

Towards Anticolonial Praxis: Utilizing the Funds of Knowledge Strategy
for the Case Study of a Toronto Music School, or The Really Long
Explanation of Why It Took So Long For Beyoncé to Win Grammy
Album of the Year

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to show possibilities for developing anticolonial praxis. Colonizers set up racist systems, including but not limited to education, with institutional power that reproduces neocolonial White supremacy despite anticolonial resistance. Using music education as an example of a neocolonial institution with a global reach, traditional music education offered by the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) and Suzuki School of Music (SSM) is critiqued to demonstrate how Eurocentric values are reflected with predominantly White male composers used in music texts, curricula, pedagogies and assessments. Despite decolonial efforts that seek to disrupt systemic neocolonialism through racially inclusive texts and diverse hiring practices, institutional practices continue to perpetuate Anglo-American dominance due to outdated assumptions about racialized women fabricated during European colonization. Spurious science manufactured in tandem with misogyny and racism sought to justify White male hegemony and subalternize Women of Colour. Postcolonialism challenged Eurocentrism and later intersectional and Afrofeminist thought further critiqued and advocated for Women of Colour to gain respect and rights in public participation in communities and institutions.

Using the funds of knowledge (FKN) strategy as a form of anticolonial resistance, the findings showed the importance of institutional leadership in developing anticolonial praxis in education. With generous funding from The Helen Carswell Chair in Community Engaged Research in the Arts, I worked as the principal investigator on research titled “Sankofa Beatzz: Testing the Efficacy of the FKN Theory for Music Education.” I conducted research for eight

months with three music teachers and eleven students in a Toronto neighborhood music school to explore how racially diverse community knowledge can be incorporated into the classroom. The research questions for the eleven music students developed in collaboration with the three music teachers were: 1) Do you see yourself reflected in the music? 2) What kind of music do you listen to at home with your parents? and 3) Do you want to learn music that you listen to at home? Findings revealed that FKN is useful for inclusion of home pedagogies and that systemic support is vital in helping educators pivot away from Eurocentrism to develop anticolonial praxis.

Key words: anti/de/neo/post/colonialism, funds of knowledge (FKN), intersectionality, *conscientização*, subaltern

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This dissertation is dedicated to the next generation – With hard work and sacrifice, make the world a better place.

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Introduction: The Importance of Music

Music has become a global driver in educating about international connections. Today's pop music has a profusion of racially diverse artists from many countries, who sing in a variety of languages and genres. Rapper Psy's "Gangnam Style" blew up charts in 2012, demonstrating that racial and linguistic music fusion was here to stay. In 2022, Bad Bunny released "*Un Verano Sin Ti*" (A Summer Without You), becoming the best-selling album of the year, the first in Spanish to top the billboards. In 2023, Zayn Malik, formerly of Britain's One Direction, released "*Tu Hai Kahan*" (Where Have You Gone?) in Urdu, connecting to his roots with the Pakistani band Aur. Artists such as Lil Nas X created a new genre with country rap's "Old Town Road," a 2018 song that topped charts for nineteen weeks. Linguistic and musical diversity continues to become increasingly popular worldwide.

Artistic expression is part of the universal human experience, transcending time, geography, gender, race, culture, class, and religion. All cultures create art and music, universal languages that have the potential to unite all. In his speech "Criteria of Negro Art," at the annual National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) conference in 1926, W.E.B. Du Bois posited that art is powerful in a way that can become an emancipatory force, asserting that the artist is "but a humble disciple of art and cannot presume to say [who] tells the truth and exposes evil and seeks with Beauty and for Beauty to set the world right" (para. 11). Banksy is an effective example of emancipatory art that anonymously critiques politically charged global situations to highlight various forms of oppression in a way that supersedes academia and military force, while in the music world Beyoncé's art strategically functions as an

anticolonial form of peaceful resistance that simultaneously commits violence against White supremacy in a consequential way.

As Du Bois noted, many artists “have used Goodness – goodness in all its aspects of justice, honor and right – not for sake of an ethical sanction but as the one true method of gaining sympathy and human interest” (para. 27). But during British and other European powers’ colonisation of the world, institutionalised music education whitewashed pedagogies, texts and assessments, creating differential value that subordinated the languages, instruments, and pedagogy of the Global South’s music. Music decision-makers today in institutions such as the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) in Toronto, with King Charles III as its patron, are, like many fields, controlled by powerful White actors that maintain Anglo-American imperialism in institutions. Du Bois argued for the arts to reclaim the humanity of Black people under the double axes of patriarchal and colonial oppression. John Dewey also promoted “the ideal of democratic community that would be achieved through the union of art and science, specifically that one could use the fine arts as sources of pragmatic action and social reform” (Gustafson, 2009, p. 117).

Racialized musicians have long engaged in resistance through combining their art with activism, known as artivism. Nina Simone, an iconic Black female artist, demonstrates several common themes for Women of Colour (WOC) in music. She trained as a classical pianist but was denied entrance into the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, forcing her to earn a living as a jazz artist. In “Nina Simone 1933-2003,” public historian Mariana Brandman notes that “Simone was billed as a jazz vocalist, but she often rejected the label, viewing it as a

reflection of her race more than her musical style and training. She self-identified as a folk singer, with a style that also incorporated blues, gospel, and pop, among others. She was able to cross genres as both a singer and pianist, and her classical background remained an important part of her musical identity” (Brandman, 2022, np). Simone’s acclaim was slow to grow because she transcended genres of gospel, jazz, classical and pop, creating covers for George Harrison (rock), Leonard Cohen (folk), and the Bee Gees (disco). During the 1960s, Simone began her lifelong dedication to fight for civil rights in America through her music. One of her most famous songs, composed in one hour, is “Mississippi Goddam” (1964), written to protest the lynching of 14-year-old Emmet Till, the assassination of civil rights activist Medgar Evers, and the Birmingham church bombing, an incredibly heartbreaking list of racial injustices. Simone sings:

The name of this tune is Mississippi Goddam
And I mean every word of it
Alabama’s gotten me so upset
Tennessee made me lose my rest
And everybody knows about Mississippi, goddam. (Simone, 1964)¹

Rejected in the 1950s, Simone received an honorary doctorate from the Curtis Institute, two days before she passed. Eventually inducted into the Rock ‘n Roll Hall of Fame in 2018, Simone’s voice continues to resonate today, as WOC such as Beyoncé have to overcome long-term barriers and limited recognition in the arts.

Indeed, despite phenomenal commercial success, racialized music artists continue to fail to receive adequate recognition. The importance of pop music is revealed through the fact that

¹ The rest of the lyrics to “Mississippi Goddam,” are available at <https://genius.com/Nina-simone-mississippi-goddam-lyrics>.

many more people will listen to Beyoncé than read Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian Nobel Prize winner (1986) in literature. However, as Nahum Welang writes in “Triple Consciousness: The Reimagination of Black Female Identities in Contemporary American Culture,” Black female artists face challenges that their male and White female counterparts do not: “Their intermediate existence between racial and gendered identities is uniquely underscored by the role white patriarchy and black hypermasculinity play in the marginalisation of black female voices and the prioritisation of white women’s interests within and beyond mainstream feminist spaces” (Welang, 2018, p. 296). Welang identifies Beyoncé’s *Lemonade* album as “possibly popular culture’s most comprehensive elucidation” (p. 300) of what he terms threefold consciousness, adding a gendered dimension to Du Bois’s double consciousness. His reading of the album elucidates how Beyoncé “uses Afrofuturist tropes, reappropriation and gothic imagery to exorcise the generational pain of betrayal by black men and white women” (p. 296). Beyoncé’s authenticity is powerful because she avoids the resilient Black woman, angry Black woman, and mammie archetypes, naming her alter ego Sacha Fierce. Critiquing patriarchy in the Black community is a theme Beyoncé foreshadowed in “If I Were A Boy” (2008), to honestly share the vulnerabilities and hurt of Black women. With her art, Beyoncé reimagines her life devoid “from the gaze of white patriarchy” (p. 301) through Afrofeminist anticolonial defiance against White supremacy. That is why Black women are important, and too important to ignore.

Back in 2015, the decision not to award Beyoncé Grammy Album of the Year was widely criticized, even during the ceremony. By 2024, even though Beyoncé had won 99 Grammys, the most ever in Grammy history, when Jay-Z, her husband, took to the stage, he had to question

why she had not yet won Album of the Year. In 2024, Beyoncé's "Texas Hold 'Em" was the first single by a Black woman to debut at number one on a Country chart and finally brought home the elusive Album of the Year accolade at the 2025 Grammys. If someone of Beyoncé's stature experiences barriers, as noted by the racist backlash after her Country Music Awards performance with the Chicks in 2016, then how can racialized music students overcome barriers to learning music they want to express? And what difference does it make if those students are not in Houston, Texas, Beyoncé's birthplace, but Toronto, a city long touted as one of the most racially diverse cities in the world with more than 55.7% of the residents self-identifying as from a racialized group (City of Toronto, 2022)?

Toronto's Racialized Settler colonial Context

In many diverse neighbourhoods in the Greater Toronto Area, the local school plays a significant part in reproducing White supremacist hierarchies through lack of representation in teaching and educational administration. As of 2016, the Peel District School Board, the second largest school board in Canada, reported a racial gap between 83% racialized students, 10% who identify as Black, and 67% White teachers (Hamilton, 2021), reflecting the systemic racism that prevents hiring certified racialized educators. The preponderance of White, middle-class, female teachers in American (Lyiscott, Caraballo, and Morrell, 2018) and Canadian schools, who may have different life experiences from racialized, immigrant and refugee children, can result in achievement gaps and punitive measures in detentions, suspensions, and expulsions. As a result, students can experience feelings of alienation in their own neighbourhoods by practices enforced

by teachers and principals in educational institutions.

Despite studies showing that “students need educational programs rooted in their community and familial experiences and culture” (James, 2012b, p. 69), teachers who aspire to engage in social justice practices, cultural inclusivity, and reflection have admitted that they did not have the education, programs or curricula necessary to meet the needs of their diverse students. Interrogating the relationship between knowledge and power, reading against texts that support Eurocentrism, and using texts that include marginalised knowledges are essential to anticolonial best practices because, as Urmitapa Dutta establishes in “Decolonizing ‘Community’ in Community Psychology,” in cross-racial interactions “not all voices are heard or received equally” (Dutta, 2018, p. 279), and some can even be silenced. Dutta reveals how central reproducing White middle classism is to the hidden curriculum in teaching, recognizing that “the classroom is but one of many sites of struggles; therefore, decolonizing ideas in the classroom have to be tethered to a sincere engagement with material struggles organized around efforts to overcome gendered, racialized, and other intersecting forms of oppression” (p. 279). Teacher silence is complicit in enabling White supremacy while educational institutions, continuing along colonial lines, constitute the process by which racial identities can be subordinated and ultimately lost. As a result of neocolonial policies and practices, racialized students can feel disconnected with learning and school and, therefore, teachers need support in developing anticolonial praxis.

In the Canadian settler colonial context, educational policies have reinforced racist practices that created subalterns, as in the case of the residential school policy that destroyed the parental rights of First Nations elders and family members in raising their children. Noted

postcolonial scholar Gayatri Spivak draws on the term Gramsci developed in his *Prison Notebooks*, written between 1929 and 1935 (Gramsci, Hoare, & Nowell-Smith, 1987; Gramsci & Boothman, 1995; Patnaik, 1988) to describe people who obey orders but never give them, such as the working-class proletariat (Paulson, 2016). The term subaltern is utilized here to demonstrate how colonial ideology oppresses Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) as individuals, as well as their families and communities, to subordinate them into subalterns through neocolonial policies in education. As part of Canadian settler colonialism, the roles of elders, parents and communities were usurped, and First Nations families and communities were torn apart to enable White supremacist agendas for land acquisition. The attempted cultural and linguistic genocide of First Nations communities belongs to the darkest chapters of Canadian education's history of assimilationist practices. Traditionally, First Nations have relied on communities to raise children. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith underscores in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, elders' knowledge is taken seriously in Indigenous communities with processes and discussions that "facilitate effective ways of sharing knowledge" (Smith, 2021, p. 16) in a respectful manner. In contrast, the church and Canadian nation state worked together from 1831 to 1996 to assimilate First Nations children into Euro-Canadian culture by enforcing attendance at residential schools. Ever since, as Eun-Ji Amy Kim points out in her study of the Ontario Ministry of Education's attempts to integrate Aboriginal perspectives into their official curricula, "the integration approach to education—without proper involvement of Aboriginal peoples—continued to play a role in assimilating Aboriginal children and youth into Eurocentric culture and ways of thinking" (Kim, 2015, p. 122). Established by the Dominion of Canada, the

1876 Indian Act created a legal relationship with First Nations peoples that pursued ongoing elimination through settler colonial notions reflected in government regulation of what Bonita Lawrence, in *“Real” Indians and Others: Mixed-Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood* (2004), refers to as statistical genocide based on the Canadian government’s manufacturing of First Nations identity. For example, between 1876 and 1985 over 25,000 women had their status rescinded. Not only have many First Nations women lost their status, but residential schools were a vehicle to demonstrate the power of the church and government as civilising agents. Kent Monkman’s *“The Scream”* (2017) depicts the trauma of First Nations mothers when their children were forcibly removed from their parents and communities.



Figure 1 TVO Current Affairs, 2017

Once separated from their families, children lost their positionality as beneficiaries of their elders’ knowledge. The Regina school that opened six years after the Riel Rebellion in 1885 is but one of many illustrations of “the insidious nature of early Canadian assimilation policies” (Brady & Hiltz, 2017, p. 81) to subdue insurrections and further settler colonial interests. The

picture below of Thomas Moore Keeswick, before and after admission to the Regina Indian Industrial School, was originally taken to demonstrate the successful assimilation of a First Nations child but also exposes the attempt at cultural genocide that Thomas' transformation into a proper British gentleman represents:

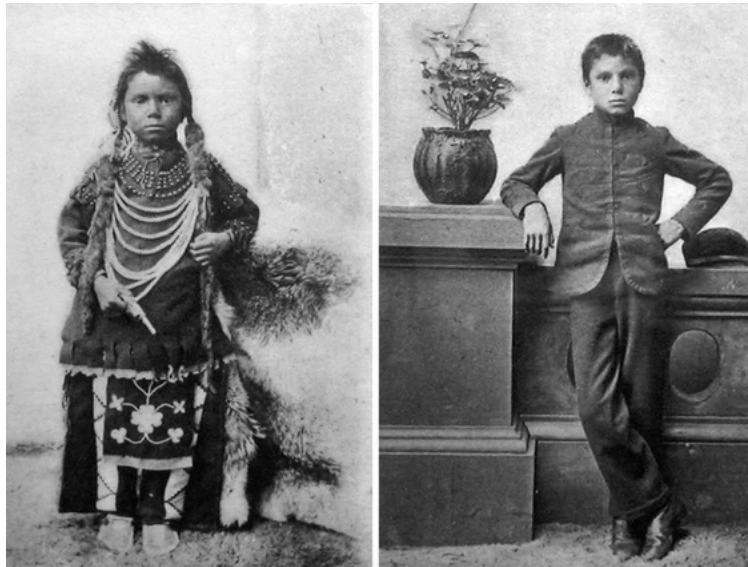


Figure 2 Brady & Hiltz, 2017, p. 63

In this way, states and their institutions take the place of kinship roles (Hartmann, 1981), specifically when dealing with BIPOC. Today, assimilationist terms continue to situate First Nations people as colonial subjects. For instance, “native” and “tribe” are global colonial terms that do not reflect communities based on kinship ties and clans that are governed by consensual decision-making, including matrilineal groups such as the Iroquois (Cheyfitz, 2002). Settler colonial policies that destroyed families in the past continue to cast a shadow over First Nations communities as a postcolonial legacy of oppression even though the last residential school in Canada closed in 1996.

Similarly, continuing the tradition of creating subalterns in the Canadian settler colonial context, Harris's Common Sense Revolution in Ontario (1995-2002) enacted various policies that detracted from family involvement in their children's education. Prior to Ontario's Education Act (1997), known as Bill 160, school boards retained the power to generate income by raising property taxes. Reproducing neocolonialism, the Harris government changed educational policy through the Education Act and took funding power away from diverse neighbourhoods in Toronto, citing the Conservative platform's principle of equity in all parts of the province. Since the inception of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) in 1998, deficits and cuts have been imposed, despite its being "the largest and one of the most diverse school boards in Canada," (TDSB, 2024, p. 1) and, as such, one of the highest income generators for the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Appealing to predominantly White middle-class voters, the Common Sense Revolution had a particularly detrimental effect on racialized students. Harris's Zero Tolerance Policy of 2000 resulted in Black youth being suspended at three times the rate of other students. The TDSB's Task Force on Safe and Compassionate Schools Toronto noted in 2003 that the Zero Tolerance Policy had led directly to the marginalisation of racialized youth. Indeed, a decade ago I wrote that "over the last 15 years, the original Canadian vision of social justice and an educator's responsibility to transform society to become more equitable may have slowly eroded through changes in curriculum and the centralization of school boards" (Jefford, 2014, p. 53). Despite subsequent efforts at amendments for progressive disciplinary action and restoration, marginalisation continues, demonstrating the power of neocolonial educational policies.

Harris also diminished the ability of teachers to respond to the needs of racially diverse communities in Toronto. Prior to the Education Act, teachers had more flexibility in curriculum delivery. Through the Harris government legislation of the Education Act, teachers became legally required to follow the Ontario curriculum. Key institutional powers were transferred from school boards by the Harris government, which “also centralized power over provincial education at the expense of school boards and teacher federations, asserting control over the curriculum and provincial testing” (Schweisfurth, 2006, p. 43). Even though many teachers go into teaching to make a difference in their students’ lives, after the Education Act, Ontario teachers had reason to feel they were implementers of government curricula rather than societal change-makers (Schweisfurth, 2006). Amendments to the Education Act disempowered teachers working in racialized neighbourhoods by shifting the funding formula and forcing teachers to follow provincially mandated curricula, thus greatly empowering the diversity-challenged Harris government.

Over the last thirty years, despite increasingly diverse students, inclusive curricula, and equity policies in elementary schools and universities, the teaching and administrator workforce in Canada has remained racially homogenous.² James and Chapman-Nyaho (2017) conducted research in the Canadian university context, consisting of 45 females and 44 males, racialized and Indigenous professors, working in small, mid-, and large-sized universities, in all disciplines from contract to tenured faculty. Five major themes emerged from the interviews:

² This material in this paragraph is from Jefford, 2021a.

1. Culture of Whiteness – Maintains colour blindness, institutional inertia, and tokenism.
2. Cronyism – Racialized women are not offered tenure and passed over.
3. Systemic Inequity – Equity policies do not address resistance to diversity because there is no accountability for implementation.
4. Good intentions – While initially the scales may tip in favour of some diverse candidates, once they were hired, many felt ambivalent about how they were perceived by White colleagues, who were not shy about pointing out they were inclusion hires.
5. Colour kills careers professionally and personally – When racialized faculty attempted to create change in the department through taking leadership positions, White faculty undermined their authority.

It has also been found that racialized women tend to be clustered in the most precarious jobs at universities (Henry, Enakshi, James, Kobayashi, Li, Ramos, & Smith, 2017) and other educational institutions. Education management continues an oppressive postcolonial legacy of keeping racialized educators in their subordinate place while reproducing White supremacy. Amending or abolishing policies such as the Ontario Education Act would be a huge step in improving the education of racialized students in the province because educational policies that reflect colonial racism significantly impact the daily lives of racialized families in a way that makes life harder.

Racism in Institutionalised Music Education

Returning to the opening material on Beyoncé and considering it in the context of the Toronto District School Board's policies and practices, a paradox can be seen: despite its popularity for more than two hundred years, Black music remains excluded from institutionalised music

education.³ Chapter 4 will discuss this phenomenon in detail. Music historian Ruth Gustafson notes that this paradox is difficult to ignore without asking how researchers can “explain so obvious a contradiction as black non-participation in school music without resorting to the conclusion, which is simplistic and distorting, that the schools and music teachers are racist?” (Gustafson, 2009, p. xi). To answer the question of racism in music education, in *Race and Curriculum: Music in Childhood Education* (2009) Gustafson examines how musical institutions were contrived during colonialism to demonstrate that even when racialized teachers are present, opportunities for racial inclusion are limited due to Eurocentric systemic standards of teaching, learning and assessment. Focusing on “the near total attrition of African American students from school music programmes and the travesty of democratic education that it symbolizes” (back cover), Gustafson’s study is valuable because it “shows how understanding this history makes a space for change without resorting to the simplistic conclusion that the schools and teachers are racist” (back cover).

Juliet Hess and Emily Good-Perkins have both built on Gustafson’s decolonial critique of institutionalised music learning in important ways that show how educators can develop anticolonial praxis in institutions and facilitate sustainable systemic change. Good-Perkins’s *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies in Music Education Expanding Culturally Responsive Teaching to Sustain Diverse Musical Cultures and Identities* (2022) is based on a qualitative study conducted in an urban high school in the United States and illustrates how traditional

3 The term “‘Black music’ refers to music that originates from Black culture including, but not limited to, Rap, Hip Hop, Jazz, Rhythm and Blues, Soul and Gospel” (Hamilton, 2021, p. 17).

approaches to music education can inhibit student engagement and learning. Based on a culturally sustaining pedagogies (CSP) approach, it poses a number of blunt questions:

In a general music class, why must the students' singing voices blend? Why must their vowels and timbre be uniform? Can we let children choose their own vocality, even if it is more nasal or a darker tone colour than that to which we are accustomed? Why must our listening practices be 'disciplined' both in body and in focus? Can we allow children to musically express themselves with their bodies, without prescribing the movements that are acceptable? What would happen if we abandoned the notion of classroom management? What if we broke the rules that have robbed us and our students of creative agency, musical embodiment, and expression? What if we truly had fun in our music classroom and gave up methods that, if we are being truly honest, are oftentimes culturally exclusive, musically boring, and based on traditions of containment, regulation, and discipline? (141-142)

The answers her study provides reflect her understanding that "Schools and educational spaces are not devoid of ideology, culture, and normalized beliefs" (142) and therefore require in-depth analyses that unpack them.

Juliet Hess's 2013 dissertation, *Radical Musicking: Challenging Dominant Paradigms in Elementary Music Education*, is closer to home for me in a number of respects. Not only was it written in the Department of Humanities, Social Sciences and Social Justice Education at the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, but it employs a multiple case study methodology (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009) involving four elementary music educators from different schools, who all explicitly set out to "interrupt the traditional Eurocentric focus on Western classical music to explore different possibilities with their students" (ii). Aware that there would be "moments in each classroom where the dominant paradigm was reinscribed" (ii-iii), she set out to ask "explicitly which bodies are able to do radical anti-oppressive work in music education, acknowledging that it is possible to unintentionally reinscribe dominant power relations while working to subvert them" (iii). Similar to my research findings, Hess found that

the two most important aspects of music education were “those musics to which the students choose to listen and those musics that emerge from their diverse cultural backgrounds” (Hess, 2015, p. 342). Hess (2013; 2015; 2018) advocates for using pedagogies generated from the ground up, which means students voices are not just included but central to classroom discussions and teaching is based on their musical interests, wherever they may come from.

For this dissertation, I employed an anticolonial lens that sought to develop praxis through conversations that highlighted the epistemologies, discourses, and practices of three teachers and eleven students in a music school in a priority neighbourhood in Toronto as the teachers implemented the funds of knowledge (FKN) strategy. The Ontario high school curriculum was not used in this research because the Toronto Music School, as a charitable organization that developed its own curriculum based on extensive consultation with the community, is not part of that system, which underscores the strong relationship it has with the Priority Neighbourhoods it serves. The FKN strategy (discussed in Chapter 4), which began in the early 1990s when an influx of Mexican immigrants crossed the border into Tucson, Arizona, was based on Vygotsky’s co-constructivist principles between teacher and student referred to as the “Zone of Proximal Development” (Vygotsky, 1930; Vygotsky, 1978) and on Freire’s critique of traditional learning methods such as the banking model, in which the teacher, perceived as the one with knowledge, deposits information into the student, portrayed as an empty vessel (Freire, 1970). They both embody practices from frontline teachers, rather than imposing curricula, and facilitate encouraging students to share interests they have at home with their parents.

As is enumerated in Chapter 4, there are many ways to implement FKN. For my Master

of Education at Brock University, one of my committee members Jennifer Rowsell, former Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Multiliteracies and the first to conduct research on FKN in Canada, advised me on implementing FKN in the qualitative design and research questions for a one term, 14-week study with adult immigrant English Language learners. I drew on Vygotsky and Freire as supporting theories for FKN to research how FKN could be utilized in the adult English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom to teach writing. Specifically, I used music – Michael Jackson’s “Black or White” and Green Day’s “Holiday” – to foster empathy for people experiencing racism. My findings on improving writing concluded that FKN was a strategy that engaged learners towards a sense of belonging and agency in the classroom (Jefford, 2014). Following up on this study in “Culture Wars: How Can ESL Educators Help Bridge Our Divisions?” (Jefford, 2017), I explained how Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development contends that students come to the classroom with knowledge. Government-mandated curricula have expectations teachers must follow. In the Zone of Proximal Development, the space in between is the part teachers are concerned with in terms of student achievement. The “how” of moving students forward involves building on a base and scaffolding existing ways of knowing using strategies such as FKN (Jefford, 2017).

For this dissertation, I also drew on FKN in carrying out an ethnographic case study that looks at the paradox of artistic expression as having the potential for emancipation while establishing the ways in which institutionalised music education can be oppressive towards Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC), especially Women of Colour (WOC). That is to say that the shift from the ESL context of my MEd to music pedagogy in my PhD was

accompanied by a shift in theoretical context from Vygotsky and Freire in the MEd to a postcolonial Gramscian critique sensitive to subalterns. In “Provincializing Cosmopolitanism: Democratic Iterations and Desubalternization,” Aylin Zafer and Anna Millan champion Spivak’s advocating for learning from below to break down barriers to democracy as the “best hope for desubalternization” (Zafar & Millan, 2014, p. 312) in the context of rising nationalism, xenophobia, and economic austerity. They emphasize that listening to children can activate knowledge of how to teach them and hope “to work towards recoding hierarchical rituals of subjugation into ritual of parliamentary democracy” (p. 322). Grounded in Spivak’s gendered Gramscian description of the subaltern, I move towards examining how postcolonialism and anticolonialism support the FKN strategy. Building on FKN scholarship that has shown how FKN can democratise teacher/student relationships (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) and consequently deconstruct Eurocentrism in teaching and learning, and in keeping with Fernández, Arce, Gonzalez, and Gonzalez’s decolonial framework for pedagogy and practice (2023), the hypothesis of this study is that centring student voices in the music classroom leads to anticolonial dynamics that resist neocolonialism. Nonetheless, without support from educational funders and decision-making bureaucrats, representation for racialized communities will be limited.

The Research Context: A Priority Neighbourhood in Toronto

The Priority Neighbourhood was designated as the research context as part of the research funding I received from the Helen Carswell Chair in Community Engaged Research in the Arts,

in partnership with York University and a Toronto music school. I will refer to the location by the pseudonym the “Priority Neighbourhood” because in 2004 the United Way in Toronto identified priority neighbourhoods through median household incomes, crime rates and lack of community services (Toronto City Council & United Way, 2008). The absence of positive media portrayals and ongoing negative images cast a shadow over all neighbourhoods of colour, but this Priority Neighbourhood has been stereotyped as particularly violent. As of 2023, the actual number of neighbourhood shootings was at a historic ten-year low, but in March 2024, there were two shootings. Community members, pastors, community leaders, and residents responded to low neighbourhood morale by rallying together to resist the problems of gun violence and deconstruct the ensuing stereotypes of the area with a prayer march. Media reports specified that the victims of the shootings were not gang-related in an effort to resist the stereotypes of gun violence as an everyday part of the Priority Neighbourhood experience. Rather, many students have shared that living among various Black communities helps support the difficult process of cultural integration into Canadian life. But challenges in education persist because schooling efforts usually aim to pressure non-White families to conform to an education system with White expectations, and rarely are students of colour, especially young Black men, perceived by teachers as possessing knowledge and cultural capital valued in the classroom (James, 2012a).

The largest communities in this Priority Neighbourhood are from Jamaica, Guyana, and Ghana (City of Toronto, 2018). The most recent census statistics reveal people who are White are at 19%, and Vietnamese, Spanish, and Assyrian Neo-Aramaic are the top three languages spoken at home, other than English (City of Toronto, 2018). Information on race was not collected from

the student participants because the music teachers felt that this would be a sensitive issue that could lead to loss of employment in the context of cancel culture. During the teaching time in the music lessons while FKN was implemented, however, the music student participants self-disclosed that their parents were first generation Jamaican, Vietnamese and Spanish speakers while they themselves, teenagers aged 14 to 17, were all born in Canada. In this way, the research participants generally reflected the Priority Neighbourhood demographics in 2021 when my case study was conducted: racialized children from homes that have household incomes under \$50,000, where the parents are originally from Jamaica, Vietnam and Spanish-speaking countries.

The Research Site and the Participants

The music school for this study, which I am referring to with the pseudonym “the Toronto Music School,” originally opened in 1999 in a church basement in downtown Toronto and later expanded to a second location in the Priority Neighbourhood, also in a church basement.

Between both sites the Toronto Music School serves 1000 students between the ages of three to 18, with 80 faculty teaching a variety of instruments, including steel drums and DJ turntabling lessons. According to Charity Intelligence Canada (2020), the Toronto Music School is funded through donations, government funding and investment income, providing free weekly in-person half-hour music lessons with one-on-one instruction for playing guitar, piano and steel drums as well as vocal music.

The Toronto Music School has several inclusive institutional practices, four of which I would like to highlight. First, it offers subsidised music classes in two priority neighbourhoods in

Toronto, crossing financial and class barriers so children have access to quality music education and disrupting the neocolonial practice of formal music education dominated by middle-class students in predominantly White neighbourhoods. The 11 music students who participated in this research are racialized children who live among the 49% of the Priority Neighbourhood whose household incomes are under \$50,000 (Neighbourhood Profiles, 2016). Without this access to music education, their talents would likely be lost. Second, in addition to partnerships with York University and the Helen Carswell Chair, the school has a racially diverse and committed Board of Directors, one of whom is a music professor at the University of Toronto who is on a Task Force for Equity and Belonging, is a co-chair on an anti-racist and anti-oppression committee, and has been a volunteer on the board for over ten years. This person researches accessible music education for youth in detention and digital curriculum development in mixed-reality video gaming for children with cerebral palsy. Third, receiving monthly professional development and organisational support for racial inclusion significantly raised the teachers' *conscientização*. Fourth, at our first session in April 2021, all the music teachers spoke proudly about being affiliated with the Toronto Music School because it allowed for greater student choice, was racially progressive, and fostered creativity.

Progressive organisations such as the Toronto Music School aspire to offer culturally relevant learning for the next generation rooted in anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices that prioritize community relationships (Ladson-Billings, 2001), in direct contrast to the traditional music teaching that caters to Eurocentric knowledge capital and is the subject of Chapter 4. Some may critique the Toronto Music School's efforts at inclusion as superficial; however, my own

interactions with the educational community demonstrate commitment for racially diverse students to thrive in the arts. Previous Toronto Music School professional development sessions included the Director of the Toronto Music School, York University's Gospel Music Choir Director and the Helen Carswell Chair's Research Associate, who gave a workshop on "Equity through Community Music Programming: Barriers and Bridges to Resources and Representation." Another event included Toronto Music School's executive members participating in a presentation covering "Renegade Research: Partnering with Communities for Change." In its efforts to centre diverse racial voices, the Toronto Music School also runs a community music school every summer, and the teacher participants also commented that this school was different from other music schools in which they had worked.

In 2021, the global pandemic COVID-19 necessitated the transition from in-person to virtual music classes on Zoom. The three music teacher research participants taught half-hour classes for each individual student, one on one. All were males in their thirties, born in Canada and racially diverse: Asian, Black and White. They had received their music education through the Royal Conservatory of Music curriculum and now earned their livings working at the Toronto Music School and other music schools, playing in pubs with their bands, and performing at bar mitzvahs and weddings. They were paid by the half hour by the Toronto Music School and received compensation for their participation in the case study.

The eleven music student participants were also Canadian born, from second-generation Vietnamese, Black and Spanish speaking homes. When siblings took the music lessons together, the teachers taught both students for one hour. The students and music teachers were in their

respective homes for the lessons. Family members of the music students were around in the home, and one mother requested to join her children's music classes, singing along and offering ideas for songs to learn. All weekly music lessons were video recorded by the Toronto Music School. The details of the ethics clearance with COVID considerations, recruitment through purposeful sampling of participants and the decolonial methodology that guided the procedures of qualitative data collection will be extrapolated upon in Chapter 5.

The Toronto Music School curriculum was developed by music educators through extensive community consultation, drawing from Juliet Hess' work on cultural inclusion and Freirian pedagogies of emancipatory education (Snell and Marsella, 2020). To its credit, it is open ended and student centred. Its priorities are "social" and "musical," with social including "inspiration/engagement, student voice/choice and self-concept/self-esteem [while music is about] rhythm, melody/harmony and tone/texture" (Snell and Marsella, 2020, p. 34). This curriculum focuses on students' individual choices and interests. Students are encouraged to express ideas and take ownership of learning, while teachers are encouraged to "ask [the student] what kind of music she likes. Have her pick a song/piece she enjoys listening to and get it for her to play or sing in your lessons" (Snell, 2017, p. 14). Note that the Toronto Music School uses gender-inclusive language in its curriculum.

The partnership between the Toronto Music School and York University enabled me to obtain relevant material in anticolonial epistemologies, of which I found FKN the most suitable. I worked with Toronto Music School administrators and teachers, York University research staff and the Helen Carswell Chair to set up timelines, communicate with each other and create

professional development (PD) for the music teachers.⁴ The research questions were developed with the music teachers, who asked about the music that students listened to at home in a variety of ways (Appendix B). The teachers recorded the responses from the music students as they implemented the FKN strategy, using initials on the handout for the students to preserve confidentiality. The initial research questions to ask the music students were:

1. Do you see yourself in the music?
2. What kind of music do you listen to at home?
3. Do you want to learn music that you listen to at home?

The teachers then followed up with more detailed questions, mindful of keeping the focus on the music the students listened to at home. Findings demonstrated that the music teachers were conscious of systemic support and institutional training for equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), using culturally sustaining pedagogies for positive long-term effects for the inclusion of racially diverse communities, such as the FKN strategy.

The objective of this dissertation is to delineate how race was invented by colonizers and how the oppressive matrix of race and gender excludes racialized women from full participation in public life, such as artistic recognition. Building on a chronology of ideology on gender and race, I seek to demonstrate how archaic colonial ideas about racialized women's bodies continue to subordinate the value of their funds of knowledge. A critique of music education and

⁴ I am grateful to Prof. Kael Reid for encouraging me in future studies to listen to the students' voices directly and not via the mediation of the teachers. While this study aimed at pushing back against the subalternizing of teachers, I acknowledge that they were in a power position vis-à-vis the students and that ageism is one of the most overlooked identity categories.

institutionalized music learning can be used as an example of how to begin the process of anticolonial praxis: examine the roots of how racist systems were established through colonialism and look for ways to change the system so more equitable outcomes are possible for Women of Colour.

An Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter 1: Why Colonialism and Music Matter to Me

In Chapter 1, I draw on my personal history with music as a first-generation immigrant child growing up in the Canadian settler colonial context. I share the stories of my family and how music was an integral part of our lives in shaping our Telugu Christian identity and our connections to the community. I also reflect on my experiences as a teacher and supervisor working at a school board in Southern Ontario, where racial dynamics created exclusion in the workplace. At the same time, I was raising my sons and experiencing marginalization in the community. My life experiences helped me understand how much racism is an intrinsic part of my daily life, and how important it is for me to resist being othered.

Chapter 2: Manufacturing BIPOC Identities

Due to my experiences with racism in Canada, I became curious to find out why I was being devalued in interactions at work, at church, and in the community. I wanted to understand why my skin colour led to my so often being dismissed. Looking at how BIPOC identities were initially fabricated during the Enlightenment and colonialism can help understand how institutional practices reproduce neocolonialism.

Chapter 3: Constructing Gender

As with race, I wanted to understand why gender limits participation in employment and community life. By examining the historical development of biological determinism and biological foundationalism, I learned that spurious science erroneously conflated it with intelligence and deemed women lesser because of their social positioning and lack of access to education. I also look at how Black women's resistance was a significant factor in developing critiques of White male patriarchy and how WOC asserted their own ideas about motherhood.

Chapter 4: An Anticolonial Critique of Racism in Music Education and the Funds of Knowledge (FKN) Strategy

In Chapter 4, I trace the history of how institutionalized music learning reflects racist colonial practices to exclude BIPOC from texts, curricula, and pedagogies even though many genres and instruments like the banjo originated in Africa. This chapter notes the differences between learning Eurocentric and Black music and how bodies overdetermined the trajectory of being seen as valued music producers.

Chapter 5: My Decolonial Research Methodology

In Chapter 5, I discuss the importance of decolonial methodology and outline how ethics clearance was obtained, research was conducted, and internal validity established. I also reflect on my positionality as a researcher.

Chapter 6: Findings

In Chapter 6, I share the themes from the workshops and seek to centre the music teachers' and music students' voices as part of decolonial practice. In analyzing the observations and feedback

from the music teachers, I demonstrate that teachers were enthusiastic about being part of racial inclusion but faced several challenges in implementation.

Chapter 7: Implications and Recommendations

In Chapter 7, I discuss the implications of the case study and make recommendations for further anticolonial praxis.

Chapter 1: Why Colonialism and Music Matter to Me

I am from Hyderabad, India, where my somewhat older dad grew up under the colonialism of the British Raj, while my mom grew up in post-partition India. But both grew up going to church and frequenting with Western missionaries. My parents strongly valued Christian culture and saw in the West the highest representation of moral authority. When the Canadian government went to India to recruit geologists, my dad was one of the first in line. Because my great-grandparents had eschewed their Hindu roots, families on both sides were disdainful of the caste system, arranged marriages and other Indian traditions. My parents fervently believed that Canada would be a place of Christian, colourblind meritocracy that would offer me the best life. Today, their internalised oppression saddens me. Despite their valiant attempts to assimilate and gain acceptance, the condescending exclusion of Canadians makes me feel a great deal of compassion for my parents. They deserved better.

Just as Spivak (1983) notes that there is the assumption that Brown women need saving from Brown men, immigrant kids have been stereotyped as needing saving from traditional parents. Western perspectives abound with exceptionalist assumptions that places like Canada offer an emancipated life for racialized girls and women. Voices like mine seek full disclosure of the disrespect my parents have endured, influencing me to write this dissertation. Not all immigrant kids need to be saved from their parents by educators steeped in oblivious ethnocentrism. One of the most famous Bollywood movies, which has played continuously in Indian movie theatres since its release in 1995, notes this distinction between East and West. *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (DDLJ)*, meaning the brave heart will win his bride, is a Romeo

and Juliet story. But unlike the Shakespearean tragedy, written to warn parents about intergenerational vendettas, in DDLJ the lovers do not run away to be together. In fact, the climax of the movie rests on the protagonist discouraging the heroine from leaving her family and questioning whether she can really live estranged from her parents. The couple, willing to sacrifice their love, return home to seek the father's blessing. DDLJ's success reflects how well Indians around the world relate to a story that portrays the importance of familial support in marriage. In the Netflix documentary, *The Romantics* (2023), about the modernization of Indian cinema, international content creator Lilly Singh, who grew up in Scarborough, Canada, an area that has 70% immigrants (Statscan, 2016), comments on this iconic moment in Hindi cinema as the crux of Indian culture.

When my family first arrived in Canada, we were poor. It was a big change from our lives in India, where my dad worked for the government and lectured at Osmania University in Hyderabad. The stress on my parents was unbelievable. Dealing with homesickness, my dad cried every night for two weeks. My mom cried every night for two years. We escaped by watching Bollywood movies, singing along with our music from home. My dad played the violin and accordion quite well, entertaining us for hours. I often wondered why the Bollywood music we enjoyed at home never appeared in public. One day someone gave us a small keyboard. I had heard the song "By the Rivers of Babylon" at the progressive United Church we attended in an extremely affluent neighbourhood with teachers and principals who worked with my dad. Back then playing reggae in church, music associated with the Rastafarian movement, was considered being inclusive, even cool. I decided to learn the piano so I could sing and play my favourite song

in English.

By some strange kismet, Baptist missionaries to my mom's hometown had retired in Leaside just down the road from the immigrant-receiving area where we lived in Thorncliffe Park. Every Sunday, we would sing hymns with them in English. Then I would come home and play the same songs, which put a huge smile on my mom's face as she sang along in our mother tongue, Telugu, a language spoken by 96 million South Indians. I could hear my mom's voice lilt with joy every Sunday afternoon from the kitchen as the delicious scent of her chicken curry wafted across the smooth black and white keys. Along with my books and Bollywood, church music was a wonderful escape. I begged my dad for a real piano, and so he made me a deal. I had to learn ten hymns by myself, and then he would buy me a piano and pay for lessons. Two months later, I proudly played all ten hymns for my dad. Shortly thereafter, I got my piano and music lessons. From time to time when I collected the monthly check, I would worry if my parents had enough money. But that never hindered me. Music has always been my best friend.

One of my earliest memories is my mom sitting me down and teaching me her favourite hymn "How Great Thou Art" in English and Telugu. I recognized how profoundly important it was to her to pass on her faith. Her teaching was so successful that the Canadian Baptist Mission asked our immigrant family to perform at various church events across Toronto as a bilingual choir to demonstrate the success of financial support for missionary work. A testament to the combined power of gospel music and maternal influence, I, my parents and my children have performed as a trigenerational choir at Telugu Christmas functions every year, all our lives, singing and playing the piano and violin, stopping only for COVID in 2020. But back then as a

teenager, I only knew that the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) was not helping me express all my identities despite my love for the traditional Russian masters of the classical music canon. Music in my language, instruments from my culture, and teachers from India could not be found anywhere in Toronto at that time. Certainly, learning the sitar (Indian guitar), tabla (Indian drum), or bansuri (Indian flute) was not encouraged by anyone except my dad, who did his best to introduce me to some of his friends who played those instruments. Even though I loved Indian and Middle Eastern sounds, there were no other teenagers present so connection was difficult. In these ways, my cultural and racial identity was diminished through Western music learning.

Attempting to meet RCM exam requirements, I became complicit in my own recolonization, as I woke up at 6:00 am to practise piano for one hour every morning all through Grade 10. While I feel fortunate to have had access to music education, I grew increasingly disenchanted with my learning but was unable to articulate my frustration in English. Despite having access to RCM music learning spaces at the University of Toronto, when I went there for my yearly exams, inclusion was for show. Every year, the RCM took pictures of me before my exams for their flyers to demonstrate that new immigrants were eager to learn the classics. Even the name “Royal Conservatory of Music” denotes colonial and assimilationist practices. In 1947, King George VI awarded a royal charter to the RCM in Toronto, recognizing it as part of the Commonwealth’s larger institution, the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM.org, 2024). I did not understand that music education was participating in a neocolonial project together with Eurocentrism that universalised Western values and thought through curricula, pedagogies, and assessments. I had access to music education but not inclusion.

Deciding I had learned enough after I passed the RCM Grade Six exam, I dropped formal lessons and bought the texts for music I wanted to learn: movie scores, church choruses, and pop music. While I have performed all my life at family gatherings, senior's homes, and cultural events, I have never played piano at church. Institutional acceptance in music performance continues to elude me.

My immigrant experiences include living in marginalised neighbourhoods with racialized friends and church members, who were predominantly from the Caribbean. I noticed that there was very little racial diversity with teachers at school or leaders at church. I never saw myself in the books I read, songs I sang, or lessons I learned from teachers. The exclusion was always complained about amongst the other immigrant kids I knew but rarely voiced to authority figures. As model minority (Pettersen, 1966) teenagers, we never spoke truth to power, instead whispering resentfully amongst ourselves about all the injustices we endured, in hidden spaces where we would not be overheard by those whose capricious, kind cruelty was exercised against us. The neighbourhoods in which I went to school and church, Thorncliffe and Flemingdon Park, have racially diverse, lower income residents. My middle school, Valley Park Junior High School, had a gym teacher named Fred Thomas, a well-known local star who had played basketball and baseball in addition to football, but is forgotten in Canadian history as the first Black Canadian to play for the Toronto Argos football team. Mr. Thomas was invited to play for the Harlem Globetrotters, after beating them. I also attended the same high school as Angela James, Canada's first Black female hockey player, and remember with great pride the day the local hockey rink was renamed for her.

Prior to 9/11, I noticed racism when spending time with Black friends and the lack of politeness we were treated with. Everyone who interacted with my Black friends and me seemed to have forgotten how to say please or thank you when they spoke to us. While in restaurants we were seated by the smelly washrooms or noisy kitchens, and my friends' food orders were delivered incorrectly. Back then, anti-Black racism was not an expression, but it was certainly a lived experience that made me conscious of my Brown privilege. However, after 9/11, racism towards Brown-skinned people rose to intolerable levels. The very next day I was stopped by a mall cop and accused of stealing books from a store I had been to at least a hundred times. Another time, my son and I headed downtown to a hockey game to sell chocolates for a school fundraiser. In twenty minutes, we sold out all four boxes and headed back to our parking spot, gleefully certain that my son would win first prize. As we approached my car, a black SUV pulled up. A huge law enforcement officer got out and started asking me questions. It was very intimidating. Downtown Toronto was on high alert for suspicious activity because a woman, a Brown woman, had been found with a bomb at Heathrow. My seven-year-old's fundraiser and I had become caught in a web of global terrorism.

Scared of having my children taken from me, I stopped going out on extra trips, except for school, church, work, and groceries, but to no avail. Over the next ten years, I was stopped by police officers in my own neighbourhood over a dozen times for minor infractions. It was clear to me that "a new category of radical/extremist/violent extremist (non-White) was invented after 9/11 and projected as a threat to international security; how monitoring/controlling/countering/preventing the radical mind was constructed as a security imperative" (Sajjad, 2023,

p. 339). In the same way Fatima Waqi Sajjad relates in “A Subaltern Gaze on White Ignorance, (In)security and the Possibility of Educating the White Rescue Plans,” that she “felt the heat of the White gaze on [her] being, as [she] ticked many boxes of the newly invented category of suspected radical,” (p. 339), I would look in the mirror and try not to focus on the culpability of having a little bit more melanin than was comfortable for my White, middle-class neighbourhood. When fatal shootings by officers of unarmed Black boys and men began being reported increasingly in the media, I knew I had been right to be filled with trepidation, despite many indifferent accusations of overreacting. Post 9/11 trauma inflicted by law enforcement still haunts me today, triggered by reports of race-based fatalities.

I began to discern that communities are colonial creations that reflect racial hierarchies, keep races apart by postal codes (Leonardo, 2013), and oppress non-White residents through institutions and other forms of social control (Dutta, 2018). My neighbourhood, called Victoria Village, has streets named after places in London, such as Sloane, Eccleston, and Elvaston. Even though the area is predominantly Middle Eastern, with Arabic as the main language, in parent-teacher associations and at community and sporting events, all the leadership continues to be dominated by White, middle-class homeowners. It is not uncommon to see officers stop Middle Eastern youth on my cul-de-sac. One day when I was waiting to pick up my son from school, everyone was complaining about the weather. I grinned and said, “That’s Toronto!” An elderly woman turned, looked me in the eye, and leered, “So? Go back to your country!” I looked her back in the eye and responded very quietly, but very firmly, “You go back to your country.” Unfortunately, like Jennifer Ma (2023), I have also been told to go back to where I came from too

many times to count. As Himani Bannerji notes in *The Ideological Condition: Selected Essays on History, Race and Gender*, “there is no better point of entry into a critique or a reflection than one’s own experience. It is not the end point, but the beginning of an exploration of the relationship between the personal and the social and therefore the political. And this connecting process, which is also a discovery, is the real pedagogic process, the ‘science’ of social science. First – there are colonial memories and memories of underdevelopment and neocolonialism” (Bannerji, 2020, p. 53). Schools, churches, and streets are public spaces controlled by powerful White actors who do not like or trust my Brown skin colour because of the 9/11 terrorists and now the 7/10 Hamas attacks.

The workplace was no better than my neocolonial community. I worked as an ESL instructor and supervisor at a school board, a career I chose because I believed I would have had to sell out my immigrant roots if I went into the regular school system. Since the class would be filled with immigrants like me, I reasoned I had the best chance for a high level of acceptance and belonging, which certainly became a wonderful self-fulfilling prophecy over the next decade. But right from the first day, a teacher protested my hiring. She believed I was going to be a terrible English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor because English was not my first language and I was an immigrant. I remember finding that strange, supremely confident I would be a much better ESL instructor than them precisely because I was a second-language speaker and an immigrant. Even though the school was touted as community led, there was only one race permitted to speak at staff meetings. While the instructors considered themselves feminists, my experience was akin to the one Bannerji describes: “wading through trivia, fluent in English, but

not in aestheticised coloniales, I searched for ways to understand what was happening to me and whether and how it also happened to others” (p. 55). It was the “deepest disappointment” (p. 55), and I defaulted back into an introverted bookworm and read up on Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela, reasoning their situations had been much worse than mine. I strongly identified with the civil rights movement in the US. When I saw the Norman Rockwell painting “The Problem We All Live With” (1964), I felt a strong connection to Ruby Bridges, who at six years old was the first African American to attend a school as part of the desegregation initiatives in American education. Similarly, my family was usually the only Indians present in churches, summer camps, and music lessons.

Into my initial foray in teaching, I searched the entire Bible and committed to turning the other cheek, with what I believed to be the most Christian response to racism. I practised Gandhian satyagraha, truth force, and ahimsa, passive resistance, primed with faith that the moral universe would bend in my favour... eventually. In “Racialization, Colonialism, and Imperialism: A Critical Autoethnography on the Intersection of Forced Displacement and Race in a Settler Colonial Context” (2023), Jennifer Ma notes that the non-White female body is a political signifier, and that gendered perception receives negative references in the racist, common-sense framework that in *The Ideological Condition: Selected Essays on History, Race and Gender*, Himani Bannerji argues undermines women in positions of educational authority, which gatekeep, assess, and create curricula. Like Bannerji, my experiences demonstrated that the staff lacked awareness of Eurocentrism yet were complicit in neocolonial practices:

Imperialism was not a ‘women’s issue.’ Readings informed me that class and gender

struggles were to be separately conceived and waged, that women were ‘class-less,’ a ‘caste’ perhaps, and patriarchy was an ‘autonomous’ power system. A growing essentialism as well as a perverse biologism persisted through all this. Racism was not even mentioned as a real issue by the ‘Canadian women’s movement.’ (Bannerji, 2020, p. 56)

When I tentatively suggested I was experiencing racism, teachers and administrators readily assented that adult immigrant students most certainly preferred White, blond hair, blue-eyed male teachers and that ethnic men would behave with stereotypical assumptions against me, supporting Eve Haque and Brian Morgan’s findings in “Un/marked Pedagogies: A Dialogue on Race in EFL and ESL Settings” (2009). When I tried to voice that perhaps my colleagues resented a young Indian teacher with the same income and influence as older White Canadian teachers, I was told I was playing the race card, which corresponds to Gabriel Ezechukwu’s observation in “Negotiating Positionality Amid Postcolonial Knowledge Relations: Insights From Nordic-Based Sub-Saharan African Academics”: “the idea that ‘if you can’t prove it, don’t mention it’ is not so much a result of a lack of evidence of discrimination but of a fear of stepping onto slippery discursive terrain by engaging issues of race and postcolonial relationships. In this context, keeping quiet becomes a survival strategy” (Ezechukwu, 2020, p. 102). Since I needed my job, I never broached the subject again.

There were a few racialized ESL instructors at the school, but we were peer managed through the divide and conquer strategy Bannerji describes: “We were at best a separate category of sub-women – ‘immigrant,’ ‘visible minority,’ ‘ethnic,’ ‘black,’ later ‘Women of Colour’” (Bannerji, 2020, p. 56). The more established teachers would take a liking to one racialized teacher and discourage us from interacting with each other. We had to be frenemies to survive the Eurocentric climate. At a large ESL school with over thirty teachers and one thousand students,

no racialized instructor ever spoke at a staff meeting, echoing Sajjad’s description: “my path as a teacher and a scholar in the years following 9/11 was determined by my frequent encounters with epistemic violence and injustice in peace, security and international relations discourses. I found myself at the centre of these discourses, as a suspect, a possible source of the problem, but I was rarely given a chance to speak for myself” (2023, p. 340). After a decade in education, I first heard a racialized woman speak in public when I attended a Masters defence at Brock University. I drove home in a stunned daze that the chair of the defence had been a Black woman and that she had given a White man permission to speak. In my daily work experience, racialized staff were treated as outsiders, and White ESL instructors and managers “would talk among themselves with ease and were willingly responded to... even when there were disagreements. I looked for reasons for their sense of a shared reality. It was not in their reading or thinking ability – because I had both – but in their ‘whiteness’ together (middle-class Anglo/European cultural heritage and white skin) and their political commonality” (Bannerji, 2020, p. 54). After staff meetings I would grimly note we had a linguistic apartheid of our own right here in Toronto, openly acknowledged by office staff and a small coterie of all White, middle-class, female teachers who dubbed themselves “the Inner Circle,” proudly asserting that they, not the principal, ran the school.

When I became a supervisor, I was expected to turn against racialized students and staff and mete out the harshest criticism on them to demonstrate my fairness toward my predominantly White female staff as a way of being held accountable to my gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987) and race. There were constant questions about my actions even though I had more classroom

experience and education than any other supervisor at the table, except for my intrepid boss, who supported me. My peers felt that they had to fight to push their ideas through, whereas my initiatives and advice to upper management went forward with little dissent. For example, as our clientele were mainly adult immigrants, I recommended that at the next professional development (PD) day, the workshop facilitator discuss the competing binary whether our ESL learners should be considered “students” or “clients.” Despite the success of the professional development, I found, as Bannerji had before me, that “whenever expertise or administration was at issue, my status as an equal worker had to be forcefully underlined” (Bannerji, 2020, p. 57). I remained committed to my professional development in academia against pushback because I could discern the need for diverse voices at tables where decisions are made. Fortunately for me, my manager had hired me for my first teaching job and later hired me for my first supervisory role. But when she retired, it became clear I had jumped from the frying pan into the fire. After that, a senior manager continued to support me professionally long after I left the school board, demonstrating the importance of leadership in institutional support for racial inclusion in the workplace.

The only place I had a voice was in my own classroom as a teacher, and much later as a PhD student at York. The Social and Political Thought program seemed to be one of the few places where interdisciplinary perspectives such as the anti/de/neo and postcolonialism discussed in the next chapter, Gramscian subalterns, funds of knowledge, and educational policies could be explored for their application in educational settings. For the first time, I felt I could pursue an ethnographic case study with a research design that would allow me to apply and advocate for anticolonial education supported by professors who had the necessary academic background.

Through researching postcolonial feminism and anticolonial critiques, I came to comprehend the ways gender, race, and intelligence are often conflated. Many of my peers in graduate school eschewed identity politics; focusing on Marx, Nietzsche, and Kant, they seemed to lack the self-awareness to reflect on how their own White male identities were represented in their learning, remaining uninterested in crossing gender or racial lines in their studies. As Sara Ahmed writes in *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*, “over and over again, it is revealed to me: this institutional lesson, which is also a life lesson, of coming up against a category in the very attempt to make the restrictions more explicit. How many times have I had male colleagues defending all-male reading lists, all-male speaker lists, all-male reference lists?” (Ahmed, 2012, p. 178). The notion that Eurocentric theories have largely been confined to the past can be damaging because postcolonial countries continue to experience subordination through Western classics that seek to universalize Western culture and anthropology while the text of the non-White Other is, as Homi Bhabha noted in *The Location of Culture*, “forever on the exegetical horizon of difference” (p. 46). I have done my best to persuade my counterparts to include as many diverse authors as possible in their studies and course delivery. Although several of my peers had spent seven to ten years in various graduate schools across southern Ontario, they admitted they had never heard of postcolonial feminism or anticolonial thought until the first day of class when I mentioned my areas of studies, while as a Teaching Assistant, I recommended to a course director that female authors make up half of the readings in the syllabus, which he adjusted in the next term.

Through my experiences as an immigrant kid, community resident, ESL instructor, and

school board supervisor, I started to perceive that Eurocentrism spawns pejorative attitudes and practices that reproduce White supremacy. Seeing racialized women othered as a normal part of everyday life makes me feel like I do not belong anywhere in Canada, no matter how hard I try. It forces on my consciousness that Canadian racism is a large portion of everyday life and not, as most assume, rare events confined to the past or solely associated with White supremacist groups such as the neo-Nazis or the Canadian Heritage Alliance. In my experience, racism does not occur in a discrete sphere of life, such as the Klan or slavery, but rather, as Zeus Leonardo persuasively enumerates in *Race Frameworks: A Multidimensional Theory of Racism and Education* (2013), it is embedded in everyday practices in institutions and a part of everyday life, something Jennifer Mueller underscores in “Racial Ideology or Racial Ignorance? An Alternative Theory of Racial Cognition”: “Racial ignorance reinforces white supremacy, attending to mechanisms of knowledge evasion and resistance that facilitate racial reproduction in everyday life, through the work of institutions, and across societies more broadly” (Mueller, 2020, p. 143). In everyday language, racism is a normalised part of community life that supports White supremacy on a daily basis in the workplace, at community fundraisers, and when moms pick up their kids from school.

I am familiar with the Priority Neighbourhood of my case study because I grew up in a similar immigrant-receiving area, where I attended the local school and community church. There are several ways I identified with the Priority Neighbourhood. As an immigrant kid, I remember people who came to interact with us from outside of the community. I remember resenting them and thinking about how their lives were focussed on thriving while my life was about surviving

Canada. I did not like outsiders in my hood. I have been involved in the Priority Neighbourhood for the last 12 years. For four years I served as a supervisor in an English as a Second Language (ESL) school that consisted of predominantly Assyrian Christian refugees from Iraq and Syria. A year before I began my doctorate, I was invited to sit on the Inner City Outreach (ICO) board that offered homework clubs in schools through the local church, where the ESL school was situated. For the last eight years, we have put on grassroots fundraisers organised and catered by the youth, with an extensive entertainment program that showcased local talent. I loved that our fundraisers were community-driven instead of the usual rubber chicken dinners at hotels far removed from the recipients of donations. Even COVID could not stop us, as we moved online for fundraising activities.

As Susan Tilley discusses in her work on doing respectful research, giving back to the communities and participants is an important part of the planning process where the community benefits as much as the researcher (Tilley, 2016). For example, one key lesson for me was a discussion about the name of our organisation when I was one of the directors on the ICO board. I tried to practise respect by asking questions, such as how power and privilege impact interactions that examined the interconnectedness of social locations such as race, gender, and class (Tilley, 2016). The ICO directors, most of whom lived in the area, did not want to have the Priority Neighbourhood in the name of the organisation. They felt that getting donations by exploiting the stereotypes of their neighbourhood was detrimental. Similarly, Tilley explains that “the complexity of the prison world belies the simplistic notion of binary opposites, insider/outsider. My work as a teacher facilitated my shifting from outsider to someone familiar”

(Tilley, 1998, p. 319) in a way that challenges binaries such as insider/outsider opposites and uses the terms familiar/unfamiliar. Because good intentions are not enough, Tilley uses her familiarity with the participants to offer them an extra layer of protection by omitting documentation that could be used against the inmates punitively. Similarly, I respected the ICO directors' protective stance towards the Priority Neighbourhood to refrain from exploiting negative media stereotypes. I took it as learning because I had thought we would get more donations if the Priority Neighbourhood were in the name of our organisation.

For the research, I reflected on how my own motives and positionality could affect the entire research process. I realised that, as the researcher, I could be what Tilley calls a "partial insider" (Tilley, 2016, p. 31) or "temporary insider" (p. 33) in an effort to avoid the binary of insider/outsider constructions that may lack the fluidity of researcher identities. A researcher-insider might be someone who has various connections within a community without a professional or personal connection to the participants. As Tilley explains, "Complicating matters further is that although researchers may see themselves as positioned in a particular way, in some cases the participant may view the researchers in a different light" (p. 32). I had connections to the neighbourhood as a former school supervisor and now volunteer director of a nonprofit organisation. I shared my history with the research participants so they would understand my long-term commitment to the community. Today, I teach in the Priority Neighbourhood Mall as a writing professor, where I hope to support the dreams of my students. My connection to the neighbourhood residents continues.

It is imperative that researchers be conscious of how contexts, worldviews, and

sociopolitical history may influence them because it is not possible to be completely neutral and objective data collectors. As Tilley further explains, “Transnational feminist research involving researchers, participants and contexts across the North and South is reflective of the growing need to continue interrogating positionality and its complexities” (p. 33). I empathise and identify with the Priority Neighbourhood residents, especially racialized mothers, so I hope that my research will help support the dreams of marginalised families in Toronto.

Chapter 2: Racism and The History of Race as a Concept

As a Gen X student in my Toronto high school, I was taught that the First World is rich, modern, and developed based on European ingenuity while the Third World is poor, ignorant, and underdeveloped due to a lack of motivation and intelligent innovation. That is why poverty was rampant in “primitive” societies such as India. During the Cold War, the USSR was considered the Second World, languishing due to communism but nonetheless a global superpower. The map with the Brandt Line, which was named after former German Chancellor Willy Brandt and the 1980 report of the Independent Commission on International Developmental Issues he chaired, rebranded the East-West divide as the Global North and Global South, but it still reflects the notion of White supremacy.



Figure 3 Grotlüschen and Buddeberg, 2020

Whether it is called the East or the Global South, the majority of those living in the darker places on the map live in a different world from those in the lighter places due to colonial exploitation,

which was conveniently omitted as the source of the global disparities I was taught about in high school. Similarly, in church I was erroneously taught that the Global North was blessed because European countries were based on Christian values and enjoyed many material rewards due to their Protestant work ethic. My curiosity led me to interrogate the assumption that the West/ Global North was superior to the East/ Global South, which in turn took me to the start of colonialism as a significant driver in establishing a global network that facilitates racial oppression.

In *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory*, Julian Go explains the trajectory of how postcolonialism and anticolonialism developed through two major waves of resistance towards Eurocentric hegemony:

The first wave emerged as anticolonialism in the early to mid-twentieth century and included thinkers such as Franz Fanon, W. E. B. Du Bois, Amilcar Cabral, and Aimé Césaire. The second wave emerged in the wake of Edward Said's *Orientalism* and included Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Subaltern Studies and Dipesh Chakrabarty. In the late 1980s and through the early 1990s, this second wave of postcolonial theory hit North American campuses. Sometimes referred to as "postcolonial studies," it became a noticeable trend in the humanities. (Go, 2016, p. 18)

A third wave is needed to address the challenges of what Go calls neo-imperialism and what I have referred to as neocolonialism. Building on Go, I seek to situate my dissertation as part of the third wave of postcolonialism with "an invitation to imagine—to imagine different types of knowledge, new ways of seeing and perceiving, and alternative conceptual forms and tools for better understanding the world around us" (Go, 2016, p. 17) through an interdisciplinary lens. In this chapter, I situate Go's trajectory in a larger history to examine the roots of colonialism from 1492. I show that while colonists laid the foundation for BIPOC identities, it was the

Enlightenment's scientific racist ideology that helped to establish global systems of oppression with institutions that continue to reproduce racism in spite of ongoing resistance. Part of dealing with institutional racism is getting at the systemic roots of problems, which is why I wanted to find out how races were constructed in the first place and why knowledge production came to erroneously be associated with skin colour. As Zeus Leonardo shows in *Race Frameworks: A Multidimensional Theory of Racism and Education* (2013), understanding how Enlightenment thinkers such as Kant used skin colour to rationalize White supremacy is necessary to begin decolonizing systems of racist oppression, especially those in education. In this chapter, after outlining definitions of concepts related to colonialism, I trace how Enlightenment thinkers established race as a hegemonic framework to critique the ongoing negative impacts enabled through neocolonial systems.

Anti/De/Neo and Postcolonialism

Global systems established under colonialism, such as the traditional music education offered at the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM), ensure that despite independence movements, neocolonialism continues to reproduce White hegemony. Philip G. Altbach's definitions of colonialism and neocolonialism from a half-century ago, are still relevant, with colonialism understood as "the direct political, economic, and educational control of one nation over another" and neocolonialism used "to designate the continued postcolonial impact of advanced industrial countries on the education systems and policies as well as the intellectual life of developing areas" (Altbach, 1971, p. 1). A related term is coloniality, which refers to the continuance of

colonialism through institutional conventions in organisational behaviour. As Nelson Maldonado-Torres differentiates them in “On the Coloniality of Being” in the context of Latin America, while colonialism “denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such nation an empire,” coloniality refers to “long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations” (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 243). Coloniality in this understanding survives colonialism: “It is maintained in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience” (p. 243). As Ann Lopez specifies in *Decolonizing Educational Leadership: Exploring Alternative Approaches to Leading Schools*, “coloniality—a reflection of colonialism—informs knowledge production and practices in education and power continues to be exercised through white supremacy and hegemonic relations. Decolonizing approaches reconnect people with their history drawing on their ontological experiences to inform educational practice” (Lopez, 2021, p. 70) with strategies such as FKN. Neocolonial systems and coloniality permit colonialism to function like patriarchal power, the subject of Chapter 3, which, as R.W. Connell notes in *Gender and Power: Society, The Person, and Sexual Politics*, makes it possible for men to enjoy “patriarchal power but accept it as if it were given to them by an external force, by nature or by convention or even by women themselves, rather than by an active social subordination of women going on here and now” (Connell, 1987, p. 215). In a similar way, institutions that reproduce coloniality enable the hegemonic supremacy of

Whiteness as a global ideology. Just as the institution of patriarchy makes everyday misogyny invisible, neocolonial systems cloak White supremacy.

Limited understandings of racism may assume that White supremacy is extrinsic to global educational and economic systems. On the contrary, as Moldonado-Torres notes, “as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and everyday” (p. 243) as an intrinsic part of life. Because racialized people lack representation in many organizations at the decision-making level, they can be marginalised from fully engaging in institutional discourses. As Riyad Ahmed Shahjahan suggests, gaining national independence from colonisers emboldened postcolonial thinkers such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak, to theorise various forms of postcolonialism and lay a foundation for analytical discourse about historical and literary texts, in which issues of knowledge production and the production of literary texts intersect with colonialism (Shahjahan, 2005). In nation-states created by colonisers, such as India, critics of postcolonialism like Ranajit Guha, sought to centre subaltern issues (Guha, 1983; Guha, 1997), arguing the Gramscian position that peasant farmers remained subalterns before, during, and after colonialism because they have never had the power to make decisions over their lives (Spivak, 2021). Anticolonialism functions as intransigence to colonial rule, postcolonial legacies and neocolonial systems of oppression. As George J. Sefa Dei wrote in “Rethinking the Role of Indigenous Knowledges in the Academy,” they move resistance forward through the “theorization of issues, concerns and social practices emerging from colonial relations and their aftermath” (Dei, 2000, p. 117). Educators need support in developing anticolonial praxis, with praxis understood as Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1921-1997) did – as the nexus where

reflection, theory, and practice intersect, and they also need to understand how neocolonial systems impact everyday teaching and learning practices.

According to Argentinian liberation theologian, Enrique Domingo Dussel (1934-2023), anticolonial resistance began as far back as the fifteenth century in the Americas. Anticolonialism interrogates how power is embedded into knowledge production and discourses to deal with oppression connected to how human beings can create knowledge structured through culture, economy, and language, something Linda Tuhiwai Smith expands on in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2021). Robert Young notes that anticolonialism is identified with nationalism and involves reconsidering histories of slavery, forced migrations and land appropriation, along with attempts to find a national voice and racial unity in Africa, India and Latin American (AILA) countries. Another central characteristic of anticolonialism noted by Dei and Alirezah Asgharzadeh in “The Power of Social Theory: The Anti-Colonial Discursive Framework” is “the notion that institutional structures are sanctioned by the state to serve the material, political, and ideological interests of the state and the economic/social formation” (Dei and Asgharzadeh, 2001, p. 300). An anticolonial stance entails a counter hegemonic movement seeking to upset systems of oppression inherent in racialized, classed, and gendered societies. As Homi Bhabha pointed out in *The Location of Culture*, this anticolonial stance becomes possible because the colonised have agency to form groups of resistance, even when diverse views in colonially created global institutions and structures are excluded.

Today, decolonisation has become the more well-known term, carrying a variety of

meanings in different contexts. In Indigenous communities, decolonisation refers to perceptions of land, truth about settler colonialism, and resistance (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005), while in postcolonial nations such as India, it refers to gaining independence from Britain and the West, deconstructing hegemonic systems, and reclaiming cultural and economic autonomy (Krishna, 2009). Postcolonial studies have taken a number of directions, examining the academic dependency of the captive mind ([wa Thiong'o](#), 1986; Alatas, 2011), critiquing stereotypes of the Orientalist Other (Said, 1978), and championing inclusive curricula and texts (Spivak, 1983; Bannerji, 2020). anticolonial resistance is reflected in Frantz Fanon's and W.E.B. Du Bois's Afrocentric work, while, more recently, postcolonial and transnational feminists Chandra Mohanty and Afrofeminist Oyeronke Oyěwùní, among many others, have written strong critiques of Western, White, middle-class feminist ideology. For the purposes of this dissertation, I have used the term anticolonialism to convey the need for a strong stance against colonialism but where the authors have used decolonialism or postcolonialism, I have remained true to the author's original wording.

An array of decolonial perspectives is required to inspire new strategies for social justice as neocolonialism continues to define knowledge production, differential value of humans based on race, and racism in communities (Dutta, 2018; Leonardo, 2013). But more than 60 years after Fanon asserted that "decolonization sets out to change the order of the world" (Fanon, 1963, p. 36), differing ideologies have created nebulous notions of how to facilitate change that will dismantle neocolonial systems. Acknowledging the many perspectives associated with anti/de/neo and postcolonial resistance, educational administrators in institutions seeking to offer

progressive education for the 21st century may well question, “So what exactly are we supposed to do now?”

The Racialized History of Colonial Oppression: (In)Human Rights and the Enlightenment

Ever since Moses cried, “Let my people go,” oppression has been noted as part of the human experience. However, in attempting to tell “The Other Side of the Story: Human Rights, Race and Gender from a Historical Transatlantic Perspective” (2014), Julia Suárez-Krabbe has shown how Portuguese and Spanish colonists expanded the scope of oppression on a worldwide scale, beginning with the 1492 European voyages to the Americas that resulted in the emergence of racial hierarchies based on geography. On May 4, 1493, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith details in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Pope Alexander VI drew “the imaginary line between ‘East’ and ‘West’” known as the Doctrine of Discovery, which “allowed for the political division of the world” (Smith, 2021, p. 69). His papal bulls authorised areas south and west of Portugal and Spain-to become Latin America-and east towards India to be colonised, creating an international hierarchy of relationships associated with race, land, and human rights.

Returning home in 1493, Columbus wrote that he

took by force some Indians from the first island, in order that they might learn from us, and at the same time tell us what they knew about affairs in these regions. This succeeded admirably; for in a short time we understood them and they us both by gesture and signs and words; and they were of great service to us. (Columbus, C., Eames, W., Lenox Library & Jay I. Kislak Reference Collection, 1892)

Starting in the 1500s, Spanish colonisers in the Americas started to dominate the Indigenous and exploit their lands. It was the political and economic expediency of the Spanish monarchy and the

Church that now decided who could be called a human being.

Over the next five hundred years, White supremacy functioned as a racial contract, where, as Fatima Waqi Sajjid notes in “A Subaltern Gaze on White Ignorance, (In)security and the Possibility of Educating the White Rescue Plans,” Europeans agreed with each other to “deny non-Whites the status of full persons. This denial allowed them to exploit non-White bodies, lands and resources” (Sajjad, 2023, p. 338). Geographical demarcations by colonists created what Fanon called zones of non-being (Fanon, 1952) for inhabitants, who were perceived to be intellectually weak with primitive cultures justifying colonization and establishing human rights solely for White male Europeans. Through an imperialist lens, non-Whites were categorized as unworthy, and Suárez-Krabbe notes that human rights have largely ignored the major racial injustice caused by imperialism. Colonisers erased areas created by local people that served the villages’ daily needs, imposing boundaries so that Eurocentric economic expediency could dominate. Thus, the idea I learned about in church – that the West is blessed – is completely false. Examining the Papal blessing of colonies in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and the fabrications of Indigenous identities that allowed for the appropriation of land and resources demonstrates that the search of God, gold, and glory was based on greed. In fact, global disparities exist as a consequence of the Doctrine of Discovery, which justified the ensuing five hundred years of economic exploitation in areas that have been variously referred to as the East and the Global South.

In her contribution to *Decolonizing the Enlightenment*, Suárez-Krabbe makes the point that debating race and human rights was a privilege the Spanish colonists reserved for

themselves, while Dussel underscored the flip side: that anticolonial resistance began as far back as the fifteenth century in the Americas. Discussions about exploiting peoples who lived in Mesoamerica were based on *jus gentium*, a Roman law that included the legal and moral justification for trade and profit. Issues of divine, human, and natural law to deal with cultural differences were hotly debated. Established at the top of the hierarchy were Christian White males first, Christian White females were second, and the converted Indigenous third. The absence of enslaved Africans on the colonisers' list of people deserving of human rights is noteworthy; in Suárez-Krabbe's words, "this hierarchization of human beings is fundamental to racism [... and based on] spirituality, economy, social organization, political organization, sexuality and thought" (p. 218). White supremacy, as an ideology, laid the foundation for institutionalized Christianity, beginning with the 1493 papal bulls. Since the Indigenous were perceived as having the potential to convert and assimilate, their insurrections were perceived as violating moral laws, which justified war against them. Colonists also viewed Africans as less than human and argued that their lives lacked meaning and could therefore be exploited (Mbembe, 2003). Colonisation of land made it possible for Europeans to place themselves at the top of the hierarchy through the eradication of the rightful owners of the land. In her contribution to *Decolonising the Enlightenment*, Suárez-Krabbe seeks to move beyond human rights' mainstream understanding of the logic of colonialism, which girds imperialistic global processes today. Colonists prioritised exclusive definitions of humanity and concocted systemic racism to establish White supremacy in a way that continues to impact neocolonialism, beginning with the Doctrine of Discovery.

Colonial masters sought to protect Eurocentric male patriarchy through various reiterations of defining human rights. Western narratives later produced several versions of human rights bills, such as the British Bill of Rights (1688), the US Declaration of Independence (1776) and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789). As is uncontrovertibly established in Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze's *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, the patriarchal racism girding Enlightenment philosophy "was instrumental in the institutionalizing of both the scientific and popular European perceptions of the human race" (Eze, 1997, p. 5). During the Enlightenment, the definition of who was perceived as a human, and who was not, enabled "processes of dehumanization [that] were often hidden behind justifications for imperialism and colonialism, which were clothed within an ideology of humanism and liberalism and the assertion of moral claims that related to a concept of civilized 'man'" (Smith, 2021, p. 29). Creating imaginary lines to manufacture nations further consolidated European power that culminated at the Berlin Conference (1884-1885), also known as the "Scramble for Africa." Its purpose, as Anne McClintock details in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (1995), was to carve up Africa in order to exploit resources such as gold, diamonds, timber, minerals and ivory, pursuing economic profit despite its negative impact on local villages. In "Defensive Relativism: Universalism, Sovereignty, and the Postcolonial Predicament" (2014), Frederick Cowell critiques the definition of "human" and "rights" by Enlightenment theorists and practices of European colonists that cast a long shadow to ultimately influence the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, where the perception of non-Whites as anti-modern savages effectively justified their continued exclusion and limited

international participation in global institutions such as the United Nations. Smith points out that “even after the Second World War, when the post-colonial period was beginning according to some cultural studies theorists, many Indigenous peoples around the world were still not recognized as humans, let alone citizens” (p. 78). The coloniser/colonised binary was established along racial lines by defining the criteria for who deserves human rights based on skin colour and European perceptions of civility.

The incongruity of the Enlightenment is that, under the same banner of science, reason, and religion, White Europeans were offered emancipation while non-Europeans were subjugated (Dhawan, 2014b). Sajjad notes that “The European Enlightenment raised slogans of rights, liberty and freedom at a time when Europeans were committing massacres and enslaving people in foreign lands. The Enlightenment liberals refused to see the reality of racial/colonial exploitation and reserved all newly constructed rights and liberties for the category of full persons only – the Whites” (p. 338). Predicated on the notion of Otherness,

they are views which invite a comparison with ‘something/someone else’ which exists on the outside, such as the oriental, the ‘Negro,’ the ‘Jew,’ the ‘Indian,’ the ‘Aborigine.’ Views about the Other had already existed for centuries in Europe, but during the Enlightenment these views became more formalized through science, philosophy and imperialism, into explicit systems of classification and ‘regimes of truth.’ The racialization of the human subject and the social order enabled comparisons to be made between the ‘us of the West and the ‘them’ of the Other. (Smith, 2021, p. 35)

As Said argued in *Orientalism*, “no matter how much a single Oriental can escape the fences placed around him, he is *first* an Oriental, second a human being, and last again an Oriental” (p. 125).

The Formation of “Enlightened” Scientific Racism

The 500-year-old tradition of philosophers and religious institutions developing notions of race, racism, and biological difference is the subject of Robert Bernasconi’s 2001 edited volume on *Race* in the Blackwell Readings in Continental Philosophy series. In the introduction, Bernasconi discusses how Francois Bernier, an early Enlightenment thinker now known as the father of the scientific racism, travelled to Egypt, Palestine, and ultimately India, where he served Mughal emperors for twelve years as a doctor. In 1684, Bernier wrote an essay differentiating amongst humans by race for the first time and justifying the Aryan subordination of people of colour: Africans, Orientals, Natives and Laplanders. People who are White became associated with reason while people who are non-White became related to savagery.

Someone bypassed in both Bernasconi’s and Dhawan’s volumes is John Locke (1632-1704). As Kathy Squadrito, Lott, and Ward analyze in “Locke and the Dispossession of the American Indian,” Locke was one of the first to advocate for the White supremacist ideology that was influential in creating the hierarchical racial system that justified land appropriation based on a pejorative view of Indigenous peoples. First, Locke considered the mind of what he termed “Native” to be close to his notion of tabula rasa, a blank slate, since they did not have learning or education and so likened darker skin as akin to animals. Second, Locke viewed Native religions as superstition without thought or reason, pursuing hedonistic pleasures as “rustic reason” rather than Christian logic and science as the “right reason.” Third, Locke deemed Native society to be as in the infancy stages of developing civilization, well behind Europe. Locke imagined Natives as savage hunters running wild through the wilderness and believed in a divine hierarchy where

humans were inferior to God and Natives inferior to Europeans because they lacked the moral seriousness to master the earth, furthering Bernier's scientific racism. Locke was instrumental in promoting White supremacy through laying the institutional foundations for what would become the British Bill of Rights 1688, colonial practices that would oppress and racialize people for the next four centuries, resulting in genocides of Indigenous communities around the world.

The Enlightenment's reform of legal, economic, and political systems was based on the notion that reason was better than the existing beliefs and practices of the colonies, and was used as a rationale for violently civilising non-White people they perceived as savages in the name of progress. As Nikita Dhawan stresses in the volume he edited on *Decolonizing Enlightenment: Transnational Justice, Human Rights and Democracy in a Postcolonial World*: "Reason was weaponized to exert European domination over the rest of the world (Dhawan, 2014b, p. 22). Dhawan draws attention to the way James Mill bragged that his writings were superior because he was not distracted by personal contact with the colonised, casting European superiority "in intellectual, moral, technological, economic, cultural and political terms" (p. 38) even though the colonies became backward *due* to European exploitation. Travellers came back with stories that "were generally the experiences and observations of white men whose interactions with Indigenous 'societies' or 'peoples' were constructed around their own cultural views of gender and sexuality" (Smith, 2021, p. 9). Based on hearing stories from travellers and reading travel brochures, Enlightenment scholars became fathers of colonisation without ever having direct contact and interactions with people who lived in southern hemispheres.

Colonialism is based on spurious associations between intelligence and the body, where colonisers contrived to engineer race to justify subordination. The body was made central to othering non-White people, who, as Oyěwùmí outlines in *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* (1997), were presented as vulnerable to irrational passions and human foibles and the rational mind became inextricably entwined with European reason. In contrast, “‘bodylessness’ has been a precondition of rational thought. Women, primitives, Jews, Africans, the poor, and all those who qualified for the label ‘different’ in varying historical epochs have been considered to be the embodied, dominated therefore by instinct and affect, reason being beyond them” (p. 3). Not just non-White bodies but non-male bodies were also hierarchized. For instance, in the 1980s and 1990s, the term “corporate executive” had male undertones while the label “gang member” had racial connotations. As a consequence, “any sociologist who studies these categories cannot escape an underlying biological insidiousness” (p. 4). Men were perceived and portrayed as “walking minds” (p. 6) due to unscientific hyperbolic associations of “differences and hierarchy, (that), are enshrined on bodies; and bodies enshrine differences and hierarchy” (p. 7). Owing to colonisers’ prioritisation of the mind/body dichotomy, anticolonial praxis is an important starting point for decolonising the Enlightenment and ultimately disrupting neocolonialism today.

European males fabricated their racial identity as superior in intellect so they could justify making decisions that excluded local people. Quoting from Theodore W. Allan’s 2012 *The Invention of the White Race*, which understands race as “an ideological fiction invented by European Colonisers and enslavers to legitimate domination,” Jennifer Mueller juxtaposes racial

ideology and racial ignorance in offering an alternative theory of racial cognition (Allen, 2012, cited in Mueller, 2020, p. 145). Bannerji also critiques the “common sense of skin and colour, particularly in the colonial context, is old. Bodies—skin, facial features, height, build, and so forth—had been morally and politically signified for centuries in North America and Europe” (p. 32). While postcolonial resistance to neocolonial structures did emerge from the Global South, full participation in public life continues to elude people of colour.

As Eze shows in the *Race and the Enlightenment* reader, almost all Enlightenment thinkers developed various justifications for creating racial hierarchies that asserted European superiority over Black Indigenous and People of Colour. One thinker he does not include but Ruth Gustafson does, in *Race and Curriculum: Music in Childhood Education* (2009), is the Swede Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), who is known as the father of taxonomy and who classified people as decreasing in humanity based on a lightness to darkness skin colour scale. Linnaeus, von Linné after ennoblement, also articulated that hierarchy is ordered by God, an idea prevalent in the 18th century that supported the system of monarchies, while Georges-Louis Leclerc (1707-1788), called Count de Buffon, classified humans through phrenology (Gustafson, 2009). Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) built on Leclerc’s work to define humans according to skin colour. Blumenbach placed Caucasians with white skin at the top of the hierarchy. Advocating for a degeneration theory, meaning that as skin colour grows darker skin, the human being is perceived to be further away from the White “ideal stock” (Eze, 1997, p. 79), Enlightenment thinkers sought to construct race based on skin colour in a way that justified White supremacy.

A key component of the European exploitation of the Global South, Darwinism ran the polygenesis theory as a response to the literal Biblical reading of creation. In contrast to monogenists, who advocated for all humans as descendants of Adam and Eve, polygenists used the notion that people originated in various places. This thinking supported White supremacy as it categorised Europeans and non-White people differently on account of their places of descent.

Perhaps the most important monogenist was Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), to whom Bernasconi dedicates the first section of his volume, including Kant's 1788 essay "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy." Bernasconi exposes Kant's attempt to defend "the concept of race" (p. 43) in order to other people of colour and notes that Kant's essay reveals him to be the first author to use race as an organising principle for human society based on skin colour, geography, and spiritual beliefs. Kant argued for four races: Caucasian, Negro, Mongolian and Other, describing the French, Dutch, English and Germans in positive terms and Africans in pejorative terms. As Bernasconi shows, Kant's differentiation of races rested almost exclusively on skin colour to determine intelligence even though his interaction with non-White people consisted of an "independent reading of the travelogues which were still the main source of information for the natural scientists of his day" (p. 14). While remaining committed to monogenesis, Kant succumbed to racist interpretations despite considerations based on the human ability to procreate across race in a way that conflated race with intelligence. He examined four skin colour types to assert that seeds in the human body reacted differently to climate, which in turn resulted in variances in biology. However, Kant rejected the explanation that climate alone was responsible for skin colour, arguing that racial variety is based on the

ideology that different races have different purposes and should not intermingle because the progeny will be unsuited to the original climate, and therefore mixed races will oppose nature's purposes. The term race was not necessarily important as a stand-alone definition but was used to protect the notion of White purity and defend against racial intermingling.

As Bernasconi notes, some Enlightenment thinkers used maps and the distance from the equator to observe that as climates become hotter, skin colour darkened proportionally. However, Kant believed that, to differentiate between races, it was possible to learn from children who lived in a foreign country. He used the example of the Roma people living out of India to demonstrate that their skin colour remained dark due to nature and would not become White even if they lived in Europe for twelve generations. As Karin Hostettler notes in her contribution to Dhawan's volume, "Under (Post)colonial Eyes: Kant, Foucault, and Critique," Kant is silent on dislocating knowledge production from non-White European locations, resulting in limited geo-cultural situatedness. Nonetheless, Kant's use of race as an organising principle of society is fruit from the poisoned tree of spurious scientific racism. Even though there were debates among Enlightenment thinkers about whether skin colour was affected by climate or the Creator, the concept of race as a justification for human hierarchy emerged triumphant.

Critical Approaches to Colonial Racial Stereotypes

Anticolonial movements should work towards disrupting the human/subhuman dichotomy from the perspective of the colonised and support the subaltern view. An early example of such work is that of Jose Rizal (1861-1896), a Filipino anticolonial thinker who critiqued Eurocentrism from

the perspective of the colonised and is the subject of Syed Farid Alatas's 2011 "Teaching Social Theory as Alternative Discourse." In Alatas' reading, Rizal argues "that the Filipinos were actually a relatively advanced society in precolonial times, and that their backwardness was a product of colonialism" (Alatas, 2011, p. 49) because colonial oppressors subjugated Filipinos as labourers. Alatas recuperates Rizal's work from obscurity "to correct the Orientalist bias by introducing non-western thinkers" (p. 48) that represent a non-Euroentric point of view. On April 27, 1521, Chief Lapu Lapu and his allies, defeated Ferdinand Magellan against Spanish colonization of the island Mactan, Philippines. Commemorated today with various festivals celebrating the victory in the Philippines and around the world, British Columbia, a province in Canada, declared April 27 in 2023 Lapu Lapu Day as a way of acknowledging the contributions of the Filipino community and the spirit of *bayanihan*-collective resistance-that successfully defeated the colonizers. Tragically in 2025, the event in Vancouver was disrupted by vehicular manslaughter in which eleven people were killed and 32 injured, demonstrating the importance of commemorating anticolonial resistors.

Négritude also provides an example of anticolonial resistance to slavery based on anti-Black racism, despite some gender-based limitations. Bernasconi describes three periods in the Black Revolution: slavery in the 1800s, the rise of *négritude* in the 1930s, and the Civil Rights Movements in the 1960s, where there was a shift in the diaspora to a willingness to talk about slavery and African pride. Leopold Senghor, the first President of Senegal and a proponent of *négritude*, advocated for conducting research and collecting data to show Black people can contribute to society if they preserve their cultures. Du Bois discusses the veil of segregation and

how, due to Jim Crow laws, Black people were allowed into the White world as labourers but then forced to return home. His notion of double consciousness – seeing oneself through the eyes of a racist White colonial society – means that people who are Black are forced to view themselves as inferior.

However, there were some problems with this form of resistance. Founded by Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas and others, *négritude* was male dominated, which is not to say there were no important women in the *négritude* movement but only that they have never received the attention they deserve. The Nardal sisters, for example, challenged the assimilationist form of colonialism they experienced in Martinique, developing global identities based on Blackness to resist internalising colonialism. They inspired new forms of humanity in a postcolonial state by hosting a salon, Le Salon de Clamart, where Black intellectuals could discuss the challenges they were facing. In her contribution to Bernasconi's race volume as well as in her monograph *Négritude Women* (2002), Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting discusses Paulette Nardal (1896-1985), the first Black person to study at the Sorbonne, and shows how she and her sisters laid the foundations for *négritude*, articulating challenges in anticolonial resistance and raising the voices of people who are Black.

A common theme that persisted well into the twentieth century was the denial of Black women's rights and their lack of participation in colonial affairs as explained by McClintock in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* using the example of racist patriarchy in the legal structure in 1930s South Africa, when the idea of apartheid was gaining momentum. The ruling Dutch elite felt threatened by Black women's reproductive power and

sought to reduce what they viewed as unwanted surplus by restricting their freedom to travel, find lodging, and marry. Marriage became a weapon of state control. A woman could only reside in Cape Town if she was married. If not, she would be sent to Bantustan, an area segregated under apartheid by the White minority for the Black majority in South Africa. In other words, South African women had no rights to reside freely on their own land. Apartheid laws further restricted movement in 1960, when women were no longer allowed to stay in Cape Town unless they were working and were required to prove they were not in an urban area for solicitation. Oppression of Black bodies, especially women's, was a prominent feature of institutionalised racism enabled through colonial ideology.

After WWII, many areas in Africa, India and Latin America (AILA) successfully sought independence, even while European colonists ensured hegemony in a way where subalterns were reproduced through neocolonial systems of oppression. According to Sankaran Krishna in *Globalization and Postcolonialism: Hegemony and Resistance in the Twenty-First Century* (2009), the postcolonial areas of AILA continue to be dependent on economic policies that perpetuate neocolonialism through the World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO), and International Monetary Fund (IMF), which as education aid receiving countries in turn generated what Gramsci called voluntary and involuntary consent. Historically, despite Italian incursions into Ethiopia during World War II, colonization was resisted in a way that did not allow the establishment of long-term institutions. Since 1945, however, Ethiopia and Liberia have come under Western influence through foreign aid, resulting in the reproduction of neocolonialism (Altbach, 1971; Jefford, 2021a). Krishna finds the erroneous belief that neocolonial educational

systems support racialized communities naïve, like the neoliberal notion of globalisation, based on Adam Smith's "invisible hand of the market," according to which corporate heads will act for the local and global good. Colonisers pillaged AILA for land, labour, and resources to create an affluent First World and impoverished Third World, so that by the 1970s, discourse on "Third World" countries was preoccupied with modernization, development, violence, and corruption, and even imagined Third World nations were portrayed by the media and in academia as rife with postcolonial misery (Chatterjee, 1993). Through a benign façade for oppression, colonists manufactured paternalistic oppression by taking control of the narrative in education.

Western knowledge and culture were tools of imperialism as much as military strength and resource exploitation. British historians G.T. Garratt and Edward Thompson asserted that colonialism was intended to train Indians for self-governance in terms of building infrastructure, legislatures, and the military. In practice, colonialism was a form of race-based oppression for Indians that sought to ensure the colonised could never be equal to the colonisers (Chatterjee, 1993). Enlightenment thinkers argued that "some societies are at a lower stage of evolution and have to be educated *like children* to make them capable of enjoying freedom. The political incompetence of the Colonised could be corrected through colonial education and the correct form of government that would enable them to realize their civilizational potential" (Dhawan, 2014b, p. 39, italics mine).

Even though colonialism began to end after World War II, it is important to recognize the paradox of Independence movements as occurring within nation-states established by colonisers seeking to extricate themselves from colonialism. As Gurminder Bhambra notes in "Postcolonial

and Decolonial Dialogues,” colonialism “disrupted the social patterns, gender relations and cosmological understandings of the communities and societies it invaded” (Bhabra, 2014, p. 118). In the early days of colonial capitalism, resources were used and manufactured products and agriculture were distributed among European countries. In turn, the intellect of the colonialist bourgeoisie was used by the oppressors to dominate existing educational institutions. Fanon notes a shift whereby formerly colonised countries gained prominence as markets able to consume goods and for this reason, violence may no longer be profitable when the colonists’ economic interests are tied up with the prosperity of the Global South. But still, leaders and partners of Western-dominated economic reform may stop short of mobilising their citizens to national independence due to the expediency of economic self-interest.

In other words, selling out to the West/ North is profitable in the short term for Eastern/ Southern leaders, who, once in power, can oppress their own people. Fanon notes the “astonishing ingratitude” with which states turned to quick profits by establishing trade with Europeans, quickly becoming a caricature. He also notes another condition necessary to move past postcolonialism: to rid intellectuals of the superiority of believing that “the masses are incapable of governing themselves” (Fanon, 1963, p. 188). For instance, during the Algerian revolution (1954-1962), academics interacted with people who lived in poverty, gained consciousness, and worked towards resolutions. Mental and physical exploitation at the hands of the French colonisers occurred as slave owners attempted to convince the colonised to be enthusiastic in their station. Colonialism was reproduced when labourers were encouraged to work themselves to death for the state’s prosperity instead of the individual master. Fanon

characterizes the colonisers' support of national sovereignty as opportunistic, designed as it was to maintain their stronghold on colonised countries by supporting leaders willing to sell out. As a result, neocolonial interests that serve extractive resource-based corporations were able to be consolidated. As Dei and Asgharzadeh emphasize, colonialism was and is based on relationships with imperial institutions that reproduce Eurocentric hegemony.

The processes of dismantling systems and internalised oppression through postcolonial critique laid the foundation for ensuing theories towards emancipation from imperialism. One of the most significant postcolonial turning points in decentering Eurocentric media portrayals and encouraging the Global South narrative came from Edward Said, who challenged the otherization of the Orientalist tradition. In *Orientalism*, Said points to June 1910 as a decisive moment in history. In the British House of Commons, Arthur James Balfour, a long-time Member of Parliament, spoke about the relationship of knowledge and power that leads to domination, using the notion of knowledge as a rationale for occupying Egypt in 1882. Arguing that “[t]he Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action” (p. 3), Said critiques media portrayals of Arabs as disruptors of access to oil production, and shows how artistic and literary works, such as Kipling’s “The White Man’s Burden,” reinforce stereotypes of Western-controlled media, which presented situations in postcolonial countries as better when the colonists were in charge. The message was clear: without British hegemony, chaos would ensue. Contending that “without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage and even produce the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-

Enlightenment period” (p. 3), Said’s Orientalism is a detailed critique of historical generalisations.

Influenced by Gramscian thought, Said paved the way for Subaltern Studies and the formation of the group by Ranajit Guha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, and Partha Chatterjee in the Indian academy that strove to centre peasant struggles. Because Indian historiography had been dominated by colonial and national elites, Subaltern Studies pivoted away from what they perceived to be Gandhian elitist *satyagraha*, truth force and Marxist industrial capitalism (Chatterjee, 1993; Guha, 1983; Guha, 1997). Guha utilises Gramscian notions of hegemony and dominance to examine peasant insurgencies and demonstrates how the British initially set up systems of indirect control and then, after Independence in 1947, elite Indians replaced the colonisers. Consequently, the everyday life of the peasants remained essentially the same prior to, during, and post colonialism. Peasant farmers were conscious of subordination, and insurgencies tended to be violent and based on religion. For example, in the 1832 rebellion preliterate peasants used smoke signals and arrows with fire to confuse the British. Unfortunately, caste differences eventually led to micropolitical fighting that undermined the effectiveness of the many insurgencies over the last two hundred years as reflected on by Spivak (2021), whose favouring of Marxism was to a great extent because it allowed for an accurate representation of class struggle in the context of the Indian caste system.

In the 1970s, peasant revolts were perceived as pre-political movements and primitive rebellions. There was a major paradigm shift in 1983 when Guha argued that while the colonial Cambridge school and Indian nationalists were rewriting history, both views were essentially

elitist. Instead, as Chakrabarty analyzes in *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies*, Guha sought to “align historical reasoning with larger movements for democracy in India” (Chakrabarty, 2002, p. 7) to acknowledge the relationship between knowledge and power. Guha argued that rather than the Eurocentric assertion that peasants were backward, their insurgent rebellions were based on accurate perceptions of Indian modernity. Between 1783 to 1900, over one hundred peasant insurgencies inverted symbols of their oppressors in daily life. Guha asserted that under colonialism, Indian culture did not reproduce British bourgeois culture in the 1800s nor was there a pre-capitalist subculture. Rather the vast majority of Indians experienced colonialism in daily life but did not experience hegemonic bourgeois culture. Guha calls this “dominance without hegemony,” reflecting the subaltern notion that texts of power and political processes did not speak for and to all Indians, especially peasant farmers.

Chakrabarty posits that, during colonialism, the British associated their bodies with character and integrity while they believed Indian bodies were associated with corruption. While setting up colonial systems of bribes to expedite services, known as *bakshish*, the British blamed Indians for blemishing the Englishmen’s character. On the physical side, British bodies were perceived as superior in strength to Indian bodies. “The body was, thus, central to the projection of European political strength in India” (Chakrabarty, 2002, p. 56). Due to the British spin on character and bodies, Gandhi provided an important counternarrative as he practised fiscal integrity, discipline in sexuality and self-control in public life. His public service demonstrated that notions of integrity and the physical body should be separated in a way that challenged

British notions of physical strength and superiority in character through eating meat. Gandhi's schoolboy chant reflected the prevailing view of the day: "Behold the mighty Englishman, He rules the Indian small/ Because being a meat eater, He is five cubits tall" (Gandhi, 1927, p. 41). Racialized people were taught to despise their own bodies through education and advertising. Advertisements for Ivory soap, for example, associated cleanliness with White bodies as the cleanest and therefore purest (McClintock, 1995).

Gandhi strategically challenged notions of White supremacy in character, seeking to expose that colonial aggression was about lust for greed and power. Discipline, as a concept, was used "as a way of organizing systems of knowledge but also as a way of organizing people or bodies" (Smith, 2021, p. 77). European males contrived to establish their racial identity as superior in intellect and knowledge production so they could justify controlling decisions that affected people from the Global South while simultaneously excluding them from the decision-making processes. Instead, the British focussed on extracting resources using structures, systems, and knowledge that would benefit the mother country. Gandhi successfully remained in a place of moral authority through his self-discipline and non-violent principles of *ahimsa*.

Believing that European history was the universal proliferation of capitalistic nationalism, Bengalis, in northeastern India, sought emancipation through historiography and development of the arts was paralleled with fervent desires to distinguish Western distortions from Indian self-representation in an effort to recapture the freedom of imagination (Chatterjee, 1993). Bengalis did not have any written form of history, relying on oral storytelling. Lacking an established written literary tradition, they were perceived as backward by British academics. Missionaries

were critical of the character of *nawabs*, similar to dukes, whose removal was later justified by the British as natural justice. Despite efforts to impose English education onto Indians, there was never an acceptance of Western interpretations of history by the Bengalis. Christian education was seen as a Western threat and a harmful influence. Bengalis sought to provide education for women and opened their own schools to socialise women with Indian values, believing it may be possible to restore “Indianness” by tracing back to pre-colonial times and allow Bengalis to live freely from colonial violence (Chatterjee, 1993).

Colonial Knowledge Production in the Neocolonial World

Due to the intractability of neocolonialism, anticolonial critique is needed in a way that leads to decolonial “calls for white supremacy, whiteness, and colonial systems of dominance to be dismantled” (Lopez, 2021, p. 6). As I have argued elsewhere, Eurocentric practices in education are not confined to the past because “racism in modern education has a long 500-year history with colonial roots that situates knowledge production as a Western prerogative” (Jefford, 2021a, p. 48). British colonial practices dominate education in its former colonies to demonstrate White supremacy and enable Eurocentric epistemologies. In India, religious learning has taken place since ancient times, with students following gurus since 5 BC to learn about the Buddhist way of life. Higher centres of learning have existed there since 427 CE; the first university, known as Nalanda University, had 10,000 students. In the early 1780s, the British East India Company took over administration of the Calcutta Madrasa and the Asiatic Society in Bengal, two of the oldest universities in India. Educational dominance was later justified under the English Education Act

of 1835, which states, “Arabic and Sanskrit poetry could be compared to that of the great European nations. But when we pass from works of imagination to works in which facts are recorded, and general principles investigated, the superiority of the Europeans becomes immeasurable” (Macaulay, 1835, para. 11).

Thomas Babington Macaulay was instrumental in making decisions about how Indians should be educated and sought to use universities to create a class of Indians who would *serve* the British Raj. As a result of British hegemony over education in colonised areas, students and teachers felt “unvalidated in our bodies, experiences and theorisation, we daily learnt and taught literature, theoretical paradigms and methods that alienated us from our lives” (Bannerji, 2020, p. 58). Teachers in colonial and neocolonial circumstances find themselves promoting White supremacy by utilizing textbooks, curricula, and administrative practices that do not include representation in a way that enables racially diverse students to see themselves in their learning.

Texts used to reproduce the British imperial tradition were hierarchized based on race that supported White supremacy, creating a canon and establishing a tradition according to which Eurocentric Enlightenment thinkers were the sole knowledge producers for the world. Hegemonic double standards maintain White Eurocentric literature as universally applicable, and limit non-White knowledge production as local. As Said explained in *Orientalism*, Shakespeare is perceived to be about pure, universal human truths, whereas Asian literature is seen as political, and conversely, overtly political knowledge is perceived as not ‘true’ knowledge whereas the “general liberal consensus that ‘true’ knowledge is fundamentally non-political obscures the highly if obscurely organized political circumstances obtained when knowledge is produced” (p.

10). French and British political interests in India prior to WWI, and American ones after WWII, were always focussed on their own self-interests but were fronted as lending a helping hand. Similarly, as Said noted, Harry Bracken “has been tirelessly showing – philosophers will conduct their discussions of Locke, Hume, and empiricism without ever taking into account that there is an explicit connection in these classic writers between their ‘philosophic’ doctrines and racial theory, justifications of slavery, or arguments for colonial exploitation” (p. 13).

In terms of method, Said uses the ideas of strategic location and strategic formation to show how philosophers, historians, and creative writers were positioned to authoritatively represent the Orient to European readers. To study cultures and peoples from an anti-oppressive lens, he insisted that “one would have to rethink the whole complex problem of knowledge and power” (p. 24), hoping to illustrate the dangers of internalised structural forms of cultural domination over the colonised that may be employed. In terms of technology, he saw that “one aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed” (p. 26).

As Linda Tuhiwai Smith stresses, Said advocated for rethinking internalised oppression caused by stereotypes and challenging the matrix of knowledge and power: “Knowledge was also there to be discovered, extracted, appropriated, and distributed. Processes for enabling these things to occur became organized and systematic. They not only informed the field of study referred to by Said as ‘Orientalism’ but other disciplines of knowledge and ‘regimes of truth’” (Smith, 2021, p. 67). Imperial centres in Europe transplanted universities and research practices that are embedded into the colonial system, which in turn enabled adventurers and researchers to

represent “the Other to a general audience back in Europe which became fixed in the milieu of cultural ideas. Images of the ‘cannibal’ chief, the ‘red’ Indian, the ‘witch’ doctor, or the ‘tattooed and shrunken’ head, and stories which told of savagery and primitivism, generated further interest, and therefore further opportunities, to represent the Other again” (Smith, 2021, p. 8).

Education functioning as a neocolonial tool can also be seen in many countries in Africa. As I detail in “Possibilities in Decolonizing English Language Learning” (Jefford, 2021a), universities have been established in Morocco since the ninth century, and Mali and Egypt have also had institutions of higher learning since the sixteenth century, long before colonization began. Similarly, Christopher Azaare Anabila has written on the role Western pedagogy played in usurping local elders in African villages from being perceived as knowledge producers under various colonisers, who used education to provide colonial subjects with rudimentary math and literacy skills so that they could labour to serve colonial interests. Colonisers sought to circumvent the potential for African insurrection by offering just enough education to ensure compliance with European dominators but not enough learning that would lead to intellectual revolution (Altbach, 1971; Falola, 2018; Jefford 2021a; Pieterse & Parekh, 1995). In the early years of independence, students who aspired to postsecondary education were required to attend universities in Europe. As Toyin Falola underscores, even after 1945, when a variety of nations sought independence from colonisers, higher learning centres in Nigeria were referred to as “colonial universities” (Falola, 2018, p. 605). In many postcolonial countries, citizen participation in higher education is a symbolic accomplishment for the nation attaining maturity

and modernity (Smith 2021), yet systemic racism reproduced by educational institutions continues to utilize oppressive pedagogies manufactured by colonisers (Jefford, 2021a).

In the United States, Harvard (1636), Yale (1707), and Princeton (1746) were all founded under colonialism prior to the American Revolution, and in the United Kingdom, Oxford (1096) and Cambridge (1209) are recognized internationally as elite institutions. However, most academics would be hard pressed to name prestigious universities in the Global South that are considered on par with these well-known Anglo-American ones. Colonial systems shifted the explicit domination of power from having a presence in colonized areas to now excluding the Global South through neocolonialism in education (Altbach, 1971). One of the most effective international hegemonizing forces for upward mobility, and the creation of social and cultural capital, academia produces not just homogenous social experiences but a “homogeneity of hegemonic forces” (Oyěwùmí, 1997, p. 16) because Western theories are the master tools of hegemony based on the assumption that White male experiences are universal and therefore applicable to everyone. Critical global perspectives are necessary in education because colonialism established a worldwide system of prioritising Eurocentric knowledge under the erroneous assumption that life experiences and ideologies are universal, birthing the Hydra of White supremacy.

From Global Immigration to Local Diversity in Education

In the context of the Anglo-American hegemony in education, immigration trends with movements from the Global South to the Global North reveal that, when immigrants become part

of what then become multicultural countries, racial hierarchies are reproduced (Simpson, J., James, C. & Mack, J., 2011). As multiculturalism becomes an increasingly international phenomenon, diversity is mostly dealt with by local educational practitioners, who are “individual champions” (Ahmed, 2015, p. 7), rather than systems reformers. Despite the increasing racial diversity of many local communities in large cities, neighbourhood schools in settler colonial countries with a history of immigration, such as Canada, the United States, and Australia, have traditions of using curricula, texts, and administrative practices to promote Eurocentrism and reproduce White supremacy in education. The mere presence of multiculturalism among students in a school community does not guarantee respect or inclusion because colonial history has not been considered enough when examining diversity (Bannerji, 2000).

Epistemologies are inextricably interwoven in historical geopolitics. In *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*, Sara Ahmed notes that educators have defended Eurocentric practices and systems in diverse settings, asserting “that you can’t do anything about geography” (Ahmed, 2012, p. 4). However, acknowledging the impacts of colonialism that create ensuing racial hierarchies in education is, as we also know from Urmitapa Dutta, a vital step in addressing inequities in valuing knowledge production (Dutta, 2018). In fact, as Ahmed notes in “Doing Diversity Work in Higher Education” (2015), diversity can keep Whiteness in place when images are presented that give the appearance of inclusion even when there are discriminatory practices or when racially diverse groups are in the minority. She stresses

that using words such as “White supremacy” and “racism” creates discomfort for many educators (Ahmed, 2015). Leonardo suggests that people need to learn and that it is prudent

to distinguish between Whiteness and White (people). A focus on Whiteness surely centers White (people) in an analysis of racism, but this is not the same as saying that White (people) themselves are only false and oppressive. There have been examples of White (people) who fought, and continue to fight, on the side of justice, the abolitionist John Brown being an obvious instance, but as an ideology Whiteness has no redeeming characteristics because it has functioned primarily to stratify society. (Leonardo, 2013, p. 89)

Diversity is a word that is “all nice and cuddly and we can feel good about it and feel like we’ve solved it, when actually we’re nowhere near solving it. When diversity is seen as a happier word, the task often becomes using this word alongside other more challenging words such as ‘racism,’ ‘whiteness’ and ‘inequality’” (Ahmed, 2015, p. 6). Diversity can foster a colour-blind perspective that ignores “racial disparities in structural life chances. Although White may be a site of difference, it is not a racial difference like all others. The center–margin pairing is material when the spatial configuration of the relationship ghettoizes or segregates bodies of colour from White spaces within neighborhoods, academies, and nationhoods” (Leonardo, 2013, p. 91). Thus, multicultural nations reinforce within neighbourhoods what Fanon called zones of being and non-being (Fanon, 1952) in a way that mirrors global hierarchies of racial oppression manufactured by colonialism on a local level. The word “community” needs to be interrogated to show how racialized immigrants are expected to assimilate into Western norms and accept colonial practices as they interact daily within their neighbourhoods (Ma, 2023).

Whiteness is an image that institutions protect, rather than interrogating who is writing policies, allocating resources, and documenting research. Then, as Ahmed underscores, “the task

becomes changing the perception of whiteness rather than changing the whiteness of the organization” (Ahmed, 2012, p. 184). Because too much time is spent in education on the image of happiness in diversity, rather than addressing systemic change, she argues that “We need space that is not designated as institutional space to be able to talk about the problems with and in institutions” (p. 10). As she further extrapolates, academic space can be seen as hostile to racialized bodies and “when diversity becomes a conversation, a space is opened up” (p. 16). As Leonardo concurs, “institutions are racialized because they are embedded in a racial predicament, which they reinforce and help reproduce. Agents in this arrangement are limited by their condition, which makes it difficult to imagine acting independently from it” (p. 21). Ahmed’s response is that, while EDI protocols in educational systems can be influential in addressing BIPOC exclusion, policy does not always lead to social action due to ongoing institutional resistance. In fact, policies and documentation that critique equity can be produced to demonstrate inclusion. Bannerji also agrees that inclusivity must be embedded in organisational structures while educational systems that reproduce alienation and oppression need to be eradicated (Bannerji, 2020). The “how” and “who” of educational decision makers can help result in the “what” of greater representational perspectives (Gabi, Olsson, Rost, Warner and Asif, 2023). Ultimately, the discretion and will of educational administrators is a greater influence in directing organizations towards racial equity through policies, organisational culture, and funding.

Nonetheless, racialized people continue to be dehumanized, and a long colonial shadow continues to be cast over multicultural neighbourhoods, preventing BIPOC from full inclusion in

daily life. In local schools, racist colonial hierarchies are reinforced, despite ongoing resistance. As a result, BIPOC continue to be marginalised and remain in zones of non-being in places in the Global North like Toronto, demonstrating the intractability of racism. In the next chapter, I build on my postcolonial critiques of racism by examining how race and gender work as interlocking forms of oppression. Building on the account in this chapter of how racism was fabricated, I demonstrate that the way gender has been constructed to deny women full participation in public life is also based on outdated scientific and religious notions that do not stand the test of time.

Chapter 3: Constructing Gender

In this chapter, I look at how gender, like race, has been fabricated through a perfidious one-two punch of science and religion. As demonstrated in the last chapter on manufacturing race, colonists justified conflating race with intelligence, using problematic arguments about scientific racism by various Enlightenment thinkers to develop hierarchies in a way that oppressed non-White bodies. Citing Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden, patriarchal religious thought was used to other women as different from, and inferior to, males. Religion and science effectively coordinated the subordination of not only BIPOC but also women. Patriarchy may have created gender-based oppression and exclusion, as Simone de Beauvoir drew attention to in *The Second Sex* (1953), but Women of Colour (WOC) suffered far greater oppression and exclusion than their White counterparts, as bell hooks noted in *Ain't I A Woman* (hooks, 1981). In this chapter I begin with Thomas Lacquer's *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (1992) and a loose chronology of the development of sexual ideology from the time of Greek thought to demonstrate how critiques of perceptions of female bodies have evolved over time. Over the course of history, the social construction of gender has relied predominantly on bodies and biological determinism to argue for male dominance and female subjugation, drawing on spurious science as proof of intellectual inferiority. I then build on Patricia Hill Collins's *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* to show that although initially White feminists such as Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (1792) conflated their subordinate position with racialized people, early Black feminists, such as Maria Stewart, Sojourner Truth,

and Mary Church Terrell, were aware that gender and race are contrived in a way that differentially impacts their value and lives and that Black and White feminist interests are racially divided and do not coincide. Next, I turn to Kimberlé Crenshaw's influential idea that not only but especially women's experiences should be approached intersectionally with nuanced understandings of how race, gender, and class intersect in a variety of ways that create interlocking forms of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989; Crenshaw, 1991), and I consider how it relates to postcolonial feminists' critiques, such as Spivak's of the absence of women in postcolonial discourses. Spivak eschews idealizing the West/ Global North and the idea that it offers emancipation for WOC. Instead, capitalist patriarchy and Western White feminism need to be recognized as complicit in the systemic oppression of WOC through implicit institutional practices that the state supports. Outlining the ways gender has been deconstructed and recreated as a social construct, I establish how Black, intersectional and postcolonial feminists have sought to gain efficacy for full public participation, demonstrating that women, like racialized people, are more than just the sum of their physical parts.

Destiny's Child: Biological Determinism vs. Biological Foundationalism

In Greek mythology, King Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia to win the Trojan War stands as an iconic symbol of the interminable patriarchal hunger to retain power at any cost. From Greek thought to the Enlightenment, the physical body was an important means of exerting male hegemony, as women were perceived as not just the opposite of, but also weaker than men, justifying their subordinate status. Lacquer notes that Aristotle perceived women as lesser

versions of men, while de Beauvoir contrasts Greek patriarchal society with Rome's more egalitarian structure but notes that it still excluded female employment outside the home. The belief that women's bodies were weak and their minds intellectually inferior has justified limiting their participation in public life for too many centuries.

Patriarchy has existed in almost all societies because gender was intentionally based on biological determinism and biological foundationalism to create a hierarchy between men and women so that women remained in the private domestic sphere and did not aspire to public engagement. The physical body remains persistently central to gender-based oppression. As R.W. Connell shows in *Gender and Power: Society, The Person and Sexual Politics* (1987), the global subordination of women is tied to biological determinism, which justifies patriarchy. In "Interpreting Gender," Linda Nicholson contrasts biological determinism, which asserts nature determines destiny and which she argues prevailing notions of gender are based on, whereas biological foundationalism allows for "commonalities [that] may also be interlaced with differences" (Nicholson, 1994, p. 83), forming the basis for the differential treatment of the sexes with cultural variances. In other words, in most premodern societies, nature intended for women to nest at home and men to hunt in open spaces. Freud was the most direct among his peers when he declared that "anatomy is destiny" (Freud, 1924, p.178). In both biological determinism and biological foundationalism, the physical body determines gender expectations and, in turn, disproportionately influences life trajectories. The intractability of sexual identity relies on the enforced accountability to the social constructs of gendered expectations for men and women, as Barbara J. Risman shows in studying single fathers, married baby-boom mothers, and

heterosexual egalitarian couples and their children in *Gender Vertigo: American Families in Transition* (1998). Women are not expected to be knowledge producers by men, who have exploited misogynistic sexual ideologies that ensured the reproduction of patriarchy by creating public and private hierarchies. Sexual ideology continues to be influential in daily lives and institutional practices, and the physical body continues to be used as the basis to justify the exclusion of women as knowledge producers and decision makers.

An awareness of the role of biological determinism in colonial oppression is part of two other key studies from the late 1990s: Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's "Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation" and Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí's *The Invention of Women: Making An African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. Bonilla-Silva argues that the intersections of class, gender, and race have not been investigated "satisfactorily" (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, p. 476) as "the struggle of women in the United States to attain their civil and human rights... has always been plagued by deep racial tensions" (p. 473), while Oyěwùmí recognizes that "social construction and biological determinism have been two sides of the same coin, since both ideas continue to reinforce each other. When social categories like gender are constructed, new biologies of difference can be invented" (Oyěwùmí, 1997, p. 8). According to Oyěwùmí, in the West, "gender theories to interpret other societies without recourse to their own world sense imposes a Western model" (p. 78). Such an imposition of cultural logic leads to what she terms "bio-logic" (p. 11), a notion which could be expanded on to be described as colonial bio-illogic. Colonialism produced unreasonable ideas about the body that continue to oppress racialized women from fully participating in society. As a result, gender and racially inclusive texts and curricula that are a

major part of decolonising education may also have minimal effects due to the recalcitrant nature of racist patriarchy. Indeed “race, then, is a fundamental organising principle in American society. It is institutionalized, and it functions irrespective of the action of individual actors... biological determinism is a filter through which all knowledge about society is run” (p. 5). Decolonisation can also be Whitewashed when educators teach about diverse views in a pejorative manner with deficit perspectives.

Oyěwùmí shows us how comparing Western feminism and Afrofeminism can be useful in understanding how cultures construct gender differently. While feminist discourse has been dominated by the West, “in Yoruba society, in contrast, social relations derive their legitimacy from social facts, not from biology” (p. 12). Today, she points out, even African Studies tends to be Eurocentric: “the most recent phase in an old Western concern with the evolving status of African primitivism, where the indices have moved from historylessness to statelessness and now to philosophy lessness” (p. 18). In the same way, she notes, feminist thought has not escaped Western domination, which “is a fundamental problem because without this necessary loosening we continue to mistake the West for the Self and therefore see ourselves as the Other” (p. 25). Oyěwùmí distinguishes between Western notions of male and female gender construction and Yoruba traditions of establishing seniority in social interactions and notes the fluidity of seniority according to different familial associations. On one side of the family, a person may be senior and on the other side junior. The Western construction of male and female bodies has limited application to societies that value knowledge from elders.

Indeed, using examples of language, daily household practices, division of labour, and possession of land, Oyěwù mí argues that colonial thought could not understand the nuances of life for the Yoruba people. Instead, “due to the fact that the economy had some degree of specialization, certain professions and crafts like weaving, smithing, surgery, divining, hunting, dyeing, and calabash-carving were associated with certain lineages” (p. 66). From agrarian to town life, certain Yoruba families were responsible for various types of work instead of the Western gendered division of labour, where the body is used to situate people and ascribe privileges. To sum up, she underscores that in the Western world, there is the “everyday common sense of race—a way of comprehending, explaining and acting in the world” (p. 5) that is an intrinsic part of knowledge production and transmitting Eurocentrism.

As a result, even where there are diverse educators, WOC can face intractable barriers in institutional life, something Sara Ahmed experienced first-hand. She knows that WOC are often not perceived as real scholars, that they are seen as motivated by ideology and anger: “The woman of colour is racist (and we hurt, too). The woman of colour should be grateful, as she lives in our democracy. We have given her the right and the freedom to speak... *it is a defense against hearing her work*” (Ahmed, 2012, p. 162, italics in original). As long as Women of Colour gratefully stay in their place, there can be no change.

Black vs. White Feminisms

In seeking to identify core themes in Black feminism, Hill Collins credits contributions to Black feminist thought that develop an epistemological framework to empower Black women: “Black

women's group location in intersecting oppressions produced commonalities among individual African American women" (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 25). She recognizes that even though neither are a monolith, Black and White feminism prioritize many different things, most crucially their relation to family life. Assumptions in mainstream scholarship that give precedence to Whiteness in feminism "negate Black women's realities" (p. 12). Perceptions about responsibilities in family life differ in that White feminists have tended to perceive housekeeping as oppressive menial chores and childrearing as accountability to patriarchy in the "barefoot, pregnant and in the kitchen" tradition whereas Black feminists have noted that Black women could reclaim their humanity through self-defined motherhood and nurturing in daily family life as a reaction against the destruction of Black families through slavery. While White, middle-class feminists sought to escape the oppression of domesticity and participate in the profits of capitalism, many Black women longed to reclaim their humanity through motherhood and the family life that had been torn away from them during slavery. Similarly, while White, middle-class feminists tended to critique family life as reflective of patriarchal capitalist oppression, Black feminists were quick to appreciate that their experiences reflected regaining relationships with their children as part of their struggle to be seen as mothers who could offer wisdom and nurturing. Because White feminism remains the hegemonic discourse of analysing family politics,

African American women who remain suspicious of feminism are being neither unreasonable nor demonstrating a lack of feminist consciousness. Moreover, when combined with the perception of feminism as being anti-family and, by implication, anti-motherhood, US Black women's collective reluctance to advance critical analyses of Black motherhood becomes even more understandable. (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 175)

Along with the fight for the women's right to vote in the early suffragettes' years, Black female activists and educators also sought to challenge existing discourses of gender.

In the history of Black women such as “Sojourner Truth, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Mary McLeod Bethune, Toni Morrison, [and] Barbara Smith” (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 3), Maria Stewart (1803-1879) encouraged sisterhood, activism and self-advocacy. In 1831, she urged Black women “to use their special roles as mothers to forge powerful mechanisms of political action. ‘Ye mothers, what responsibility rests on you!’ Stewart preached. ‘You have souls committed to your charge... It is you that must create in the minds of your little girls and boys a thirst for knowledge, the love of virtue,... and the cultivation of a pure heart’” (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 2).

Also in stark contrast to White, middle-class feminists who sought emancipation from domesticity and child rearing, Sojourner Truth (c. 1797-1883) asserted her rights as a mother in fighting to get back her child, who the slave owner that had bought him had tried to poison against her. Truth sought to rectify aspersions against her maternal right and used her deeply rooted beliefs in God as an intrinsic value for her life and found support in her faith. Black feminist activism occurred at the intersection of oppression based on gender, race and class against slave labour, institutional exclusion, and negative stereotypes. When Truth challenged, “Ain't I A Woman?” at the 1851 Women's Conference in Akron, Ohio, she was shushed by many White women, who prioritised voting rights, documenting the gap between White and Black feminist interests when sharing the horrors of slavery. Truth reflected on the notion of

gender as a social construction, drawing attention to the fact it was based on White male

treatment of White women:

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me Any best place! And ain't I a woman?
Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman?
I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman?
I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman? (Truth, 1851, para 2).

Reclaiming their humanity due to the destruction of their families under slavery, “many Black women understand the power that maternal love has had in empowering them as individuals” (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 170).

Hill Collins also stresses their understanding of work, noting that domestic Black workers also questioned that if women were indeed the weaker sex, then why were the heaviest domestic duties assigned to Black women? Sojourner Truth and Maria Stewart can be seen as the earliest Black feminists who critiqued notions of race and gender to demonstrate the dual discrimination later reflected in Crenshaw's intersectional critique. As Crenshaw underscores, “Not only are Women of Colour in fact overlooked, but their exclusion is reinforced when *white* women speak for and as *women* (p. 154, italics in original).

A Black activist not overlooked thanks to Ulrike Harmann's “A Historical Claim for Justice: Re-configuring the Enlightenment for and from the Margins,” another contribution to Dhawan's important volume on *Decolonizing Enlightenment*, is Mary Church Terrell (1863-1954), the daughter of two former slaves who came to imperial Berlin in 1904 to deliver a talk on

'The Progress of Coloured Women' at the International Women's Congress, as the only woman of colour presenter. Examining the Euro-dominated discourse that justified violence from "progressives" and sought to consider the potential for social change by appropriating "discursive tools that emerge from oppressive regimes" (Harmann, 2014, p. 139), Church Terrell asserted that racist colonialism had always been challenged. As Harmann notes, her conference presentation marks crucial differences in the feminist movement as American women were allowed to get college degrees, but Black women's rights were severely suppressed by White women, who were deemed to be complicit in Black female oppression. The conference offered Church Terrell a chance to teach White feminists about racism and critique American progress. Subverting the notion that Black women were tied to the stereotype of slavery, she talked about successful Black businesswomen, scientists, and artists to implicitly draw inferences to the European Enlightenment that sought to silence African histories. She challenged White Europeans to acknowledge that Blacks' lack of knowledge or progress was not due to race but rather due to the effects of slavery and reproduction of colonialism, and she sought to reconfigure them as subjects of narratives. Unfortunately, the hosts of the conference continued to stereotype Black Americans by fetishizing differences, exoticizing personas, and seeking spectacles of Blackness.

Difference can be used as a tool for subjugation, which presents the image of valuing diversity as a way of appearing superior in terms of progressive inclusivity, and at the same time perpetuates White hegemony. Harmann highlights how Black women such as Church Terrell were held accountable when they did not conform to White stereotypes. Church Terrell presented

at a conference in fluent German, which she had learned while studying in Europe, demonstrating her intelligence and education. It was a tactic used later by Nelson Mandela, who learned Afrikaans to speak to his prison guards. Harmann underscores how Church Terrell's linguistic competence drew both applause and confusion; her ability to be simultaneously familiar and strange rendered her uncanny.

Maria Stewart, Sojourner Truth, and Mary Church Terrell all critiqued racism to lay a foundation for Black thought as radically different from the White, middle-class feminist thought that lasted well into the 1970s. As Linda Nicolson stresses in "Interpreting Gender," second-wave feminism was based on acknowledging and challenging biological facts as determining sex because biological determinism created a place of hopelessness and undermined efforts to eliminate sexism. Gender as a social rather than biological construction was a desirable foundation for feminist discourse because, as Oyěwùmí explains, "it was interpreted to mean that gender differences were not ordained by nature; they were mutable and therefore changeable. This in turn led to the opposition between social constructionism and biological determinism, as if they were mutually exclusive" (p. 8). Biological foundationalism was preferable because if gender is viewed as constructed on a cultural site that highlights differences in societal expectations for men and women, that construction is, therefore, open to being changed, and eventually eliminated.

While critiques of patriarchy during the 1960s and 1970s gained momentum, Black and White American feminists ended up following diverging trajectories, something Winifred Breines traces in *The Trouble Between Us: An Uneasy History of White and Black Women in the*

Feminist Movement (2006). In seeking to understanding why a racially integrated feminist movement did not develop in the second wave of the feminist movement in the 1970s, she noted that Black feminists critiqued capitalism, black male patriarchy, and white feminists but simultaneously sought to remain loyal to their communities. Solely through justice can there be authentic relationships among genders as men give up traditional notions of masculinity (hooks, 2001). American feminists in the 1970s, who were predominantly White, continued to deny difference, advocating for colour blindness in the movement despite “the denial of this difference as detrimental to feminist solidarity” (Harmann, 2014, p. 146).

Intersectionality

The importance of intersectional theory cannot be understated. Just as the exclusion of women in postcolonial and subaltern studies has buckled under what Chakrabarty in *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies* calls “the triple axis of class, gender and ethnicity” (p. 18), Critical Race Theory (CRT) also identifies the limitations on feminist thought in systemic practices. Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality to centre on the interlocking matrix of systemic oppression faced by women who are Black. Not only have women been central to CRT from its inception but intersectional theory exists because of Black women. Prior to 1980, Black women were “excluded from feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse because both are predicated on a discrete set of experiences that often does not accurately reflect the interaction of race and gender” (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 140). Continual failure to interrogate race and gender reinforces, replicates, and subordinates racialized women while the upper hierarchy

reap the privileges (Crenshaw, 1991). As White, middle-class feminists generally fail to consider race, examining how intersectional identities are oppressed under interlocking matrixes is an important part of deconstructing race and gender (Hill Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991; hooks, 1981; hooks, 2004; Leonardo, 2013).

In her seminal 1989 essay in the *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” Crenshaw argues that Black women can be excluded from both antiracist and feminist discourses because neither considers how systems of oppression work together to keep Women of Colour subjugated. She draws on *DeGraffenreid v General Motors* to illustrate how institutions use systems of oppression to situate Women of Colour in a matrix of double subordination. Prior to 1964, Black women were never hired at General Motors. However, Black men and White women were hired. Then, when layoffs based on seniority occurred in the 1970s, Black women, who were at the lowest rungs of institutional protection, were systemically disadvantaged. The courts furthered the matrix of oppression by denying that Black women could be defined as a protected special class under the US Constitution. Instead, the legal system only allowed for laid-off Black female employees to bring their case forward under a sex discrimination suit or race discrimination class action. But not both.

Postcolonial Feminism

What Hill Collins has shown for the US – that defining people of colour as more animalistic and less human supports the politics of economic domination in colonialism, slavery, and

neocolonialism; that the matriarchal nature that emerged in response to practices in slavery detracted from Black male fathers is perceived as deviant, challenging White male patriarchy as the ideal family structure; and that White women have opportunities to share power with White men in a way that Women of Colour (WOC) do not –, is not limited to the US experience. As Robert Young has noted in his introductions to postcolonialism, postcolonial feminism includes challenging Eurocentric views of men and women, including those of Western feminists (Young, 2001, 2003). He defines postcolonialism as seeking to turn the world around from oppression to emancipation as a political philosophy that “first and foremost [advocates for] the right to autonomous self-government of those who still find themselves in a situation of being controlled politically and administratively by a foreign power” (2003, p. 112), and postcolonial feminism as challenging dominant patriarchal ideologies about subaltern women, who are stereotypically depicted as Third World victims of patriarchy instead of oppressed by Western neocolonial structures. In this view, postcolonialism stands for the empowerment of the disadvantaged, particularly women, in poverty and statelessness “within a broad framework of democratic egalitarianism that refuses to impose alienating western ways of thinking on tricontinental societies” (Young, 2003, p. 112). It resists capitalist exploitation and advocates for sustainable basic rights for all – education, health care and food and housing – and fosters sympathy and potential allyship for the subaltern women who function in a world made by men.

In their contribution to Dhawan’s volume on *Decolonizing Enlightenment*, “Decolonizing Theories of Global Justice,” Anna Millan and Ali Can Yildirim note that Spivak cautiously rejects “representational ‘ventriloquism’” (Millan & Yildirim, 2014, p. 203), which promotes

parochial pedagogy and the traditional/modern dichotomy. The Western desire for research justifies and can be complicit with subordination when practices in the Global South are examined. In Spivak's famous example, research on *sati*, the practice of widows throwing themselves on a flaming pyre, reproduces colonial stereotypes of White men saving Brown women from Brown men (Spivak, 1983). Another scholar who engages with Spivak's critiques is Sankaran Krishna. In *Globalization and Postcolonialism: Hegemony and Resistance in the Twenty-First Century*, he describes how the interlocking forms of oppression in colonialism and later, neocolonial nationalism, serve to situate the subaltern women at the lowest substratum, marginalised and oppressed, while at the same time disavowing the political usefulness of her pedagogies. The heterogeneity of the subaltern voice must be interrogated, as race and gender continue as essentialist categories used to organise society through invisible colonial illogic that aids oppressing racialized women, and if the questioning of assumptions is overlooked, postcolonial feminists can participate in the further subalternization of women in the global South.

Stereotyping the Other, in the name of difference, is a colonial tradition that, as Bannerji astutely observes, tends "not to go beyond a rich and direct description of personal experience to a social analysis which will reveal the sameness of social relations that construct the experience of 'white' privilege and 'black' oppression" (p. 67). Or, in the case of stereotyping *sati*, "brown oppression." She further critiques the general tendency of Western feminism to attempt to raise consciousness "without changing the world" (p. 46). Instead, domestic and non-governmental organizations advocacy tends to deal with issues through pedagogy and the right to education for

all women rather than the social organization of patriarchy. Feminism can become incorporated into, and coopted by, patriarchal bureaucracies of state and capitalism that enable one class of women to have power over another class that, for example, works in administrative/ technical fields or as service providers or policy creators. These bureaucracies “help build the ruling apparatuses that oppress the very women they want to ‘empower.’ In this way, even unintentionally, feminists can become ideologues for patriarchal capitalism’s reproduction” (p. 47). In other words, as Welang notes, “mainstream feminism, it is worth underscoring, functions as an ally for white patriarchy” (p. 298). Thus, social change has to be pursued at all levels for those who need representation in all areas of life, and that advocacy has to include their full participation in institutions.

Dhawan also uses a postcolonial feminist perspective to note the importance of the Enlightenment in history as an oppressive force against freedom and equality and for exploitation and domination (Dhawan, 2014a). In terms of gender and class, women and the working class were excluded from political history, the creation of nations, and political participation, and as a result European notions of sex, gender and race became embedded in the colonial (il)logic of difference. The global oppression of women continues, and despite the promise of post-colonialism, as Anne McClintock stresses in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, nowhere do “women and men (have) equal access to the rights and resources of the nation state” (p. 14). This is demonstrated by the worldwide feminization of poverty (Connell, 1987), especially in the Global South.

Postcolonial Theory and CRT: Caught Between Scylla and Charybdis

As leading figures in postcolonial and critical race theory respectively, Spivak's and Crenshaw's critiques demonstrate the importance of Black, Indigenous Women of Colour (BIWOC) as valued knowledge producers, even if Spivak utilizes a global postcolonial feminist lens while Crenshaw's critiques are rooted in the African American experience. Both highlight the experiences of WOC in relation to systems of exclusion and oppression, and therefore, as Ali Meghji argues in "Towards a Theoretical Synergy: Critical Race Theory and Decolonial Thought in Trumpamerica and Brexit Britain" (2022), postcolonial theory and CRT are not mutually exclusive. Nor are negative media stereotypes, such as mummies, matriarchs, welfare moms and Jezebels, limited to how US Black women are perceived.

The ideological fusion of CRT and decolonization can lead to new and under-explored areas of study, such as postcolonial, anticolonial, and transnational feminism, centering the voices of racialized women through intersectional perspectives. As Meghji has shown, CRT and decoloniality complement each other as nationalised social systems with a transnational focus that can be described as "theoretical synergy" (p. 648). Most nations that were created in the context of European colonialism and even while struggling for independence, including AILA countries and the US, staunchly upheld patriarchy. If racism is conceptualised "as a material structure of inequality, involving the unequal distribution of societal resources across the racial hierarchy" (p. 649), then, Meghji argues, it is necessary to trace the transnational historical effects of imperialism in a global context. In the postcolonial world, "decolonial thought denies that the present exists as a discrete temporal event, instead arguing that... an historical approach

which traces how the logics, processes and practices put in place during colonialism continue to shape the present and future world” (p. 650).

However, as Meghji also shows, there are also important differences between decolonization and CRT. The former covers a broad geographical area and adopts a historical materialistic perspective with “a more globally oriented paradigm of thought” (p. 649) while CRT has a transnational blindspot. CRT’s state centrist focus is “guilty of methodological nationalism... sailing between the Charybdis of CRT with its presentist focus on the ‘contemporary racial structure’ and its emphasis on the US’s racialized social system, and the Scylla of decolonial thought with its focus on coloniality, and its historical, transnational approach” (p. 651). Anticolonial critiques may be more applicable to androcentric global geopolitics, whereas CRT may be more reflective of the Black/White binary racism in the US, which excludes BIWOC from fully participating in decision-making in their lives.

One has to be careful, therefore, in analyzing postcolonial situations with CRT. On the one hand, CRT does not address intraracial postcolonial legacies of conflict. When Indians ousted the British, the colonizers intentionally left behind the bloody Partition that divided India and Pakistan, exacerbating religious differences and resulting in a million deaths and the relocation of approximately 16 million people, with ongoing border skirmishes along the Kashmiri border today, almost eighty years later (Marshall and Toohey, 2010). Spivak shares in her interview with Paulson (2016) how the Partition tragically led to her interest in postcolonialism due to her aunt’s suicide. As Spivak’s aunt did not have a weapon to fight against colonizers, she used her body as a site of imperial resistance. The incident influenced Spivak’s postcolonial perspectives, yet she

later distanced herself from postcolonialism in her 1999 book *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, a position she reiterated again in her 2021 essay on “How the Heritage of Postcolonial Studies Thinks Colonialism Today” to argue the complexities of postcolonial theory as having limited applications within the Indian context of the caste system. In another postcolonial context, that of Cameroon, the fight over resource exploitation and linguistic hegemony in French and English Cameroon, known as the Anglophone Crisis, caused 6,000 deaths and the forced movement of half a million people (Jefford, Fossi, Keunne, 2023a).

On the other hand, CRT accurately describes the social construction of races with the ensuing implications to power. It just omits naming colonization as the key factor in manufacturing and reproducing systemic racism. Racialized women’s institutional experiences in Crenshaw’s intersectionality are central to CRT but are largely excluded from the early days of anticolonial and postcolonial thought. In terms of practices, educators “engaging in social justice, antiracist, culturally responsive education, and other critical discourses do not have to discard the knowledge gained from those discourses but use it to inform decolonizing practices” (Lopez, 2021, p. 45). Thus, both CRT and anti- and postcolonial thought inform each other to present a more complete picture of the subalternization of racialized women both in the Global South *and* the increasingly diverse Global North.

As Binaya Subedi and Stephanie Lynn Daza point out in “The Possibilities of Postcolonial Praxis in Education,” there is more to racialization than skin colour, including gender, education and religion, and one also has to pay attention to the fact that teachers and administrators “in the everyday school settings... are simultaneously deracialized since they are

not considered authentic racial subjects in the US's black/white racial framework" (Subedi and Daza, 2008, p. 8). Black, Indigenous, Women of Colour need to be in political positions to make decisions, especially about funding, as demonstrated by Cammarota and Romero (2011) and Acosta and Mir (2012), whose highly successful Mexican American Studies program, based on the FKN strategy was unceremoniously axed by the New Mexico state department of education and characterized as treasonous because school subjects, such as literature and history, were taught in a way that did not glorify White settler colonialism.

The Challenges Feminisms Face

As feminist critiques of patriarchy have come to the forefront, demonstrating that patriarchy is a barrier to democratizing gender relationships, men have, for the most part, lagged in acknowledging how patriarchal capitalism continues to oppress women. However, as bell hooks discusses in *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* (2004), patriarchy also harms men. In challenging toxic masculinity, she encourages everyone but especially men to do the work necessary to reconnect with their feelings and aim for personal growth and mutual understanding. Economic gains may have helped women assert their rights for a better life; however, psychological terrorism can still reproduce gender-based subordination and coercion and needs to be countered (hooks, 2001).

The global reality of gender-based oppression is reflected in the #MeToo movement, which exposed affluent, successful, White women oppressed in the throes of Hollywood and news media sexual politics. Interconnectedness, based on critiquing existing power structures,

can help build female solidarity that, as Chandra Mohanty wrote over twenty years ago when revisiting her enormously influential *Under Western Eyes*, “requires understanding the historical and experiential specificities and differences of women’s lives as well as the historical and experiential connections between women from different national, racial, and cultural communities” (Mohanty, 2003a, p. 522). In reflecting on how terminology had changed in the intervening 17 years, she finds:

the language of *One-Third World* versus *Two-Thirds World* as elaborated by Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash (1998) particularly useful, especially in conjunction with *Third World/South* and *First World/North*. These terms represent what Esteva and Prakash call social minorities and social majorities—categories based on the quality of life led by peoples and communities in both the North and the South. (p. 506)

What she finds advantageous about *One-Third/Two-Thirds World* in relation to terms like *Western/Third World* and *North/South* “is that they move away from misleading geographical and ideological binarisms” (p. 506). The One-Third/Two-Thirds paradigm underscores that the subtext is not oppositional and “allows for teaching and learning about points of connection and distance among and between communities of women marginalized and privileged along numerous local and global dimensions” (p. 522). Feminists need to be as attentive as Mohanty to contextualize terminology and to reject binaries such as East/West, which create barriers to global solidarity and activism. They would also benefit from following her lead in looking “to create pedagogies that allow students to see the complexities, singularities, and interconnections between communities of women such that power, privilege, agency, and dissent can be made visible and engaged with” (p. 523). The Global South/ Global North dichotomy reflects patriarchal access to wealth while many racialized women have restricted access to the profits of

capitalism. A global model representative of current Black, Indigenous, Women of Colour experiences needs to be developed to change the way the world is divided up into East and West binaries based on outdated racist misogynistic agendas.

Anticolonial Feminism: The Future

Decolonisation offers opportunities for change as critiquing colonialism is at the heart of emancipation in the context of violence as a result of “patriarchy, cultural nationalism, and empire” (David McNally in Bannerji, 2020, xiii). While what Bhambra terms the anti-oppressive “connected sociologies” (p. 115) of subaltern studies, postcolonialism, decolonization, and anticolonialism have yet to be brought under an umbrella term along with a variety of feminist theories, there has been success in challenging Eurocentric hegemony in the fields of sociology, history, and literature. But the failures are twofold and based on a lack of intersectionality: White feminists often fail to interrogate race, and anti-racists often fail to critique patriarchy, meaning that both inadvertently reproduce oppressing BIWOC because, as Crenshaw hammers home, “adopting either analysis constitutes a denial of a fundamental dimension of our subordination and precludes the development of a political discourse that more fully empowers Women of Colour” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1252). Ideologies need to be critiqued as they influence social relationships, which ultimately create oppressive structures (Heier, 2014). Therefore, anticolonial feminist perspectives are necessary as they offer opportunities to inform a wide variety of disciplines and institutional practices to encourage thinking about how racialized women should be seen as valued knowledge producers who are greater than the sum of their physical parts.

Chapter 4: An Anticolonial Critique of Racism in Music Education and the Funds of Knowledge (FKN) Strategy

While in Chapter 2, I examined how Enlightenment scholars attempted to assert that “geography is destiny” using scientific racism and in Chapter 3, I interrogated the similar assertion of “gender is destiny” used to justify excluding BIWOC as knowledge producers, in this chapter, I examine how racialized people, especially women, have been subalternized in formal music learning spaces through colonial practices. In the past Black Indigenous People of Colour (BIPOC) artists might not have had access to formal lessons and thus might not have the certification for being included in hiring, resulting in a lack of representation. But there have been BIPOC composers of classical music, such as Chevalier, the artist depicted in the 2022 film directed by Stephen Williams. Despite Chevalier having his own creative genius, he was dubbed the Black Mozart, a moniker reflective of the Eurocentric nature of classical music and the fact that his renown was tied to a White male composer. Chevalier is just one example of the many BIPOC composers who have gone unrecognized for too long.

As noted in the Introduction, the question of racism in music education was tackled by Ruth Gustafson, who in *Race and Curriculum: Music in Childhood Education* (2009), examined how musical institutions were manufactured for racial exclusion during colonialism. More recently, Emily Good-Perkins established in *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies in Music Education Expanding Culturally Responsive Teaching to Sustain Diverse Musical Cultures and Identities* (2022) that “the discourses and normalized practices used within the field of music teaching and learning, many of which have remained intact for 200 years, have prevailed because

of the ways in which they benefit and privilege the status quo” (p. 141) due to British dominance. Reflecting anticolonial thought by critiquing why more has not been done to challenge White supremacy in music education, Good-Perkins’s hypothesis is that “an ahistorical understanding of contemporary Western classical music teaching practices and ideology has allowed for an ‘unknowing’ of their harmful histories, thus deeming an interrogation of them unnecessary” (p. 26). She details how colonial ideology about race was conflated with the advent of the singing subject in acoustics, and vocals were “disciplined and controlled by the singing teacher. Classical vocal technique and the pedagogy with which it is associated became the ‘scientifically proven correct’ and ‘healthy’ way to sing allowing for a hierarchizing of singing and a ranking of singing subjects based upon ‘scientific principles’” (p. 33). A hierarchy of pedagogy was created through Enlightenment science, which promoted White supremacy in forming notions of the proper way to sing. For generations to come, teaching vocals meant “music educators could manipulate, homogenize, and discipline their students’ voices” (p. 33), manufacturing race-based values in musical expression.

Local talent, instruments, and singing styles from the colonies were effectively dismissed during colonisation, resulting in invisible systems based on racial oppression and exclusion. As a result, there is ignorance about why and how educational institutions such as Toronto’s Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) function as the kind of neocolonial project Good-Perkins has exposed: “The homogenization of a Eurocentric, normalized music education practice spread quickly throughout Britain and its empire allowing for a hierarchization of Western classical music ‘standards’ over local music traditions” (p. 36). Many non-Eurocentric music traditions do

not centre scores and composers, instead capturing intergenerational life stories anchored in the past with cultural memories and taught informally in community gatherings. Examining the roots of how colonizers manufactured Eurocentric learning shows how racist practices became the foundation for embedding White supremacy in institutions, demonstrated here in the area of music education. In what follows, I look at how colonizers intentionally embedded racism into systemic practices using music education as an example of how neocolonial institutions support White supremacy. Music learning was seen as a civilizing mission for people for all seen as inferior. From music pedagogy, texts, and assessments to how the body and voice are used for artistic expression, I show how the learning process for music conforms to European notions of civility. I then detail how the FKN strategy can work to bridge the lived experiences of racialized communities and those of their mostly White, female, middle-class teachers.

Music's Colonial Legacy

British imperialists took steps to exclude racialized peoples from the classical music canon in order to reproduce Eurocentrism. The British Royal College of Music gained worldwide renown between 1800 and 1950. In 1812, Sarah Anna Glover (1786-1867), a church music director in Norwich, England, developed the Tonic Sol-fa method to teach children how to sing. The Tonic Sol-fa method can be understood as a musical ladder. Any note can be “doh,” and the singer can use that note to move higher or lower to sing a song. The singer can skip up the rungs to higher notes or jump down the rungs to sing lower notes. The Tonic Sol-fa method is perhaps best known as portrayed in the movie *The Sound of Music*, in which it is used by Maria to teach the

Von Trapp children to sing. Deeming musical cultures in their colonies as irrelevant and inconsequential to the human experience, the British sought to use teaching Sunday School songs as a civilising agent (Good-Perkins, 2022). In 1841, a group of Sunday School teachers commissioned John Curwen at a conference to create a way to expand the use of music in Sunday School. Curwen built on Glover's methods as a bridge from the Tonic Sol-fa method to the staff notation and sight singing used today.

Beginning with the Tonic Sol Fa movement in Sunday School, British music pedagogy and practices were normalised as superior. In this form of pedagogy the composer, score, and reading music are prioritised, unlike in African American spirituals, which are orally transmitted, so “the imposition of a musical score or transcription is contrived and limiting” (Good-Perkins, 2022, p. 135). Just as race and gender are manufactured through differences in the body, creative identities and expression can be confined to the physical. Bodies are associated with music in a way that “plays a role in the systematic inclusion or exclusion of people, whose bodies already have been sorted and ordered through a process of differencing that materializes bodies as raced” (Koza, 2008, p. 146). As a result, the transmission, function and history of African American music was diminished.

In 1889 the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music merged to become the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM.org, 2024), under whom the future King Edward VII adopted the Tonic Sol-Fa certification system to create a standardized music exam system (ABRSM.org, 2024). Beginning in 1889, the ABRSM encouraged novice vocalists to start with softened voices, effectively learning to silence themselves through standardised

music education. Music that mapped colonizers' voices used the top half of the body while Black spirituals used greater vocal pitches with the entire body in cohesion with the music. The examination system today still reproduces the devaluing of local musicians. That music is produced by the body is a commonplace notion, as Grant Olwage notes in "The Class and Colour of Tone: An Essay on the Social History of Vocal Timbre," but it is also "a fact too easily forgotten in Africanist ethnomusicology, where the bodiliness of black musicking is usually signified by, and so confined to, dancing. As part of the body, the voice stands for the subject more directly than any other instrument" (Olwage, 2006, p. 206). Eventually, vocal identity became associated with class, and music learning aimed to develop a "civilised" voice culture that erased Black voices.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, Commonwealth music institutions were created with music practices and texts that were used as tools to civilise and proselytise BIPOC, subjugating their own local music, which in some cases became virtually extinct. Olwage critiques how the Black choral voice in South Africa was fashioned through structural aesthetics, political acts, and colonial conditions. Music practice, especially singing, directly affects the body so "voice culture provided the opportunity for re-forming the voice, for colonizing yet more of the other's body. And, at least ideally, it was conceived as part of the programme to civilize black South Africans" (Olwage, 2006, p. 208) because colonial writings categorised Black voices as different and uncultured. Similarly, in the US music was used to assimilate immigrants when they arrived. In fact, many immigrants were familiar with Western music through the church. Prior to immigrating, "parents and children alike, through singing, would be encouraged to abandon the

musical tongues of their ancestors for the Americanized, homogenized Western classical choral aesthetic. Music education and assimilation shared a common goal: to whitewash America” (Good-Perkins, 2022, p. 68). Once racial differences were noted, racialized voices were subjugated to become recipients of colonial music education, rather than their becoming celebrated creators of racially diverse art.

Post WWII, when nations began extricating themselves from political colonialism, Commonwealth music institutions remained to enable neocolonialism. ABRSM practices were steeped in racism, leading to the exclusion of racialized artists worldwide. By 1948, ABRSM examinations were taking place all over the former British empire: in Canada, Australia, India, and Africa. By 1981, there were close to half a million exam candidates in 90 countries every year with musical standards that echo White supremacy in a way that resulted in the marginalization of local teaching practices and music making in postcolonial countries. As Good-Perkins outlines, normalizing Western classical music teaching practices, “the imperialist and the ‘civilizing’ missions of the Tonic Sol-Fa and ABRSM musical examination systems have all contributed to a hegemonic power structure of music education throughout the world” (p. 36).

There are several aspects of RCM music education that lack inclusion. In terms of teaching world instruments, “despite the banjo being an instrument that originated in Africa and was brought to the United States by African slaves, the image chosen to represent the banjo is of a middle-aged White man” (Good-Perkins, 2022, p. 138) in music books. RCM’s music curriculum creates barriers for music students who are Black from full participation in the classroom by erasing their histories. Instead of building confidence and presenting a tradition like

African American jazz as meaningful, “the curriculum seems to actively avoid making a cultural and historical connection. The one-dimensional nature of standards and the reduction of musical concepts and goals to short statements ensures an epistemically narrow approach to music teaching and learning” (Good-Perkins, 2022, p. 138). Bodies and music are interrelated and categorised, and, as Julia Eklund Koza notes in “Listening for Whiteness: Hearing Racial Politics in Undergraduate School Music,” this “involves the materialization of bodies as raced. As many race theorists have argued, race is a social construction, and the materialization of bodies as races relies on a discourse of difference” (Koza, 2008, p. 151). RCM music education effectively functions as the “civilising” mission of voice culture as an institution established through colonization as a global institution that erases local student representation in texts and curriculum based on skin colour.

Like the ABRSM, the Suzuki School of Music (SSM), a music institution established in the 1950s, also has had a neocolonial influence on music education. Despite its Eastern name and connotations, SSM only includes Eurocentric music texts from the classical canon. As Eria Kubo details in her chapter on the Suzuki method in the *Handbook of Japanese Music in the Modern Era* (2023), Shinichi Suzuki developed the method that now bears his name because he believed children learn languages easily and could therefore be taught to perform well from a young age. SSM pedagogy reflects Japanese notions of discipline in learning: bowing to the music teacher before instruction and repetition for mastery of skills. SSM also uses principles of learning in a community through weekly groups practice sessions along with individual lessons. However, Suzuki makes sole use of European masters of the classical canon, such as Bach and Beethoven.

Even though Asian pedagogy is used to learn, Eurocentric texts dominate, and in this way SSM participates in reproducing White supremacy.

Western hegemony in music can also be seen in how Suzuki and Yamaha have sought to profit from making pianos rather than Asian instruments, such as the erhu, for global consumption. By 2000, Yamaha had sold over five million pianos in their hundred-year history. In the early 2000s, Taiwanese artist Jay Chou gained international acclaim from the fusion music known as Zhong Guo feng, songs that use traditional Chinese instruments such as the dagu (Chinese drum) and guzheng (Chinese zither) with the Western violin and piano. The potential was there to capitalize on Chou's successful music fusion by marketing dagus and guzhengs, but Western hegemony prevailed in the creative world once again. Indeed, Suzuki's own father had switched from manufacturing the shamisen, a three stringed banjo, to the violin back in the late 1800s when Japan opened up its borders for trade with the West. As Aysa Gray, Norka Blackman-Richards, Selena T. Rodgers observe in their contribution to *The Experiences of Black Women Diversity Practitioners in Historically White Institutions* (2023), curricula, policies, and practices centre on White supremacy, resulting in financial incentives for Western music hegemony to abound.

The capitalist, profit-driven focus of music learning is the stuff of Mary Catherine Stoumbos's dissertation, *Student Citizens: Whiteness, Inequality, and Social Reproduction in Marketized Music Education* (2023), while Gustafson underscores that teachers who can retain diverse students may not be as highly valued as teachers who can produce stars in the classical mode (Gustafson, 2009). The RCM and SSM teaching methodologies are examples of how

Eurocentrism and White supremacy are reproduced in music education as recognizable brand names. Both emphasise rhythmic pattern repetition and are presented as devoid of cultural associations creating and sustaining what Good-Perkins identified as rational Eurocentric music epistemologies; in contrast, “African American gospel singing, Mariachi singing, Arabic mawal, Congolese singing, Malaysian Dondang Sayang, Croatian Bec’ arac, and Vietnamese Ca trù singing are just a few examples of vocal traditions that rely on a chest-voice dominant vocal production for meaning” (Good-Perkins, 2022, p. 143). These singing practices are not as recognizable as brands as the Tonic Sol-fa movement, and as a consequence, utilising diverse music styles is not as profitable. As Du Bois perspicaciously observed back in 1926, “the white public today demands from its artists, literary and pictorial, racial prejudgment which deliberately distorts Truth and Justice, as far as coloured races are concerned, and it will pay for no other” (para. 33). As a consequence of colonial notions, local knowledge from the Global South is still denied acknowledgement today in traditional spaces of music learning such as the RCM, while outside of formal music spaces diverse music artists are thriving. Yet, scholarships and research opportunities continue to reflect colonial ideologies about race and gender instead of increasing opportunities to study music internationally and creating spaces for greater fusion in the creative arts. Educators need to advocate for more funding in the context of neoliberal cuts to all art programs. Indeed, as of April 2025, music programs are on the chopping block to help cover a 70 million dollar deficit at the Toronto District School Board.

Institutionally recognized music education in the West resulted in the production of music businesses, scholarships, and status through neocolonial learning of the European masters. The

RCM's assessments are recognized and rewarded worldwide in academic institutions, such as faculties of music, as the unrivaled standard for music education, with the website claiming to be "the most respected name in music lessons" (rcmusic.com, 2025). The Eurocentric focus of the RCM reproduces a monopoly on worldwide learning and assessments at all levels of music education and prevents subalterns, such as Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, and, specifically Women of Colour from participating in making decisions when learning about and expressing their art. Good-Perkins notes, a similar hegemony was established in America over the First Nations communities, which tied the power of the church with the arts to "attempt to erase and replace Native American culture" (p. 38). In this way, White supremacy claimed moral authority in music education over globally colonised areas through the education system. The RCM tradition established singing voices in classes "where the first class was most familiar with the Western classical vocal technique... The ranking and judging of students' voices and bodies became synonymous with the teaching of 'proper' vocal technique in the music classroom" (Good-Perkins, 2022, p. 56). She compares the British approach to music education to militarist training due to the emphasis on posture and discipline over creative expression.

Music Education in Canada

The Royal Conservatory of Music in Canada, established through colonisation in a manner that reproduces neocolonial ideology and practices, fails to reflect ethnic national identities, much less local music or racialized female artists. For example, Beothuk music from First Nations peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador, has been lost through settler colonialism, and the voices from the

historic Africville (1840-1960) in Halifax, Nova Scotia, have been excluded from history due to anti-Black racism.

Canada's reputation for tolerance is something Juliet Hess addresses, noting the neocolonial aspects of the country's music education system: "Canadian music curricula assume a universal student – a 'Canadian' (white, Western) student who will feel at 'home' in the world of Western European music. The curriculum places this so-called universal student at the center and arranges 'Others' around the periphery" (p. 338). As such, music education can be "largely irrelevant" (p. 339) for racialized students, resulting in further marginalisation in educational spaces. First Nations and music from immigrant communities remain on the periphery of music education in Canada, reinforcing otherization. She further critiques the additive approach to music curriculum, where steel drums are only taught during Black History Month, as trivialising learning, and argues that it is important to move away from a tourist festival curriculum that dispenses tokenistic introductions to global music. Music curricula reproduce White supremacy through an emphasis on Western notation, metre, and dynamics perceived as natural, and, as Hess suggests, such an approach to curriculum "tokenizes alternative practices by making them tangential to the main curriculum. In many respects, Western music in music education acts as a colonizer" (p. 336). Instead, as Gloria Ladson-Billings argues in "Crafting a Culturally Relevant Social Studies Approach" (2001), African steel drums and other culturally relevant pedagogy should be taught at any time, including Black History Month.

Timothy W. Schneider and Jack Klotz (2000) have shown that music education can improve student academic achievement, and therefore it is important to support music learning

long after parents sign up children for lessons. Strict adherence to the Eurocentric RCM and Suzuki curricula, which focus mainly on White male composers, may cause students to disengage from music learning. Some teenagers may lose interest because playing the violin or piano is seen as not cool. In the context of an increasingly globalised and multicultural world, racialized music students need to see themselves in their learning. Through asking questions about students' lives and experiences, teachers can learn about diverse global stories. In *Globalization and Postcolonialism: Hegemony and Resistance in the Twenty-first Century*, Sankaran Krishna draws on Spivak to note that educators need to reflect on “the politics of deconstruction, of exposing the contradictions and silences of hegemonic discourses, sowing the absences around which they cohere, without claiming a transcendent position from which one can escape one’s own complicity in structures of domination” (Krishna, 2009, p. 104). As social alliances tend to be overdetermined by race, gender, and class, reflecting what Homi Bhabha calls “enmity and amity” (p. x) along the lines of identity politics, critiques of education should never be race neutral or colour blind.

In “#BlackMusicMatters: Dismantling Anti-Black Racism in Music Education,” Darren Hamilton draws on Critical Race Theory to show how traditional band experiences in high school reflect Eurocentrism. Defining anti-racism work as “the process of tearing down systemic structures that oppress and discriminate against Black people, their lives and their culture” (Hamilton, 2021, p. 17), he identifies a trifecta of oppression in Canadian music education: the exclusion of Black culture, the dearth of Black teachers, and the gap between Black and White social capital. Having conducted research with 95 Black students at a Canadian high school, he

found that 87 out of the 95 students stated they would take or consider taking a Black-centric music education class. The paradox is that “music educators and music institutions can choose to reject non-western classical music; however, racialized music students cannot avoid Western classical music” (p. 19). Creating awareness of societal systems complicit in the oppression of students of colour should be prioritized because teachers, staff, and administrators need to value the communities they serve in. Even for music that is traditionally associated with Black culture, such as jazz, White teachers tend to be hired (Domínguez, 2019; Lyiscott et al., 2018), a practice reflected in *La La Land* (2016), which won six Oscars and employed a full White cast, save one Black singer. The appreciation of non-White cultures as contributing to Canadian society must be embedded into institutional best practices because “individual actions that fail to recognize the structural factors that operate as barriers to achievement will not produce the necessary school reforms” (James, 2012b, p. 124).

Focussing on individuals rather than structural change has long worked against improving race relations because, as Michael Fullan notes, changing systems is easier than changing people. Hamilton also notes aspects of the educational system that reinforce exclusion of Black students, such as the belief that the Western use of sight reading is superior to African oral traditions. Music classes also tend to reflect the White middle-class ideology of individual lessons in formal learning while Black students may be more comfortable developing their musical talents in informal spaces through gospel choirs, community jam sessions, and family get-togethers. Of note are the many Black artists who began their singing careers in church choirs, such as Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston, John Legend, and Jully Black, to name a few, while the emergence

of hip hop in 1970s Brooklyn has roots in African American traditions of rhyming and throw downs. It should also be noted that the Toronto Music School began in a church basement, St. Paul's Basilica in 1999, in a public housing project in downtown Toronto.

Hamilton recommends that post-secondary institutions mandate at least one Black music history and one Black music performance course as compulsory for music degree requirements. At the high school level, steps can be taken to include Black-focused stand-alone music courses, especially in diverse neighbourhoods. Black music educators can collaborate to create Black focused curricula that integrate arts courses at all skill levels. There is a need to develop curricula and pedagogy that, at a minimum, reference the community, develop awareness of institutional racism (James, 2012b), and disrupt racist pedagogies.

The Funds of Knowledge Strategy

While I draw on Hamilton's study, which, like Good-Perkins, finds Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) a useful methodology to gauge the interest of high school students in learning about music by Black artists, I chose to work with FKN to show music teachers how to start conversations about cultural and racial inclusion in the classroom by connecting with the music knowledge students already had from their homes. FKN is a form of anticolonial resistance that challenges colonial legacies and hegemonic relations in a global context to "retheorize the anticolonial for the decolonial projects of transforming schooling" (Dei & Lordan, 2016, p. vii).

The images below depict how students can feel connected to schools through using FKN:

Without FKN the student and school are disconnected, living in two separate worlds. Students feel they have to constantly code switch, stay guarded / barrier - fence / perform and “can’t be their true authentic self” because they don’t feel valued.

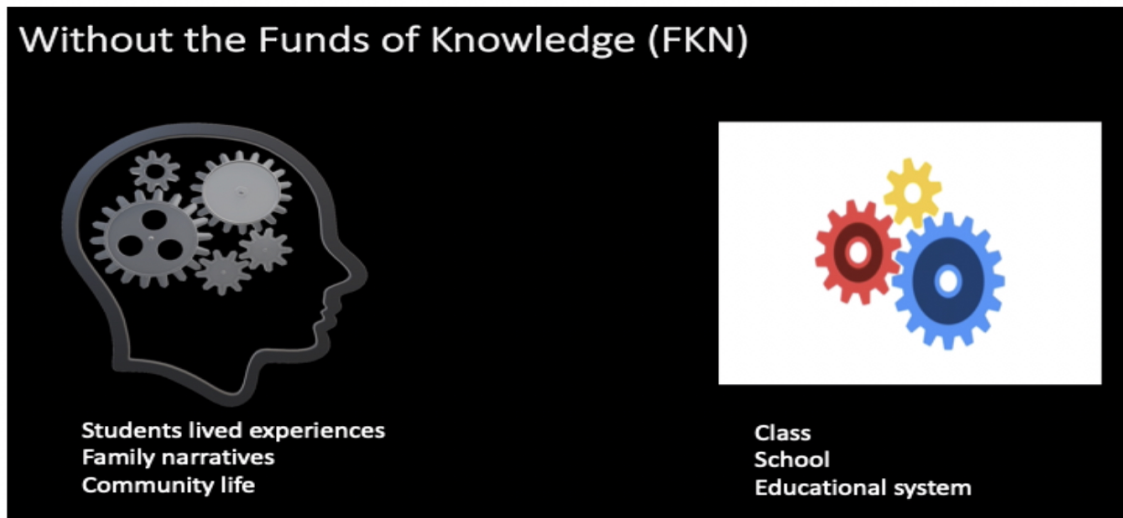


Figure 4 Without FKN (Jefford, Titus, de Lira e Silva, Fossi, & Cherciov, 2023b, p. 4-5)

With FKN a nexus of culture and language is created within community contexts connecting learning and lived experiences (Rowse, 2007).

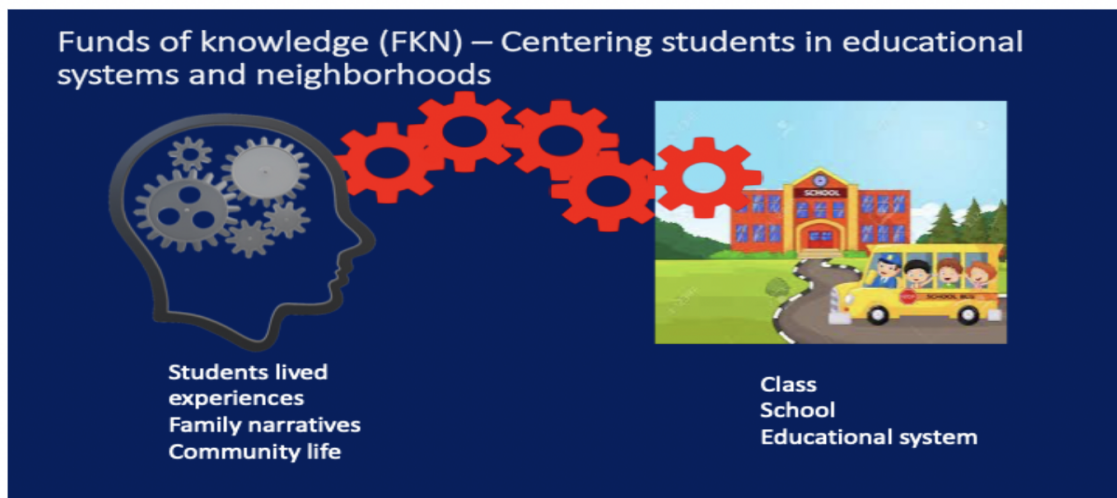


Figure 5 With FKN (Jefford, Titus, de Lira e Silva, Fossi, & Cherciov, 2023b, p. 4-5)

FKN began in the early 1990s when an influx of Mexican immigrants crossed the border into Tucson, Arizona, and gaps became apparent between the Mexican refugee children, their families and communities, and their White middle-class female teachers in terms of languages, cultures, and lived experiences. University of Arizona researchers wanted to engage with community and household capital using qualitative research methods to overcome teaching practices that created disconnects between home and school cultures because the students “are usually viewed as being ‘poor,’ not only economically but in terms of quality of experiences for the child (Moll et al., 1992, p. 132). Teachers may overlook, or undervalue, learning gained in homes and communities that influences children’s prior knowledge, sources of their interests, and lived experiences (Hedges, Cullen, and Jordan, 2011). Based on the “prevailing and accepted perceptions of working-class families as somehow disorganized socially and deficient intellectually” (Moll et al., 1992, p. 134), teachers can become complicit in marginalising students and exacerbating internalised oppression.

FKN, in contrast, can be defined as “bodies of knowledge, including information, skills, and strategies, which underlie household functioning, development, and well-being. These may incorporate information, ways of thinking and learning, approaches to learning, and practical skills” (Hedges et al., 2011, p. 189). In 2001, Mari Riojas-Cortez expanded on the definition of FKN to include families’ beliefs in education, morals, and discipline. For example, findings revealed that children as young as five knew, in a detailed and comprehensive way, how to qualify for an American passport and become a US citizen, knowledge teachers were able to draw on to talk about civic duties (Moll, Gonzalez, & Amanti, 2005). A key early collaborative

project (Moll et al., 1992) involved ten teachers, who over one semester visited 25 homes. Teachers had conversations with families to engage in how the socio-historical context of the US-Mexican border was taught, and they examined and critiqued border geopolitics and their impact on the complex interrelationships in their households. One of the most common examples was that many families contained both children who had been born outside of the US and younger children born in the US. Being born in different countries impacted the children's varying citizenship statuses. Studying the culture they had been born in also demonstrated that the children had multi-stranded and thick relationships with their families. The uncle who taught the students carpentry also came to birthday parties. In contrast, the children's relationships with teachers were single stranded and thin. The two worlds existed as two solitudes.

As teachers visited homes and learned about Mexican culture, they summarised the many detailed examples of FKN they found in the table below:

Table 1
A Sample of Household Funds of Knowledge

<i>Agriculture and Mining</i>	<i>Material & Scientific Knowledge</i>
Ranching and farming Horse riding skills Animal management Soil and irrigation systems Crop planting Hunting, tracking, dressing	Construction Carpentry Roofing Masonry Painting Design and architecture
Mining Timbering Minerals Blasting Equipment operation and maintenance	Repair Airplane Automobile Tractor House maintenance
<i>Economics</i>	<i>Medicine</i>
Business Market values Appraising Renting and selling Loans Labor laws Building codes Consumer knowledge Accounting Sales	Contemporary medicine Drugs First aid procedures Anatomy Midwifery Folk medicine Herbal knowledge Folk cures Folk veterinary cures
<i>Household Management</i>	<i>Religion</i>
Budgets Childcare Cooking Appliance repairs	Catechism Baptisms Bible studies Moral knowledge and ethics

Figure 6 A Sample of Household FKN (Moll et al., 1992, p. 133)

The FKN strategy is important because teachers learned not to assume deficit attitudes towards ethnic neighbourhoods, which can be passed on to the students, who may begin to view their home cultures through a pejorative lens. Through FKN, it is possible to democratise the interrelationships among students, parents, and communities, as Julio Cammarota and Augustine Romero have shown in “Participatory Action Research for High School Students: Transforming Policy, Practice, and the Personal with Social Justice Education” (Cammarota and Romero, 2011). When students can see their knowledge valued as opposed to disrespected, they become more engaged in their learning.

FKN can be a key strategy in helping educators implement curricula that can help overcome subaltern silencing. In examining updated adaptations of FKN from the last twenty-five years in many neighbourhoods across the US, Luis C. Moll (2015) identified three main benefits of FKN as a nuanced way to include racially diverse voices in the classroom:

- 1) Teachers learn to journal their lived classroom experiences and knowledge since teaching has become a commuter profession that may no longer represent demographics found in local neighbourhoods. Teachers can build their efficacy for understanding diverse school communities, learn about various cultures and think about how to ask questions that will develop their own understanding.
- 2) Teachers expand their capacity to work with family members and community allies to build “relational agency,” where teacher cohorts mediate pedagogy through researching resources, discourse in study groups and analysing documentation. “The goal is to have funds of knowledge to inform practices, but not determine them; teachers must formulate a pedagogy based on their particular needs and conditions, but with the assistance of others” (Moll, 2015, p. 115). In other words, teacher cohorts generate pedagogy in an organic way through learning from diverse communities, peers, and students.
- 3) FKN prioritises current knowledge rather than reproducing stereotypes. While in the early study Moll et al. (1992), the teachers relied on home visits, today, online journals, videotaping and semiotic digital development all serve to access FKN in new ways and

discover new meanings that promote students' voices.

Critiquing teachers' understandings of play-based learning as superficial because it is disconnected with their inter-generational extended familial and cultural contexts, Riojas-Cortez (2001) used FKN to interrogate how children developed their initial interests. The teachers she studied found that grandparents were identified as influential in developing children's interests, among other family members (Riojas-Cortez, 2001), demonstrating the importance of including elders and their FKN in the classroom.

Joseph P. Zanoni (2008) and Sarah Gallo and Holly Link (2015) have also done studies that show the FKN strategy functions as an effective form of resistance, demonstrating how to raise *conscientização* that can be used to build efficacy for activism with systemic support from a variety of stakeholders, including communities, media and parents. *Conscientização* is the Portuguese word Paulo Freire used to describe developing a critical consciousness about social injustice, where the understanding leads to action against oppression (Freire, 1970).

In "Antonio Gramsci and Fund of Knowledge: Organic Ethnographers of Knowledge in Workers' Centres," Zanoni portrays Mexican labourers and music teachers as subalterns and employers as oppressors. He examines immigrant support systems for Mexican labourers back home and in the US. Many immigrants in Chicago, Phoenix, and San Antonio have families and organisations in their Mexican hometowns, and Zanoni suggests that it "may be useful to explore how these associations function in terms of reciprocal relations and the development of social networks for workers in the US, and in generating meaning to support migration and transition" (2008, p. 7). By tapping into organizational FKN, colonial systems of oppression can be

challenged and overcome through peer leadership fostered among adult immigrants that enabled Latino/a labourers to critique unsafe practices and create policies to ensure their safety in the workplace. Latino/a workers' centres are places that include transnational identities (Schiller, Basch, Blanc-Szanton, 1992) and “reflect a social history of organizing in specific communities and foster subaltern leaders who take up roles in agency, discourse and reflective praxis” (Zanoni, 2008, p. 3). As a result, workers learned to advocate for their rights and to demand changes in exploitative treatment of immigrant labour. Through FKN, the historical knowledge possessed by Mexican migrant workers that rely on networking through a variety of groups was shown to be valued and mobilized to enable emancipatory practices that enact changes in immigrant labour health and safety policies that save lives.

Similarly, Gallo and Link's “*Diles la verdad*”: Deportation Policies, Politicized Funds of Knowledge, and Schooling in Middle Childhood” (2015) reveals how one mother developed her systemic FKN to stop her husband from getting deported after he was arrested for dropping a can of soda. Drawing on “a five-year ethnographic study of Latina/o immigrant children and their elementary schooling to examine the complexities of how children, teachers, and families in a Pennsylvania town navigate learning within a context of unprecedented deportations” (p. 357), the researchers focus on the potential deportation of a son's father and how students and teachers, as well as the mother, developed their FKN as they functioned as intermediaries who negotiated between the Mexican families and the neocolonial immigration system. Gallo and Link emphasize how the mother of the undocumented family developed her politicised funds of knowledge when confronted with her husband's detention and potential deportation. They

underscore that in similar situations, many deportees remain silent due to struggling with feelings of shame. Instead, the mother asserted, in Spanish, that it is imperative to *diles la verdad*, meaning “tell the truth” to the media, school administrators, and the whole community as a way of pushing back against silencing “as a form of practical labor, [that] leads to knowledge” (Ahmed, 2012, p. 173). The mother alerted the media to social injustice, held rallies, and spoke openly to school administrators. Gallo and Link’s analysis demonstrates that FKN can be used for activism that can facilitate overcoming systemic barriers through the knowledge gained from this activism. Knowledge and experience connect to political agency in a transformative way that “signals a beginning in what Gramsci called ‘the twilight zone of common sense’” (Bannerji, 2020, p. 79), referring to general knowledge from the masses. In Gallo and Link’s study, the mother’s consciousness of systemic oppression was raised through the injustice of her husband’s potential deportation and her subsequent fight to keep her family together. As developed by FKN, *conscientização* for social issues can be raised among various community stakeholders, which can lead to social action. In both Zanoni (2008) and Gallo and Link (2015) *conscientização* was raised by the workers and the mother respectively.

Finally, in Fran Martin and Fatima Pirbhai-Illich’s “Towards Decolonising Teacher Education: Criticality, Relationality and Intercultural Understanding,” FKN was introduced to the preservice teachers to critique classroom practices. The data demonstrated that teacher candidates were aware of Eurocentrism, “yet this continues to be located within a Eurocentric perspective” (Martin & Pirbhai-Illich, 2016, p. 366). The violence caused by Eurocentric pedagogies are so visceral that many colonised people adopt a grateful attitude towards benevolent colonisers and

seek to practice their ways, accepting an inferior posture. Utilising FKN means students may share lived experiences that do not follow stereotypical understandings of histories, ethnicities and cultural practices. But as teachers learn from students' lives, there is a possibility to pivot from a deficit perspective to assets-based views.

The Funds of Knowledge Strategy in Canada

The FKN strategy has been utilized all over the world from Spain to Uganda and Aotearoa in a variety of subjects from kindergarten to post-secondary education in over forty studies (see Appendix C). But is FKN relevant to the Canadian settler colonial context? A number of studies have found the FKN strategy effective in connecting students with their home cultures. The first FKN study in Canada, by Rowsell, Sztainbok and Blaney (2007), was conducted with six teacher candidates over one year in a Toronto neighbourhood with a predominantly Muslim population and found that FKN should be prioritized as a strategy for cultural inclusion.

On the Canadian west coast, Elizabeth Marshall and Kelleen Toohey connected a classroom of nine- and ten-year-old English Language Learners to the FKN of their Punjabi Sikh grandparents through a bilingual intergenerational storytelling project. The influence of grandparents was “considerable” (Marshall and Toohey, 2010, p. 225) in childcare, yet one teacher noticed that the grandparents were hesitant to come into the school. As part of a larger study, one teacher conducted research with findings from two children who recorded the grandparents' immigration journeys during a school time called the “noisy reading period” before school started. She discussed how to collect the stories, frame the setting, describe the characters

and build the plot. Recording, translating, and creating picture books for the school library in Hindi, Punjabi and Malay, “students drew on a multiplicity of ancestral, globalized, and Western discourses in their textual and pictorial illustrations” (p. 221) that resisted institutional devaluing and violence against their home worlds.

Several FKN emerged from Marshall and Toohey’s research. Demonstrating the power of pop culture, the Nike icon emerged as a transnational, transgenerational symbol in the students’ drawings, in which “popular cultural resources that represent their hybrid identities as grandchildren of Punjabi Sikh newcomers to Canada, as children growing up in twenty-first-century North America, and as elementary age students attending public school” (p. 236). The Partition of India was also a significant theme in the children’s stories. The history of the Partition may not be perceived as age-appropriate learning in a way that maintains childhood innocence in elementary school, and the telling and retelling of the grandparents’ memories did not align with the belief of suppressing traumatic events for young children: “As some of the children’s grandparents had told stories about the Partition of India and Pakistan, a number of the stories were quite gritty” (p. 226). A student who participated in the Marshall & Toohey study created an ebook to demonstrate the tragedy of war on both sides. The grandparents’ FKN disrupted everyday practices and lives, reflecting on tragic events in the past to evoke the painful consequences of war as meaningful learning. The class discussed issues brought up during the research project and with the teacher’s “guidance, decided that these stories might not be appropriate for the kindergarteners but were suitable for older children” (p. 226).

The students drew pictures with the texts, which were later uploaded as digital books with

animations, sound effects, bilingual texts, and opportunities for communities worldwide. The digital stories were added as an example of how English Language Learners can produce through different mediums of communicating, known as multimodal literacies. The greatest relevance Marshall and Toohey's study has for my case study is their noting the tendency of institutions and curricula not to acknowledge the funds of knowledge in the classroom, especially when topics are deemed controversial. Instead, as a sobering reflection on the success of FKN, the physical books created by the students stayed in the classroom untouched and unread, never brought to the school library to be shared with the school as originally intended. At the end of the study, Marshall and Toohey poignantly questioned, "What happens when the funds of knowledge that children bring to school challenge the curricular and institutional practices of the classroom?" (p. 237). In "Speculations on Qualities of Difficult Knowledge in Teaching and Learning: An Experiment in Psychoanalytic Research" (2006), Britzman and Pitt acknowledge that there can be trauma when learning about difficult history that will be hard for kids to bear. However, it is important for educators to offer more than "lip service" for inclusion (Marshall & Toohey, 2010, p. 238).

In Northern Canada, Jim Anderson and two of his colleagues at the University of British Columbia conducted a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funded study with Laura Horton of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium to examine the impact of play-based curricula on cognitive and linguistic development in the early years (Anderson, Horton, Kendrick, and McTavish, 2017). A video on how to skin a marten, a weasel-like creature, by a trapper, who is also an elder and grandfather in the community, was leveraged

to present the efficacy of FKN in passing on cultural practices to the next generation. As in the case of the original Moll et al. (1992) study, the relationship with the elder was thick with several strands of connection through the home, extended family, community elder, and expert huntsman. Anderson et al. (2017) note different types of FKN. First, children learn in groups that have a variety of ages, unlike more formal learning daycare centres in the community where children are separated by age. Second, the grandfather modelled how to use a knife to his four-year-old grandson, which may not be seen as age appropriate in some cultures. Third, teaching in a formal school context gave legitimacy to the hunting and trapping ways in Indigenous life.

One elder taught about Biskaabiiyang, an Ojibwe verb meaning looking back to or returning to self. Interestingly, the notion is also reflected in Sankofa, meaning to go back and get that which was lost, from the Akan community in Ghana. Both Biskaabiiyang and Sankofa reflect FKN. One of the elders also encouraged the researchers to look, reflect and value Indigenous intelligence: “Laura Horton, one of the authors of this paper and former director of the post-secondary education program at Seven Generations Education Institute, helped develop with Elder Bebomijiwebiik-iban (Elder Anne Wilson) a Biskaabiiyang approach to research that attempts to decolonize Indigenous knowledge” (Anderson et al., 2017, p. 26). The FKN strategy was found to be a significant factor in passing on and preserving Indigenous worldviews and values.

As these studies demonstrate, the potential to use FKN effectively has possibilities for teacher education programs in faculties of education for teacher training across Canada. Indeed, the Ontario Ministry of Education: Curriculum and Resources calls on teachers to incorporate

culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (CRRP) [that] recognizes students' various cultural and linguistic identities as critical resources in language and literacy instruction and learning. Knowledge of English language learners' strengths, interests, and identities, including their social and cultural backgrounds, is important. These funds of knowledge are historically and culturally developed skills and assets that are central to creating a richer and more meaningful learning experience for all students and promoting a socially and linguistically inclusive learning environment. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2023, np)

The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (2021) also advocated that teachers use anticolonial perspectives in the classroom as increasing racial, ethnic and cultural tensions escalate into incidents. Hopefully, my case study will be used not only in the field of education but will be related to anti/de/neo and postcolonial theories relevant to fields of study, such as neocolonial immigration, legal and economic systems.

The Agony of Institutional Defeat

While FKN has had significant success in terms of working within systems such as education, employment, and immigration to develop emancipatory practices, vigilance is key to sustaining anticolonial practices within institutions. In Tucson, Arizona, the original site of the FKN theory (Moll et al., 1992), Cammarota and Romero (2011) and Acosta and Mir (2012) engaged in a two-year project with colleagues to develop a Social Justice Education Project (SJEP) for high school students from Mexican backgrounds. However, in contrast to the original FKN model, which gives primacy to household visits and analysis, in Acosta and Mir's 2012 "Empowering Young People to Be Critical Thinkers: The Mexican American Studies Program in Tucson," there was an emphasis on understanding student-generated funds of knowledge as the primary sources of innovation. Racialized students often exist in many different worlds, virtual and real, where their daily life experiences are ignored, leading to their marginalisation in education. Unfair situations

exist because school districts ignore “neighborhood issues, socioeconomic realities, or the perspective and voice of youth who have their own ideas for transforming the world... Students are desperate for an education that reflects their lives and are starving for inspiration” (p. 17). As a result, students are disengaged, distrustful, and cynical towards learning. In fact, trust was mentioned as a factor in developing student and teacher connections in this study; Moll et al. (2005) refer to it as *confianza en confianza*, important when sharing personal parts of students’ lives with teachers. Trust in any relationship is vital, but in contexts of inter- and intraracial interactions, teachers need to foster global villages of authentic relationships in the classroom that will deconstruct neocolonial racial hierarchies in communities. Including students’ connections is about more than offering breakfast, which, while important, is not enough. The hearts and souls of students also need to be fed at schools in order for education to be relevant to their lived experiences.

The SJEP was structured to help students meet Grade 12 requirements for college applications. In social science, the course content was supplemented with college-level material on critical participatory action research, theory, and pedagogy that documented their experiences in social media, notes and poetry and enabled students to master standardized expectations and develop *conscientização*. Using participatory action research practices, students conducted interviews over several months, recorded in notebooks and on camera, and accumulated data that was analysed to raise consciousness about racial injustices (Camarota & Romero, 2011). At the end of every semester, SJEP students held public meetings called *encuentros* with teachers, families, and administrators to present new knowledge gained from their research, helping to

develop their public identities as well-versed intellectuals. The student participants advocated to change institutional practices, such as displaying the Mexican flag and representation in racial diversity for advanced placement programs (Cammarota & Romero, 2011). Resisting the coloniser/colonised binary, students in Cammarota & Romero (2011) and Acosta & Mir (2012) sought to connect their local and global identities in a way that led to emancipation from internalised oppression and inferiority complexes (Dei & Lordan, 2016).

Acosta and Mir had worked with one of the SJEP teachers to find literature that would be relevant and thought-provoking to the students' life experiences. The literature teacher created engaging curricula that led to discussions on perceptions and applications of texts through critical pedagogy and inquiry. Through positive peer pressure, students developed *conscientização* from social justice themes in books. Literature classes “became a lens to analyze our *barrio*, school, or world and the platform for students to generate ideas for taking action to transform the inequalities in their lives” (p. 21). As Acosta & Mir explain, unfortunately Arizona House Bill 2281 banned the works of playwright Luís Valdez, the father of Chicano theater, in an effort to devalue Mayan contributions to knowledge production. The 3113 BCE Mayan calendar proves that knowledge production did not begin in 1492 with the European awareness of Mesoamerican land. Valdez's poem specifically asserted that humanity, “*huinik'ilil*” or “vibrant being,” is universal, despite institutionalized education continuing to reflect White supremacy. Despite the idea that changing the “who” and “how” of decolonising education could result in greater social justice and equity, MAS demonstrates the power of oppressive bureaucracy and limitations for racialized educators working in educational systems. There appears to be a shelf life for social

justice initiatives that can feel like progress is one step forward, two steps backwards. Without support from political governance for programs like the SJEP in Arizona and educational administration for strategies such as FKN, anticolonial resistance will fail.

In spite the ample evidence, or perhaps because of the fact that SJEP students achieved academic success through MAS, the program was eventually cancelled after a bitter fight among Latino/a students, teachers, and conservative administrators. The most recent analysis of MAS's success – Nolan L. Cabrera, Jeffrey F. Milem, Ozan Jaquette, Ronald W. Marx's "Missing the (Student Achievement) Forest for All the (Political) Trees: Empiricism and the Mexican American Studies Controversy in Tucson" (2014) – used sampling strategies and multiple modelling for rigorous assessment to demonstrate that "taking MAS classes is consistently, significantly, and positively related to increased student academic achievement, and this relationship grows stronger the more classes students take" (p. 1107). And yet, the Arizona State Department banned SJEP because conservative politicians felt threatened by the program's success. MAS was labelled seditious because non-Eurocentric perspectives disrupted White supremacist education (Cammarota & Romero, 2011). Teachers of colour can be stereotyped "as deviant foreigners, [where] their authority, and the authenticity of their work, is often challenged. Postcolonial studies and postcolonial scholars of colour may be labeled as 'anti-American' and/or 'pro-terrorist' because of their transnational focus and identities, respectively" (Subedi & Daza, 2008, p. 5). Even though two students and eleven MAS teachers sued the Tucson school board and won under the First (freedom of speech) and Fourteenth (equal protection) Amendment Rights (Stephenson, 2021), the program was dropped due to fear of losing 15 million dollars in

state funding (Acosta & Mir, 2012). The combined power of bureaucracy and funding can obliterate subaltern voices that disrupt neocolonial systems. Change can be facilitated by institutional leaders willing to work with diverse local stakeholders but “with the emergence of the transnational knowledge economy, the local, specific and Indigenous are often forfeited in the pursuit of economic advantage” (Dei & Lordan, 2016, p. xii). Many students seek relevance from their learning for their lives as reflected by Pakistani American student Asiya Mir, who, after eleven years of irrelevant learning, finally connected to the classroom through this Mexican American Studies program. FKN fosters anticolonial praxis and moves sources of valued knowledge back to local communities instead of hegemonic institutions that reproduce White supremacy. Despite that, the Mexican American Studies (MAS) program has never been reinstated to its former glory. Bureaucracy matters.

Chapter 5: My Decolonial Research Methodology

As we saw in the previous chapter, the methodology used in FKN case studies “enables the mediation of the necessary connections between household analysis and classroom activities” (Jovés, Siqués, and Esteban-Guitart, 2015, p. 71). In each case study, the teachers are at the centre of the interviews and pivotal to developing anticolonial praxis in the classroom through conversations with student participants. In the discipline of music, including subaltern voices can create new areas of study in genres, instruments, texts, languages and pedagogies through learning international music. The point about teachers being treated as subalterns themselves can be seen as teachers are expected to implement policies, curricula, and strategies without ever having an opportunity to offer input into professional development (Lyiscott et al., 2018). Educational institutions expecting compliance in implementation effectively situate teachers as subaltern subjects, similar to Zanoni’s study of workers’ centres, in which employers are situated as oppressors and workers as the oppressed. Throughout this study, I modelled the funds of knowledge strategy and reflected decolonial praxis with the site, music teacher participants, and the music student participants. I made every effort not to subalternize the teachers, but rather sought to empower them in a way that was culturally responsive to their students, which is why I developed the research questions with the music teachers.

In this chapter, I describe my decolonial research methodology as a way of centering the participants’ voices. Because the focus of my research is developing anticolonial praxis in education, I identify experiences where I had to learn how to listen to the community and locate myself as a familiar outsider or partial insider (Tilley, 1998; Tilley, 2016) vis-à-vis the Priority

Neighbourhood and the Toronto Music School. As we see in the first section, I sought to refrain from presenting myself as a saviour towards community residents using Andrea Davis' reflection piece (Appendix D) as a guide for conducting research with over-researched Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) and their communities. Instead, I assumed the mindset of a learner towards the Toronto Music School and the teacher and student participants. So when I first approached the director of the Toronto Music School, I was careful to be respectful because I did not want to give the impression that the music teachers were not already sensitive to students' learning and racial identities. Instead, I reiterated several times that I hoped to build on existing Toronto Music School best practices.

This chapter first outlines how FKN works as a decolonial framework and then how the research was conducted, beginning with the process used to obtain ethics clearance from the Research Ethics Board (REB) at York University during COVID and to solicit research participants. It then outlines the form of the professional development that I conducted: focus groups with the teachers and the varying responses of the research participants, as well as some of the challenges I encountered in finding racialized female music teachers. I elaborate on how I collected the qualitative data and encoded the themes. Finally, I explain how I familiarized myself with the data in order to see where there were connections to literature on anticolonial praxis for music education that support decolonizing learning.

FKN as a Decolonial Framework

FKN is a strategy that fits within decolonial praxis and offers a framework to contextualise the

five-step process of emancipatory anticolonial struggle in education that Linda Tuhiwai Smith outlines in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*.

1) Develop critical consciousness as a researcher

I began with a reflection piece by Andrea Davis (Appendix D) that discusses how Black communities are over-researched, a process that does not benefit the community over the long term. I reflected on my Research Assistant, Tina, and how my FKN project could help community residents. Given the fact that I did not have any racialized female teachers in my study, Tina's input, as a young Black woman, was especially valuable. I met Tina when I was a Teaching Assistant, so she is the only one associated with the project whom I have ever met in person. About a year later, she sent me an email indicating an interest in being my Research Assistant. A year after that, when I received generous funding from The Helen Carswell Chair and Research Ethics approval, I contacted Tina to find out whether she was still interested in working together. We started working together in March 2021. As a community member who lived in a neighbourhood similar to the Priority Neighbourhood, Tina was included in the professional development (PD) sessions to help her understand the framework of the research. She was paid for all her hours of work. At the end of the project, Tina reflected in the PD sessions that it was difficult to speak openly about racism and inclusion in Canada, echoing Spivak's theorizing on the subaltern. Tina's role as a Research Assistant in this study was key to helping her achieve her goal to attend graduate school. I am happy to report that after the project, Tina completed her Master's in criminology. I am keeping in touch with her and hope to continue to support her academic journey. I was pleased to attend a concert two years after the case study

was completed. The Toronto Music School put on *The Great Pause*, a musical composed and performed by Priority Neighbourhood residents, at the Isabel Bader Theatre at the University of Toronto. One of the teachers from the study, Brendan, participated extensively in the musical. Brendan's participation demonstrates his long-term commitment to the FKN strategy and the importance of systemic support in creating institutional spaces to create and perform community-based arts. The institutional commitment of The Toronto Music School inspires me to feel that anticolonial change is possible.

2) Reimagine the world with creative epistemologies

FKN is a creative epistemology that encourages research participants to engage in asking interview questions. I set out to discover the teacher participants' FKN in global music. The professional development I offered looked at music from all over the world, including the didgeridoo from Indigenous communities across Australia; the Turkish singer and songwriter Tarkan; Hindi music from a Bollywood movie; and the Nigerian national anthem. I asked the teacher participants to share their experiences in music learning. Including teachers' journeys in learning and teaching music is an essential part of utilising FKN because educational initiatives rarely include teachers' voices. By beginning with teachers' experiences, I sought to centre and learn from the music teachers how they felt about diverse racial capital; my aim was to model FKN and decolonial praxis. As a result, participants could see how to take the position of learners as teachers to disrupt hegemonic discourses and counteract the silencing of racialized voices imposed by upper echelons in education who make decisions that promote Eurocentric curriculum.

3) Create opportunities to intersect with various social categories and ideas

Traditional notions of research in Anglo-American academia are characterised by discipline, institutionalisation, and hegemony. But, as Smith explains in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, research can start with the hope to solve problems in society with human curiosity as an imaginative and intellectual activity. Paradoxically, “educators who have emphasized the emancipatory potential of schooling [have] often ignored or diminished the role in social agency of such qualities as hope, optimism, and the need to strive for utopian goals” (Smith, 2021, p. 258). As racialized communities and families struggle every day, strategies such as FKN “when theorized and mobilized can become a powerful strategy for transformation” (Smith, 2021, p. 255) to work as anticolonial resistance with the potential to decolonize learning that is caught in the snare of colonial tradition.

Today, there are a variety of methodologies, such as participatory action research, culturally relevant pedagogy, critical race theory, and Kaupapa Māori research based on the concept of ako,⁵ that support decolonial praxis and seek to present marginalised experiences in authentic ways that centre participants’ voices, all of which, like FKN, fall under the umbrella term of decolonial methodologies.

4) Compete with hegemony as sites of struggle to disturb the status quo

Even when a classroom is racially homogenous, using FKN offers opportunities for teachers to

⁵ I am very grateful to Prof. Nicole Perry for bringing this Māori concept to my attention. Its emphasis on respectful, two-way communication from which all participants learn and grow parallels Freire’s pedagogy in its emancipatory approach to education.

investigate marginalised communities that have historically existed in local areas and to counteract hegemonic Eurocentrism. For instance, while Halifax, Nova Scotia is as diverse a city as Toronto, it has a rich history from nearby Africville. Hamilton and Corbin (2022) created lesson plans that explore Blackness in Canadian music education, including works such as Black Union's song "Africville," featuring Maestro and Kaleb Simmonds. Today, many international students call Halifax home, providing domestic students with opportunities for diverse learning. In many places in the world, such as Halifax, new multicultural spaces have been created that need to be included in culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 2001) and culturally sustaining (Good-Perkins, 2022) pedagogy and curricula. If teachers can learn how to use FKN as part of anticolonial daily practices in classrooms, then decolonising learning can gain momentum.

5) Critique structures as girding imperialistic power relations that legitimise marginality and inequality

Ultimately, FKN offers the opportunity to critique hegemonic structures that support White supremacy in education. FKN seeks to support students' multiple identities with teachers, helping them to build relationships with their own communities. FKN is a critical framework that "creates space to question dominant, historical Eurocentric practices embedded in the institutions" (Tilley, 2016, p. 11). As explained by Smith, researchers like me "come from a minority social group or it may be that their interest in and perceived support for marginalized communities unsettles the status quo or questions both implicitly and explicitly dominant approaches to research" (p. 261). Decolonial praxis helps racialized researchers imagine "a different world, or reimagining the world, is a way into theorizing the reasons why the world we

experience is unjust and posing alternatives to such a world from within our own world views” (p. 259). Marginalised spaces are occupied by those who are attempting to escape, struggle, and resist the hostile spaces they are in. FKN is about fostering a democratic decolonial dynamic in classroom learning and teaching. Academics interested in democratising research may prefer to develop decolonial practices through methodologies referred to as social justice, community/participatory action, and critical research to avoid researched/researchers binaries.

While researchers may perceive their work as benefiting their field of study, participants may feel that their input benefits the researchers’ careers and does not positively impact the community. Project workers and academics likely see their work as serving the greater good and emancipating an oppressed community and yet, over-researched communities of colour, First Nations and Māori have become frustrated by systemic inaction post-participation (Smith, 2021, p. 2). Given the history of how skulls were filled with millet seeds to measure mental capacity, offensive standards make it difficult to assert that “Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that it is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us” (Smith, 2021, p. 1). It is imperative to develop political and racial identities that commit to social justice and move beyond the victimhood, essentialism, and paternalism based on the erroneous belief that research participants lack efficacy over their lives. As Tilley also stresses, new canons must be utilised that centre subaltern voices because colonialism and research are inextricably entwined in a way that can perceive racialized participants through a pejorative lens. In this study, I sought to invite the teacher participants to develop questions and ways to teach and learn from their students about global music as a way of modelling FKN that

would reflect respectful anticolonial practices in the long term.

How This Project was Conducted

Ethics Clearance and COVID Considerations

This research was conducted with the necessary considerations and clearance in mind. The site that participated in the study, Toronto Music School, was predetermined by the research funding I received from The Helen Carswell Chair. I duly submitted an application for ethics clearance to York's Research Ethics Board (REB) and did not begin with the data collection until my application was approved. York's REB stipulated that in-person research during COVID was strictly forbidden for safety reasons, so this case study was conducted entirely on Zoom.

Hereafter, the word "met" is used to mean online Zoom meetings.

Once ethics clearance was granted to "Sankofa Beatzz Testing the Efficacy of the Funds of Knowledge Strategy for Music Education," Certificate Number: 2020-376, I was introduced to the director of the Toronto Music School through The Helen Carswell Chair. I obtained informed consent before beginning research to assure the music teachers about the entire process, time commitment, and methodology. All participation in this project was voluntary, and all participants were informed that they were able to leave the study at any time without penalty and that their data would not be used if they did not wish it.

Procedure

Prior to commencing research, I submitted a timeline for research completion and a budget. Next, I was also asked to develop an elevator pitch for the other administrators at the Toronto Music

School. I was concerned about peddling social justice initiatives in ten minutes, so I requested and was granted the opportunity to make a half-hour PowerPoint presentation to explain the objectives of the FKN strategy. I also prepared an outline of the four one-and-a-half hour workshops I was going to offer the music teachers. These one-and-a half-hour workshop sessions were video recorded in March, April, May, and October 2021 on Zoom. In the first session, I gave a PowerPoint presentation explaining the FKN strategy. I asked the music teachers how they thought they could use FKN in their music classes and facilitated discussions with them on how the FKN strategy could be implemented, and the teachers and I constructed the research questions. At the end of the first workshop, I gave out a handout so that the music teachers could record the music students' answers about their FKN.

Then, the teachers implemented FKN with their music students for the six weeks of the study, and five of the lessons the music teachers gave to their students showing they implemented the FKN strategy were also recorded on Zoom. Over the next few weeks, I received video recordings from the Toronto Music School staff that showed how the teachers were implementing FKN. While the Toronto Music School regularly video records music lessons, so parental permission had been already signed, it was nevertheless explicitly obtained for this project, and access to all video recordings of the music lessons was stipulated on the email flyer, in the letter of invitation, and on the consent form.

After I received the video recordings of the music lessons that the office manager had sent me. I watched to see how each of the teachers was interacting with their student participants to ensure that FKN was being implemented properly. I could see some challenges on the teachers'

part in utilising FKN, which I was able to support in the one-on-one workshops. I felt that by that time, the music teachers would be comfortable discussing any problems in implementing FKN, which they appeared to be, spontaneously responding, laughing and playing guitar to emphasize their points. In the third workshop we, as a group this time, discussed the FKN the music teachers had obtained from the student participants to find out what the students listened to on their own and with their families. In the fourth workshop, I held a debrief session to ask the teachers what they had learned from implementing FKN and whether they had any final thoughts they wanted to share about their eight months in the case study. They handed in their lesson plans on how FKN was incorporated into the music class via email, the themes of which were coded and are analysed in the next chapter.

Tina, the Research Assistant, transcribed the first three workshops. Once I became familiar with Zoom, I was able to generate a transcript of the last workshop. I kept all Zoom recordings and transcripts on a laptop that only I use and store in a safe and secure location, and I will destroy all the data after the dissertation defence, as agreed with the research participants in the Letter of Consent. Pseudonyms are used for all music teachers, and the music students are not named.

Recruitment of Participants

Over the last four years, the Toronto Music School has identified racial diversity and inclusion as a key factor in classroom practices through their professional development, and today it includes anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices in their mandate as part of their regular music program delivery. Mindful that “recruitment poses less of a problem when students already have some

degree of familiarity, and people and communities are supporting the research they are proposing” (Tilley, 2016, p. 101), I presented at the monthly professional development session in March 2021, so the Toronto Music School community knew who I was and were aware of my research interests. A member of the Toronto Music School Media and Communications staff and I cooperated to create an email flyer, which was sent through a Toronto Music School’s teacher email list, asking for music teachers who wanted to improve their cross-cultural practice.

Three teachers responded immediately. They were all men in their thirties, but were racially diverse: Black, Asian, and White. Another email flyer, which the staff and I also created, was sent to all Toronto Music School students by the office manager. The three music teacher participants then approached their high school students to find out who was interested in being part of this FKN case study. I wanted a purposeful sampling of teenagers 16 to 18 years old because I felt they would have the capacity and experience to answer questions about race, culture, and music. As a few of the high schoolers had younger siblings who indicated an interest in also participating in the project, I amended my ethics application and received approval to include minors, resulting in a total of 11 music student participants from 14- to 17-year-olds. I did not have direct contact with the music students, and while I trusted the teachers to be reliable when reporting their interactions, teacher participants were video recorded to ensure internal validity. The Toronto Music School was not the only place where some of the music teachers worked, and they referenced their other experiences as music professionals working in a variety of contexts, schools, performances, and clubs. As participants were employees who were paid an hourly fee for taking part in the professional development, this meant there was a power

relationship among the music teachers, administrators who had access to recordings, and myself, so at times they may have felt compelled to speak positively about the Toronto Music School initiatives, including mine.

Data Analysis

The four recorded workshops with the music teachers made up the qualitative portion of the research. Three out of the four workshops were in groups so the teachers would feel confident with their peers and not be influenced by the researcher (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The one-on-one sessions, during which I sought to build trust with each teacher, were to discuss challenges in implementing the FKN strategy through systemic limitations, lack of texts, or peer pressure. I also sought to explore the teachers' beliefs and how their personal ideas might be impacting their use of FKN. Through qualitative data analysis, I looked for recurrent themes and also varying individual perspectives.

My thematic analysis was undertaken in five phases: (1) familiarisation with the data – I read over the transcripts several times, (2) generating initial codes to look for repeated ideas and feelings and connections to FKN, (3) searching for themes – I highlighted teachers' reports of the students FKN from the handout and lesson plans, (4) reviewing themes by watching the workshop videos and noting the emphasis the teachers placed on stakeholder drivers, such as parents and educational institutions, and (5) defining and naming themes through using the Zoom classroom videos. Throughout the data analysis, I searched for ways to highlight the range of teachers' and students' voices, especially when the responses diverged with my own interest in FKN because I felt that was an important part of ensuring validity.

Establishing Validity Through Triangulation

While I relied on the teachers' knowledge and understanding of FKN to implement the FKN strategy, I also sought to achieve data triangulation, which refers to gathering three points of data from varying sources (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010). The first point of data triangulation came from the handout I gave to the teachers at the first workshop with the PowerPoint PD. The handout, to be used in the first lesson, specified the students' names with initials and their musical interests to be returned to me once student interests were clarified. The second point was the Toronto Music School video recordings showing the music teachers implementing the FKN strategy. The third point of data verification came from the lesson plans that the music teachers emailed me in the summer of 2021. The lesson plans showed when and what questions the music teachers asked their students and how FKN was implemented over the next five months of weekly lessons. In the individual sessions, I sought to understand the teachers' various beliefs after rapport had been established in the first workshop. I engaged in conversations about music education to probe whether they had general knowledge about global instruments, genres, and artists. I tried to keep my tone conversational to find out music teachers' attitudes towards racial inclusion and their general knowledge about geopolitical history, specifically the impact of colonialism on racial injustice, by discussing different ideas about education that I brought up in the PD. The fourth and final session provided an opportunity to find out the teachers' phenomenology of the study. Throughout the project I used the handout, lesson plans and, recordings over eight months to ensure that FKN was implemented and the responses documented properly. In our conversations I sought to engage with the teachers in a

way that would ensure they would be authentic and unconcerned about giving “right” answers that I would want to hear. Finally, at the end of the research I provided the music teachers and research assistant with a copy of the transcripts and analysis to ensure that they had an opportunity to provide feedback, which they did.

Limitations of the Research

As a researcher who had worked with disseminating professional development on FKN in a variety of educational contexts over the last ten years, I found this time very different due to COVID. The context of conducting research during a global pandemic was somewhat impersonal as all meetings had to be held on Zoom, and I never got to meet any of the research participants in person, except for Tina. Tilley explains that “researchers need to draw from critical, theoretical, and contextual knowledge to inform their analysis” (2016, p. 159) and, in this case, COVID hindered developing relationships with the participants and their communities. Because decolonial research seeks, as Smith underscores, to situate individual narratives in historical geopolitical contexts, I did not feel the need to seek out more participants. However, a limitation of the study is that all three participants were men in their thirties; but at least they were racially diverse. I tried to address the gender imbalance by including Tina in every session and meeting four times to chat about the research and listen to her thoughts. On four of these occasions her best friend was also present and interspersed her comments in our conversations. Nonetheless, by pointing out the limitations of this study, I hope it will lead to more research that will help students see themselves in their learning and as more Black, Indigenous, Women of Colour are

hired, that conditions improve so that they have the necessary work-life balance to be able to participate in studies like this one.

Methodological Assumptions

The most important assumptions related to the research questions are about whether racial diversity is a valuable source of knowledge, whether Eurocentrism limits learning, and whether the impacts of colonialism are negative for BIPOC. I assumed that the teachers joined the study to help marginalised students. Because the music teachers worked with the Toronto Music School, an organisation that offers free music classes, I felt it was safe to consider the teachers as empathetic, kind, and willing to cross racial and class boundaries. In “Conducting Respectful Research: A Critique of Practice,” Susan Tilley reflects that “power relationships, material inequalities between student and teacher-between the imprisoned and the free, the non-White and the White, the academically failed and the academically successful-all affected the interviews” (1998, p. 323). Indeed, there could be indirect forms of coercion and direct exploitation if participants do not know their rights. In a critical framework “qualitative researchers are working with the understanding that research is value-laden, and knowledge is always partial and contestable; that a neutral, objective researcher, interviewer/observer does not exist except in the imagination” (Tilley, 2016, p. 7). Nonetheless, knowledge gained in examining phenomena from multiple realities that support social change for emancipatory research with intersecting categories of gender, race, class, ability, sexuality, their interconnections and transnational identities (Schiller et al., 1992) all serve to raise *conscientização*. The participants were assured

they could withdraw at any time, but all music teachers and students stayed for the duration of the study.

I hope that this example of how to develop decolonial praxis using an anticolonial practice such as the FKN strategy will lead to research in other disciplines that can help students see themselves in their learning. As decolonial scholars such as bell hooks and Stuart Hall have noted, marginalised spaces are occupied by those who are attempting to escape, struggle, and resist because they exist in excluded spaces. Marginalised academics may perceive their “intellectual purpose as being scholars who will work for, with, and alongside communities who occupy the margins of society” (Smith, 2021, p. 260). In the same way, researchers can work with/in institutions in their roles to support research participants. Consequently, the researcher and vulnerable community dynamic has to be careful to avoid institutional and individual research exploitation (Smith, 2021; Tilley 1998). Research should create “space to question dominant, historical Eurocentric practices embedded in the institutions” (Tilley, 2016, p. 11) with critical frameworks, such as the FKN strategy. Positionality in decolonial research is about working alongside, not over, racialized communities.

Chapter 6: Findings

In this chapter I discuss the themes that emerged in the thoughts and feelings of the music teachers while they implemented the FKN strategy with their students. As detailed in the previous chapter, as part of my own anticolonial practice in the case study I aspired in our conversations to centre the music teachers' insights and show how the research literature supports themes from the teachers' voices and the students' interests.⁶ As we know from Hess's research, building a village can create an understanding that "music relationally also allows students and teachers to come to know themselves relationally, as thinking in this manner facilitates the analysis of all relationships" (Hess, 2015, p. 341).

First, I show how the teachers were significantly influenced by institutional support for centring students' voices in the learning and teaching taking place. I then use the themes I coded to show how they connect to the literature on the importance of "un-subalternizing" the voices of students and teachers. Finally, I detail the teachers' concerns in implementing racially inclusive strategies such as FKN in the context of cancel culture.

Institutional Aspirations and Actions

In the first group conversation, all three music teachers agreed that "The Toronto Music School is all about people feeling like they belong, so the traditional way of teaching is really out the window. We only teach music our students want to learn." Sean⁷ asserted, "It is all about

⁶ I deliberately do not use the word "interview" for the conversations I held with the teacher participants because I did not want my voice to dominate but instead keep in line with decolonial methodologies.

⁷ While it was mentioned in the Introduction, I would like to remind readers that the names of the three

relationships,” while John critiqued the first PowerPoint professional development (PD) I gave, commenting, “If you’re going to give a presentation on FKN at the Toronto Music School versus a conservative or orthodox ivory tower place, that’s two different separate presentations. At our school we spend a lot of time in PD sessions like earlier this week on the same topic we’re discussing.”

The music teachers were clearly conscious of institutional support as an important driver for racial inclusion, which supported the goals of my study. Brendan mentioned, “We have PD once a month about the importance of racial inclusion all the time at the programs. The Toronto Music School is different from other places where we work. We don’t have to stick to a predetermined program. We are always encouraged to ask the students what music they want to learn. Toronto Music School is a unique place to work.” Like the music teachers, I also found the Toronto Music School to be an effective learning space with robust, friendly competition and administrative excellence in many disciplines. Thus, the Toronto Music School is a suitable place to conduct research because the culture of the school reflects a commitment to social justice from the administrators to the frontline staff.

Abolishing Postcolonial Legacies

If FKN were a strategy utilised by policy makers at all levels in organisational hierarchy, inclusion of racially diverse leaders could organically foster more equitable outcomes in institutional practices. Sean was quick to critique traditional forms of music education, sharing:

teachers are pseudonyms.

“I went through that in university. Western music is well funded and supported. There is a new jazz stream that is more diverse that has a structured curriculum. But Western music is very traditional in curriculum structure. There is no non-Western musical structure in the curriculum. Newer music is not well appreciated or well-funded.” Sean’s double negative of “no non-Western” reflects the linguistic struggle in vocabulary to articulate the exclusion of BIPOC artists. I encouraged Sean’s insights, agreeing that “funding formulas are limited to support Western ideas. Like the movie *La La Land*, a movie about jazz with one Black musician, no disrespect to John Legend. It is about race and art. Why didn’t producers fund a movie about jazz with actors who are Black? Why separate the art from the people who are prominent creators of the genre?” It would be interesting to find out how many diverse administrators made decisions about jazz music curricula at Sean’s university. As Koza has shown, even when music education is organised through auditions, faculty committees often evaluate “for cultural capital; more significantly, they listen to affirmations of Whiteness. Not just any Whiteness will do, either; art on country twang will not cut it” (Koza, 2008, p. 150).

Slang and accents used in rural areas also carry stigma in the classical music world, which fosters classist attitudes. Both race and class are factors in access to funding music education. In addition, “often the focus is mainly on hiring and admissions to demonstrate racial inclusivity, but administrative and financial support needed to sustain, keep safe and support are lacking” (Gray et al., 2023, p. 265). Structural funding changes through anticolonial policy critiques are paramount in initiating community connections to education with economic support.

Constructing Inclusion

Asking the students questions enabled a more democratic interaction among the students and teachers. After the first workshop, I gave the teachers a handout to collect information about the students' FKN with a table on the handout to be filled in with the initials of the student to preserve confidentiality (Appendix B). The teachers handed in the sheet to me in the middle of the study to ensure they had enough time to build trust and rapport so the students could share information about their home in a comfortable way. The teachers then had enough time to build their lesson plans that showed how they incorporated the students' FKN (Appendix E).

The handout was an important starting point for encouraging the teachers to think about the students' FKN, scaffold initial responses to more detailed examples, and include the music genres, epistemologies, and artists in lesson plans. The teachers' collection of students' FKN was an important step in moving forward in a focussed way. I suggested we "find out specific artists and why the student is interested in that particular musician. Ask the student about their interests more specifically related to the artists rather than the parents, as students indicated that they perceived music to be an expression of their individuality. Ask students if they see themselves in pop cultures." Asking for more details meant that the teachers could find out the sources of students' FKN. Brendan responded:

All my students are from the Priority Neighbourhood. There is a different relationship with music. It is not 'I don't want to be involved with this.' One student is from Jamaica, or somewhere in the Caribbean. He mentioned that reggae was a big deal in his family. So I asked him to share 'If I had never heard of reggae what would you share?' He brought in a couple of tunes. That being said, I am not sure he himself is not sure that he would identify with that music.

I added:

We have been taught that non-White music is less. Drake and BTS are now in pop culture. Our music, our history, and our knowledge have not been welcome in educational spaces. Young people internalise what they have been taught. So that is why FKN is so important. Because it is saying that all music is on par with music created by White composers. Rap and hip hop can be perceived to be in a lower hierarchy in traditional music circles despite the fact that in some cases, diverse music sources may even be more musically sophisticated than traditional European White composers. We can flesh out why people reject music from their own cultures. Students are not taught to be proud of their own cultures and that can lead to embarrassed internalised oppression.

Resisting Stereotypes When Students Feel Boxed In

The music teacher participants' reluctance to discuss race in the initial two workshops and instead focus on colourblind creativity was understandable. In addition, many educators avoid talking about race in the classroom for fear they will say the wrong word, be accused of being racist, and cancelled. John commented that growing up in a small town made him uncomfortable about talking about "race in an open way. It might seem weird for me to talk about people's races that are so different from my own. We might get complaints from parents." Even teachers who had grown up in the Priority Neighbourhood were ambivalent regarding their connection to the area, complexities that include changing the negative stereotypes, giving back to the community, and leaving the area (James, 2012).

Because FKN is focussed on individual student interests, stereotypes can be circumvented to support racial identity exploration even if, as in this study, the teachers, while racially diverse, had all been born in Southern Ontario. Sean felt strongly that "it would be useful in a sense of maybe you can show your own cultural reference because everyone has one it would be useful there but in a sense of maybe trying to impose all of that idea and everybody maybe not so

because everyone has their own voice that's what I think.”

Hess cautions against making assumptions about communities, teachers, and students, shifting instead to a mindset “that might allow students to take up the role of the expert when they do have expertise... Cultural associations do not necessarily intersect with knowledge and we can attend to any assumptions to avoid stereotyping or alienating students” (Hess, 2018, p. 139). I questioned whether the teachers felt “identity exploration would be imposing or emancipatory.” It was Sean who answered that “Approach matters. Identity exploration can be emancipatory if discussed with a sense of grace, brings together different cultures and helps people understand you better.” Brendan wanted to be treated as an “individual, right? When I was growing up, I hated high school because I barely spoke Chinese but had to talk about my whole life in a tokenistic way I wasn't comfortable with. We have to be sensitive when talking about transnational identities.” Brendan referred to the professional development (PD) I gave about how people retain their identities even when they are second-generation immigrants (Schiller et al., 1992). The teachers' FKN was important here because, as former music students turned educators, they were familiar outsiders and partial insiders (Tilley, 1998; Tilley, 2016).

All three music teachers agreed that asking questions about race and culture could be potentially offensive and that just asking the question once about cultural inclusion would not yield nuanced answers. Instead, they discussed at length a variety of ways to ask the same questions in different ways to keep the conversation going. Sean was concerned about

FKN having to be asked at every lesson and keeping the conversation going over the next couple of weeks. I don't know if that will be becoming too investigative. Students may pull back. Some students are very unwilling. Maybe willingness can be built into each lesson

talking about music culture. Let us talk about it. Back and forth. I am Jamaican, but I don't see that in the music might be an answer we get. Then we can ask them if they would like to see something happen in your lesson. It has to be a dialogue. You have to ask indirectly. A direct question will give a short answer. If I say I am Jamaican, I like reggae, but I don't see it in the Royal Conservatory of Music structure. What do you like? Do you like Guyanese rappers? A dialogue is important. They may only like what their friends like in pop culture.

One of the biggest questions the teacher participants had was how to ask for FKN in a politically correct manner that would not impose on the young people or lock them into their racial or ethnic identities. Using FKN teachers can tap into “the dynamic qualities of identity and empower students to share their identity and their cultural knowledge when they so choose” (Hess, 2018, p. 140). When FKN is implemented properly, the student controls what and how much they share about their lives in order to respect the family's privacy as the youth respond to teachers' questions.

Initially, individual expression was prioritised by the music teachers over inclusion of music interests in the home. Sean and Brendan concurred that it is acceptable to “invite a conversation by talking about yourself but not by forcing someone else to talk about their racial and cultural identities.” One aspect the teachers wanted was to have more questions to keep the dialogue open with the students to get more and more FKN. Brendan suggested

Yeah, a list of questions that we can use to find out more about the students, them feeling comfortable talking about context, talking about race, opening up that dialogue that's something that is a touchy subject for a lot of people, right? An approach that you know? If we're talking about treating teachers right, here's an example of 10 different things we can potentially ask him and find out more about their contexts.

The teachers felt strongly that discussions about race should be done with a list of prompts because a misspoken word could lead to being cancelled. Brendan resented having “people speak

on his behalf. Having grown up as a visible minority so much of who is just perception, right? It is not all the dimensions of my personality. I was asked to talk about my heritage, superseding over everything I wanted to talk about with my interests. Music, hobbies, and video games I like to play. Just kids stuff, right?" I understood, saying "You just want to play baseball, right?" Brendan responded joyfully, "Exactly! I want to make sure that people see those aspects of my identity alongside the cultural side as well." Brendan spoke in a nuanced way about his experiences as a student and the importance of racial and cultural expression as self-directed, self-identification. So there was substantial trepidation in the beginning of the case study concerning dialoguing about race.

Music Teachers Construct the Research Questions

Keeping the music teachers' reservations in mind, I used constructivist practices, through conversation rather than formal interview questions, to facilitate developing the research questions. If teachers are considered subalterns, then having their participation in constructing the research questions reflects anticolonial practice. FKN supports their relationships to students in a way that prioritises students' interests instead of meeting criteria established by organisational leaders far removed from diverse neighbourhoods. In fact, the music teachers were so unfamiliar with participating in implementation that they questioned their role after the first meeting, in which I gave PD on FKN through a PowerPoint presentation. I tried to work with the music teachers to support their creative musical teaching processes, which is different from teaching history or English because it is skills-based learning rather than comprehension of a subject.

Researchers need to consider whether they have the knowledge and expertise to ask the research questions (Tilley, 2016) and see how the participants' voices can be centred. While I have been in education as a teacher and supervisor for 15 years, I am not a certified music teacher, so I had to trust and rely on the teacher participants' expertise. However, I shared my experiences teaching a Continuing Education piano class and as a 10-year-old piano student with a kind elderly teacher who composed songs for me to play at recitals. As a parent, I spent every Saturday morning for 15 years taking my children to music classes, singing, violin, guitar, and drums and all the ensuing recitals during the year. I also signed up for monthly performances for Roy Thomson Hall Kids Concerts with my sons. I feel that music education is a worthwhile part of life for expressing oneself and adds to quality of life. I love international music, which helped me connect with the music teachers.

Despite that, Brendan insisted, "in terms of the PD session, we need to spend more time on the more practical side of things instead of the theoretical side. For instance, thinking about the Rodney King riots. A lot of us have seen and done PDs around anti-Black racism and want to build that awareness versus what we can do it like in the actual classroom." I explained that when offering PD on FKN, the theory is explained, but it is the teachers who come up with the practical applications for FKN. In this way, it is possible to centre the teachers' voices during PD and for me to offer PD in subjects in which I do not teach. I understood Brendan's point about practical applications and felt that I could have used more time in the initial PD session to give more detailed examples of how FKN has been used across America over the last 30 years. Treating research participants with respect is paramount and can be demonstrated through reciprocity

(Tilley, 2016). In this case, because I play piano and value working with creative people, we enjoyed some rapport. The participatory action research methodology was new to the teachers, and it would be useful in the future to go over the anticolonial aspects of the case study and explain more about it in the beginning. Time constraints impacted the initial stages of the case study in terms of the teachers' understanding of decolonial methodology, which was new to them.

Through developing questions with the music teachers, I sought to find out whether the students were resistant to learning about home pedagogies or whether they were influenced by them. Historically Black and Aboriginal music were excluded from the music canon in a way that reflected a hierarchy of races. From the 1920s onwards, when racialized music was included in school curriculum, the purpose was to develop “more ‘sophisticated’ listeners. According to Gustafson, in positioning these musics on the margin in the younger grades, the musics were deemed both ‘simple’ and ‘primitive’—constructing a Darwinian hierarchy of musics, effectively by race” (Hess, 2018, p. 129). For example, opera and rap are generally perceived differently, and there are also important differences in how different groups perceive them, points the teachers proved very aware of. Sean shared,

I used a traditional Alfred Series book that is classical, traditional, or as you say ‘White.’ But other students, young males, are into rap. They are Guyanese, Trinidadian. Into Holiday by lil’ tjay. But there are a lot of curse words, which I try to avoid. Another Vietnamese student is interested in ‘Be Happy’ by Dua Lipa. There is a mixture of cross-cultural learning, but it is because pop is cross-cultural. Not necessarily their parents’ music.

Brendan asserted that it was important to ask, “Something other than ‘How do you identify with the music?’ if the student has already answered.” He also wanted to know “Is there another

prompt I can use?” I suggested that “we could ask the question the opposite way, ie ‘What makes you not want to identify with the music from your culture?’ See if students have internalised oppression within them.” All the teacher participants verbally assented, “Right, right.” I further shared with the music teachers that “People assume I’m from a culture that is musically ignorant. Ask the students what reason would you have to not be interested in your parents’ culture? Probe where they get their ideas and why they might be embarrassed about their parents’ culture. Ask why some music is superior to others.” It was important to deconstruct any assumptions about the FKN that might be shared by the students and teachers. If “critical research relies on the belief that knowledge is socially constructed” (Hess, 2018, p. 130), then music teachers need to learn how students’ interests are influenced by the constructivism of dialogues from their home pedagogies as a way to enable equity in the systemic practices of music education (Rodriguez, 2025).

Funds of Knowledge Surprises

Despite the initial consternation and systemic barriers to racial inclusion, the FKN project yielded great interest and a variety of musical capital from the students’ homes. Right from the initial purposeful sampling, Toronto Music School families were interested in the research project. This interest led to greater parental participation and including younger siblings in the study. Part of FKN is democratising the teacher-student relationship, so the first question I asked at the second session was “What have you learned from your students?” Brendan replied,

I was surprised by how engaged the students were. I thought my students would be the same as John’s to prefer mainly their friends’ music. But they were very engaged. They

were embarrassed by their parents, but they were not embarrassed by their parents' music. There was a strong connection with the music they listen to from back home. The connection was stronger than I thought. That was surprising to me. I would be interested to see how their neighbourhood influenced them. If it was a communal influence or just the parents.

Brendan further reflected that, "All my students are from the Caribbean. So we are not the same race. But I am non-White. So I don't really know?" Brendan felt that, as an Asian teacher, his interactions with racialized students were ambiguous and did not fit into the mold of the usual interactions in classrooms. For the first time, the music teachers reflected out loud on their own racial identities and the impact on classroom interactions. Sean felt

The same as Brendan. I went in with the notion that maybe most of my students or at least 50% would be reserved about their parents' music. I thought they were not going to be communicative. But my students let me know everything. I learned that they were engaged. I also learned about their culture. One student has been trained classically. I thought everything would be classical, but he liked other stuff. It is an interesting question.

It may be that the classical training was the choice of the institution. When the student had the chance to share more, he provided more. Once again, institutional priorities influenced student choices in learning texts, and used in tandem with anticolonial strategies, FKN allowed for greater student engagement.

Black musical interests, for example, are not a monolith. John revealed, "Students blindsided me by how they were interested in all types of music. With this line of questioning I looked at how much I learned. One student learned about Oscar Peterson and became a fan." Sean asserted that, despite being Black, his uncle, who "lives in Orangeville, drives a truck and likes country music. So clearly musical tastes do not fit stereotypes." Further, Dr. Blyden-Taylor, Director of Nathaniel-Dett Chorale, shared he was initially streamed toward hip hop despite his

love for chorale (Blyden-Taylor, Tubman Talk, January 2019), demonstrating the importance of FKN that does not assume that students' interests will follow educators' stereotypical understandings of cultures. Hip hop music education can be seen as reproducing racial and social hierarchies (Gustafson, 2009). There are a plethora of genres to choose from, and race should not control interests or artistic expression. Since 2008, for example, the Chinese government, with a nod to the power of rap, has released music videos to popularise government initiatives such as joining the military. FKN does not reproduce stereotypes and does not assume that, for example, Black students will love hip hop, reggae, or rap, or that any students even want to connect to their home cultures. Stereotypes can demand a change in the analyses of objects while simultaneously fetishizing differences in a way that "the objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 101). When FKN is implemented properly, the student maintains control of expressing their interests. If a student is not interested in connecting to the home culture, then FKN should not be forced and individual interests respected.

Popular musical contexts also influence music learning, but it should be noted that the use of profanity and racial slurs limited their educational potential for the classroom. As Welang has established, rap and hip hop videos dehumanise Black women (Welang, 2018), and thus parents may have reservations about their children's musical interests. Many genres of music, such as rock, also objectify women, so teacher and parental reluctance towards music students learning misogynistic lyrics in pop music is understandable. Student interest, in contrast, can be piqued

even more to listen to music with forbidden words as part of asserting their own identity. As the music world gains traction through social media with international languages, hopefully music can be the universal language to unite the next generation. As Du Bois noted almost a century ago, creativity and art have a persuasive appeal that extends over academia, military, and government and, as reflected by the teachers' conversations, supersedes language, race, and culture.

Brendan was able to incorporate FKN principles into his teaching with two members of the same family whose mom listened in on the Zoom room during the lesson. The mom's participation reveals the interest that the family had in FKN because the younger sibling was eager to participate in her brother's opportunity to be part of the study. Brendan shared that the older brother, referred to as Student 1, was "also participating in our Song-to-Studio program with James Bunton [a music producer] so we have been dedicating our lesson time to work on him developing and writing his own song" (Appendix B). Student 1 was in the production stage of the music he had composed. The lesson plan revealed that FKN principles were implemented and that the findings showed "as an added surprise, his mom sang along with the song from the sidelines of the lesson" (Appendix E). Student 1 shared an interest in reggae, specifically Bob Marley's "Redemption Song." Brendan noted that the younger sister, Student 2, "shared examples of music from the 'reggae' and 'soca' genres.⁸ The artists that Student 2 shared,

⁸ Not as well known as reggae, soca was popularised by Trinidadian Lord Shorty back in the late 1960s. Fusion music from East Indian and Afrobeats, soca is short for "Soul of Calypso" and from the first letter of the ancient Indian language Sanskrit, kah. Lord Shorty experimented with AfroIndian fusion in many ways, including chutney music and using instruments such as the tabla and dhantal. While the tabla is a traditional

Brendan continued, “included ‘SOCO, Wizkid, Dumebi, Joro, Kes, Machel Montano.’ We discussed the influence of African rhythms and harmonies in some of the examples shared (i.e., the use of major triads).” Brendan ended the class “by working on the D minor harmonic scale as a tool for improvisation on the song ‘Joro’ by Wizkid” (Appendix E). Student 1 and Student 2 shared how they developed their musical interests based on the pedagogies of the home, substantiating that students have knowledge that can contribute to classroom learning. The inclusion of soca and the siblings sharing in Brendan’s classroom what they had learned at home embodies FKN principles that bring in children’s rich histories and diverse experience to create relevant curriculum that acknowledges the power of race relationships in the classroom between teachers and students.

Valuing the Virtual Village

Having critiqued stereotypes in musical interests, it is also important to recognize the influential nature of rap, hip hop, reggae and other forms of artistic expression. Just as heartland rock music, such as Bruce Springsteen and Bob Seger, celebrates the disenfranchised blue-collar worker, music from marginalised groups can speak to subaltern hearts around the world. In “Indigeneity and Resistance in Hip Hop and Lived Experiences of Youth of African Descent in Canada”

Indian drum, the dhantal is mainly found in the Caribbean, as a yoke for oxen. It is shaped like a horseshoe and attached to an iron rod, reflecting a certain amount of ingenuity and symbolism of, literally, turning a yoke into an instrument of emancipation. Soca and the banjo instrument, as well as many other genres “have their roots unmistakably in Africa. The dismissal of popular music as ‘Other’ or somehow less worthy is easily as racially motivated as the casting off of music from countries outside of Western Europe” (Hess, 2015, p. 337). While some connections, such as genres like Rhythm and Blues, are more obvious, there are subtler associations, like a 3–2 beat (Hess, 2015).

(2016), Bazira-Okafor advocates for teaching the history of rap in mainstream curriculum for all students to understand the politics of resistance, which puts Black struggle in an empowering perspective. In this way, music education can not only foster activism but encourage non-violent expression. Colonialism achieved dominance through White supremacist states that violently imposed racism, segregation and slavery, and “rap is simply a response to this violence. Music was the main form of self-preservation and non-violent form of resistance that black people could undertake during slavery” (Bazira-Okafor, 2016, p. 137), such as the strong tradition of spirituals. Another example of emancipatory Black music is Kwaito, which was banned during apartheid and celebrated by South African youth who felt free to sing, have fun, and express political resistance after years of oppression.

Bazira-Okafor stresses that possibilities for global connections through social media are available if institutions are willing to support teachers who draw on FKN to foster transnational identities and even peaceful activism. In fact, social media, such as YouTube and TikTok, can be a powerful way to develop transnational identities and create interest in the classroom. Brendan, Students 1 and 2, and the students’ mom, had a listening session together using TikTok to engage with music that the family listened to at home. Brendan commented that

We don’t know if going through the student always paints a complete picture. Asking parents might be better to get a complete picture when we use the funds of knowledge. One student came to me and said that her dad played soca music for them. It is like calypso from Trinidad. We looked it up on YouTube and found a couple of songs. [Brendan plays a riff on his electric guitar]. It has a really cool sound. Like reggae but lighter.

Brendan extended the FKN strategy even further when, during one lesson, he asked the students to take the role of the teachers and give an introduction to “music they already know from their

family experiences... (from) specific genres mentioned in his questionnaire response” (Appendix E), building on the FKN strategy and creating a teaching moment for himself and his learners. By having the music students play the role of the music teacher, Brendan was able to creatively expand FKN beyond the workshop discussions and modelled power sharing in the classroom.

With a music teacher such as Brendan and a family that had a respectful dynamic, it was possible to make the music class a family event, reflecting the notion that “in order to bring the personal into the curriculum a respectful classroom environment must be established” (Hess, 2015, p. 343). The dad was not present in class, but he also shared his musical interests at home, enabling the inclusion of home pedagogies through the FKN strategy. At the end of the study, Brendan concluded, “We have been spending a couple of weeks on soca. It does give a connection to the home, family, and learning in class. So, I think FKN can work. Sometimes it comes all together. I think it’s worth a try.” Thus, in terms of education, anticolonial critiques can get at the problematic root of institutional racism by critiquing discriminatory colonial practices to initiate systemic change for the inclusion of subaltern voices. Anticolonial thought may even enable possibilities to further rethink and disrupt neocolonial political, cultural, legal, and economic systems.

Racial connections to musical genres and language defying art can be powerful. Despite institutional structures that create barriers and exclude Black participation in traditional music education, as Bazira-Okafor noted, ethnic identities can remain strong through the transnationalism developed in relationships with diaspora from many countries and Internet connections. That is why through the FKN theory presented in four professional development

sessions, I sought to teach the teachers how to focus on learning from students about their music to increase home and classroom connections. Brendan reflected:

One thing I think about is representation in countercultural music, which with students may be a genre thing. I don't like traditional music. My own example is that I am a second-generation Chinese Canadian. Not much of a tie to the home country, Hong Kong. But I do experience pride when I see a second-generation Canadian doing something cool. In a roundtable at the Toronto Music School it was cool to see an Asian American play rock.

The notion that it takes a village is a powerful influencer in keeping racialized cultures alive in Canada. With community members all partaking in child rearing, it forms a site of resistance to Western hegemonic parenting practices. Personal experiences with food from countries in Africa, videos, and languages create powerful nostalgic connections to “back home” (Bazira-Okafor, 2016, p. 120). In contrast, Canadian institutions are rife with White privilege and power with an intrinsic legacy of racism, while “hip hop culture offers a way of belonging for black youth precisely because it is a form of resistance against white supremacy and racial discrimination” (Bazira-Okafor, 2016, p. 120).

A Girl Dad's View

To begin seeing how to reflect parental cultures, I asked Sean, as the only parent in the study and a two-time father, whether he thought “in a way that parenting impacts how you may deliver a musical educational program?” He responded quickly:

Funny enough I teach at another school, and I had a lesson yesterday, so we were doing the whole RCM stuff. The child was getting disinterested. The father came to me and said, ‘In our culture we do jazz. I want to do a lot of jazz music with my son. He is very interested in jazz.’ So I strongly believe that parental involvement is very important with cultural involvement because it gives the child a sense of home with connection and a sense of heritage. At the end of the day Western art is classical music. I have nothing against it but it's not relatable to a lot of cultures. They are not used to growing up, watching, reading

and hearing Western music. Classroom learning is not the same as their home. Most of the time they're listening to their own music. But yeah, for me that's why I love to include parents into the program as well as whatever culture they want to do.

Mirroring Sean, a music teacher in Hess's 2013 study bluntly critiques the dominance of "Dead White Men" in Western-based classical music curriculum as "irrelevant" (p. 145) to racially diverse students in Toronto. Including parents as important stakeholders in colonial communities and local education can help raise teachers' consciousness on valuing FKN from racialized parents. John, on the other hand, concurred about their contribution to the implementation of FKN:

I think that the philosophy that you're trying to get across is one way of bringing parents in early and that is very useful. When we talk to these kids, they might not communicate any of our teaching to their parents, right? Having the opportunity to bring parents in earlier on and say it's like Sean's experience where he's teaching an RCM design curriculum and a parent saying that's not how we do things at home. Having a parent in early with some kind of briefing with the FKN focus would be very useful.

Brendan, too, felt that it was important to "Almost be investigative in that direction. I feel like I want to share less information more than I would want to gather information, you know? Like talking to the parents? Well, for one thing, do you guys listen to music at home?" All three participants confirmed Hess's finding that "despite the way the curriculum is constructed, many music teachers strive to create diverse programs for their students" (Hess, 2015, p. 336), because there is still a need to connect student learning with their communities to support connections to their families and racial identities through institutional best practices. As Hess explains, "Thinking relationally allows us to offer our students so much more" (2015, p. 346). Creating a microcosm of the global village in the classroom offers democratised learning for teachers and students, racial inclusion and puts students' lives at the heart of learning.

FKN Not for Everyone: Students' Tepid Responses

One of the teachers, John, contributed several valuable critiques in implementing FKN that he heard from his students, beginning with: if FKN is imposed on students when they are not interested in talking about racial inclusion, then that is a pedagogy of oppression. The FKN strategy should only be used if the teacher meets with interest; if students prove not to be interested in connecting to their cultures, then the students' feelings must be respected. Based on students' responses, John pivoted to more general questions about a student's life, commenting,

as long as you can help a student by catering to their interests. Just act like there's no wrong answer. You don't have to show me your country's traditional dress if you don't want to. Not everyone is a first- or second-generation immigrant, right? Do you have third- and fourth-generation immigrants? We don't know how many there are, and society puts them in a box anyway. So the answer is to ask questions that break the box.

John's comment is in keeping with Good-Perkins' finding that "Music classrooms, therefore, can be places in which students find their cultural centeredness within this hostile environment and the courage to persist in the face of hostility" (Good-Perkins, 2022, p. 148). Racialized students deserve to have their knowledge included in classrooms and received by the teacher with respect. As John received the students' FKN, he demonstrated respect for their lack of interest in connecting with their cultures.

Some music educators and students may not see cultural knowledge as fostering individual artistic creativity. John wanted to express that it is important to ask all kinds of questions. He said that he "played Twenty Questions with his students. And that's the reason because there is no wrong answer, but you're probably going to get a lot of interesting answers out of it, right? And I have yet to meet a child that doesn't like to talk about their favourite food

and snacks because they trust me a lot.” Brendan responded, “I thought that was such a great conversation to have with the kids because it leaves it open so if someone wants to share something about their family in their home country it’s there, and if they just want to say burgers and pizza they can.” I interjected saying that it did not exactly cover FKN principles, but effective teachers have always sought to include students’ interests in the classroom. That is nothing new. FKN distinguishes itself as an anticolonial strategy that relates directly to diverse racial and cultural connections from the home to the classroom when there is a desire for inclusion in classrooms.

John indicated that using FKN could even be oppressing students from being seen as extensions of their parents and that locking music students into their racial and ethnic identities was unfair. He countered:

Where do you draw the line between student X not identifying with their parents’ music because it could be a generational phenomenon? Parents don’t approve of kids’ music and kids don’t like parents’ music. How do you distill or tease that from internalised oppression to generational differences? Most kids don’t identify with their parents’ music.

He felt strongly that music was a way to express individuality. As part of the feedback when the case study was over, John clarified:

While I do think that everyone has a different degree of interest in the ‘pedagogies of their home,’ this was also demonstrated in some of the responses that I received from my students. Student 3 and Student 4, siblings, both identified tepid to no interest in the music heard in their home. More interestingly, both students identified that the music that their mother plays at home is American 80s rock music – when asked, neither one mentioned anything about Vietnamese music, their cultural background, at home. It would have been inappropriate for me as a cultural outsider to assume that there would or should be. For me, to force them into a cultural discussion when it’s got to be a generational problem would be wrong. Do I have to foist BTS on them? I don’t look like someone from their culture. I can’t shoehorn that into the conversation.

Interestingly, John used “shoehorn,” the same word as Begum and Saini (2019), who argue that decolonising the curriculum “goes beyond shoehorning POC on to reading lists, but decolonising the academy itself, so social scientists not only question but challenge structural racisms and sexism rather than simply preaching the neoliberal virtues of ‘resilience’ and ‘hard work’” (p. 200). So the idea of racially diversified texts and practices seems to connote that there must be some institutional political will to enforce compliance for greater inclusion amongst people who may be outwardly complying but passively resisting an unpleasant idea. It is important to walk the line between political will that forces ideas on students and attempting to foster greater racial connections.

We discussed how race was named openly in America and unmentioned in Canada. John responded, “We can ask, is this music that your friends like? But even if it is their friends, it’s still what they want.” I agreed with John and asked, “How can we ask students about their cultures?” Brendan said it is very “tricky. Students are not consistent with attendance, so it is tricky to build on music connected to identities and parent culture. There are difficulties with Zoom.” John asserted that he had “good contact with students, especially Saturday mornings. The feedback I am getting from students is one size does not fit all. Other responses are that the students are already doing music that comes from home or are not interested in parents’ music in the home. They want their own music.” In “Funds of Knowledge – A Conceptual Critique” (2020), Helen Oughton supports John’s students’ resistance to FKN’s assumption that they have knowledge and may actually be seeking to learn Eurocentric music because they genuinely believe it will develop their musical expertise and open up opportunities for recognition in artistic

circles.

Overall, John's responses focused on the pragmatic. He revealed that:

I think one thing I feel a little bit of the professional development is just it feels like a little bit of information overload, and I wonder if some of the focus can be a little bit more narrow, oriented towards what I will be using in the classroom, right? I don't know how to articulate other than information overload, right? Maybe you give them something to start with, less theory and more hands on or more anecdotal. It is our first time grappling with those sorts of ideas.

Teachers face many demands from institutions, and likely expectations of teachers will increase in the future. At the final session, John concluded, "You're a better teacher when you're learning. Teachers have to be active musicians. If you're an active musician, you always have an open ear. I think you're asking the original question of how do you encourage teachers to be learners themselves." John's comments reflected one of the goals of FKN: to democratise teacher-student relationships.

Brendan suggested that a music teacher's attitude towards developing music skills is significant in meeting student interests. Brendan reflected:

I mean I think the truth is that a lot of us play folk music and *weird* (italics mine) music professionally, so I think specifically for our school we have over 100 faculty. You can list any genre. I did a bar mitzvah two weeks ago right? *Laughs* Like I did French music two weeks ago, my bread and butter is New Orleans music, right? So I think a lot of music that I play professionally does come from racialized communities. Every music teacher is going to bring a diverse set of interests and skills. You may get lucky when you have students from Zimbabwe and you play the Jit guitar, right? But it's the willingness of the teachers to learn something they don't know, right?

Brendan not only displayed knowledge about world instruments, such as a specific guitar from Zimbabwe, but an openness to learning.

I found the use of the description "weird" music as related to racialized communities

interesting as Brendan actually demonstrated great openness to a variety of content, styles, and epistemologies. Hess (2018) also found music students called out “‘Guantan-weirdo’ across the room in reference to ‘Guantanamera’—a song they studied” (p. 138). Remaining relevant despite being a 1929 nationalist Cuban protest anthem, geopolitical interpretations of “Guantanamera” were discussed in the music class because the US maintains a prison in Guantanamo Bay. Hess (2018) also found students mocked Afrocentric music that one teacher tried to introduce in a high school class to expand their cross-cultural quotient in light of the Eurocentric and White supremacist texts and curricula long established in the minds of students, teachers, and community members as the norm. Learning new styles and instruments requires musical aptitude, which Brendan seemed to learn effortlessly “by watching YouTube and TikTok.” If only it were that easy. I was a little envious, not just of Brendan’s teaching skills, which appeared considerable, but of his musical abilities, which were displayed with an air of relaxed confidence as he cradled his guitar, riffing to punctuate his points with flourish.

Sometimes educators and students may react to ethnic music in deficit ways due to latent Eurocentric attitudes. FKN is an effective strategy that does not impose on students’ interests, even for their own good, and instead scaffolds their existing interests and home pedagogies. In “Children Are Not Colourblind: How Young Children Learn Race” (2009), Erin N. Winkler records her observation that children, even as young as three, can reflect not just biases against their own culture but also the power dynamics of racial hierarchies. In other words, White supremacy is learned at a young age and thus must be eradicated through education for young children utilising strategies such as FKN that will resist neocolonial racism.

Music: The Universal Language

Sean noted the linguistic openness of a student when he “gave the option to do pop. This student who is Spanish is doing BTS [a Korean boy band] on open mic in a couple of weeks. She also learned the “Pink Panther,” an old school song. Even though she is Spanish, she is interested in K-pop. But it is what she is drawn to because they are on TikTok.” Social media offers a great deal of linguistic diversity in music and, for this student, moved her as a Spanish speaker to learning Korean lyrics.

Yosso refers to the linguistic capital of racialized communities, while Bazira-Okafor has shown how rap can even revive Indigenous languages from English pidgin and Swahili to Kikuyu and Luo used in West Africa and how Kenzo, the first Ugandan composer to be nominated for a Grammy, wants his music to embody the triumph of the human spirit celebrating life despite poverty: “music became his safe haven. Staying true to his roots even after a breakthrough in the music industry, some of his music videos continue to portray socially conscious messages of the marginalised” (Bazira-Okafor, 2016, p. 120). Kenzo’s video “Sitya Loss” demonstrates defiance against imperialism through local dance movements and language hybridity in Luganda, a Bantu language spoken in Uganda by more than five million people. Kenzo’s message is a musical critique of Western complicity in African underdevelopment through colonial exploitation of resources. Rather than becoming corrupt through Western greed and materialism, “Sitya Loss” encourages Africans to celebrate life and relationships, reflecting how connections to the homeland built Kenzo’s agency.

As an Indian mom who plays Bollywood music at home daily, I have seen the

continuation of my cultural heritage in the form of linguistic inclusion through social media with my own children. I was pleasantly surprised when my sons played Zayn Malik's songs in Urdu and DJ Snake Wade Join and the Nooran Sisters' Bollywood-inspired electronic dance music in my car. I viewed 2019's ubiquitous song of the summer, "Despacito" in Spanish, as an extension of linguistic openness, where international music is an integral part of my millennial and Gen Z's lives. Eschewing singing in English can be an empowering form of emancipatory resistance.

Sean further noted that in the many types of Caribbean and African American music, there is no language barrier, observing, "That is one way music from the Caribbean can gain a following easily. We have language in common. It is something people in Black and White communities share." Singing in English can be understood by many people in postcolonial countries around the world. Because of the relative lack of language barriers to Black inclusion in music learning, there is even less justification for the dearth of Black artists, especially female composers, in the music canon and as music educators. Success in sports often leads to coaching opportunities because students want to learn from the best. Following the logic of meritocracy, which for all its faults is at least anticolonial and against Eurocentric White supremacy (cf. Littler), there should be more Black female music educators, due to their success in the public arena. Who wouldn't want to learn from the greats such as Beyoncé? There could even be opportunities for great music artists to open their own music schools.

Time Constraints for Social Justice

Aspiring for racial inclusion as an institutional priority, my participants and I felt constrained for time. Hess notes that “Much of what is problematic in elementary education is based on that term-end concert... Students and teachers no longer need to ‘conquer’ the knowledge – a reproduction of colonial relations at the elementary school level; they simply engage with it” (2015, p. 345). Despite supporting the premise of FKN and immediately understanding the objectives of the project as racial inclusion, Sean’s implementation of FKN was limited. He only had time to ask questions to find out what musical interests the students had but could not incorporate the FKN strategy into the classroom. I also would have liked to spend more time in the beginning offering concrete examples of how FKN had been used over the last 30 years across America. I felt that if I had had more time at the beginning of the case study, there might have been greater buy-in because of the learning curve involved in developing anticolonial praxis. Research participants can feel racial vertigo, similar to Risman’s (1998) notion of gender vertigo, which is a disorientation when gender roles do not conform to societal expectations. In classrooms where Eurocentrism supports White supremacy and racialized people are forever cast as the learners, racial role reversals can cause disequilibrium for everyone. A half an hour is insufficient time for teachers to understand social justice issues. Even excellent teachers, like the ones who participated in this case study, need time to adjust to a paradigm shifting ontology for unlearning praxis. Elevator pitches do not help foster enough political will to help people adjust to the anticolonial learning curve that challenges ubiquitous postcolonial legacies of Eurocentrism and White supremacy. Developing anticolonial praxis takes time and patience.

Peer Pressure in Tandem with Home Pedagogies

I encouraged the music teachers to ask the students whether they thought dislike of musical tastes between parents and kids was generational and whether their parents' music was automatically boring and uncool. I asked them to just ask them to write it down. If that is what the research says, then we will have it in the findings. Sean felt strongly that students are influenced by peers by reflecting on his daughter's attitude:

It is not that they don't want to be identified by their parent's culture. They want to feel part of the community and not be left out. They don't want to be looked down on for following their parent's cultures. When I asked them the research questions, they were interested in pop culture. A student from Ghana finds music in pop culture, but in her private life she can enjoy herself. Kids feel comfortable at home. My eight-year-old is going through that. She wants to fit in pop culture in TikTok. They love home and their parents' cultures but when they go out, they want to fit in.

Based on the music teachers' feedback, I felt it was vital that I support going the pop culture route as a way of getting the music student participants to open up. I agreed, "Let us go with the pop culture route."

Sean contributed that:

Kids not liking parents' music is not new. In the 1960s there was Ray Charles, and his style of music was different from what I saw on a documentary. White kids gravitated towards Black music, and White Christian parents did not like what was going on. But the kids would hide the music and bring it to parties. So kids are influenced by pop culture. They don't want to feel disenfranchised. It is a real thing of getting bullied because you are not doing what pop culture wants you to.

As a parent, Sean was conscious of the repercussions of resisting peer pressure among young people and alluded to his FKN about Ray Charles.

In contrast, Brendan asserted, "One thing that is quite clear to me is pop culture is also culturally specific. K-POP, BTS. Soca is Caribbean pop music. It has a presence large enough

that my students want to play the big names.” Sean concurred saying, “It is fusion pop, which is also a big thing. One of Lil Nas X’s collaborators.” Brendan suggested “dissect the distinctions in pop culture to find nuance.” One of the major findings of the project was that the diverse nature of pop culture significantly influenced the international nature of the music participants’ interests. Diverse artists abound today, who express all genres of music in many languages. It appears that there is great potential for artists to lead the way in terms of anticolonial resistance. Rap, hip hop, and fusion artists are powerful influencers and people such as Beyoncé need to keep challenging the Eurocentric status quo with anticolonial resistance.

Teachers’ Feedback

In an effort to reflect anticolonial praxis in the research, I asked the teachers for feedback at the last session. Teachers felt a free jamming space would be helpful to deconstruct Eurocentrism. Brendan referred to systemic change about implementing FKN policies saying, “You can always implement policies and say 50% of all music 50% of western music should be taught in classrooms. But at the end of the day parents are going to make their own decisions. You can start to get some information out to management and see where to go from there. The influence has to be from society in order to change how music is taught.” Brendan was conscious of the top-down bottom-up process (Bulhan, 2015). Sean assented “Yeah, you’re right, Brendan. Toronto Music School is just one organisation in a society that is trying to change things, but everybody can do it.” Brendan and Sean recognized the importance of the Gramscian notion of societal consent (Gramsci et al., 1987; Gramsci & Boothman, 1995) and the Freirian concept of

raising *conscientização* as key factors in facilitating change. Further, Brendan included the idea of running ideas from parents up the food chain, which would reflect cooperation from the bottom-up and top-down processes useful when implementing systemic change (Bulhan, 2015; Hess, 2013; 2015; 2018; Mohanty, 2003b; Snell & Marsella, 2020). The music teachers' acknowledgement of how the power of parents and their villages can be underutilised in education change management is an example of how *conscientização* can be increased to reflect knowledge from racially diverse neighbourhoods.

In practical terms, John noted, "Our school has what is called a community band for people from any background." Sean thought that was a great idea, stating that "It is a drop-in, so it's collecting people from the neighbourhood, coming to play music for fun." Brendan felt that a community band could be cross-generational, "This is across ages, not specific for any age group, which is another different aspect too." Intergenerational music spaces reflect the FKN framework, which seeks to include elders in knowledge sharing. John contributed, "Yeah, it's just show up and let's make music." Brendan remembered, "I did that with Cassie and Kobe on Queen Street at the drop-in refugee help center he was running. Most of the instruments were from African culture. It was very much like what you're talking about. Come in, let's see what you got for us." The music teachers' responses reflected racial inclusion, which was embedded in the FKN strategy. Creating a space where people can create great music by jamming together develops anticolonial praxis and allows for informal learning in a relaxed and comfortable way where the focus is not just performing at a recital every term. Indeed, research in a single institution could explore the creation, utilization, and impact of

“third spaces” within HMEIs [Higher Music Education Institutions] that serve as supportive communities for marginalized students, staff, and faculty. Studies might examine how these spaces contribute to a sense of belonging, promote cultural expression, and facilitate resistance against systemic challenges. By understanding the mechanisms through which third spaces operate, institutions can better support their development and integration into the educational environment. This research can also identify best practices for fostering such communities, benefiting other institutions seeking to implement similar initiatives. (Rodriguez, 2025, p. 236-237)

The strongest tension was between racial inclusion in learning and individual creative expression. In music education, there is the driving factor of individual artistic expression.

Brendan’s observation reflects anticolonial praxis as he sought to reconcile his individual identity in the context of Canadian multiculturalism with Hong Kong’s colonial past. By acknowledging that it is important to advocate for the complexity of intersectional identities to be recognized by institutions, anticolonial praxis can build on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives.

Brendan astutely summed it up best when he concluded:

I guess what I would say about the whole FKN idea is that yes, I am Chinese, even though I was born here. It is a personal and individual identity, especially since all my students are second generation immigrants, right? Part of the journey of self-discovery is figuring out how much of me is Hong Kong, Chinese, or Canadian. I think of myself as Canadian, and it is an ongoing process. We can’t really go back and say that everyone is going to have a strong transnational connection. Identity might be a systemic issue as well. Race is one part of my identity, but it is not everything. I want to be seen as Asian, yes. But that is only a part of who I am.

Now, that is solid gold.

To summarize this chapter on findings, in response to the first question “Do you see yourself reflected in the music?” students stated that they saw a little bit of themselves in the music they were learning but that FKN helped them to better reflect themselves in their learning. The second question “What kind of music do you listen to at home with your parents?” yielded a

variety of responses, the main example being soca. With Brendan's commitment to implementing FKN, taking on the role of the learner and including the mother, FKN made a great difference in not only the sibling students' learning, but also for the music teachers and the parents in terms of learning from students and feeling included respectively. The third question "Do you want to learn music that you listen to at home" was a resounding, if surprising to the music teachers, yes! Greater inclusion of home pedagogies (Yosso, 2005) resulted in a more joyful, authentic, and meaningful learning experience and demonstrated how the FKN strategy can function as anticolonial resistance to Eurocentric Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) texts.

My findings also revealed that the most important aspect of anticolonial praxis is institutional or political will. A significant investment of effort, energy, and institutional will is "needed to transform a situation in order not to reproduce what would habitually be produced. When used in this way, an institutional will would be required to break an institutional habit" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 128). Neocolonialism can be dismantled through anticolonial perspectives such as the FKN strategy. Systemic changes that include diverse knowledges are necessary not only in terms of texts and curriculum but in decision making in all areas, such as funding and inclusion that reflect respect for BIWOC.

Chapter 7: Implications and Recommendations

Introduction: Resisting Colonialism and the Master's Tools

In this, the final chapter, I will consider some of the implications of the research, and make recommendations. In the Canadian settler colonial context, these male music teachers were concerned about being cancelled for discussing topics related to race and culture, which was not an issue addressed in the other 40 funds of knowledge studies (Appendix C), but was corroborated by the responses of Tina, Research Assistant, included in Chapter 5. I sought to centre the teachers' responses, enabling them to offer nuanced insights based on their backgrounds, positionality, and teaching ability. John, as a White male from a small town, authentically explained his point of view that forcing discussions about race can be uncomfortable, which meant he understood the significance of connecting to home pedagogies with balancing individual artistic interests and expression for his teenage music students. Brendan implemented FKN beyond what was expected through his technical music knowledge and talent to learn independently from YouTube and TikTok videos and with a Hong Kong background also understood personal and historical connections to colonialism. Sean, sympathetic and enthusiastic towards racial inclusion, shared his insights as a Black father with two daughters to identify time constraints as a detriment in incorporating anticolonial praxis in the music school schedule. As the music teachers acknowledged, it is prudent to conduct conversations about race in a respectful and thoughtful manner.

While the music teachers' responses were united in concerns about political correctness, their responses were also varied, which is why it is important to situate teachers as subalterns

who need a space to speak realistically about the challenges they have in implementing racial inclusion and to suggest practical strategies on how to incorporate effective solutions that deal with racism in music education. Situating the frontline teachers as subalterns allowed me to learn from their FKN, echoing Spivak's notion of democratizing education through "desubalternization" (Zafar & Millan, 2014, p. 312) and Hess' (2013; 2015; 2018) recommendation to learn from the ground up. One positive impact of the music teachers' participation in the case study was that they reflected for the first time on how their own race affected their pedagogy, demonstrating that their *conscientização* had been raised. Anticolonial praxis about is not just challenging curricula but also "engaging with the epistemologies and methodologies of what is taught, how and by who" (Gabi et al., 2023, p. 96) because teachers' racial identities influence daily classroom practices. Like the music teachers in this case study, educators need to examine their own positionality, come alongside their students, and problematise educational systems to move away from racial binaries. As Geetha Marcus recommends in "Decolonising the Curriculum: Silence is Not an Option," it is about "interrogating the legislation, policies, practices that govern our institutions, and it is also about exploring our own conscious or deeply embedded biases as individuals" (Marcus, 2021, para 4). Long term sustainable strategies embedded in the system are also required because, as Ann E. Lopez notes in *Decolonizing Educational Leadership: Exploring Alternative Approaches to Leading Schools*, "when educators take on change by themselves, it is difficult to sustain and burn out sometimes occurs. It is important that training occurs at all levels of the system" (Lopez, 2021, p. 55). Brendan's recommendation in Chapter 6 for systemic change in relation to

implementing policies utilizing FKN was to point out that even if the curriculum expectations include voices from the Global South in a 50/50 way, parents and management are powerful stakeholders in student learning. Sean concurred when he asserted that the Toronto Music School was one institution that was trying to change society. Through their participation in the case study Sean's and Brendan's *conscientização* was raised. Brendan's reference to running ideas from parents up the food chain reflected the cooperation necessary among grassroots community groups, frontline teachers and upper management as effective in institutional transformation (Bulhan, 2015; Hess, 2013; 2015; 2018; Mohanty, 2003b; Snell & Marsella, 2020). The music teachers' acknowledgement of parental and community influence is an example of how *conscientização* can be used for education change management.

Implications

FKN is a pivot away from festival multiculturalism and leads to necessary conversations that can cause discomfort when anticolonial perspectives are shared in the classroom. The teacher participants initially confided that they preferred conversations about general interests, such as food, video games, and sports, rather than the cultural inclusion of home pedagogies. Through the four workshops, the teachers were able to develop confidence in connecting with knowledge rooted in diverse homes. As noted in Chapter 4, the preponderance of White women hired in education (Domínguez, 2019; Hamilton, 2021; Lyiscott et al., 2018) necessitates using FKN in diverse classrooms. In "Decolonial Innovation in Teacher Development: Praxis Beyond the Colonial Zero-Point," Michael Domínguez argues for revising teacher education to anchor

ontological and epistemic perspectives from the Global South, which can then be expected to disrupt coloniality because “teacher education remains a deeply colonial endeavour. Worldwide, it is a process undertaken by predominantly White institutions, preparing predominantly White novice educators, and, though steeped in discourses of diversity and multiculturalism, still” (Domínguez, 2019, p. 47). Equity work often takes place in the context of teachers who are, as Domínguez points out, predominantly female (Domínguez, 2019, p. 54). As discussed in Chapter 2 colonial histories imbue White women with social capital, and the biological determinism and biological foundationalism explained in Chapter 3 support notions that women are the ideal people to socialise children, extrapolating the exclusion of BIWOC.

Strategies such as FKN, which centers perspectives from the Global South, encompass the “difficult knowledge” that Britzman and Pitt note in “Speculations on Qualities of Difficult Knowledge in Teaching and Learning: An Experiment in Psychoanalytic Research” (2006), which Marshall and Toohey (2010) and I in “Possibilities for Decolonizing English language Learning” (2021a) draw on in advocating for realistic expectations when challenging Eurocentrism. Leonardo and Porter find the Fanonian framework useful for examining the role of violence in emancipatory education because “the violence is already there” (2010, p. 139). They quote Fanon’s perception of “*education as violent and violence as educative*” (Leonardo & Porter, 2010, p. 140) for all students due to the relationship between colonialism and education. In order for decolonisation to succeed, there must be epistemic violence. Classrooms as safe spaces may be an unrealistic expectation because epistemic violence is an intrinsic part of education. My study suggests that if teachers can be taught to use strategies such as FKN, even

when it produces unwelcome knowledge, it will be possible to build teachers' efficacy when dealing with painful history but can also disrupt White supremacy in education.

Indeed, teaching Critical Race Theory (CRT) was recently banned in Florida because it could create feelings of discomfort for students who are White (Tierra, 2023), and yet, reflecting racist double standards, racialized students were criticized for being “snowflakes” or “too woke.” Anticolonial praxis will doubtless create epistemic violence for everyone who accepts the status quo, including complicit BIPOC, giving an unpleasant emotional and psychological jolt of authenticity for all “beneficiaries of colonialism” (Bulhan, 2015, p. 244). Competing perspectives of colonialism need to be considered thoughtfully by educators with empathetic teaching skills to bring meaning and authenticity to memories in the classroom, such as the Partition, which marked my family's history. Unfortunately, administrators can silence student voices, such as in the Mexican American Studies (MAS) program, a common colonial tactic to repress challenges to White supremacy. The phenomenology of students sharing their FKN creates anticolonial praxis that can challenge Anglo-American imperialistic assumptions of superiority. Anticolonial praxis in policy creation is necessary because people have messy, complex intersectional identities, which, as Himani Bannerji notes, result in “fractured cultural communities, each with its ethnicized agents hooked into the ruling apparatus of the state and the social organization of classes. Defined thus, third world or non-white peoples living in Canada become organized into competitive entities with respect to each other” (p. 7). The intersectional and critical race theories discussed in Chapter 3 ought to gird educational agendas:

to include all forms of social inequalities, including racial oppressions. Lorde argues ‘there

is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.’ And she explains that we ‘cannot afford the luxury of fighting one form of oppression only because there is no hierarchy of oppressions.’ Therefore, in my view, the decolonising agenda is not just an anti-racist campaign, and to argue so, is reductive and myopic. (Marcus, 2021, para. 5)

Instead, anti/de/neo/postcolonial perspectives can inform the critiquing of any oppressive colonial structure in a way that can be incorporated into policies that will enable racialized women to participate more fully in decision making in education and other areas of *political* power.

Recommendations

1. Prioritising Anticolonial Education for Children

Problematizing Eurocentrism in education and increasing calls for decolonising the academy have gained traction over the last two decades (Shahjahan et al., 2021), yet there has been relatively little movement towards anticolonial education for children. While Eurocentric criticisms of academia that lead to changes in representation are important, waiting until postsecondary education to develop anticolonial praxis is too late. In “Decolonizing Educational Leadership: Exploring Alternative Approaches to Leading Schools,” Lopez identifies four aspects vital for educational changes to meet the challenges of the 21st century:

1. Name colonialism as an oppressive form of systemic racism.
2. Embrace decolonizing “teaching, leading, learning, classroom practices, and policies” (p. 42) to empower teachers and students.
3. Focus on policy creation by the government
4. Implement policies that impact everyday practices “at the school level” (Lopez, 2021, p.45)

Living in a postcolonial world means challenging dominant and racist patriarchal ideologies that will turn the world from oppression to emancipation by increasing sympathy for the subaltern by developing voices from the below rather than on top (Fanon, 1963; Spivak, 1983; Young, 2003), beginning with anticolonial praxis in schools. As Hess stresses, teachers need to reconsider their responsibilities towards “power relations at play in the classroom and in the relationships of the classroom. If we engage these power relations critically with our students, then those relations that were previously invisible may emerge for interrogation and possibly even subversion” (Hess, 2015, p. 344). While one of the main tenets of adult education calls on teachers to recognize the experiences of mature students, it is also important to acknowledge that children also bring their FKN into the classroom, no matter how young.

In my case study, I had originally only intended to seek older teenagers, from 16 to 18 years old, because I felt they would have the necessary capital to contribute age-appropriate insights. When younger siblings indicated a desire to be included in the study with their older brothers and sisters, after some consideration I requested an amendment from York’s REB to include them in my research. I was grateful for the efficacy of the 14- to 15-year olds in advocating for themselves to join the study. In fact, the inclusion of younger siblings in the study yielded greater FKN in terms of the capital of home pedagogies. That was a huge learning on my part as I had underestimated the younger teenagers’ FKN, their closeness to their parents, and the potential for constructivism that could be shared with their teachers. My study demonstrates that students in Grade 9 and 10 had funds of knowledge that they could contribute in the classroom.

Educating and raising consciously racially inclusive young people should be a priority

because schools in their present Eurocentric form create neocolonial subjects (Gabi, et al., 2023; Leonardo, 2018; Lewis, 2018; Shahjahan et al., 2021). While Dewey promoted national values to socialise children, today's global villages result in the need to focus on raising children who can function in a geopolitically complex world. As Zanon showed in "Antonio Gramsci and Fund of Knowledge: Organic Ethnographers of Knowledge in Workers' Centres,"

Gramsci is prescient in acknowledging the core premise of the funds of knowledge approach when he states that every generation educates its young and this process is, at first, a struggle against the rudimentary biological forces in humans, then is carried to the socially constructed level of the conception of the world. In Gramsci's view, one important starting point for the organic intellectuals is a critical approach to the rudimentary, instinctual, common sense or traditional concept of the world. (Zanon, 2008, p. 23)

Part of helping young people is creating a properly postcolonial nation, which can be accomplished through conversations with elders, as Sean recommended in noting the importance of speaking with parents and Brendan found in including his students' mother in the classroom. The music students were able to connect their music learning with their parents through my research project.

2. No Education Without Representation: Hiring Diversity in Management

In order for the knowledge of Black Indigenous Women of Colour to be included in the classroom, greater numbers must be hired to close the gap between diverse racialized students and educators. Despite the large number of racialized girls taking music lessons, their talents are in danger of being lost if they do not have the necessary support in the form of long-term support and mentoring. Greater diversity "both perspectival and corporeal, is needed in music teaching" (Koza, 2008, p. 146) because students cannot see themselves in their teachers due to lack of representation in hiring. Indeed, "as a social relation, racism maintains its distinction from

cultural imperialism by emphasizing somatic relations as proxies for deciding human worth. Race is a relation of bodies” (Leonardo, 2013, p. 157) between teachers and students.

Another important aspect of music education is that race is also a relationship of bodies to institutions. The music teachers felt caught in the middle between the institution, The Toronto Music School, and the music students and their families, and so declined to solicit race-based data from their students. Discouraging acknowledgement of racial differences means that Black and Brown children are rendered invisible in education due to the dominance of Eurocentric epistemologies (Good-Perkins, 2022; Martin & Pirbhai-Illich, 2016; Sajjad, 2023). Informal places of learning music, such as the home, were subordinated through colonial institutions based on racism as “music and singing in the music classroom took place with a still body, whereas the music and singing at home was expressed with the moving body” (Good-Perkins, 2022, p. 112). In contrast, the comparative model of music education that Hess (2015) advocates for reflects the FKN strategy, where students can make power relations visible for subversion and interrogation that were rendered invisible due to imperial history. Promoting democratic relationships means teaching through legal documents, such as government mandated curricula, in a way that problematizes “these constructs as the only truly valid way of knowing music. Thinking relationally gives us a tool to denaturalize the power relations at playing this privileging” (Hess, 2015, p. 344). FKN provides counter narratives that can affirm and prioritise students’ humanity instead of archaic traditions to reimagine the boundaries of music teaching and learning. For example, even though reggae was taught in several classes, Student 1 provided the FKN of soca from her father, offering a new area of learning previously unexplored. In this way, FKN opens

up nuanced areas of specific types of music, adding to the overall learning in the classroom. According to Good-Perkins, expanding epistemologies to connect the school and home makes race visible. Musical pedagogy reflects social practice that broadens “the curriculum from its specific emphasis on Western classical music to include different musics in a way that ultimately does not tokenize or trivialize” (Hess, 2015, p. 337) racially diverse music practices. Music teaching practices must expand and embrace diverse music epistemologies and explore global music traditions through teachers who can foster anticolonial praxis using the FKN strategy to connect the home and school for the student’s benefit. Representation in hiring moves the inclusion needle forward as relationships between racialized bodies and institutions can only happen when BIWOC are hired.

3. Include Black Indigenous and Women of Colour in Educational Policy Creation

The Toronto Music School is an example of an institution that has a racially diverse and gender inclusive Board of Governors and is therefore able to offer culturally sustaining pedagogies because they understand the significance of developing curriculum and policies with grassroots communities and local members. Like the music teacher participants in this case study, who advocated for a creative jamming space to promote voices from the community, Rodríguez (2025) champions inclusion through making more spaces for WOC from diverse communities at decision-making tables where influential policies are created. In contrast, Harris’ Education Act with his Zero Tolerance Policy that marginalized Black youth through increased suspensions and expulsions might have looked very different if more WOC, especially mothers who are Black, had been involved in the process. Most likely, the Mexican American Studies program referred to

in Chapter 3 would not have been axed (Acosta and Mir, 2012; Cammarota, & Romero, 2011) had state educational bureaucrats been more racially diverse. Policies can be developed with greater subaltern engagement to deal nimbly with the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders, especially WOC and racialized students.

Perceived as promoting EDI, US state boards of education are currently under the threat of being eliminated altogether while music programs are on the chopping block in Canadian schools. Racialized voices and those who support racial equity are being silenced by powerful forces that seek to systemically disempower BIPOC in an effort to preserve White supremacy through neocolonial practices. The importance of bureaucracy in education, the significance of policies, and policy advisors from BIPOC communities is vital for institutional transformation from neocolonial oppression to anticolonial emancipation.

Final Remarks

Growing up in Toronto as a racialized girl in an immigrant-receiving area like Thorncliffe Park with lower than median incomes meant that diversity was normal among my peers but not in institutional representation. I identify with the families in the Priority Neighbourhood because in many ways, their story is my story. I do not remember the first person I met who did not look like me. My elementary class school pictures have kids who are Jamaican, Greek, Filipino, Chinese, Kenyan, and Australian but with teachers who were always White. Within the racially diverse context of my daily life, my identity was formed when my dad told stories about India, a land flowing with gold, jewels, and rivers alongside lush jungles ruled by tigers, elephants, and

peacocks. One of my favourite stories was about His Royal Highness, the Nizam of Hyderabad (1886-1967), featured on TIME magazine's 1937 cover as the richest man, who before the DeBeers mine at Kimberly, South Africa, controlled the world's diamond market. A progressive and kind ruler, he brought in electricity and built universities, including Osmania University, where my dad worked, and established several dams. Completed in 1931, the Nizam Sagar dam redirected water from the Manjira River, which I was named after, to prevent flooding and provide clean water to Hyderabad and irrigation for villages. Invariably, at this point, my mom would interject that in *her* fishing village along the Bay of Bengal, they ate shrimp, kingfish and crab every day. "Make a fist," she would say, "O, the shrimps in Kakinada! Double the size! And the crabs, bigger than your face, Munjeera." Note that we decided to anglicize the spelling of my name rather than taking a Western name; we settled on the phonetic writing of "Munjeera" because it was difficult for Canadians to produce the correct pronunciation of "Manjira" in English. It was not so much that my mom was trying to preserve her culture but that it was part of her normal lifestyle to eat the fresh daily catch. So once a month, my parents would get up early and trek to Chinatown, where they had found a treasure trove of seafood. Oblivious that these dinners were considered high end, I ate the so-called diminutive crustaceans in curry sauce surrounded by Vedic oil paintings at an intricately carved rosewood dinner table inlaid with ivory and pictures of ancient landmarks. On vacation in India in the mid-1990s, my mom's hometown lived up to its culinary and seaside promise, while Hyderabad reflected the colonizers' exploitation of resources, its former glory vanquished into urban squalor. Visiting postcolonial India was a nostalgic trip down memory lane, during which my parents mourned the failures of

Independence and the tragic loss of a country that existed now only in their hearts and minds. The contrast between my childhood stories and the postcolonial reality could not have been greater.

My parent's Indian FKN has motivated me to challenge existing stereotypes and seek validation that, if I can emulate leadership like Nizam of Hyderabad, who made a difference for the people, our knowledge, history, and culture will be valued. Growing up in the diverse environment of Toronto, I always felt I could contribute to institutional life in "the West" despite the neocolonial barriers unpacked in Chapter 2 that sought to subalternize me. Today, I engage in daily desubalterization practices on an individual level, such as participating in decision-making committees, making choices that ensure I do not subjugate myself, and interacting with everyone as an equal. My journey towards not being complicit in my own oppression feels emancipatory, and despite ongoing institutional barriers, satisfactory, especially having the opportunity to complete my doctorate.

There are many ways to challenge neocolonial oppression, and the combined power of diverse art and bureaucracy holds promise for institutional transformation. As discussed in the Introduction, art is powerful, but in terms of arts education and institutional recognition, it can disempower BIPOC, especially WOC in music, such as Nina Simone. As such, I advocate for *artivism*, art and activism, providing platforms for social transformation. In this way, music and art students can engage in

organizing community-based art projects, supporting student-led initiatives that address specific social issues, and facilitating partnerships with organizations and movements outside the traditional confines of the art world. Such initiatives enrich the students' educational experiences and contribute to a more just and equitable society by amplifying diverse voices and perspectives through artistic expression. (Rodriguez, 2025, p. 233)

To reiterate DuBois' notions about how art can be used for social justice and utilized by artists such as Beyoncé today: art is powerful in a way that supersedes academia.

Nonetheless, more policy reviews that include racially diverse communities are needed to work with policy advisors in educational administration, especially arts education as a way of including local grassroots knowledge in institutional transformation (Rodrigues, 2025). The most important transformation is that BIPOC, and especially WOC, are included and lead change in prominent roles of policy advisement, creation, implementation and reviews (Rodrigues, 2025), which would move towards greater racial equity. More research is necessary in anti/ de/ postcolonial praxis to learn about the challenges facing diverse educators as they resist White supremacy in Canadian education in a way that will promote BIWOC leadership for policy creation. With the current attacks on EDI, now more than ever anticolonial praxis is required.

Pop culture continues to lead the way, as exemplified by Ed Sheeran's recent album *Play*, co-written with Ilya Salmanzadeh, a Swedish-Iranian songwriter, which features Middle Eastern sounds using the IndoPersian instruments *santur* (dulcimer) and *ghatam* (a clay pot percussion) in the song "Azizam," meaning "my dear." The latest drop, "Sapphire," a fusion of Western and Punjabi sounds, promises to be the song of the 2025 summer. Bollywood's biggest star, Shah Rukh Khan, makes a cameo and *Falaknuma*, a former palace of the Nizam of Hyderabad's family is featured in the video. Most importantly, Sheeran sings his beats in Punjabi, backed up on vocals by cowriter, Arijit Singh. Sheeran connected his own funds of knowledge from Irish folk music that he found similar to the Punjabi beats sounds he learned about by collaborating with the music scene in Goa, a province in India formerly colonized by the Portuguese. If only

academia can foster greater collaborations using local global funds of knowledge, it may be possible to develop more connections worldwide in a way that respects and values racially diverse knowledge. Perhaps Brendan expressed it best when he prioritized the subaltern voices based on his anticolonial praxis with his students as he learned from them that, “The influence has to be from society in order to change how music is taught.” Indeed, despite changes to the Grammys that added 3000 new women in the voting category, the introduction of the category of “Best Traditional Country Album” reveals that there is limited progress in terms of acknowledging the accomplishments of racially diverse women like Beyoncé. Vigilance is key for long term sustainable activism and change.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The Helen Carswell Chair's Final Report (2021)

Sankofa Beatzz: Testing the Efficacy of the Funds of Knowledge Strategy for Music Education

What is this research about?

This research is about the Funds of Knowledge (FKN) strategy (Moll, 2005) that shows teachers how to build on inclusivity at the Toronto Music School. The FKN strategy scaffolds students' interests to include racialized families and their cultural backgrounds. Teachers asked students:

- 1) if they see themselves reflected in the music they are being taught?
- 2) What kinds of music reflect their interests, races, and cultures?
- 3) how their family culture can be reflected in music learning?

What did the researcher do? What you need to know.

Sankofa is a concept from the Akan people of Ghana. It means to go back and get that which was lost. In this case, the idea is to preserve the culture of immigrant and racialized parents.

Music education, from sources like the Royal Conservatory of Music have traditionally focused on White male European composers. In the context of an increasingly globalized and multicultural world, racialized music students need to see themselves in the music they are learning. There is a racial and cultural gap among the curriculum, teachers, and students. For these reasons, students may never fully engage with their learning and eventually lose interest in music education.

The researcher conducted a literature review of twenty-five research projects that used FKN across America. In each case FKN was adapted to the context. In every case, teachers collaborated to find out how to include racialized community knowledge into the classroom. Some examples of FKN are political knowledge (Gallo & Link, 2015), how to obtain passports (Moll et al. 2005) and use social media for social justice (Cammarota, 2008 as cited in Moll 2015). In this study, collaboration was limited due to COVID. It was not possible to meet in person and discuss lesson plans. However, like the other 25 studies, FKN as a strategy was adapted to the needs of the Priority Neighbourhood for music learning. The researcher showed the participants how to try to include racialized musical artists into the curriculum, especially female singers that reflect the students' cultural and racial background.

What did the researcher find?

The primary participants in this project were three music teachers from the Toronto Music School who were racially diverse: one Asian, one Black and one White teacher. While all three teachers were concerned about diversity in their teaching methods, one teacher in particular was previously attuned to race issues as a result of their own racial background and culture. Two teachers cited personal creative expression, individuality and asserting an identity in artistic practice as top priorities. Parents were also revealed as an important stakeholder in music education. Further, the importance of administrative support was also revealed from the study. At first, the professional development (PD) was given only half an hour of time. However, the researcher reiterated the importance of holding three PD sessions and supporting teachers'

efficacy in utilizing FKN as a strategy for learning and teaching music. In the end, teachers received enough time to learn how to incorporate FKN into the music classrooms. It was important the teachers receive the full PD because of the sensitive nature of asking for racial inclusion. However, due to the small number of participants, it may be difficult to generalize the findings.

How can you use this research?

FKN can be used to foster more racial inclusion. Given the recent discovery of mass graves of residential school children, involving communities in educational institutions has risen to the forefront. Education is often seen as a way of emancipation. Rarely is the negative impact on racialized communities acknowledged. Even more rarely is the impact on racialized parents examined. FKN demonstrates how music teachers can develop respect for racialized mothers and fathers. When parents' cultures are included in the music classroom, education can strengthen ties to the family and community rather than committing cultural genocide as in the case of the First Nations lands that were colonized. FKN can be an antidote to the mistakes of the past and demonstrates the importance of decolonizing education.

About the researcher

Munjeera Jefford is a PhD student in Social and Political Thought at York University. Her research areas are decolonizing education management.

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Appendix B: Music Teacher Handout with Follow-up Research Questions and Student Responses

<p>Questions</p>	<p>What music shows up in your life? For example, TikTok or with your family? What music are you seeking to have in your life?</p> <p>Do you see yourself in the music?</p> <p>Does the music you learn resonate with you?</p> <p>Does the music you listen to represent the culture in your home?</p> <p>I see you are interested in _____, do you see yourself in them?</p> <p>Do you see an artist in your culture that you like?</p>
<p>CM</p>	<p>Some genres that CM mentioned were ‘Old-school’ R&B, K-pop, Spiritual and Gospel music, Soca & Reggae.</p> <p>Most of this music was introduced through family – Soca and Reggae were played in the house and even K-pop was discovered through the introduction from an aunt through Youtube’s recommended videos. Soca & Reggae is connected to the family’s background – St. Vincent & Guyana.</p>

	<p>Gospel and spiritual music was discovered through church.</p> <p>With all of these genres, CM described being introduced to the music from church and family though after its discovery, being sought out independently in ways like creating playlists and listening at home or in the car.</p> <p>Prior to this study, we have been learning a K-pop song by the group discovered with auntie through YouTube, ‘Life Goes On’ by ‘BTS’.</p>
TM	<p>Reggae, everybody in the household listens to ‘a lot of reggae’– family is originally from Jamaica. Mom is often singing and plays gospel music (i.e. Stone cold, colour blind is always singing. CM and TM enjoy rap. Mom sings and plays Gospel, (i.e. Stone cold, Glee – Colourblind) His own music discovered through Youtube, XXXTacion, Cradles, Sub-urban found through listening to music in the shower - found on Youtube.</p> <p>Doesn’t feel like music is a representation of himself; just something he enjoys when he is bored.</p>

<p>JD</p>	<p>Finds music ‘everywhere’; ‘listening to certain sounds that make a rhythm is in a way, a kind of music’ In dance class, older hits are often used (i.e. ‘Loveshack, B-52s). Mom and sister are both learning piano; sister listens to music in the morning. JD’s own preference – specific genre doesn’t matter, likes music in general Radio - pop, YouTube, hits. Some genres he listens to include classical, orchestra, rap, drill (UK rap), grime. “See” himself in music, relates emotionally and matches emotional qualities he is feeling; matches his mood to do other things; for example, listening to faster music before playing basketball. Family is originally from St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Caribbean music shows up once in a while; mom listens to gospel in connection to religious practices through church</p> <p>Mom + Aunt prefer Caribbean + gospel music</p> <p>JD connects to gospel at church, and listens occasionally in personal time but usually prefers other genres first</p> <p>*Note; JD is currently participating in a songwriting project with additional Toronto Music School faculty – JD is currently working on writing his own music and generating ideas and lyrics with production support.</p>
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Appendix C: Forty Examples of the Funds of Knowledge Case Studies

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Appendix D: Toward a Non-Extractive Community Engagement by Dr. Andrea Davis

The following resource for researchers undertaking projects in racialized contexts was designed by York University students taking a course similar to the model United Nations program that engages students to study social issues and find solutions.

Preliminary Questions for York Students to Ask Ourselves Before Engaging with the Priority Neighbourhood

The following list of questions was designed by C4 course York students of 2019/2020 and is intended for any York student who is interested in working on research or projects which involve the Priority Neighbourhood. Too often we at York have engaged with the Priority Neighbourhood in an extractive manner by running projects which result in York University's ultimate ownership over the data, stories, and experiences of the Priority Neighbourhood members. Too often these projects have disproportionately benefitted York community members (through funding, publications, awards, etc.) rather than the Priority Neighbourhood members. We have created this document with the hope that York students may use it as a preliminary way to gauge whether they should be working in the Priority Neighbourhood. The questions are divided into three sections: Motives, Context, and Accountability. We believe that in order to work toward a non-extractive model of community engagement students must thoroughly educate themselves and reflect on these three areas. This document is by no means a comprehensive solution to this challenge, rather it should serve merely as a starting point. We

encourage anyone using this document to seek out readings that can help them gain deeper insights into the ideas presented.

1) MOTIVES

Reflecting honestly on what draws you to community engagement in the Priority Neighbourhood is a necessary first step in doing work in the community. It is important for you to unpack what your innermost self truthfully seeks to gain through your project. Sometimes even seemingly selfless motives are often fueled by a desire for praise or acclaim. An unexamined “saviour complex” for example, can be gravely harmful despite being rooted in good intentions. When we are motivated by a belief that people are in need of “saving” we dehumanize them because we eliminate the possibility of seeing them as equals. This can result in treating the Priority Neighbourhood members in patronizing or infantilizing ways. Using the following questions to examine what your true motives are may allow you to avoid causing harm in the Priority Neighbourhood:

- What is your honest reason for wanting to engage with the Priority Neighbourhood?
- What do you hope to achieve from working on this project?
- Would you still do this project if it would not result in your desired outcome?
- Who will this work benefit and in what ways?

- How can you lessen your personal material benefit from this work?
- Would you do this project for no reward? (a good grade, a publication, an award etc.
- How can you increase the material benefit of this work for the Priority Neighbourhood?
- Do you feel a desire to “save” or “fix” a community which you perceive as “disadvantaged”?
- How can you move away from holding a “saviouristic” attitude with regard to the Priority Neighbourhood?
- How can you educate yourself about the ways in which “saviouristic” attitudes are harmful?
- If you’re starting a new project that was conceived by you (or someone you’re working with), have you considered why you are not offering instead to work on an existing project in the community?
- Have you connected with any community members about what community-led existing projects may need support?

- Are you willing to not be the “designer” or “leader” of this project if it means supporting work that community residents value?
- How are you ensuring that your motives are not self-serving?
- How will you ensure that the needs/wants/voices of community members are the guiding force for your work?
- How will you ensure that you are not projecting your own ideas about what you think is right/good/helpful onto the Priority Neighbourhood members?

2) CONTEXT

No project or person exists in a vacuum. We are all living in response to many oppressive systems which structure our realities (e.g. colonialism, capitalism, white supremacy, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, ableism etc.). Understanding the contexts in which we find ourselves empowers us to create change. Similarly, we are empowered to do more meaningful work when we understand how we fit into the history of the relationship between York University and the Priority Neighbourhood. Unfortunately, York has a history of an extractive model of community engagement with the Priority Neighbourhood. This has looked like York University benefiting more from this relationship through such practices as over-researching, creating inaccessible publications out of community members’ experiences, providing funding for York researchers, and ultimately perpetuating harmful narratives about the Priority Neighbourhood. As students at York, understanding this history offers us an opportunity to not repeat these mistakes but rather

to work toward community engagement that is neither self-serving nor extractive. The following questions may be a good starting point in acquiring a better understanding about your position as a York student within a larger context.

- Have you made an effort to educate yourself about settler colonialism, racism, and poverty in Canada?
- Have you made an effort to educate yourself about the history of the Priority Neighbourhood?
- Have you made an effort to educate yourself about the relationship between York University and the Priority Neighbourhood?
- Have you made an effort to educate yourself about the ways in which York University has engaged in the extractive, self-serving over researching of the Priority Neighbourhood?
- Have you made an effort to educate yourself about the harmful narratives surrounding the Priority Neighbourhood and how York University has participated in perpetuating these narratives?
- Do you view the Priority Neighbourhood as monolithic?
- How will you ensure that you are not allowing one or two people to speak for an entire community?

- Have you made an effort to understand your own points of privilege and the ways in which your presence in the Priority Neighbourhood could cause harm?
- Are you able to respect and accept beliefs and positions that differ from your own?

3) ACCOUNTABILITY

When working with the Priority Neighbourhood it is important that you are taking consistent actions to uphold your commitment to non-extractive community engagement. It is not enough to merely reflect on these ideas. Nor is it enough to talk about them. In order for us to create long lasting, meaningful, and beneficial relationships between York University and the Priority Neighbourhood it is imperative that we hold ourselves accountable in our actions. This means intentionally using our positions of relative power and privilege to redistribute resources, ensure that the Priority Neighbourhood has access and ownership to the information our projects acquire, and most importantly, ensure that we are always centering the Priority Neighbourhood members' voices. The following questions may help you begin to consider what accountability can look like for your project.

- Do you have meaningful connections in the Priority Neighbourhood to whom you will be accountable?
- What resources do you have access to by means of your relative position of power (affiliation with York) and how will you leverage them into the community?

- How will you make the results of your research or project accessible to the Priority Neighbourhood members?
- What are you doing to ensure that your project is non-extractive? (In other words, how are you going to ensure that the Priority Neighbourhood, not York University, is in possession of its own stories, data, experience, art etc.)
- What will you do to ensure that you are not participating in the over-researching of the Priority Neighbourhood?
- Are you willing to speak up if you witness extractive practices occurring in the Priority Neighbourhood?

Appendix E: Weekly Music Lesson Template

Class/Student: CM younger sibling/TM older sibling

Musical Learning Goal: By the end of this lesson, CM and TM will share some specific examples of artists and songs enjoyed by his household and should be able to begin learning some specific songs mentioned.

	TASK	ACTIVITY DETAILS
	<p>Prompting the student to introduce music they already know from their family experiences</p>	<p>The student will take the position of the ‘teacher’, and give an introduction to the specific genres mentioned in his questionnaire response. They will answer the question ‘If someone had never heard of those two genres before, what songs would you share with them?’</p> <p>This will be a ‘listening session’ with teacher and student engaging in the music together.’</p>
	<p>Identify skill-appropriate songs he introduces and begin learning them</p>	<p>From the examples that are shared, I will identify songs that are appropriate to their skill-levels and relevant to skills they are already working on and begin teaching chords, passages, or improvisational tools from those</p>

		songs.
		TM shared an introduction to Reggae, and specifically identified Bob Marley. He shared the song 'Redemption Song' and we began learning the musical introduction. As an added surprise, his mom sang along with the song from the sidelines of the lesson.
		CM shared examples of music from the 'Soca' and 'Reggae' genres. Artists included 'SOCO, Wizkid, Dumebi, Joro, Kes, Machel Montano.' We discussed the influence of African rhythms and harmonies in some of the examples shared (i.e. Use of Major Triads). We ended the class by working on the D minor harmonic scale as a tool for improvisation on the song 'Joro' by Wizkid

Sankofa Beatzz - Mixed Methods Research to Test the Efficacy of the Funds of Knowledge Strategy for Music Education



SANKOFA

Reach back (SAN) to reclaim that which is lost (KO) in order to move forward (FA)

A metaphorical symbol used by the Akan people of Ghana to express the importance of reaching back to knowledge gained in the past and bringing it into the present in order to make positive progress.

Artifactual Literacies - Share a song or instrument that is meaningful to you.



Questions to Explore:

- **What is the funds of knowledge (FKN) strategy?**
- **What theories support cultural inclusion in the classroom?**
 - **What assumptions hinder racial inclusion in education?**
 - **Can FKN improve the experience of learning for music students?**

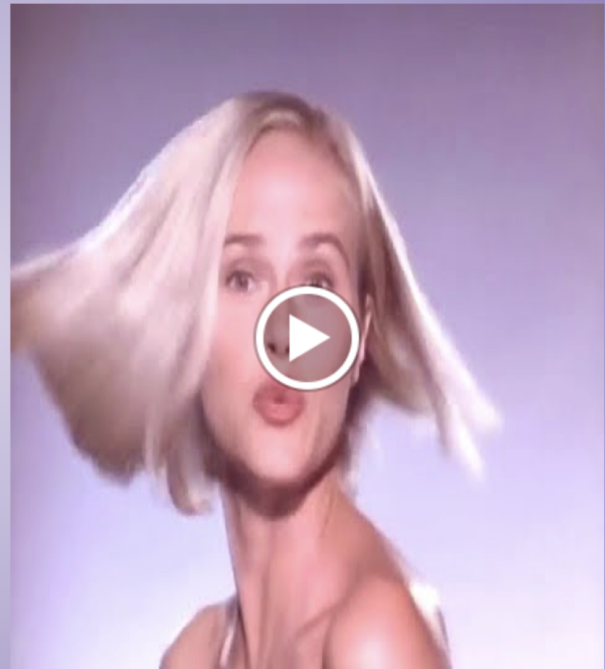
What country are these songs from?



What is the name of these instruments and what country are they from?

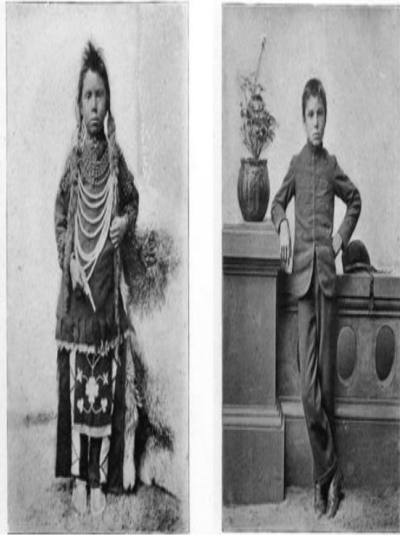


A Realistic 1990s View of the Rodney King Beating



3 Models of Education

Assimilation



Thomas Moore before and after his entrance into the Regina Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan in 1874.
Library and Archives Canada / NL-022474

Integration



Transnationalism

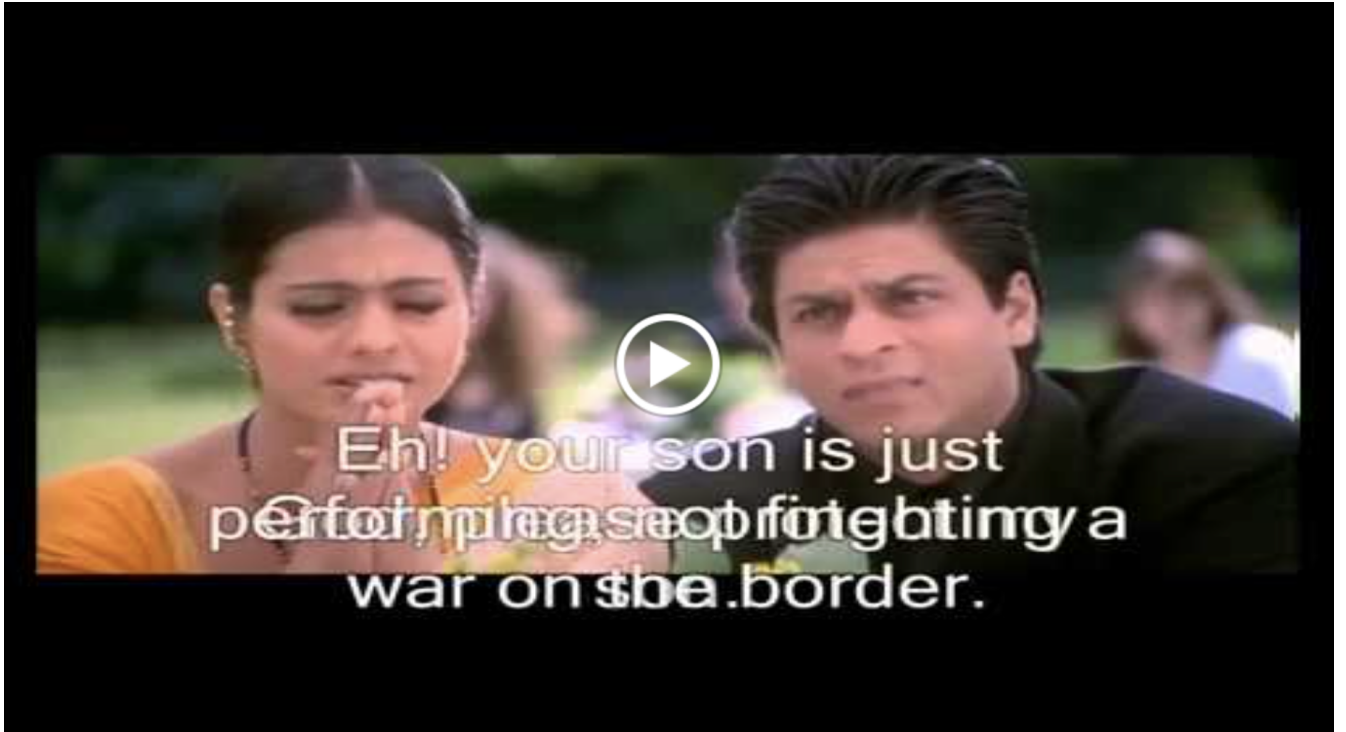


“

Relationships transcend time and space across continents and generations to reproduce cultural identities.

”



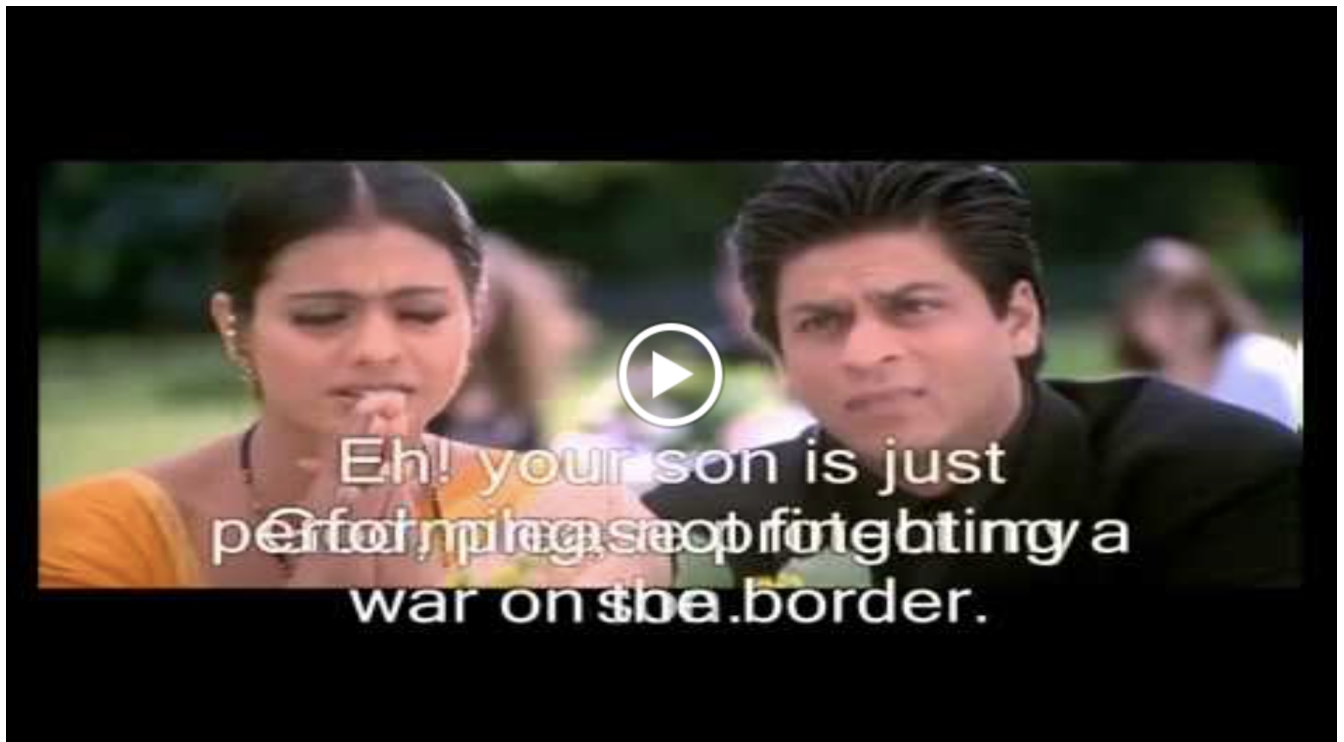


Nigerian National Anthem - Love of music can build cultural identity and community connections





Teachers interviewed Mexican family members to find out the daily habits of the children's lives, the types of knowledge involved in the parents' occupations and any other information discussed within the family unit. For example, many fathers worked as mechanics, so sons knew a lot about cars. Asked them how to be inclusive in the lessons and incorporate their knowledge into the lesson plans.



Funds of Knowledge

- **In the early 1990s, there was an influx of students from Mexico into Arizona**
- **The children of illegal immigrants began to attend schools in Tucson**
- **Predominantly middle-class White teachers struggled to connect with the new students**
- **Began as an ethnographic study (1990) under Luis Moll and Norma Gonzalez who studied how to improve math and science learning**