged in the name of serving neoliberal prerogatives. Since the birth of modern industrialized schooling, many of the imagenings for the function of education have been captured by concepts of workplace preparedness and marketable skill sets. Yet, without an analysis of the desires that play a role in the creation and perpetuation of both curricula and pedagogy, unintended consequences can work against the potential for education to serve a function beyond employment and consumption. Furthermore, an insistence upon a singular purpose for education results in an undermining of the multiplicity held in student and teacher desires to produce an educational experience that transcends systemic trappings. This paper provides a Deleuzo-Guattarian and Lacanian comparative analysis of desire, and its application to pedagogy, with the intention of approaching lines of flight to view our existence as becoming subjects.

Introduction

The ancient Greek symbol of Ouroboros depicts a dragon consuming itself. Meant to symbolize rebirth, the character of Ouroboros is, in a sense, consuming to produce consumption. Friedrich Nietzsche wrote of this concept as eternal recurrence or a perpetual state of being without end in his text *The Gay Science* (1882). Perhaps one interpretation of this eternal recurrence could be a sense of perpetual incompletion or even a state of 'becoming'[1] as opposed to a finite sense of 'is'. The concept of 'becoming subjects' so closely tied to the work of Gilles

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[1] The process of 'becoming' for Deleuze and Guattari was "inspired by his encounter with Nietzsche's work. Nietzshe's eternal return is a conception of the becoming of becoming, and of productive return of difference. Becoming is therefore a component of Deleuze's search for a new image of thought, and of how to conceive thought as an experiment that does not know beforehand what its result may be." (Skeet, 2014, p. 253).

Deleuze and Felix Guattari, like Nietzshche's eternal recurrence or Ouroboros, explores the interpretation of consciouseness as part of a webbed continuence, framing us as beings always in production. Throughout the work of Deleuze and Guattari the concept of feedback loops becomes a recurrence unto itself. "Deleuze, following Nietzsche, pictures the world as a chaotic web of forces without a particular origin and goal and which necessarily come to rest at a terminal of equilibrium state" (Mercieca, 2011, p. 45). Deleuze and Guattari provide tools that make it possible to illustrate a reimagining of existences of consciousness freed from conceptualizations of lack so revered and sedentary. By liberating the sedentary to the nomadic,[2] Deleuze and Guattari establish an eternal recurrence of becoming and the limitless potentiality of infinite becomings. This imagining of becoming subjects provides a "philosophy that seeks to free our thinking from constraints placed upon it by habit and opinion, and want[s] us to affirm life's capacity to produce questions by seeing them as opportunities to transform life" (Hjorth, 2011, p. 52). It is in this philosophy of the nomadic becoming that an analysis of desire can be deterritorialized[3] to illuminate the role that education plays in the becoming of subjects. Ultimately, this philosophy can be used as a tool to analyze the ways in which current educational pedagogy frames desire, and can ultimately create a feedback loop that is the eternal recurrence of humanity's becoming consumption machines.

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[2] To understand the concept of the nomad "we can consider nomadic space, not as a space with intrinsic properties that then determine relations (in the way chess pieces determine how movements might be enacted), but as a space with extrinsic properties; the space is produced from the movements that then give that space its peculiar quality" (Colebrook, 2005, p. 187).

[3] "Deterritorialization does not express itself in general. And therefore it cannot be understood generally either. This is why the movement of deterritorialization can never be grasped in itself, one can only grasp its indices in relation to the territorial representations. As implied by the term, deterritorialization has no concrete meaning apart from that territory it traverses." (Kilgore, 2014, p. 261).

<u>Desire:</u>

To unpack the ways in which neoliberal desire restricts educational relationalities, a working definition of both what constitutes desire, and then what constitutes neoliberal desire, must be established. There are several understandings and schools of thought on what constitutes desire, however for the sake of clarity this paper will work with two of the most prominent, and conflicting, modern views on desire. Twentieth century psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan sees desire as "the idea of lack as part of our subjectivity. We are, for Lacan, lacking subjects who are always trying to compensate, even if always inadequately, for this lack" (Mercieca, 2012, p 47). However, for theorist Gilles Deleuze, "desire is the material process of connection, registration and enjoyment of flows of matter and energy coursing through bodies in networks of production in all registers" (Mercieca, 2012, p 47). It is in the Deleuzian conceptualization of desire where pedagogy can develop in an affirmative way; this is not to assume desire should be reduced to a dialectic of lack *or* another, as that would negate the function of a Deleuzian interpretation of desire, rather it should be viewed more in a relationship of lack *and* the other.[4]

When viewed as an affirmation, desire can be seen as the very reason for teaching and learning. Gilles Deleuze, along with Felix Guattari, suggest that desire is "a material entity and … is regarded as an autonomous and affirmative force that not only defies any social determination but also shapes the social in many ways" (Zembylas, 2007, p. 335). Though desire is often viewed as lack, a Deleuzo-Guattarian view of desire is more to exist with a desire that is being "filled by itself and its contemplations (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987)" (Zembylas, 2007, p. 331). Put more simply, desire does not consist *only* of lack. Of course individuals, and ultimately

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[4] For Deleuze and Guattari, desire is "thoroughly productive, which is not simply to say that desires are produced, but rather that desire is production , and more, that its product is the real itself." (Altamirano, 2014, p. 258).

curriculum, act to compensate. However, a Deleuzian perspective allows for flow to meet flow, students to meet staff, both to encounter curriculum as becoming subjects, and desire to be full and self-fulfilling as it is not framed as a deficit model. Ultimately, the ability to shift an understanding of desire from solely envisioned as lack allows for an imagining of desire as a rhizomatic[5] play both between and within flows with an unknown finality (Kidd, 2015, p. 11-18). Though there are other beliefs and schools of thought as to what constitutes desire, for the sake of this paper these two examples of the Lacanian theory of desire framed solely as lack, and the Deleuzian theory of desire as a relational product of affirmation will allow for the discussion to progress.

The view of desire as an affirmative force can be difficult to wrestle with in modern Western society as the prevalence of competition often seeks not to honour 'the other' but to see individuals as lesser-than one's self, essentially reducing others to a competitor that must be bested. The belief that for one to succeed another must fail is contradictory to a Deleuzian view of desire. This competition-based reading of desire as lack suggests that it is best to create a dialectic of those within and outside of history (Donald, 2009). In the creation of an *us* and *them* the relevance of *the other* produces motivation as lack making possible an exploitation for some resemblance of an individual's personal gain. With this understanding we can begin to see how a deficit model of binary narrative promotes the competition so essential to neoliberal desire.

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[5] "Rhizome is the name of the introductory plateau of Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus,* and of the model of thought informing the writing and reading of that book... As a model of thought, the rhizome can be located between the philosophical concept of multiplicity… and physical instantiations such as botanical rhizomes, felt, and patchwork quilts, on the other." (Holland, 2014, p. 271).

Neoliberal desire:

When the Cold War ended, neoliberalism was heralded as the answer to all economic woes by those living in free market states. In America the infallibility of capitalism became the victorious battle cry as the evils of communism were spent into submission; the world was now able to live in a state of economic freedom where each individual was seemingly the master of their own fate. Freedom was heralded as being unchallenged, for lack of foe, and therefore must be an incontrovertible inevitability (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 3-19).

However, with the cementing of liberal democracies as the global victor, came the kind of overcoding that "inevitably leads to a sedimentation of social relations that are solidified by pretensions of freedom" (Connell, 2008, p. 4). These pretensions of freedom are inherent in modern liberal democracies and can take many forms. One of the most prevalent illusions of freedom is the capitalist preoccupation with the accumulation of material wealth. Citizens in capitalist states are born into a system that "represents a soft imperialism of sorts, in which the colonized believe they are exerting democratic autonomy as they choose their commercial indenture (Barber, 1996)" (Connell, 2008, p. 4). With this critique of capitalism in mind, a working definition of neoliberal desire can be understood as the belief that "capitalism ensures that we do not seek balance, but instead are always dissatisfied with what we have" (Harper & Savat, 2016, p. 129). This dissatisfaction, or lack, is the very function of desire in a neoliberal state, and schools play no small part in the indoctrination required for this commercial indenture. Yet, for capitalism to remain the dominant system it must reinforce the structures of power and control which support its growth.

One method state sanctioned neoliberalism uses to imbibe this control through lack is the manufacturing of an "us" and "them" binary created to cement loyalty to the state. Ultimately,

the state becomes a vehicle for the propagation of the neoliberal sensibility. The dialectic which creates an "us" versus "them" narrative allows the framing of the state as the protector of worldview, and thus the defender of one form of immortality project. Yet, as the neoliberal prerogative tightens its grip on people living in 'free' states, we see that "the desire that capitalism frees through decoding and deterritorialization becomes captured in the capitalist axiomatic or reterritorialized by the State" (Sellar, 2015, p. 427). Rephrased, citizens become the property of the systems that are supposedly freeing them. In this way the conception of a state can be seen as "an instrument of oppression" (Becker, 1975, p. 98) which sets to reinforce "the we-versus-they construction (Zizek, 1997)" (Scott, 2001, p 289). The state becomes a vessel for the solidification and the face of a specific worldview. This is not shocking as "the principal way humans manage the fear of death is through the construction and maintenance of cultural worldviews" (van Kessel, 2019, p 127). Just as we are taught to read in school, we are also taught to read our desire as just that, singular and ours. Students are welcomed into the *us* so long as they know and celebrate the narrative of *us*.

Reading desire as lack provides an accessible account for the neoliberal influence over pedagogy and narratives propagated in schools. This propagation of binary based national narratives injects interpretations of desire as lack for "[Capitalism's supreme goal] is to produce lack in the large aggregates, to introduce lack where there is always too much, by effecting the absorption of overabundant resources (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004)" (Harper & Savat, 2016, p. 128). When viewing desire as lack, the self-correcting machinic assemblage[6] of the capitalist system fulfils its need for a socialized and qualified workforce by emphasizing the ability of

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[6] For Deleuze and Guattari an assemblage is the "combination of three aspects: (1) the *conditions* for acting, (2) the *activity*, and (3) the *consequences* of the action… Deleuze and Guattari's concept of *assemblage* is a robust conception of agency and a powerful framework for analyzing social formations." (Litaker, 2014, p. 251-252).

competition to provide an accumulation of possessions and education as the key to the income necessary for this accumulation.

This unilateral understanding of desire can be seen through many elements of education, not the least of which is grading. In a Deleuzian reading of capitalist desire one can see that "the coding of desire through the act of grading is part of the play of capitalist relations within the classroom setting" (Moffatt, 2006, p. 1). When students and teachers view achievement as a coded value system where the supposed fulfilment of desire is expressed through semiotics, societal values are merely reproduced from generation to generation. This reproduction ultimately creates cyclical propagations of both financial privilege and power structures which control the aforementioned binary narratives of *us* and *them*.

Perhaps it is in this perpetuation of framing desire in lack, and the ability for capitalism to provide a fulfilment of desire, that we see the importance of the education system to capitalist assemblages. When "semiotic systems depend on assemblages, and it is the assemblages that determine a given people…[one] can assure the predominance of one semiotic over another (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004)" (Connell, 2008, p. 5). Thus, narrative, historical or otherwise, becomes a form of standardized semiotic coding placing value on one understanding over another. This is particularly troubling as when an illusion of a certain kind is perceived as a singular reality, concern can grow over who is authoring this story and what motives are at play for its perpetuation. If a singularity of history is accepted as the past, what is missed is that history is "not merely a perspective on what has been" (Russen, 2004, p 67) but that history "moulds moral values into a 'body of time'" (Russen, 2004, p 67). One example of this moulding, that can be viewed as a manifestation of the neoliberal prerogative, is the capturing of

social studies education through the perpetuation of a Canadian Grand Narrative[7]. If the narration of past is framed as a singular narrative of *us*, then to question said narrative not only becomes incomprehensible within the popular assemblage but a treasonous act associated with *them*.

In a global capitalist system of competition, each culture wants a piece of the pie and must unite to fight for it, pitting culture against culture (jagodzinski, 2016). By agreeing on the value of desire as lack, and the ability for the neoliberal structures to fill that lack, the Western capitalist educational system has united liberal democratic nations under the propagation of desire solely as lack and the ability of profit to fill that lack. Hence, a Deleuzian reading of desire can be utilized to point out the paradoxical capitalist assemblage where lack desires profit but the aim of profit is to promote lack. In other words, Deleuze and Guattari provide an understanding of the ways in which profit becomes deterritorialized to the point of reterritorialization.

Students that are fed into the current Western educational system are often conditioned not to, or have not been given the opportunity to, question the prerogatives of neoliberalism. By not providing opportunities (such as the role of historicity in a social studies classroom) to analyze the multiplicity or rhizomatic nature of one's own desire, educators and students are guided to default into the patterned conceptualization of desire in capitalist terms. Given the context of many current Western educational models, students and teachers will often identify desire solely as lack that can be filled with the semiotic understandings of grades. "The *lacking* at the heart of capitalist enterprise is present in the classroom… All students' productive effort is reduced to a *lacking* through grades. The grades become part of a capitalist field where value is measured against itself" (Moffatt, 2006, p. 1). In this system, students and teachers are conditioned not to exist with desire through a Deleuzian lens as flow meeting flow but rather are

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[7] Stories that provide commonly accepted narratives of history are called grand narratives and offer easily digestible plot lines that over-generalize and thus foreclose our ability to recognize ourselves (den Heyer, 2018)

conditioned to exist in a system of lack which pitts popularly conceived notions of desire against the 'other's' desire in a competitive framework.

As the neoliberal prerogative tightens its grip on people living in 'free' states, we see that "the desire that capitalism frees through decoding and deterritorialization becomes captured in the capitalist axiomatic or reterritorialized by the State and the family" (Sellar, 2015, p. 427). A negative feedback loop is created where even if one's desire is freed from lack through innovation, this innovation then becomes recaptured as a capitalist recognition of lack in the other. Seventeenth century philosopher Baruch Spinoza would state that this negative feedback loop of desire being created by recognition of desire in the other is pointless when adopting his Monistic Relational Ontology where all living matter can be viewed as a single entity and where individuality is nothing more than a mechanism of affect from within that entity (Braidotti, 2015). As Deleuzian theory builds on some of Spinoza's logic, it becomes apparent how the view of desire as an affirmation creates a line of flight[8] out of the feedback loop of desire as lack in a neoliberal system (Braidotti, 2015) so as not to be framed as a deficit model or consider one's desire to be captured within the modulations of a control society.

Neoliberal desire in a control society:

According to Deleuze and Guattari, humans lived under systems of mass control as early as 7000 B.C.E. as the concept of a 'state' arrived and overcoded ways of living in early agricultural societies (Connell, 2008, p. 3). As aforementioned the *progress* of states to arrive at the current global dominance of liberal democracies is often credited to their ability to purport

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[8] For Deleuze and Guattari, " a 'line of flight' is a path of mutation precipitated through the actualisation of connections among bodies that were previously only implicit (or 'virtual') that releases new powers in the capacities of those bodies to act and respond." (Lorraine, 2005, p. 147).

freedoms. Yet, these pretensions of freedom which are inherent to modern liberal democracies can take many forms. One of the most prevalent illusions of freedom is the capitalist preoccupation with the accumulation of material wealth and the presumption that the sole function of an education is to provide the means to this end. In a Western Eurocentric model, desire holds the potential to be manipulated, thus placing humans in a state of servitude to their own possessions and cementing an understanding of desire as lack. In this Eurocentric understanding, one must feed their desire to the capitalist assemblage before it can actually become one's own again, only after being digested and returned by the assemblage it has been stripped of all but a singular quality, lack.

One clear example of how desire is shaped by a neoliberal framework in a control society can be found in the gamification of holistic assessment results at Hwa Chong Junior College in Singapore (Mercer, 2013, p. 5). Here, students compete for the prestigious Public Service Commission (PSC) scholarship. This highly sought after scholarship provides students the ability to be fast-tracked into the highest paid and most influential careers in government. The criteria for assessment is based on numerous "forms of meritorious behaviour" and uses a "scoring matrix" (Mercer, 2013, p. 5) to calculate said behaviour. In this system students are pitted against each other with results publicly displayed around the school. The system is essentially a competition where admirable behaviour is rewarded with points and "gamifies the holistic assessment of students by rewarding students who demonstrate leadership, character, good social skills and emotional maturity with points" (Mercer, 2013, p. 5). Thus, "Hwa Chon's attempt to gamify its holistic learning assessments, albeit crude, nevertheless reveals a significant development in the educational capture, measurement and control of student's affective capacities" (Mercer, 2013, p. 5). In the study of the gamification of holistic assessment, we see

"a manifestation of what Gilles Deleuze calls an apparatus of 'modulatory' control (Mercer, 2013, p. 6). The use of modulatory control in this scenario provides a clear example of capitalist prerogatives controlling desire. Most assuredly, "when desire is treated industrially, it leads to the destruction of desire (Steigler, 2012)" (Mercer, 2013, p. 7). Return here to the metaphor of Ouroboros, and an imagining where we can see a feedback loop of desire consuming itself.

Perhaps, it is possible that the function of the neoliberal projection of desire is to eliminate desire altogether or to recode it within a framework to best suit its own benefit. Ultimately, Capitalism, which will base itself in a deterritorialization of desire, will recode desire with its own signifiers and images (Moffat, 2006, p. 4). The neoliberal modulation of desire to a point of elimination therefore sees people turned into an emotionless and extremely efficient workforce. Key to this process is the concept of fixed criteria by which all students are measured, a system of standardization.

Standardization has become extremely prevalent in education today and is closely linked to the idea of a control society. Standardization exists in most liberal democracies around the world, and is used to measure state against state, then district against district, and ultimately school against school. An example of this competitive framework is the use of standardized exams such as the Program for International School Assessment (PISA) created by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1997 (Sellar, 2015, p. 430).

PISA provides feedback to school districts around the world through standardized comparative analysis. That is to say, how does a student in a school district in China compare to a student in New Zealand or France in a given criteria determined by the OECD? When discussing the influence of neoliberal desire in the control society, it would be difficult to see this

more clearly illustrated than the fact that the OECD designed the standardized systems of assessment used to gauge the success of education systems in the framework of free market principles for any participating liberal democracy.

Through this sophistic approach to education, understandings of desire are limited as "students do not *inquire* as much as *acquire* "qualification" and "socialization" through their master's seal of reputation by imitating the master's version of right opinion and conduct" (den Heyer, 2015, p. 13). Here, desire is not only framed as lack but as lack that is filled only by the approval of a privilege signifier through current Western assessment practices such as the Alberta Diploma Examinations, or measures of standardization such as PISA scores. This unilateral understanding of signifier and signified will in-turn create a new assemblage of an auto re-producing system of privilege as only one story, the story of the privileged which creates and perpetuates curricula, becomes told and retold in classrooms negating the legitimacy of stories belonging to those outside said circle of privilege.

An example of neoliberal desire in a control society: social studies education in Canada:

For the perpetuation of classes of privilege, desire must be sold as lack with one group signifying the fulfillment of that lack to another. A neoliberal perspective of desire cannot include the 'other' for risk of questioning inequalities that it produces. In a pedagogical light, this produces a "loyalty to the liberal state... [and] leaves us afraid to support the struggles of the local marginalized 'other' in our lives" (Couture, 1997, p. 136). In a Lacanian model of deficit, this fear to support the 'other' leaves the desire of the marginalized lost and the desire of those not visibly marginalized coded into submission of standardization. Yet, Deleuze and Guattari

allow us to see that it also *produces* a "central pedagogical problem… How can the teacher move beyond habituated ways of being and reclaim immanence?" (Connell, 2008, p. 8). This loss of immanence[9] is indicative of a surrendering to the neoliberal institutionalized desire and inability to disconnect from the control society.

Yet, the aforementioned understandings of standardization are not limited strictly to practices of assessment. Perhaps one of the more damaging and problematic ways standardization is imposed, particularly in the Canadian education system, is through the propagation of a singular national Grand Narrative. Surely nation can be viewed as an "instrument of history" (Willinsky, 1998, p. 120) when "elite descendants of settlers…have worked to make their…historical memory the 'national' language, literature, and history (Kymlicka, 2007)" (Gani & Scott, 2017, p. 34). This proliferation of a singular national history sets to reinforce "the we-versus-they construction (Zizek, 2007)" (Scott, 2001, p. 289) which strengthens the use of nation for a narrative of privileged *us* over unprivileged *them*. Furthermore, the methodological individualism present in the narration of national history as a single "inalienable psychological essence of the individual" provides "major theoretical as well as ethical and political problems" (Wertsch, 2000, p. 45) as nations are not a "natural, God-given way of classifying [humans] (Gellner, 1983)" (Wertsch, 2000, p. 44). More simply put, as nations are constructs it is possible to see these constructs as myths under the guise of grand narratives which serve to capture imagenings of desire in singular stories for a collective past. Delueze and Guattari however, ask us to reimagine what is productive and nomadic about these myths. Their understanding of the multiplicitous nature of desire shifts the belief that singular

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[9] "The distinction drawn between immanence and transcendence is all important to Deleuze's philosophy… Immanence and transcendence are terms about the relations that hold at the heart of different metaphysics. Are the privileged relations in a philosophy of the form of a relation 'to' something, or of a relation 'in' something? If it is 'to' then it is a philosophy of transcendence. If it is 'in' then it is immanence" (Williams, 2005, p. 128).

stories can be accepted as anything more than singular and do not encapsulate the entirety of reality.

A reading of history as one truth excludes that history is "something that is in part made in and by persons", persons which are "historically fashioned" (Holland & Lave, 2001, p. 30). As historically fashioned individuals, the authors of history must account for "the composition and decomposition of the interpretive dispositions that inevitably frame historical agency (Smith, 2001)" (den Heyer, 2017, p. 240) as they produce echoes of the past. The stories we call nations are mythic echoes relayed through time in the form of narratives. Narrowly constructed grand narratives rely on a single fantasized past for the reproduction of privilege and maintenance of an illusionary national identity. As the "espousing [of] a society's myths is a primary function of its institutions… curriculum documents can thus be considered mythological" (Donald, 2019, p. 107). A central issue of concern then is how myths are enacted as educational relationalities which have become contrasted, and impeded, by neoliberal imperatives refuting the ability for flows to interact in any rhizomatic fashion. Perhaps one possible line of flight is a reimagining of social studies curriculum as not a study of history, but desires enacted throughout histories. Surly, this reading of social studies provides a means to address the fact that "it's time to build an education no one has to recover from" (Ayers, 2010, p. 18). However, to move forward, social studies educators must recognize that grand narratives serve the function of "boringly repeat[ing] the rhythms of colonization with the consolidation of recognizable styles (Spivak, 1997)" (Parkes, 2007, p. 392). These recognizable rhythms ultimately serve to divide the world "among people who live inside and outside history" (Willinsky, 1998, p. 119).

At their very core, nations are "imagined communities" (Francis, 1997, p. 10) constructed of myths and these "myths are echoes of the past, resonating in the present" (Francis, 1997, p.

11). Myths don't just do the work of building a narrative; they also maintain the status quo of preexisting narratives as well as the assemblages these narratives serve. By reproducing the status quo, said myths maintain privilege by marginalizing "anyone who seems to be frustrating the main cultural project" (Francis, 1997, p. 11). The issue that arises is "if, driven by a zeal for the truth, one imagines that all the elements can actually be accounted for…then one has fallen for the delusion that *a* truth is *the* truth" (Jenkins, 2004, p. 50). For those inside a history of privileged narrative, the fantasy of *a* truth as *the* truth allows for a propagation of said privilege but at the cost of a more hopeful possible future for both themselves and the marginalized other. Indeed, for neoliberalism to exist there must be an *other* to compete against. This is not surprising as "education today is still largely guided by curriculum mythologies predicated on the assumption that liberal market ideology is the key to human freedom and happiness" (Donald, 2019, p. 107). Thus, the myth or history of a nation's unilateral worldview becomes imperative to the ability for said nation to compete globally in an economic sense as the prevalence of neoliberalism grows and imagenings of the multiplicity which desires can be captured therein.

Yet, one must wonder, will current structures of power and capital ever allow the dismantling of the fantasia producing a singularized narration of past? The power of fantasy in narration of nation is evident as "power is produced in concrete and particular relationships, that subjects are structured as a function of those relationships, and that these subjects cannot transcend the specificity of their circumstances without the simplification fantasy provides" (Scott, 2001, p 303). But there are ways to counter this cycle and liberate relationships, subjects, and circumstances from restrictive models of historical representation through lines of flight.

To shift thinking on historicity, or even education, Deleuzian models of thought and representation can be utilized as a method of liberation for a subject. Hope grows when individuals use "representational models…that enable people to invoke differing frames of reference to make sense *of* the world" (den Heyer, 2018, p. 238). These models evoke a "mirror of experience within which life in the present is reflected and its temporal features revealed" (Rusen, 2004, p 66). When we begin to see "histories as representations, and history as representational practice" (Parkes, 2007, p. 397) we are presented "with an opportunity to both understand and resist" our "inscription within historical discourse" (Parkes, 2007, p. 397). The use of altering representational models provides the ability for educators and students to avoid "pursuing a linear policy path driven, at times, by the impulse *to do the wrong things better*" (Couture, 2017, p 31).

To both re-cognize our debt and relation to the other "we will have to consider a form of public history that opens one to both the demand of, and responsibility to, the alterity of the historical experience of others" (Simon, 2005, p 4). An effort must be made, in all subject areas, to both recognize the presence of this debt as well as a rethinking of what Deleuze means by a rhizomatic model of thought. Though differing narratives often do not align to provide the same account, perhaps we need to re-envision "history education as a site of conflict, rather than its solution" (Farley, 2009, p 538). Ultimately, by diversifying the conceptualization of historical narrative and its role in the production of fantasy dependent privilege, individuals, collectives, and nations can adopt a historical identity that allows the human self to expand "its temporal extension beyond the limits of birth and death, beyond mere mortality. Via this historical identity, a person becomes part of a temporal whole larger than that of his or her personal life" (Rusen, 2004, p 68).

By not only accepting but also attempting to make room for alternative myths of nation we begin the process of supporting the struggles of the "local marginalized 'other' in our lives" (Couture, 1997, p. 136) and making "the unheard heard in order for them to be remembered" (Jenkins, 2004, p 55). This productive re-cognizing of desire in narrative for the multiple becomings is essential, not just to the marginalized other but also to the privileged. Truly, "the more we recognize our indebtedness to and relationship with the others in our midst, the more likely we are to have effective political agency, practice, and communities (McAfee, 2000)" (den Heyer, 2018, p. 237). Perhaps in an acceptance of *other* in national narrative, we can also shift the defining of educational desire as solely functioned to produce potential capital. Ultimately, the use of different representational models, such as a Deleuzo-Guatarrian conceptualization of desire, can help us to free historical thinking from singular understandings of past. Perhaps then we can begin to problematize the fact that "youth are trained to believe that their emerging identities as human beings are directly connected to neoliberal market logics and consumerism as a necessary lifestyle choice" (Donald, 2019, p. 112).

It is evident that through a Lacanian reading of standardization of both pedagogy and narrative, the educator's, and subsequently the student's, desires are captured in the framework of the neoliberal control society. "In this way the ethical and political dimensions of the teacher are removed and replaced with policy… which diminish the role of the teacher… to control and checking" (Mercieca, 2012, p. 44). In this educational framework a teacher's relationship with their own desire and the student's becomes trapped by the capitalist assemblage. The educator capitulates their desire to be supplanted in systems of control only to find foundations for practice in capitalist-fueled mechanisms of monetary value dependent upon standardized messaging. One must then ask: "why do [people] fight for their servitude as stubbornly as though

it was their salvation?" (Mercieca, 2012, p. 44). Again, through this Lacanian reading of standardization of pedagogy and adoption of a single story, we see desire trapped in prescribed modes and methodology. Creators of curricula are then, unconsciously or consciously, fashioning the systems of oppression that reproduce cultures of privilege. Yet, when viewed using a Deuluzo-Guattarian reading of desire, all of these *problems* become reimagined as productive conflicts circling back on themselves, feeding themselves with their own concerns. Resembling the ancient Egyptian symbol of Ouroboros, or Nietzche's 'eternal recurrence', standardization of pedagogy and narrative creates a systemic neoliberal desiring in the control society where privilege both produces and is produced by curricula. Ultimately, an imagining of desire as not solely consisting of lack allows for a potential reimagining of physical and cognitive spaces for *us* and *them* dialectics to collapse into a recognition of the other within mainstream understandings of desire manifested through historical narrative.

Conclusion

Through an analysis of desire and the ways in which it is manipulated or produced, the cyclical nature of the process of becoming consumption machines, as well as education's role in that process, becomes apparent. However, to what end? How does one escape or is there an escape to this eternal recurrence? Not only do Deleuze and Guattari provide the lens necessary to view the existence of this condition, but they identify the "particular tools and practices to "pry away" potentiality from the apparatus of capture (Deleuze, 2004)" (Connell, 2008, p. 8) necessary to disrupt, if only momentarily, the capitalist assemblage that places both students and teachers in a state of becoming consumption machines framed by lack.

As machinic assemblages, individuals must understand that desire and education "enable[s] us to do different things, including think different things" (Savat, 2013, p. 4). However, as educations allows individuals to think differently one must analyze the language and processes of these thoughts "especially if one is to be able to avoid, or at least be aware of, the various forces and pressures exerted upon and through oneself as a machinic assemblage" (Savat, 2013, p. 9). Singular imagenings of desire, as well as the manifestation of said desires as singularities of narrative or even assessment are examples of the very pressures being exerted upon all stakeholders in education.

By analyzing the role desire plays in becoming subjects, not solely as lack but also as productive, one begins to see that "the very fact that there *are* machines initiates a decoding of perception and flight into the perceptual unknown" (Johnston, 1999, p. 38). Yet, it is imperative to remain vigilant in the analysis of the capitalist assemblage to provide cracks in the cyclical nature of becoming consumption machines and allow access to this perceptual unknown. This analysis proves exceedingly difficult as capitalism functions by "constantly overcoming existing beliefs and meaning to open up new markets and introduce new marketing strategies to do so" (jagodzinski, 2016, p. 15). The prevalence of neoliberalism's manipulation through narrative has "accelerated this process to such an extent that many are left with a groundless ground" (jagodzinski, 2016, p. 15). This groundless ground, or hamster wheel is created by the neoliberal assemblage but accelerated by individuals' relationship with desire.

All of this analysis is not to say that there is a lack of communication about the issue of becoming machinic or of consumption as Deleuze states: "We do not lack communication. On the contrary, we have too much of it. We lack creation. We lack resistance to the present (Deleuze & Guattari 1994)" (jagodzinski, 2016, p. 27). However, despite this abundance of

communication one thing that is clear is that "the global capitalist social order is indeed ill" (jagodzinski, 2016, p. 28.) The scope must be widened and desire freed from lack, as this is not really a conversation of merely an economic system. This is an issue of either being unaware of the subversion of desire by the capitalist assemblage, or of seeing that subversion as only framed in deficit models.

The more one attempts to understand the role of education in the process of becoming consumption machines, the more one must acknowledge that "fighting to change the current economic system… is simply to use "its own already defined assumptions," a denial of *virtual* realities- "the multiplicities and contradictions" – beyond or within Capitalism" (Cronon, 2012, p. 53) Perhaps what the larger desire at play would be that "once you recognize that culture (love, poetry, rock music, desire), and not economics, is the real problem, then your theory is fit for the unemployed and the CEO alike" (Cronon, 2012, p. 53).

To fight against the neoliberal assemblage serves merely to improve the system's efficacy. This process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization is not only indicative of the process of becoming consumption machines, but also of the eternal recurrence or Ouroboros like nature of the capitalist assemblage and our imaginings of desire within it. As humanity becomes increasingly interconnected and conditioned by singular fantasies, the borders of the cycle strengthen and lines of flight become increasingly more difficult. The auto-corrective nature of the capitalist assemblage produces exponential expansion with every challenging it encounters. The assemblage is not only auto-corrective, or even a form of artificial intelligence unto itself, but also and perhaps most profoundly it is productive.

The judgement of said production is up to any one individual. Yet, prior to passing this judgement, perhaps an analysis of the nature of desire and its relationship with neoliberalism is prudent. As, in analyzing the nature of desire and its captivity within a culture of consumption, Deleuze and Guattari make possible, at the very least, and if only for a fleeting moment, a line of flight where the entire eternally recurring capitalist assemblage becomes unmistakably discernable in its complex rhizome-like nature. In keeping with the metaphor of Ouroboros, this discussion will finish where it began, with the point that led into this paper's opening quote from Foucault's preface to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*. "Withdraw allegiance from the old categories of the Negative (law, limit, castration, lack, lacuna), which Western thought has so long held sacred as a form of power and an access to reality. Prefer what is positive and multiple, difference over uniformity, flows over unitites, mobile arrangements over systems. Believe that what is productive is not sedentary but nomadic (Foucault, 1983)" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. xiii).

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