



Dropping My Anchor Here: A Post-Oppositional Approach to Social Justice Work in Education

Kakali Bhattacharya, Kansas State University

Abstract

In this paper, I explore the ways in which post-oppositional theorizing can be used to bridge between qualitative inquiry and praxis to address issues of inequities in education. I present an overview of how oppositional thinking has been privileged in academia creating an ontological trapping, with subsequent drainage of our energies and efforts. I offer post-oppositional onto-epistemologies as an invitation to examine our wounds, deeply held belief systems, and understand their manifestations forms while using a critical, post-oppositional lens. Thus, I advocate for cultivating conditions via post-oppositionality that would create onto-epistemic shifts in our scholarly activist work in education. Critical inquiry using post-oppositionality allows for imaginations and enactments of possibilities (without demonizing oppositional discourses), that affect the lives of those who suffer from the networked effects of various social structures of oppression in education.

Keywords: *post-opposition, onto-epistemology, nepantlera, social justice*

The concept of inquiry within the educational landscape has been intersected by positivist, post-positivist, critical, and deconstructive approaches over several decades. Yet, somehow, critical problems in education are addressed in fragmented ways. There are those who work in theoretical, pragmatic, and methodological spaces, and the conversations between/across all three spaces are minimal, yet necessary to activate, especially within the context of critical inquiry (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009). Perhaps such gaps are indications of training and/or career preferences, however, the inequities that exist in education need the collective talent, intelligence, commitment, and partnership of educational scholars, leaders, and practitioners for not only challenging status quo of dominant hegemonic discourses, but creating possibilities of an equitable future through situated, contextualized, fierce truth telling.¹ While on one hand critical and deconstructive scholars have opened up spaces with their critiques, and rightfully so, on the other hand such critiques have caused a paralysis of what needs to be done on the ground at a material level while putting theory to work.

Over the last decade, there has been methodological debates about what truth claims can be made, who should make those claims, what putting theory to work might look like, and what methodological moves are considered simplistic while discourse about evidence-based inquiry gained traction in all areas of education including funding, evaluation, and accountability

1. Aaron Kuntz (2015) discusses the role of the qualitative researcher where he unpacks truth telling versus bull-shitting.

(Bhattacharya, 2014; Bloch, 2004; Cannella & Lincoln, 2004; Koro-Ljungberg, 2004; Pearl & Knight, 2010). These discussions have created several academic camps that are in opposition to one another, and while such oppositions can be fruitful for academic dialogues and interrogation of idea, one truth that cannot be denied is that there is an incredible amount of human suffering within educational spaces due to the ways in which social structures of oppression are enacted in these spaces. In other words, even if the subaltern cannot speak (Chakravorty Spivak, 1993), the subaltern still suffers, whether or not such suffering could be diligently, transparently, and accurately addressed.

Framing and Orientation of this Paper

In this paper, I use post-oppositional theorizing that informs the ways in which qualitative inquiry can be brought to bear on issues of educational inequities, while moving away from methodological paralysis to bridging theory, inquiry, and praxis. I make some truth claims, which are not absolute, but are presented as anchors that I have dropped for myself for doing the bridgework informed by post-oppositional onto-epistemology. I explore these truth claims critically², while specifically drawing from exemplars that demonstrate partnership between stakeholders who work in theoretical, methodological, and practitioner spaces. I argue that such anchors are necessary to build theory-driven solidarity in praxis, feel less paralyzed, and make claims without being afraid of critiques. Critiques³ are necessary for strengthening claims, however, they should not create such fear, that one feels paralyzed to make truth claims. Indeed those who are experiencing material suffering would be agentic enough to make their own truth claims if one was willing to listen. Given that truth claims about minoritized populations are always already constructed, it becomes necessary for those who work in critical spaces to disrupt such construction while being aware of the trappings of oppositional discursive relationships.

Thus, the choice of post-oppositional theorizing is driven by the need to move beyond politicized academic camps to spaces of imagination and possibility without the need to place this work in opposition to that which came before, where we justify our ideas as better than what was presented, as if to create some sort of intellectual victory. Ana Louise Keating (2013) describes this cultivation of oppositional culture in her work:

My undergraduate and graduate work trained me to think oppositionally, to structure my articles and book chapters as a series of binary discussions that proceed through nuanced contrasts: first, describe other scholars' theories and perspectives; second, demonstrate the limitations in their views; third, explain why my views are superior to those of other scholars; fourth, persuade readers to reject the other scholars' views and embrace mine. (p. 2)

2. My use of the term critical refers to anti-oppression work conducted informed by social structures of inequities. Within such work, lies interrogation (reflection?) of limits and possibilities of knowledge making, of engaging in actions, and considering possibilities for challenging dominant discourses and their effects in relational, generative ways.

3. I refer to critiques to imply the deconstructive work that can be done to break apart modernist, structuralist, humanist assumptions that could leave scholars who work from critical race theory, critical feminist perspectives in a state of paralysis since it is difficult to work from these premises knowing the existing deconstructive critiques (see Hatch's concern discussed later in this paper). All paradigms are intersected with problems and potentials and we could use a multipronged approach to have meaningful dialogues about large-scale inequities in education and actions that would address these inequities. Complex problems are messy and might invite imperfect solutions, but it is only with sustained, introspected, and refined efforts that these problems could be legitimately understood and addressed.

Keating details a practice is valued and privileged in academia, where scholars who can deliver the best oppositional, critique-driven work, are celebrated as strong academics and philosophical thinkers and thereby reinforcing such oppositional thinking. Post-oppositional thinking allows for holding contradictory ideas in one space, without the need to situate one argument better than other even if such an argument aligns best with our epistemic and ontological positions. In this way post-oppositional onto-epistemologies align well with Minh-ha's (1989) notion of blurring the boundaries between self and other, while still holding space for the unique ways in which self and other could function. Minh-ha states:

I/i can be I or i, you and me both involved. We sometimes includes, other times excludes me...you may stand on the other side of the hill once in a while, but you may also be me, while remaining what you are and what I am not. (p. 92)

Thus, Minh-ha's illumination of self and other creates space for oppositional discourses as well as what could possibly be beyond such discourses. Therefore, post-oppositional theorizing invites us to think non-oppositionally without demonizing oppositional discourses. Post-oppositional thinking could trigger relational methods amongst other viable, realistic alternatives. Because the problems facing education are complex and ever evolving, the solutions then would have to also be dynamic, multidirectional, multidisciplinary, multivoiced, provocative, and multipronged. In other words, if we are to fight against social injustices in education, how do we do so theoretically, methodologically, and pragmatically, without being co-opted into the binary of the oppressor and the oppressed? What if the moves towards correcting social injustices are only just breaking some walls in the master's house, with the master's tools, without dismantling the master's house as described by Audre Lorde (1984)? I do not want to engage in breaking down the walls of one room in the master's house and cheering ourselves along and any other friend who could do the same, when the entire master's house has an infected foundation.

Additionally, in this paper I discuss two exemplars where post-oppositional theorizing has been enacted methodologically to address issues of inequities in education. I align with Henry Giroux (2009) as he states the role of theory in critical work is where "Theory...becomes a transformative activity that views itself explicitly political and commits itself to projection of a future that is as yet unfulfilled" (p. 35). This relationship between theory and praxis is also one that supports how Darder et al. (2009) situate Freire's perspective on theory and praxis when they state, "Cut off from practice, theory becomes abstraction or simple verbalism. Separated from theory, practice becomes ungrounded activity or blind activism" (p. 13).

My goal is not to exaggerate a binaried division between theory and praxis or discourse and materiality. Instead, I highlight the perceived polarized divisions in the current moment of qualitative research to illustrate that such boundaries are illusory and superficial. I promote an ethics of care and practice that support onto-epistemic shifts to explore interdependent relationships between thought and materiality that focuses on injustices in education.

Post-Oppositional Onto-Epistemological Framing

Recently, scholars have called for more post-oppositional (Keating, 2013) ways of doing academic work and engaging contemplative approaches in higher education (Barbezat & Bush, 2014). AnaLouise Keating (2013) describes *oppositional consciousness* as representing

a binary either/or epistemology and praxis that structures our perceptions, politics, and actions through a resistant energy—a reaction against that which we seek to transform. Oppositional consciousness can take a variety of modes and occurs both inside and outside academic settings (classrooms, journals, etc.). (p. 2)

Within this framing of oppositional consciousness, *post-oppositional consciousness* could include expanding and interrogating binary discourses, as well as observing the ways an oppositional stance develops within ourselves, creating our individualized resistances, which eventually manifests outwardly in our actions and experiences. The process of interrogation or expansion does not require opposing or dismissing other scholars' work. Instead, it introduces a space in which we can either find shared ground, or observe and seek to understand why oppositional stances are manifested within us, without resistance. One way to conceptualize post-oppositional consciousness is to ask, "How can transcending oppositional discourses create space for the possibility and the hope that qualitative research can inform social justice work?" Such a question inspires me to look for choices, to imagine beyond opposition, and to forge solidarity with those with whom I might disagree.

Oppositional discourses have fueled qualitative research for decades (Bloch, 2004; Feur, Towne, & Shavelson, 2002; Lather, 2004; Lincoln & Cannella, 2004; Peshkin, 1993). Qualitative researchers have had to justify how their work matters and the value of qualitative inquiry itself. They have had to legitimize such inquiry against the current backdrop of positivist and post-positivist understandings of scientific knowledge, which not only drive funded knowledge construction but also discipline the process and the products of dissertation research, publications, and tenure and promotion eligibility.

Somewhere along the way, we gave ourselves permission to conduct inquiry that was not simply quantitative-lite—developing an ever-evolving, flexible understanding of qualitative research that privileges paradigm proliferation (Lather, 2006). However, in our efforts to be inclusive and diverse in our approaches, we have witnessed bitter oppositional discourses within qualitative research. We have seen such conversations within the contested understanding of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2009); in current criticisms of efforts to code data (Pierre & Jackson, 2014; St. Pierre, 2011); and among those who find such critiques of coding to be reductive, monolithic, and exclusionary (Saldaña, 2014).

J. Amos Hatch (2006), former editor of the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, perceives the postmodern/poststructural turn in qualitative research to be paralyzing for some who conduct empirical work. Hatch (2006) argues:

It is no wonder that many scholars who count themselves as qualitative researchers felt incapacitated by the powerful ideas of a post-everything world. Notions such as the crisis of representation, the elevation of deconstruction and the end of ethnography send shivers down the spines of many postpositivist, constructivist and critical-feminist researchers at the same time they are compelled to take them seriously. Many of these folks fought on the front lines of the paradigm wars of the 1980s and 1990s, and now they and their students feel trapped between retrenched positivist forces on the one hand and stinging poststructuralist critiques on the other. (p. 405)

Imagining critiques from other paradigms, even if the assumptions of those paradigms were vastly different, generated a call for a change in our thinking about every aspect of qualitative research. This included our epistemology, ontology, theoretical framework, methodology, methods of data collection and data analysis, representation, ethical tensions, subjectivities, and reflexivity. Hatch (2006) reflects, “Those who continue to think of qualitative research as data-based, carefully executed, systematic inquiry may find themselves with less and less space in which to operate” (p. 405). Yet, there is no reason why systematic, data-based inquiry would become theoretically void; perhaps the discursive space for valued theoretical application can be broadened to include expanded ways of thinking and working with high, mid, and micro level theories.

Hatch (2006) expresses concern based on the proliferation of *post-* discourses, noting the increasing number of scholars who discuss/critique research, theory, and data analysis without conducting a single empirical study (beyond their own dissertations), and who teach their students to do the same. Hatch does not demonize all *post-* work, but worries that “the next generation of qualitative researchers will have been well prepared to theorize, deconstruct, and critique but have no clue how to design a study, collect data and generate findings from a thoughtful analysis” (p. 406). Yet, a question arises, reflecting on the call of this special edition issue, how could future researchers move towards a critical praxis, if somehow their efforts are more invested in engaging in critique than in praxis? More importantly, how do we understand materiality of human suffering and oppression in educational spaces if we only engage in the abstractions and critique of such abstractions?

Norman Denzin (2008) addressed Hatch’s (2006) concerns from the perspective of a scholar who fought paradigm battles, contributed to paradigm proliferation, and pushed mixed-methods discussions to be more responsive to non-dominant paradigms of inquiry. While Denzin did not agree with all of Hatch’s ideas, he, too, expressed concern that the perceived discursive divisions between various paradigms of inquiry in qualitative research would damage our enterprise. He responded by calling for an expanded big tent. Denzin (2008) stated:

We cannot afford to fight with one another. Mixed-methods scholars have carefully studied the many different branches of the poststructural tree (Creswell, 2007). The same cannot be said for the poststructuralists. Nor can we allow the arguments from the SBR⁴ community to divide us. We must learn from the paradigm conflicts of the 1980s to not over-reach, to not engage in polemics, to not become too self-satisfied. (p. 321)

Over the past decade, I have witnessed factions arise as qualitative research becomes divided between politicized academic camps. At one of the most widely recognized and celebrated international qualitative research conferences, two threads of conversation occur repeatedly. One is focused on high theory. The other focuses on making theory accessible for empirical work on the ground, and questions the pragmatic feasibility of some theoretical stances. For example, during a high theory presentation, a high school teacher asked the presenter, “I like the way you use high theory to critique qualitative research, but how could I take this back to my school and apply it when we are bombarded with accountability measures, where our performances and raises are not calculated just based on our work, and every day it seems we are being pressurized even more and more. How would I take the ideas you have presented and put it to work in a pragmatic way?”

4. Scientifically Based Research.

The presenter immediately launched another critique based on the premise of the inquirer's question, deconstructing the binary relationship between theory and praxis and cautioned the inquirer that it would be dangerous to maintain a division between theory and praxis. However, there was no discussion about how one might build a bridge between theory and praxis since there was already an interest in putting theory to work in a problematic context in education. This division, or at least the perception of this division, creates oppositional discourses, including a false dichotomy and perhaps an inaccurate assumption of the mutual exclusivity of theory and praxis.

While practically all disciplines honor oppositional thinking, I return to Hatch's concern presented earlier about the role of *post-* discourses. *Post-* discourses are always already oppositional because they are set up as critiques. Put another way, postmodernism critiques modernism, poststructuralism critiques structuralism, posthumanism critiques humanism, and so on. Therefore, these discourses are in relation to that which they critique. The critiques offered sometimes create a trapping for reductive binaries, situating the critique-driven discourse as the better, more desirable discursive choice between itself and that which it critiques. For example, these oppositional discourses create binary relationships between insights and ambiguity, essentialized truth and multiplicity, core self and multiple selves, authenticity of being and multiplicity of becoming, and so on.

Therefore, the argument forwarded is that the call to generate insights after conducting interpretive qualitative research is somehow incommensurable with the ambiguity that qualitative research could provide within its inquiry process and within the research report created. Why would insights need to be just this one fixed thing? Why cannot an insight be about ambiguity, multiplicity, and keeping things in play? Similarly, criticisms are forwarded about essentialized truths to favor multiplicities. If I think in multiplicities, follow my rhizomatic tracings of thoughts, and I feel that this is key to who I am and what I do, and it is my onto-epistemological framing, then can I not argue that this notion of impermanence is a part of my essential truth and core being? In addition to blurring the boundaries between the binaried discourses, my point here is that we live our lives in such complexities and ambiguities that language is not sufficient to capture them all. However, if we use our materiality to inform the ways in which we can make language perform, then are we not restricting ourselves within binary driven oppositional discourses where meaning is fixed on one side of the binary and it multiplies and becomes permanently deferred on the other side? Our dynamic lived realities do not portray such clean divisions. Therefore, truth telling and social justice work need to somehow come to terms with the need to be agentic and yet not be limited by a structure within academia that makes us fight against each other to claim intellectual victories, and collect accolades.

If I am being completely honest, I must acknowledge the pain I have experienced as a result of seeing fellow academics express caustic oppositional stances to one other, as well as from my personal experiences of standing in opposition to my colleagues. While we can agree intellectually that differing perspectives need not be mutually exclusive and value the inclusion of diverse perspectives, we are still called upon by journal editors and publishers to demonstrate that our scholarship is somehow better, superior, sharper, smarter, more sophisticated, more nuanced, and so on. With such arguments we prove our work to be worthy of legitimization through publication, which informs how we will teach and mentor the next generation of qualitative researchers.

Simply put, we create our niches with like-minded scholars. We cite each other's work. We begin to create a field. The moment we do so, we distinguish ourselves from that which currently exists, because our scholarly insights need to be different, unique. They must produce—at the very least—some kind of new knowledge, in some kind of new way. By creating our very own

niche-based field, we create our own communities of practices (Lave & Wenger, 2003) and our own normative discourses. Yes, we can critique grand narratives that once marginalized our perspectives. But once we have gathered our own people, we somehow un/willingly create our own centers, narratives, and citational privileges. We thereby construct our own oppositional stance against those who are not us: who do not think like us, who do not read the same scholarly works we do, who do not use the same continental philosophers we do to work theory into data analysis...and so on.

However, I acknowledge that oppositional sensibilities have intersected several of my scholarly and teaching moments. I have always promoted, supported, and contributed to anti-racist, anti-colonial, anti-heteronormative, anti-classist, and anti-imperialistic discourses as part of my social justice teaching and research agenda. Yet like Keating (2013), engaging in resistance against social injustice has situated me squarely in oppositional discourses. I do not intend to imply that I should not be an advocate for these social justice agendas. However, I have noticed how drained of energy I have felt, locked in battle with my crusading agendas. The more time I invest in engaging in such oppositional critique-driven discourses, the less time I can invest in understanding the ways in which my truth-telling could connect to praxis, to empirical work, to building bridges across various stakeholders interested in challenging certain structures of inequity in education.

Keating (2013) describes an alarmingly harmful consequence on our being when we look at how fragmented parts of ourselves retain oppositional energies, even when we are not in a battlefield, because we have internalized and created high value for an oppressive system that rewards us for engaging in oppositional discourses.

Our internal fragmentations—our intra-divisions, as it were—have their source at least partially in the oppositional energies (and the dichotomous thinking behind them) that the groups used to combat social oppression. We can't turn off the negative energies once we remove ourselves from the battlefield. We take these energies with us, into our work, our homes, our minds, our bodies, our souls. They eat away at us, devouring us as we direct this oppositional thinking at one another and at ourselves. We fragment. We crumble. We deteriorate from within. And then we regroup. We begin again. And on to the next corrosive battle. (p. 9)

It is this repeated practice within and outside academia that prevents us from truth telling and showing up in ways that are authentic to our being since there is a danger of being battle-fatigued, (and by that I do not mean one fixed way of being and knowing, but rather attending to the iterative ways in which we understand our ontological assumptions through our ever-evolving multiple relations and practices) to do the social justice work that we are inspired to do. I consider this a deep ontological trapping and therefore, I am using post-oppositional ontologies to engage in truth telling and social justice work to expand our practice beyond oppositional intellectual victories in the name of critical scholarship. Truth telling, for me, involves writing from within subaltern ontologies, rather than writing about it. My focus in truth telling is the need to highlight interrelatedness of being and a radical interconnectedness in our collective struggles and liberation while attending to internal fragmentations. Such an agenda would motivate me to scrutinize my wounds caused by fragmentations and move towards an ongoing effort to heal while projecting such effort outwards. In other words, if I am fragmented by the binary discourse of the oppressor and the oppressed, then a post-oppositional approach could be to blur that division within me, to look for the reasons why my survival and freedom are contingent on what the oppressor validates and find

ways to imagine myself as whole, beyond the actions of the oppressor and project those ways outwardly. Perhaps then we could ask questions like, how do we challenge oppressive structures without being trapped in a binary relation with oppression? How do we inform our strategies of survival, organization, and progress driven by an agenda that is deeply healing instead of being an iterative cycle of energy drainage?

Truth-telling then is driven by fearlessness, a willingness to be vulnerable to criticisms, and travel in and out of multiple worldviews to refine an agenda against inequities and injustices, by building bridges across oppositional discourses, or at least not allow oppositional energies have a draining effect on one's being. And in doing so, truth telling cultivates the conditions for destabilizing established belief systems within one's being and the ways in which such beliefs manifest outwardly.

Anzaldúa's *Nepantlera* and *Nepantla*

To answer such questions, I have sought refuge in Gloria Anzaldúa's (1987/1999) notion of *nepantlera*, one who is comfortable moving in and out many worldviews without needing to stay in any one. Keating (2013) explains that a *nepantlera* "represents a type of threshold person or world traveler: someone who enters into and interacts with multiple, often conflicting, political/cultural/ ideological/ethnic/etc. worlds and yet refuses to entirely adopt, belong to, or identify with any single belief, group, or location" (p. 12). Anzaldúa's use of the term *nepantlera* is an adaptation of a commonly known Náhuatl word, *nepantla*, which means "in-between space" and includes ontological, epistemic, and ethical dimensions (Keating, 2013). Anzaldúa shares her understanding of *nepantla*:

Nepantla is the site of transformation. The place where different perspectives come into conflict and where you question the basic ideas, tenets, and identities inherited from your family, your education, and your different cultures. Nepantla is the zone between changes where you struggle to find equilibrium between the outer expression of change and your inner relationship to it. Living between cultures results in "seeing" double, first from the perspective of one culture, then from the perspective of another. Seeing from two or more perspectives simultaneously renders those cultures transparent. (Anzaldúa, 2002, pp. 548-549)

The conceptualization of *nepantlera* and *nepantla* invite us to think of how liminal spaces (Turner, 1964) could create states of confusion, ambiguity, while attending to paradoxical ontologies, giving rise to nonoppositional threshold theories and practices. Combining Turner and Anzaldúa's concepts of liminal and *nepantla* spaces, one could see that these spaces could be intersected by multiple states of consciousness, thereby creating conditions for contradictions, tensions, messiness, and chaos. A *nepantlera* who travels between multiple worldviews and goes in and out of the thresholds of such worldviews remains in a state of flux, negotiating and holding contradictions in her being, in her consciousness, and yet understanding the relational context of such contradictions from her threshold traveling. Ontologically, a *nepantlera*, then, would have to exist beyond binary oppositional consciousness simply by the notion that based on a *nepantlera*'s travels to multiple worldviews, and being able to hold multiple contradictions in her being, a binary oppositional consciousness would be incongruent to her ways of being and knowing. This state of being can also be destabilizing (transformative?) where ideas and identities could be challenged to make

room for new possibilities, or simply to make room for something yet to be known and imagined. A nepantlera would have to evaluate previously held beliefs, theories, assumptions, values, subjectivities while holding multiple contradictions to understand what is no longer part of her consciousness, what does not serve her knowledge making and understanding of her existence in multiple threshold spaces and her travel in between the nepantla spaces, and calibrate her onto-epistemological understanding to reflect a shift in her thinking.

Another way I think about the liminal nepantla spaces for nonoppositional consciousness is to imagine this space existing between (among?) multiple worldviews. A nepantlera travels in between these worldviews also known as the nepantla spaces. The nepantla spaces can then become a space to take stock of what is learned from the different thresholds that the nepantla traveled. And while taking stock, the nepantlera might be outside the bounds of restrictive discourses, frameworks, and assumptions, understanding and informing her in ways that exceed such restrictions.

I would consider many colleagues who are qualitative methodologists and educators as nepantleras. We move in and out of different worldviews of our students, our colleagues, handle multiple contradictory perspectives, find shared grounds even in difference, and understand our own resistance and accommodation to these constellations of worldviews and the ways in which we might shift in the liminality of these worldviews. In other words, we are in constant movement, in a state of shuttling, sometimes experiencing deep pain in isolation if we are not entrenched in any one specific worldview, therefore, not being an insider of any spaces in which we travel. However, existing in such flux could be what is needed for us to cultivate nonoppositional consciousness in order to deal with critical issues of inequity and injustice in education so that we can think beyond polarizing, politicizing binary discourses, and find ways to organize together to engage in and organize actions that challenge a large set of networked structures of oppression affecting education.

From such nepantleric traveling, one could possibly see the self in fragments, as s/he interacts with thoughts, ideas, beliefs, assumptions, and perspectives of each worldview. These fragmented parts of self may be transient or may have some value to the nepantlera for the nepantlera to remain attached to certain fragmented parts of her as part of her identity development. Note, nothing in this discussion of self, or perhaps core self, denotes any kind of understanding that is fixed in time and space, that is static. From a nepantleric ontology, traveling between multiple worlds and existing in liminality are not reflective of some static core, an unchangeable thing, but an experience of connecting relationally, materially, ontologically, and even spiritually with fragments of ourselves in whatever forms they have shown up. Anzaldúa (2009) discusses how even in such fragmentation one could have a sense of wholeness, incorporating movement, shifts, fluidity, contradictions, tensions, and chaotic messiness of understanding of self in relation to multiple worldviews. She says:

You say my name is ambivalence? Think of me as Shiva, a many-armed and -legged body with one foot on brown soil, one on white, one in straight society, one in the gay world, the man's world, the women's, one limb in the literary world, another in the working class, the socialist, and the occult worlds. A sort of spider woman hanging by one thin strand of web. Who, me, confused? Ambivalent? Not so. Only your labels split me. (pp. 45-46)

This is how I see nonoppositional, non-dualistic ontology functioning, when one can understand and exist in multiple relations and practices and still have a sense of self that is not splintered into

isolated, decontextualized fragments. And by understanding such ontological moves, notions of authentic being, core self, or essence of self could be reimagined and reconceptualized in fluidity instead of fixed in static and reductive understanding. Then, if we extend this kind of way of being and knowing in the world to other people, we can imagine social justice initiatives and actions that are anchored in such truth telling where we start from a place of understanding complexity of lived experiences in its various forms and functions, its relational contexts and practices, and the ways in which we can engage our various states of consciousness with such materiality for aspired outcomes.

I want to underscore that the discussion of post-oppositional framing is not intended as a critique of oppositional thinking and oppositional discourses. Instead I reflected on how oppositional discourses functioned for me as I was bearing witness to an ever-proliferating culture of oppositional discourses within and outside of academia. However, as a nepantlera, I recognize that it is a perspective, and many people are indoctrinated in such oppositional ontologies. Perhaps by presenting a post-oppositional framing I could extend an invitation to those who are drained by engaging in and witnessing oppositional discourses and their manifestations. What I especially want to avoid (although I might already be complicit in it) is to situate post-oppositionality in some kind of hierarchically superior position to oppositional discourses. Instead, like Keating (2013), I want to gently prod, pull, extend, and expand these oppositional academic discourses in qualitative inquiry to inform the social justice work we could do in education.

Dropping my Anchor Here and Building Bridges

In this section I discuss two projects, which I conceptualized as bridge building work with various stakeholders in education as a nepantlera, and discuss the limits and possibilities of such engagement. In doing so, I highlight that there may never be any kind of flawless engagement, or an engagement where all tenets of some high theory could be appropriately enacted, but that should not stop us from engaging in the material consequences of inequities. I do not represent these projects as some kind of utopia to glorify my efforts. Instead, I offer exemplars of the struggles, the messiness, the chaos, and the hope for a better future while we engage and collaborate.

Reimagining the Accreditation System for K-12 Schools in Kansas

For the last two years I have been part of a project in collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner to reconceptualize how accreditation of Kansas schools ought to look like if we did not make standardized testing the only and the most important marker of performance and accountability. I became part of the project when the project was already in motion. I mention this to highlight that I was not in the room when decisions were made in terms of how the project would be initiated, designed, or executed. I entered the threshold of this project much later. The commissioner's office decided that they would conduct town hall meetings across Kansas, speak with every possible representative stakeholder they could think of in these town hall meetings including higher education professionals, business owners, community college professionals, students, parents, administrators, and teachers. They asked all of these stakeholders what skills would each of them value in a student who graduates high school. The Dean's office in the College of Education, the department chair in Educational Leadership, the commissioner's data analyst, the deputy commissioner, and I became involved in the project while they were conducting their town hall meetings.

They conducted and documented conversations from over 2500 people, and they needed my help in analyzing the data. I remember one chilly winter day in Kansas, I was drawing paradigm charts for the deputy commissioner and his data analyst to explain truth, reality, rationality from different paradigms to see where we are onto-epistemologically with this project and where we would then travel to in terms of our relationship and understanding of truth, meaning, realities, and so on. We discussed the worlds in which they would have to travel and make the work intelligible. The deputy commissioner and his data analyst discussed that they would have to deliver a presentation to the commissioner and to the members of the Board of Education. Therefore, even though they have these paradigms to which they were exposed, this would not be something they could communicate back to their stakeholders. This was a clear moment of tension where we could not cross into each other's thresholds and could not bridge our differences.

We moved on to discuss how we would manage the volume of data and how we would use NVivo, a qualitative data management software, to do so. We talked about how this software will not do the analysis for them in the same way that SPSS would, but it would allow them to sort and chunk data. As they went through the process of moving in and out of data and trying to create some interpretive understanding that was congruent to their sensibilities and intelligible to their stakeholders, we engaged in deep discussion about how we would like education to perform for students, teachers, and administrators, and how we would like policies to support our aspirations and not stifle them. This was a moment where we crossed thresholds into each other's worldviews and discovered shared ground.

Given that I came into the project while it was already underway, I was perhaps not in full alignment with the way the project was set up, and could immediately attend to the opposition that rose in my being. I also knew I did not want to be part of something superficial, that offers lip service, but really does not transform or work towards a social justice agenda. And I knew that I get upset when people think they could engage in qualitative research without any formal training, as long as they just "talk" to people. Therefore, while I was extremely inspired by the spirit and intentions of the project, I was less than inspired by some other aspects of the project, especially when understanding of qualitative research seemed minimal or an assumption was there that doing qualitative research should not be too difficult since it did not involve number crunching. There were several moments where I found myself at the tension of having to teach qualitative research in a one-hour meeting and being inspired by the broader spirit of the project. The deputy commissioner eventually enrolled in our doctoral program and began to take qualitative classes with me as some of his first classes in the program. And he continues to assert that his town hall meetings would have been quite different had he known more about qualitative research then.

This project is currently in ongoing, but suffices to say, that there was some preliminary analysis conducted on the conversations collected and presented to various stakeholders. These analytic insights were compared to the national discourse on skills of millennial learners and how values are being placed on some skills more than others. I am currently working with the deputy commissioner to help develop an evaluation system that would take into account what was said in the town hall meetings to develop a new accreditation system for Kansas. This system can include standardized tests as an indicator, but it would only be that, one indicator, instead of the one used to create inequities in our education.

I present this as an exemplar of contestations and bridge building work towards social justice in education for various reasons. First, to highlight the obvious, various education professionals are either in collaboration with or support of this initiative taken by the Commissioner's office. Next, there is bridge building in terms of our simultaneous travels in and out of each other's

worldviews about educational praxis, qualitative research, and intelligibility. For me there were moments of tensions when I was explaining the role of qualitative methods to push against the corporate neoliberal agenda driving education. In those moments, we discussed the purpose of schooling and evaluation that would align with the purpose of schooling that the town hall attendees highlighted, instead of what the corporate stakeholders wanted. In our own ways we were doing the bridge building work while discussing our ontological assumptions. We did not always have shared ground, but we forged some. On some issues, we could not find shared grounds. But given that we were aligned ontologically with what needed to happen as a socially just move in our education, we engaged in transforming an oppressive system through some kind of post-oppositional framing of our work even when we might have not been in agreement with each other.

I am also not naïve enough to think that we can solve all ills of educational policy enactment and inequities by this one move. However, in being able to move within and outside of each other's worlds, we were able to understand our ontological messiness (though we did not term it that way in our discussions), we were able to work with the discomfort of incomplete data and that much of what could be known was still invisible to us. Additionally, I did not think that I could engage them in a discussion about relations and practices of voice, the subaltern nature of voice of minoritized participants, or the ways in which we could reflect on what was gained and lost in hearing these voices in town hall meetings. There were pending deadlines for presentation, therefore, we were constrained by time. I was unable to offer readings on theory that could help or make such expectations critically pragmatic or insert theory-driven understanding of data within spaces of K-12 praxis. However, I was able to help them work through the tensions about remaining an "objective" researcher, when meeting such a goal is an impossibility grounded in illusory understanding of inquiry. We talked about how futile it would be for them to claim in their presentation to their stakeholders that somehow they were separate from what they were presenting. I said that their humanity could not be divorced from their human interactions with the participants or the textual data. Eventually they agreed and we moved forward.

In our bridge building work, we were meeting each other at the thresholds of each other's worldviews and in the liminal spaces. Our assumptions and beliefs were at times in contradiction to each other (for example needing to present objective, generalizable data), and while I was uncomfortable with some of the contradictions, I was also comfortable with the idea that we could be part of something that would help schools, teachers, students, and parents, and move our educational practices forward beyond test-score based understanding of its goodness. What we tried to cultivate was this space of holding multiple contradictions together and orient ourselves outside of binary, oppositional, corrosive, mono-thinking onto-epistemologies and discourses. We did not reach a full resolution, but one that was pragmatic due to the looming deadline for presenting information to the stakeholders. Given that this is an ongoing project, I look forward to our unfolding together to see where we travel to and what messiness comes into our awareness next.

Bridging between Tribal and Public Education

I met Alex in my first introduction to qualitative research class. He is white, has short blonde hair, blue eyes, in his early 30s, married with two daughters. One day after class he waited to talk to me. It was then he revealed to me that he had indigenous Osage heritage and that he was quite involved in his tribe and shared a deep generational history with his tribe. His father is an elder of the tribe and he is strongly committed to maintaining his cultural identity within his tribe. Yet, he recognizes that because he looks and passes for white, he enjoys privileges that several of

his tribe members do not. He wanted to do his dissertation research on some kind of bridging of tribal and public education.

For the next year or two, I continuously sent him books and papers to read on indigenous education, de/colonizing epistemologies, methodologies, and education, and anything else I thought would be relevant. Alex tends to devour everything I send him and then engages me in deep discussion. Once we spent three hours talking about third space and whether or not he is located in third space. I asked him to read Gloria Anzaldúa's work on mestiza consciousness and on her theorization of the nepantlera, so that he did not have to simply conceptualize a third space but can move in and out of multiple spaces as he tried to do the bridge work.

The more readings Alex completed, the more he was able to engage in discussing what he wants to study. Like many other students, I began to notice that as his paradigms were shifting, his language use changed too. As Alex began to engage people in discussion about third space, settler colonialism, decolonizing epistemologies and his desire to build partnership between tribal and public education, my department chair and the Dean of the College of Education offered him a full time position at the university for him to structure his role in any way he wanted to start this partnership with whatever support he needed from us. This was a proud moment for me to witness.

Alex is currently writing, working, thinking, talking, and building partnerships. While we tried to work on his dissertation, we talked about the ethics of storytelling and conducting research in partnership with his tribal elders. There was one critical moment of tension where Alex was paralyzed by the expectations of qualitative research. We were discussing how Alex might present his findings and he told me that no amount of fictionalizing details and using pseudonyms would prevent people from being identified in his study, because his tribe was unique in the region and would be easily identifiable. He would either have to conduct a superficial study or not conduct a study involving his tribal members in any way. Next, Alex informed me that culturally, he was uncomfortable telling stories of his elders, because that was not his place to do so. He would be misaligned with his ontological awareness of his place within his tribe. And he certainly would not try to engage in any kind of knowledge-making from such a place of unbalance. This was a moment of tension for both of us and we did not come to any resolution other than the incommensurability of the expectations of Western, institutionalized qualitative inquiry and indigenous sensibilities. Perhaps a bridge building effort could have been attempted, but it came with the risk of co-opting or coercing indigenous people in Alex's tribe and neither of us was comfortable even entertaining such possibilities. So we had to abandon our belief systems that perhaps if we had good intentions, we should be able to conduct inquiry in any space, especially in spaces where we might be cultural insiders.

Alex has not started his dissertation research yet. However, in one of our chats the other day, he informed me that he is considering accepting a suggestion I made earlier and conduct an autoethnography. He does not feel misaligned ontologically or epistemologically to conduct autoethnography. In fact he is beginning to feel free to bring all parts of his selves, his multiple contradictory perspectives from his threshold travels into various worlds and worldviews into one place. He is able to consider his onto-epistemological stances and understand that everything that pours out of his being and knowing is what allows him to be in a state of flow from where he can create, write, and travel deep into various states of consciousness. This is not necessarily a resolution of the previous ethical dilemma, but an invitation for Alex to look at the fragmented ways in which various ethical dilemmas function within him as he takes on the role of a nepantlera in his dissertation and professional partnership work.

I provide Alex's example as a way to demonstrate how someone can work with oppositional, nonoppositional, and non-dualistic ontologies while struggling and attempting to engage in bridge-building work. Alex's willingness to engage with his internal states of contradictions and modes of consciousness resonates with Anzaldúa's argument of wholeness even in fragmentation. Alex's essence (which is fluid), if we can even use that term, is a sense of self that comes from crossing multiple thresholds of several worlds. In his liminal nepantla spaces, he sits with the knowledge he gained from his threshold traveling and uses them to create projects that demonstrate the shifts and transformations in which he is engaging.

Alex is aware of the fact that he was introduced to multiple contradictory perspectives, ways of being, and knowing in his nepantleric travels. And yet, emanating from his onto-epistemological perspective, he has been willing to engage in a critical social justice partnership project in education, which is material, which makes him take a position, where he drops his anchor, to do the generative, relational, bridge building work, and which is reflective of his negotiation of his states of being and knowing. Discussing Alex's work also demonstrates how attending to oppositionality could open up spaces of possibility. Alex understands the atrocities his people experienced and how schooling has been severely affected by multiple forces of systemic oppression. Yet to challenge the status-quo, Alex is trying to forge a partnership path, aware of the co-optation dangers, while remaining in close dialogues with every stakeholder. The authenticity that flows from these states of multiple, contradictory consciousness leads to imagining a social justice project that is beyond oppositional engagement.

I do not want to present post-oppositionality as the utopian possibility without perils to engage in social justice work in education. In fact the work of a nepantlera is hard. The traveling between multiple worldviews, without belonging in any one permanently can sometimes become isolating, confusing. Sometimes bridge building efforts are co-opted. Sometimes bridge building efforts include some folks and exclude others. Those excluded then create their oppositional discourses against the bridge building work. And yet if we want to connect our theoretical and empirical spaces with praxis we have to engage materiality in all its possibilities and problems. Engaging in materiality of suffering and oppression is not easy and yet it is easy to get dirty when one is in the trenches of this work. There could be energy draining relations and practices while conducting this social justice work, resulting in fatigue. And for that reason it is imperative that we attend to oppositional discourses within in relation to dominant, critical, resistant, public discourses, so that we can attend to the ways in which we build up our resources when we wish to challenge status-quo and dismantle networked structure of oppression. It is also worth mentioning that non-oppositionality does not exclude challenging status-quo. In fact it is a key part of social justice agenda to challenge status quo. However, non-oppositionality invites us to think beyond binary dualities, to understand when we are in co-opted relations and practices (breaking walls in the master's house, instead of breaking down the master's house), instead of engaging in oppositional discourses that drain our own resources.

Concluding Thoughts

In this paper, I have discussed the ways in which post-oppositional framing can allow an engagement with social justice work in education, without being involved in energy-draining oppositional discourses. I have advocated for such framing in qualitative inquiry, by using two exemplars where post-oppositional framing became a necessary path to social justice oriented projects. Part of my motivation to do this work stems from being disappointed and drained after having

to bear witness the acrimonious discourses within various politicized academic camps in qualitative inquiry. To do some bridge building work, I have tried to blur some of the binary relationships that are being forwarded in various discursive spaces within qualitative inquiry. To that end, I have opened up constructs such as core self, authentic self, analytical insights that were previously conceptualized as a fixed, static, reductive idea with more fluid and porous notions that are always already a site of constellation of multiple contradictory worldviews. Perhaps then, we would not have to engage in acrimonious oppositional battles within ourselves and focus on ways in which we can build bridges to engage in social justice education projects that are authentic to our beings, in whatever ways we want to conceptualize and understand that.

Dropping my anchor here (the title of the paper) refers to the need to engage in some truth telling, instead of being in a constant state of deconstruction, since I am able to do so with this large all-powerful intellectual critique hammer that I am able to wield. Often deconstructive qualitative scholars are prolific with breaking things apart, but nothing is built back up from the ruins of that which was broken. Perhaps there is a fear that making a commitment to build something can again be broken down. However, we live in critical times. Our education system is continuously being plagued with various restrictive, oppressive discourses that continuously create inequities. Those of us who are interested in engaging with material suffering of our fellow human beings, will have to do some truth telling, take some positions, and drop their anchor somewhere, albeit temporarily. The dropping of anchor will not be clean or always in full alignment with some kind of high theory. Instead, there will be moments where we could and would get co-opted. There would be moments where forging shared grounds might not be possible. There would be moments where the chaos and contradictions of multiplicities could lead to compassion and motivation fatigue. Yet this work needs to be done to illuminate the connection between discourse and materiality in intelligible ways in various educational spaces so that we could organize actions and offer counternarratives to dominant discourses that blame those who suffer from inequities for their own suffering.

I have used two exemplars to demonstrate how unclean, messy, unfinished this work can be and how different stakeholders can bring about different needs where the spirit of the project and the execution of the project might not align well. However, for me, the key is that if we are not in the room when critical questions in social justice issues in education are being raised, then we are excluded from the discussion about critical solutions. For that reason alone, I advocate for the bridge building work that comes from being aware of how one can be a nepantlera, traveling through multiple worldviews and liminal spaces without a need to belong in any but crossing various thresholds. And yet again there are perils in bringing into awareness a nepantleric state of consciousness that is intersected with isolation, pain, lack of belongingness, confusion, and chaos. Despite all of that, if there is work to be done, then there needs to be three key questions answered: How do we engage in social justice education from critical perspectives without being co-opted (is that even possible)? How do we bring a post-oppositional framing to challenge the status quo, when we are ontologically in opposition to the status quo? How do we bring to bear a bridging between onto-epistemology, inquiry, and praxis between various stakeholders who might not internalize the merits of these bridge building efforts?

Engaging in social justice work requires us to imagine. We have to imagine beyond restrictive discourses, relations and practices. We have to see the change and work towards the change in whatever way we can. I am reminded of political activist Arundhati Roy's conceptualization of resistance against the empire.

If we look at this conflict as a straightforward eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation between Empire and those of us who are resisting it, it might seem that we are losing. But there is another way of looking at it. We, all of us gathered here, have, each in our own way, laid siege to Empire. We may not have stopped it in its tracks--yet--but we have stripped it down. We have made it drop its mask. We have forced it into the open. It now stands before us on the world's stage in all its brutish, iniquitous nakedness. (Roy, 2003, p. 122)

It is this kind of non-dualistic thinking that I have tried to privilege in this paper where we would transcend from the either/or, win/lose, binary relationship driven discourses to engage in building resistance that could have the power to dismantle the status quo. This reframing does not necessitate infighting amongst qualitative researchers to outperform each other in our theoretically or methodologically nuanced dances. Nor does this reframing necessitate that all of us have to work in the same way as we lay siege to the empire. However, if we could really utilize our talents, our intelligences, our collective communities in which we belong, to engage in non-dualistic understandings of social justice in education, make some truth claims, what kind of possibilities would we produce in the next ten years?

References

- Anzaldúa, G. (1987/1999). *Borderlands la frontera: The new mestiza* (Second ed.). San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.
- Anzaldúa, G. (2002). Now let us shift...the path of *conocimiento*...inner work public acts. In G. Anzaldúa & A. Keating (Eds.), *This bridge we call home: Radical visions for transformation* (pp. 540-577). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Anzaldúa, G. (2009). La Prieta. In A. Keating (Ed.), *The Gloria Anzaldúa reader* (pp. 38-50). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Barbezat, D., & Bush, M. (2014). *Contemplative practices in higher education: Powerful methods to transform teaching and learning*. San Francisco, CA: Josey Bass.
- Bhattacharya, K. (2014). Coding is Not a Dirty Word: Theory-driven Data Analysis Using NVivo. In S. Hai-Jew (Ed.), *Enhancing Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research with Technology*: IGI Global Publishing.
- Bloch, M. (2004). A discourse that disciplines, governs, and regulates: The National Research Council's report on scientific research in education. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(1), 96-110.
- Cannella, G. S., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2004). Dangerous discourses II: Comprehending and countering the redeployment of discourses (and resources) in the generation of liberatory inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(2), 165-174.
- Chakravorty Spivak, G. (1993). Can the subaltern speak? In P. Williams & L. Chrisman (Eds.), *Colonial discourse and postcolonial theory* (pp. 66-111). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Darder, A., Baltodano, M. P., & Torres, R. D. (2009). Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction. In A. Darder, M. P. Baltodano, & R. D. Torres (Eds.), *The Critical Pedagogy Reader* (Second ed., pp. 1-20). New York: Routledge.
- Denzin, N. (2008). The new paradigm dialogs and qualitative inquiry. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 21(4), 315-325.

- Feur, M., Towne, L., & Shavelson, R. (2002). Scientific Culture and Educational Research. *Educational Researcher*, 31(8), 4-14.
- Giroux, H. (2009). Critical Theory and Educational Practice. In A. Darder, M. P. Baltodano, & R. D. Torres (Eds.), *The Critical Pedagogy Reader* (pp. 27-51). New York: Routledge.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967/2009). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies or qualitative research* (Seventh ed.). New Brunswick: Aldine Transaction.
- Hatch, A. (2006). Qualitative studies in the era of scientifically-based research: Musings of a former QSE editor. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19(4), 403-409.
- Keating, A. (2013). *Transformation now! Toward a post-oppositional politics of change*. Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2004). Impossibilities of reconciliation: validity in mixed theory projects. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(4), 601-621.
- Kuntz, A. M. (2015). *The responsible methodologist: Inquiry, truth-telling, and social justice*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.
- Lather, P. (2004). This IS Your Father's Paradigm: Government Intrusion and the Case of Qualitative Research in Education. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(1), 15-34.
- Lather, P. (2006). Paradigm proliferation as a good thing to think with: Teaching research in education as a wild profusion. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19(1), 35-57.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (2003). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lincoln, Y., S., & Cannella, G., S. (2004). Qualitative research, power, and the radical right. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(2), 175-201.
- Lorde, A. (1984). The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house *Sister outsider: Essays & speeches by Audre Lorde* (pp. 110-113). Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press feminist series.
- Minh-ha, T. T. (1989). *Woman, native, other: Writing postcoloniality and feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Pearl, A., & Knight, T. (2010). Rejoinder to D. Brent Edwards Jr. and His Interpretation of Our Position on Democratic Education and Social Justice. *The Urban Review*, 42(3), 243-248. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11256-010-0160-z>
- Peshkin, A. (1993). The goodness of qualitative research. *Educational Researcher*, 22(2), 23-29.
- Pierre, E. A. S., & Jackson, A. (2014). Introduction: Qualitative data analysis after coding. *Qualitative Inquiry*, Online first, 261-280. doi:10.1177/1077800403262360
- Roy, A. (2003). *War Talk*. Cambridge, MA: Southend Press.
- Saldaña, J. (2014). Blue-collar qualitative research: A rant. *Qualitative Inquiry*, January 24(Online first). doi:10.1177/1077800413513739
- St. Pierre, E. A. (2011). *Data analysis after coding in qualitative research*. Paper presented at the Seventh International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry., Champaign/Urbana, IL.
- Turner, V. W. (1964). Betwixt and between: The liminal period in rites de passage. In J. Helm (Ed.), *American Ethnological Society* (pp. 4-20). Seattle, Washington: The Proceedings of the 1964 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society.

Kakali Bhattacharya is an Associate Professor at Kansas State University. She holds a Ph.D. from University of Georgia in Educational Psychology. Specifically, her program of study was in Research, Evaluation, Measurement, and Statistics with a specialization in Qualitative Inquiry. Currently housed in the department of Educational Leadership, her research interests are transnational issues of race, class, gender, nationality in higher education in the U.S., technology-integrated learning and social spaces, de/colonizing epistemologies and methodologies, and contemplative approaches to qualitative inquiry. Specifically, she is interested in arts-based approaches to qualitative inquiry, which integrates various de/colonizing and contemplative practices. Kakali works in various interdisciplinary teams with people from within and outside education interested in eradicating social problems of inequity.