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**BRIDGES TO DIFFERENCE & MAPS OF BECOMING:
AN EXPERIMENT WITH *TEACHERS IN NOMADIC SPACES* FOR
EDUCATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Public education in British Columbia bores witness to bitter rivalries and fierce debates. Union values clash with political desires, parents have confront implacably-nested institutional interests, and students are repeatedly caught in the cross-fire (Fleming, 2011). Indeed, it would be less hyperbole than constructive metaphor to describe education policy in BC as a field of battle, a site where a war is being waged — with a collective future at stake. Regardless of political affiliation, a sober reflection of material reality paints a striking figure of an education system in crisis. Since 2001 there has been an increase of nearly 16,000 students in BC's public school system whose primary language spoken at home is not English, and yet the number of full-time ESL teachers has gone from 1,015.6 to 687.5 — a decrease of 328.1 teachers over 9 years, for an average loss of 36.5 teachers a year. An even more dire landscape comes into view when we look more broadly at the changes in the staffing of specialist teachers, which includes librarians, counsellors, special education, and aboriginal education. From 2001-2010, the number of full-time specialist teachers employed in BC's public schools has gone from 7,185.8 to 5,726.4 — a decrease of 1,459.4 teachers, for an average loss of 162.2 teachers a year. Additionally, the number of classrooms with more than 4 students with Individual Education Plans has gone from 10,942 in 2005/06 to 12,240 in 2010/11 (BCTF, 2011). And in 2002 the number of students per counsellor was 360 to 1, whereas it is now as high as 1,200 to 1 (Swiggum, 2011).

Adding further detail to the metaphor of war, school closures, standardization regimes, concerted attempts to de-professionalize and instrumentalize teachers, and a systematic re-conceptualization of public education as 'preparation for the world of work' can all plausibly be construed as sorties in an asymmetrical field of battle. It is important to emphasize that this field of battle is framed by desires but waged by people, and frontline soldiers — or pawns, depending on perspective — are teachers; they are the *means* with which particular *ends* are sought. Teachers, in other words, have become the *objects* of policies — homogenizing or occluding their agency beneath fictive simplifications of 'best practice' (Biesta, 2007; Weiss et al., 2008). Meanwhile, the desire of the teacher — much like the desire of the student — is assumed to be univocal in its joyous praise unto the State.

Any tactician can affirm that the morale of the troops is an essential element in sustaining a successful attack — or defense. Thus, the morale of teachers is essential to more than good pedagogy and a collaborative school culture. It is also critical that teachers are able to sustain morale in battle — or what might more accurately be considered a *war of attrition*. Under constant attack from policies that circumscribe their professional agency, teachers in public schools work and live in a sea of chaos. This gives rise to an unending struggle of negotiating between the competing desires of personal and professional agency, and institutional domination. It easily follows, then, that the field of teaching should be

highly vulnerable to stress. This is, generally speaking, the ‘problem’¹ that Kaustuv Roy’s (2003) *Teachers in Nomadic Spaces: Deleuze and Curriculum* sets out to address.

According to Roy (2003) *Teachers in Nomadic Spaces (TiNS)* “attempts to demonstrate that Deleuzian pragmatism can be appropriated and then reconstituted through educational experience to form an important conceptual matrix for advancing thinking in curriculum” (p. 16). Overall, Roy’s study speaks directly to the all-too common dilemma of teachers’ duress while affirming the “generative possibilities of the situation” (p. 2). He states that the “pragmatic purpose [of publishing *TiNS*] was to introduce a ‘swerve’ or a deviation in the plane of taken-for-granted assumptions by means of which a new experiment in thought could be inserted in the interstices” (p. 2). With regard to in-service teachers in BC, Roy’s study can be extended to “find ways in which to connect teachers to the positivity of difference” (Roy 2003, p. 10). That is to say, *TiNS* offers a set of concepts and figures for constructively negotiating the chaotic lives of teachers, and speaks directly to pervasive problems like low retention rates among newly-inducted teachers, as well as high rates of stress and plummeting job satisfaction among in-service teachers (Naylor & White, 2010).

The overall layout of *TiNS* is in the *plateau*-like spirit of Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) and assembles five thematic chapters, with a substantive introduction and conclusion. Including references, *TiNS* is under 200 pages, published by Peter Lang, and is targeted at a readership of professionals interested in curriculum theory and practice, the philosophy of education, and the lives of teachers. With that said, Roy’s prose is occasionally stilted and many of his arguments are philosophical and dense, and many readers may struggle with accessibility. However, this is fitting in the sense that Deleuze himself struggled with making his ideas accessible to students: “They were long sessions, nobody took in everything, but everyone took what they needed or wanted, what they could use, even if it was far removed from their own discipline” (Deleuze 1995, p. 139). Rather than a recipe or blueprint for curricular practice, *TiNS* can more aptly be conceptualized as an “electric circuit.”

There are, you see, two ways of reading a book: you either see it as a box with something inside and start looking for what it signifies... Or there’s the other way: you see the book as a little non-signifying machine. This second way of reading is intensive: something comes through or it doesn’t. There’s nothing to explain, nothing to understand, nothing to interpret. It’s like plugging into an electric circuit. (Deleuze, cited in Roy 2003, pp. 177-178)

Although unacknowledged within the body of the text, *TiNS* is a commercialized translation of Roy’s (2002) PhD dissertation, *From Transcendence to Immanence: Teacher Becoming in a Deleuzian Perspective*. On this basis, *TiNS* should be located within an ever-expanding body of scholarship that attempts to bridge the gap between the Ivory Tower and public discourse.

However, it is interesting to note that Roy’s subsequent publications have maintained and upheld a dichotomy between public knowledge — freely available to anyone and everyone with the literacy to apprehend — and academic knowledge — a circumscribed field of elite literacies and understandings. For instance, Roy has complemented his Deleuzian approach to curriculum theory with peer-reviewed studies of social relations (2002), nihilism (2004), sense and nonsense (2005a), power and resistance (2005b), and the politics of freedom (2005c). His most recent (2008) book-length study considers how public schooling is imbricated within networks which naturalize war and State-organized forms of violence. In this provocative follow-up to *TiNS*, Roy argues that pedagogy can be used as a means of escape from a dystopic reality in which war is used to transfer the “life energies and productive capacities” of the masses to the State. Nevertheless, by and large Roy’s “radical contributions to the field of curriculum scholarship remain tragically undetected” (Wallin, in press, p. 19). That is to say, Roy’s scholarship is unknown and inaccessible to all but an elite few who have access to academic databases and those who have stumbled across his somewhat obscure publications. Even still, *TiNS* is every bit as relevant today as the day it was published, and Roy’s oeuvre may yet find a broad readership among philosophically-inclined in-service teachers and teacher education programs.

¹ “There is no solution because there is no problem” (Duchamp, as cited in Janis & Janis, 1945, p. 24).

Before progressing any further, I should acknowledge that my positionality colours the form and function of this review. For one thing, I encountered Roy's *TiNS* in the dual role of teacher and researcher: first as a secondary social studies teacher and second as an MA student at UBC in the Centre for Cross Faculty Inquiry in Education — with a research focus on the relationships between education/curricular policies and the lives of teachers. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that an interest in critical and philosophically-informed frames of educational practice inspired me to read and review *TiNS*. I should also stress that I do not mean to present this review as an objective measure of Roy's *TiNS*, but as an arrow shot in the dark: "The key thing, as Nietzsche said, is that thinkers are always, so to speak, shooting arrows into the air, and other thinkers pick them up and shoot them in another direction" (Deleuze 1990, p. 118). As a result, the primary function of this review should be seen as pragmatic, not didactic: Rather than representing the 'truth' of Roy's text, I hope to illustrate the pragmatism of the concepts he employs by linking them to the experiences of public school teachers in BC.

In the following review, I will map Roy's notion of 'teachers in nomadic spaces'. Then, after outlining the rudiments of Roy's case study and approach to curricular practice, I will consider the usefulness of *TiNS* for public school teachers in British Columbia, and conclude by situating it within a field of Deleuze-o-Guattarian-inspired education studies. In so doing, I hope to advance Roy's scholarship as a vehicle for re-conceptualizing educational encounters, the lives of teachers, and curricular policy.

Encountering nomadic space: Down falls the State tree

Roy borrows and deploys a bestiary of Deleuzian concepts to theorize and address the stress-ridden lives of teachers, but the 'leaders of the pack' are the *nomad* and *rhizome* — both of which center around the notion of *becoming*. To frame the notion of becoming Roy cites Deleuze & Guattari (1987), who argue that becomings "have neither culmination nor subject, but draw one another into zones of proximity or undecidability; smooth spaces, composed from within striated space" (p. 507). Becomings produce difference, release "active passions" (Roy, 2003, p. 102), and index a "tension between modes of desire" which enable a range of "potential relations" in the interstices of "two molar coordinates" (Massumi, 1992, p. 94). By bridging these concepts together and applying them in the field of curricular inquiry, Roy hopes to illustrate the pragmatic relevance of a Deleuzian-inspired re-formulation of epistemology and ontology vis-à-vis curricular practice. Since these concepts are of central importance in Roy's study, I will now briefly unpack each of them and link them directly with the lives of teachers in BC.

The concept of the *nomad* is most fully developed in Deleuze & Guattari's (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus*, and indexes "groups whose organisation is immanent to the relations composing them" (Holland, 2005, p. 183). That is to say, the nomad is less a category or set of qualities than a contingent irruption of exteriority and becoming. In illustrating the concept Deleuze and Guattari contrast the games of Go and chess:

Chess is a game of State, or of the court: the emperor of China played it. Chess pieces are coded; they have an internal nature and intrinsic properties from which their movements, situations, and confrontations derive. They have qualities; a knight remains a knight, a pawn a pawn, a bishop a bishop.... Go pieces, in contrast, are pellets, disks, simple arithmetic units, and have only an anonymous, collective, or third-person function... [they] are elements of a nonsubjectified machine assemblage with no intrinsic properties, only situational ones.... The "smooth" space of Go [can be situated against] the "striated" space of chess. The *nomos* of Go against the State of chess, *nomos* against *polis*. The difference is that chess codes and decodes space, whereas Go proceeds altogether differently, territorializing or deterritorializing it. [emphasis in the original] (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 352-353)

To explicitly link the concept of the nomad with curricular practice and teachers' stress, Roy highlights teachers' struggles in accommodating students' difference. Specifically, Roy argues that teachers need to 'loosen up conventional categories' and enact networks of practice that privilege flexibility and the ability to deal with contingency (Roy, 2003, p. 74). For instance, Roy recounts how teachers in his study had fixed conceptions of their roles as teachers, and this invariably led to the subversion of difference within their teaching practice. Roy suggests that when teachers encounter students with fixed preconceptions of identity — 'at risk', 'delinquent', 'deficient', etc. — these category-bound hierarchies contribute to teacher stress and short careers (Weiss & Weiss, 1999). To back up his claim, Roy briefly surveys the literature on

teacher stress: Friedman (1995) found that relationships with students are consistently among the most important sources of stress for teachers; Borg & Riding (1993) locate ‘poor student attitude’ as a reliable predictor of teacher stress; and Abel & Sewell (1999) link prolonged stress with burnout. Teachers’ stress is even further aggravated when the organizational approaches used to inhibit burnout are “managerial in style and technique” (Roy, 2003, p. 155). On this basis, Roy argues that teachers could benefit from a nomadic vision of curricular practice which contrasts strongly with chess-like, ‘striated’ approaches to curricular practice, and it would not be altogether irresponsible to essentialize *TiNS* as a case study that gives rise to a map of a *nomadic topos*:

The map of a nomadic topos is unlike any other map; it is at once map and territory. It is nonrepresentational, which is to say, it does not represent but makes connections and projects new lines of flight. Each concept in the map is also a living circuit of becoming, rather than a dead icon. It is a *becoming-map* — therefore, one cannot read this map with the idea of a referent; one can only experiment with it, insert oneself into the making of it even as one constructs it. (Roy, 2003, p. 80)

Phrased more simply, Roy is interested in contributing to the creation and enactment of a vision of curricular practice which cannot be reduced to a ‘paint-by-numbers’ approach but must instead be experimented — or played! — with. This would mean, for instance, that curricular practice would need to shift from resembling a tree to enacting a *rhizome*.

In recent years Deleuze & Guattari’s (1987) notion of the rhizome has achieved an uncommon — yet fitting — degree of pervasiveness: It has infiltrated the social sciences (Hickey-Moody & Malins, 2007), the hard sciences (Poster & Savat, 2009), and has become something of a cottage industry among scholars of education and teaching (e.g., Gough, 2010; Gregoriou, 2004; Ling, 2009). Be that as it may, popularity has also insured that the rhizome has been misapprehended, essentialized, and de-politicized. Thus, it is helpful that Roy not only takes care to differentiate a rhizome from a tree, but also distinguishes the rhizome as a mode of becoming:

Rhizomes are contrasted to trees or arborescent systems; whereas trees are vertically ordered, rhizomes tend to be nonhieratic, laterally connected multiplicities that do not feature linear development. Like tubers and mosses, they grow laterally and entangled, and like knowledge, they are messy; any point on a rhizome can be connected to any other point, making such a structure open and dependent on emergent relations. Rhizomes can be interrupted at any point only to start up again, proliferating lines of flight that sprout contingently, not according to fixed pathways. They thrive in irregular and in-between spaces, and have no specific starting or ending point; they are always in the middle, in transition, on the verge of becoming something else. Rhizomes are structures of intensity. (Roy, 2003, p. 88)

To better situate the distinction between rhizomatic and arborescent approaches to curricular practice, a few examples may be helpful:

A view of education which elevated study in schools above ‘life experience’ would be arborescent, whereas an emphasis on ‘life experience’ would be rhizomatic.

Outcome-oriented education — with its clear demarcations of legitimacy — would be arborescent; whereas experience-oriented education — with its inextricable messiness and inconsistencies — would be rhizomatic.

Teacher-centered curricular practice — with its reification of the teacher as curricular expert and students as deficient — aligns with arborescent systems; whereas collaborative, cooperative, and networked learning practices are more characteristic of rhizomes.

Although similar in scope and character with student-centered models of curricular practice, rhizomatic approaches are more accurately understood as a-centered curricular practice (Roy, 2003, p. 115). That is to say, rhizomatic approaches enable “the mimic, the bully, and the class clown [to] become contributors to the curriculum” (p. 91). In so doing, teachers’ fixed conceptions of identity become re-territorialized as

dynamic, open processes; and many of teachers' most persistent sources of stress become re-territorialized as affirmative difference.

To sketch an example and link the concept of the rhizome with the lives of teachers in BC, it is helpful to remember that in 2010/11 more than 12,240 classrooms across BC had 4 or more students with Individual Education Plans (BCTF, 2011). As a result, teachers across BC are struggling to accommodate a wider spectrum of learning needs with reduced access to resources and support staff. Within this toxic milieu, 'stressed-out teachers' might be somewhat of an understatement. Here is where the concept of the rhizome can offer relief: (i) instead of struggling to homogenize learning outcomes, teachers can begin to struggle with re-negotiating classrooms with greater ranges of difference in order to affirm that difference; (ii) once teachers de-center themselves from the curricula and enact a rhizomatic style of curricular practice, teachers will undoubtedly have less stress over maintaining a particular fidelity to the curricula; (iii) after integrating a rhizomatic approach to curricular practice, teachers can subvert their victimization by policies which circumscribe their professional agency and begin to draw on the resources that *are* reliably available to them - the students themselves. More importantly, adopting a rhizomatic style of curricular practice might help teachers begin to see themselves as imbricated within larger assemblages of power, exploitation, and solidarity. For teachers in BC, this could lead to enhanced resistance to vicious staffing cuts and silence critics who argue that study in schools lacks 'real world' relevance. At a minimum, the concept of the rhizome offers teachers in BC an alternative to the 'teacher-as-an-island' approach, and opens new possibilities for understanding the educational encounter.

Plateaus of affirmation: Surveying arguments & locating outcomes

Befitting a Deleuzian-inspired approach, Roy's *TiNS* places a singular emphasis on the production of *affect*: "[W]hen we say that a body is affected, we mean that a certain mode encounters another mode and enters into a composition with it, thereby increasing or diminishing its 'power of acting or force of existing' (Roy, 2003, p. 159). Paradoxically, affects index "ways of feeling" (Deleuze, 1995, p. 165), and yet "affects aren't feelings, they are becomings that spill over beyond whoever lives through them — thereby becoming someone else" (Deleuze, 1995, p. 127). At its most extreme, affective capture is what "allows [citizens] to kill and die in its name" (Holland, 2011, p. 43), but it is also the case that affective investments undergird acts of service, community, and the horizons of the 'common good'. In other words, affect is the relay for becoming, and it is the potential for inciting meaningful change in the lives of teachers that most interests Roy. Specifically, Roy attempts to harness affect in order to re-conceptualize the lives of teachers, education research, and curricular practice.

Roy distances *TiNS* from data- and method-driven inquiry and, pulling from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1990), situates his work as *fieldwork in philosophy*. In summary, fieldwork in philosophy is a "theoretical mode of analysis" (Roy, 2003, p. 175) which "makes philosophy go to work for us amid the turmoil of the everyday" (p. 2). Roy's contention is that philosophy — and in particular the philosophy of Deleuze — can be used to "interrogate the lived experience of curriculum and thereby find new possibilities of action" (p. 175). By the same token, Roy locates fieldwork in philosophy as a foundation for learning to "think differently — in order to attain even more: to feel differently" (Nietzsche, cited in Roy, 2003, p. 19). While philosophy is often trivialized or considered impractical, Roy affirms Deleuze & Guattari (1994), who argued that "philosophy is the discipline that involves creating concepts" (p. 5), and that in philosophy "concepts are only created as a function of problems which are thought to be badly understood or badly posed" (p. 16). Philosophy, in other words, helps us think about the world — and the problems in it — differently, which opens new possibilities for experience and becoming. And in Roy's view, this makes philosophy immanently capable of addressing and ameliorating the stressful lives of teachers.

Difference, representation, and the "twilight of the idols"

The problem no longer has to do with the distinction Essence-Appearance or Model-Copy. This distinction operates wholly within the world of representation. Rather, it has to do with undertaking the subversion of this world — the "twilight of the idols." (Deleuze, cited in Roy, 2003, p. 19)

The central ‘problem’ addressed by Roy’s *TiNS* relates to teachers’ difficulties in accommodating difference. Specifically, he is interested in teachers’ attempts to regulate the scope of legitimate becomings in classrooms. For instance, Roy states that “beginning teachers often come in with certain persistent technocratic metaphors that drive teacher behavior, one of which is ‘classroom management’” (p. 73). Within this idealized understanding of education as ‘orderly’ and ‘managed’, difference and the Other become targets for remediation and are circumscribed by a drive towards fixity and homogenizing logics of practice. As a result, many new teachers struggle to achieve a productive relationship with difference. Thus, Roy affirms that “teachers need not merely a separate set of skills, but new lenses through which to rethink curriculum as a whole” (p. 85), and positions fieldwork in philosophy as a means of helping “teachers equip themselves with the necessary theoretical tools and concepts with which to remap what is going on” (Roy, 2003, p. 85).

Drawing on Deleuze (1994), Roy makes a devastating critique of *representationalism*: “Representation captures the experience of difference and forces it to conform to the four criteria of representation, namely, identity, resemblance, analogy, and opposition, *thereby suppressing difference itself in the interests of producing order and recognition* [emphasis added]” (Roy, 2003, p. 20). For instance, representation “captures the experience of difference and forces it to conform” when teachers participate in the labeling and sorting of students as ‘at risk’, ‘in need’, or ‘high-ability learner’; but other common manifestations of representational thinking in schools include report cards, labeling deviance, and naturalizing dividing practices. “[T]he pedagogic encounter is an overcoding of the child, creating a supplementary dimension in which are inserted various transcendental and powerful unifying images of identity, conformity, nationalism, work, achievement, competition, success/failure, and many others” (p. 29). Roy argues that it is this misapprehension of *being* as representation that underlies key elements of students’ apathy, teachers’ stress, and curricular practice.

The tendency to represent difference as discrete categories is not unique to teachers, and yet it is important to emphasize that teachers are uniquely enmeshed in networks where “thought is confined to maintaining ‘correctness’ of existing ideals” (Roy, 2003, p. 23). A striking example of this can be found in the form of standardized tests — where ‘thinking correctly’ often becomes instrumentalized as ‘accurately navigating and filling in a bubble sheet’. While it is fair to say that standardized assessments ‘maintain the correctness of existing ideals’, it is more controversial — but no less accurate! — to say that standardized assessments affirm and naturalize a conservative vision of the purposes of public education.

For an opposing view, Roy cites Hartley (1997), who argues that “education is supposedly about leading us away from where we are, but its effects may be to lock us into technical rationality as the only mode of thinking” (cited in Roy, 2003, p. 22). As a point of strategic intervention, Roy suggests that “teachers are better served by being educated to see the learning encounter as a system of signs they have to engage and experiment with, and not something they can take for granted or treat in terms of representation or recognition” (Roy, 2003, p. 30). In practice, this means that for teachers the “ethical challenge is to respond to [each] student in a way that lets her or him be in otherness, that does not seek to recognize or otherwise close the gap with this singular other” (Ruitenbergh, in press, p. 9). In contrast with those who view successful education as a well-navigated bubble sheet, ‘job prep’ or ‘skill-development’, Roy affirms a vision of education which replaces the ‘idols of representation’ with “the positivity of difference” and “seeks to *produce* difference, and thereby articulate new worlds” (Ruitenbergh, in press, p. 21). Hence, Roy’s text will most directly speak to teachers, curricular theorists, and policy scholars who are struggling to unleash difference as generative.

(Re)Theorizing Deleuzian theory for liberative pedagogies

Many readers will find Roy’s situating of Deleuzian theory vis-à-vis Marxism, feminism, psychoanalysis, poststructuralism, and systems theory informative and practical — if not inspirational. On the other hand, it is also the case that many readers are likely to find Roy’s survey of social theory and post-foundational thought somewhat selective and stilted — if not pedantic. Nevertheless, in framing Deleuzian thought in this way, Roy provides a socio-conceptual roadmap for a Deleuze-inspired approach to curricular practice.

With regard to Marxism, Roy argues that “Marxist positions fall short of giving us the tools necessary to escape subjugation on this emergent plane that requires new forms of resistance” (Roy, 2003, p. 35). For

instance, the Marxist theory of surplus value misses the fact that “surplus labor no longer requires labor” (Deleuze & Guattari, cited in Roy 2003, p. 34). Instead, surplus value is the “result of complex qualitative processes that enslave through consumption rather than exploit through relations of production” (Roy, 2003, p. 35). Phrased differently, whereas Marxism links surplus value with the production of commodities, Deleuze anchors surplus value to consumption — in particular, to the consumption of affect. According to Roy, this type of “analysis goes beyond neo-Marxist ones in showing the mechanism through which children’s bodies are opened up, with the connivance of the school system, for ‘vampiric extraction’ of surplus value through consumption” (p. 35). Equally important, Roy emphasizes that in contrast with the

broad class struggle of the Marxist lineage, Deleuze’s political project and confrontation with power is mostly at the minoritarian level, concerned with the conditions of capture of the ‘molecular,’ or freer multiplicities, by the ‘molar,’ or forces of homogenization; that is, it looks at the conditions of possibility of specific struggles and resistances of different groups such as sexual minorities and other marginal social movements which Marxism treats as epiphenomenal to the historical antagonism between the classes. (Roy, 2003, p. 36)

On this basis, Roy advances the notion that it is necessary to move “beyond a critical approach” (p. 29) and reject the tendency among Marxists to discount individual struggle, for “we not only must struggle against the state but against ourselves as well” (p. 37).

Roy’s discussion on feminisms and Deleuze simultaneously links Deleuzian thought with the feminist project and pays homage to standing critiques of Deleuzian theory. To simplify and generalize, Deleuze is prone to “evoke in some feminist minds ‘colonial anticipations’ and male adventurism” (Roy, 2003, p. 39). For example, when Deleuze speaks of “woman-becomings as a ‘path to original potency’” he is vulnerable to being taken as reinforcing “exploitative discourses of animalisation and sexualization [of women]” (p. 39). In response, Roy astutely notes that for Deleuze “bodies of either sex are urged toward a becoming-woman which takes us beyond the limit of recuperability of gendered individuality” (p. 40). A similarly robust counter-argument is offered in response to feminists’ critiques of Deleuze’s privileging of minoritarian over macro-political struggles:

while overt struggles with recognizable ends, leaders, symbols, and means are important, faceless struggles that have no particular definition must and do occur alongside, every moment. It is mostly to this kind of struggle to escape patriarchy and domination that Deleuze and Guattari address themselves. (Roy, 2003, p. 40)

In brief, Roy argues that it is imperative to realize that “while category-based struggles [like feminism, human rights, special needs, First Nations, etc.] are valuable, teachers [and policy analysts] must carry resistance into the micro-spaces of difference” (Roy, 2003, p. 41). In clarifying Deleuzian thought in this way, Roy upholds feminists’ struggles against patriarchy while demonstrating the relevance of a Deleuzian approach to looking at curriculum and the lives of teachers.

Roy’s section on Deleuze and psychoanalysis traces lines of thought that project well afield from the interests of many teachers, so it is helpful that the author gives careful attention to differentiating between Deleuze’s, Freud’s, and Lacan’s notions of consciousness. To risk the folly of essentialism, Freud’s model of consciousness is grounded by a notion of desire as “fantasy and illusion”; and for Lacan desire is seen as “a lack in being that strives to be filled through the impossible attainment of an object” (Roy, 2003, p. 41). Deleuze, however, sees desire as the “primary producer of reality and all relations within it” (p. 43). On this basis, Roy argues that “we have to analyze and actively engage in ethical experimentation in order to make new ‘connections’ in the production of the real” (p. 43). Roy links these concerns directly with curricular practice, a view of learning, and teacher development when he suggests that “by radicalizing the conception of desire as irreducibly multiplicitous and affirming it as the very site of production, we take a step toward constructing a curriculum of intensities, leaving behind the ground of boundaries and categories” (p. 43).

Roy’s discussion of Deleuze and poststructuralism passes through the orbits of two of modern Europe’s most iconoclastic theorists: Derrida and Foucault. For readers who are unfamiliar with these theorists, it is helpful that convergences and divergences are *diagrammed* — that is to say, passed through a “specific and contingent configuration” (Roy, 2003, p. 45). For instance, Roy avers that “while Foucault talks of power,

Deleuze talks of force” (p. 44). And Derrida, with his fixation on “close textual analysis that exposes inherent contradictions in the text”, can be meaningfully contrasted with Deleuze, who was more interested in “ethical praxis, and describes himself as a ‘constructivist’” (pp. 47-48). For Roy, this means that Deleuze accommodates and surpasses Derrida and Foucault in offering a radical revisioning of teacher becoming and curricular practice which “may appear to be something personal, [but] is really a matter of getting away from personalist conceptions toward a more tectonic and geographical distribution of forces and intensities through which one can be a producer of affective power” (p. 47). Although it is likely that this section will challenge many readers with its conceptual density, it is important in that it: a) diagrams Deleuze’s thought in relation to the ideas and practices of Foucault and Derrida, and b) locates the educational encounter as an ontological process which is inextricably saturated with politics and ethics. In so doing, Roy affirms Bell and Russell, who argued that “poststructuralism offers promising theoretical perspectives for educators” interested in “disrupt[ing] assumptions about objectivity, the unified subject, and the universality of human experience, and thereby to expose the classist, racist, sexist, and heterosexist underpinnings of Western humanist thought” (Bell & Russell, 2000, p. 189).

Roy emphasizes the centrality of *becoming* for Deleuze by way of an introduction to the work of the systems theorists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela. Highlighting the notion of “structural coupling” (Varela, 1998) as a relay between systems and environments, Roy argues that curricular practice should accommodate the fact that “the world is not a given, but is brought forth continually through the very act of living” (Roy, 2003, p. 51). In a practical sense, this means that teachers need to help students “move from decoding life within an existing schema to producing those existential moments themselves” (p. 50). For example, in instances where schools emphasize standardized learning outcomes, difference “is only a means to a synthesis, and must ultimately be subsumed” (p. 51). Under these regimes, teachers are tasked with inculcating fidelity to externally-imposed understandings and values. Since the educational encounter is a “situation where multiplicities encounter other multiplicities” (p. 51), this attempt to naturalize particular understandings and homogenize becomings inevitably produces resistant students and stressed-out teachers:

[T]he effort toward pure repetition... keeps curriculum, students, and teachers mired in ungenerative pursuits, resulting in frustration and violence, especially among underprivileged groups who have no stakes in preserving the illusion of repetition, or maintaining the existing order. (Roy, 2003, p. 50)

Given these points, Roy seems justified in positioning systems theory as a pragmatic conceptual repertoire for teachers, and prudent in linking systems theory with Deleuzian thought.

School as case study as fieldwork in philosophy

As a basis for grounding his study, Roy’s fieldwork focused on an innovative secondary school in the U.S. that systematically attempted to accommodate to the lives of marginalized urban youth.² In a candid admission, Roy states that “it was the sense of a somewhat altered space that made [him] want to get involved in what the school was doing for young people... Its *raison d’être* was to establish a different space” (Roy, 2003, p. 58). The operational objective of this school was to

offer a curriculum that was much more suited to the needs of urban youth whose lives were rather complex, many of whom had to support themselves and their families from an early age, had no regular homes, lived in unsafe neighborhoods, and among whom teenage pregnancy, drug problems and dropout rates were high. (Roy, 2003, p. 59)

² It is fair to say that the case study serves as a *backdrop* - not the *foreground* - for Roy’s theorization of a Deleuzian-inspired approach to curricular practice. That is to say, in Roy’s application of ‘fieldwork in philosophy’ the emphasis is on the creation of and experimentation with concepts rather than empirical analysis of ‘material reality’. As a means of validating and extending the author’s emphasis on concepts, I have followed his lead and have weighted this review accordingly.

Denoted within Roy's study as 'The City School', the site of analysis was a school founded and staffed by a group of innovative teachers who privileged a vision of schooling where reciprocity was substituted for hierarchy and the usual separation between teaching and administration was collapsed. Nevertheless, after some years of operation new teachers were hired and tensions began to mount. Roy suggests that innovative schools "tend to have a limited life; after an initial period during which there is a burst of enthusiasm, there is a tendency to get reabsorbed into the mainstream due to internal differences, funding difficulties, problems with facilities" (Roy, 2003, p. 62). Specifically, Roy found that newer teachers did not appreciate the imperatives the school was founded upon, nor did they "fully comprehend the vision of the founders" (p. 63). This leads Roy to theorize that "*innovativeness can survive only on further innovation* [emphasis in the original]" (p. 63). Sensing that The City School's new faculty was ill-prepared for navigating curricular practice as a 'smooth', non-hierarchical space, Roy argues that there is a need for new approaches to pre-service teacher training which could better prepare teachers for entering schools as "*becoming structures* [emphasis in the original]" (p. 64). This is, on the whole, the primary function of Roy's text: to help teachers embrace difference and becoming in order to 'generate new and irregular spaces of proliferating connections' (p. 64).

Over and above basic demographic details, Roy's data collection includes observations (classrooms, staffroom, meetings), and interviews (teachers, administrator). For the most part Roy's encounters with teachers were ad hoc, and there is a notable absence of theorization vis-à-vis interview methodologies. Given that all interviews were un-structured "conversations" (Roy, 2003, p. 64), there is some sense that Roy sacrifices generalizability for simplicity. By that I mean to say that Roy's interviewing methods are problematic for the fact that they lack any legitimate degree of replicability. Moreover, although the author provides readers with extracts from transcripts, there is no discussion of transcription methods anywhere in *TiNS*. Transcription necessarily entails "interpretive decisions (What is transcribed?) and representational decisions (How is it described?)" (Bucholtz, 2000, p. 1439). Thus, it is imperative for researchers who rely on interview data to adequately theorize their approach, and to accommodate the fact that "embedded in the details of transcription are indications of purpose, audience, and the position of the transcriber and the text" (Bucholtz, 2000, p. 1440). On the other hand, it could also be argued that Roy's approach to collecting interview data was rhizomatic, and that he intentionally avoided more arborescent frames of inquiry. While this strategy has the added benefit of staying within a Deleuzian frame of analysis (i.e., by privileging *immanence* over *transcendence*), it is unnecessarily vulnerable to critique. Roy could have designed his study such that un-structured interviews provided the basis for semi-structured interviews. This would have provided Roy with immanently-generated interview prompts which could be translated across contexts. In other words, by providing the basis for replicability³ Roy could have enhanced his study's generalizability. This would mean, for one thing, that *TiNS* would become more explicitly functional, less abstract, and more capable of exhuming and affirming difference. Nevertheless, I should reiterate that methodological inadequacies do not entirely supersede the relevance of *TiNS*, even if they circumscribe its accessibility in meaningful ways. In particular, I would argue that Roy's text has tremendous relevance and pragmatic value for its conceptual emanations.

Conceptual emanations: Re-territorializing curricular practice for nomads

Following Nietzsche, Deleuze placed a singular emphasis on the creation of concepts: "[We] must no longer accept concepts as a gift, nor merely purify and polish them, but first *make* and *create* them, present them and make them convincing [emphasis in the original]" (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 220). It is fitting, then, that the primary thrust of *TiNS* is less oriented towards uncovering the 'reality' of The City School than in supplying readers with concepts for re-centering curricular practice along an axis of Deleuzian becoming.

³ Here I do not mean to imply that Roy's study could or should be programmatically "reproduced". Instead, I would argue that providing readers with interview prompts enhances a text's pragmatic value. More prosaically, by making a structure visible, it becomes more capable of constructive buggery, more amendable to birthing a monstrosity: "tak[e] an author from behind and giv[e] him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous... the child [is] bound to be monstrous too, because it result[s] from all the shifting, slipping, dislocations and hidden emissions" (Deleuze, 1995, p. 6). It is my contention that without access to interview prompts, some readers may be tempted to perceive a study as 'one-off', or — even worse — an abstraction.

For the most part, Roy's conceptual emanations forward a view of curricular practice that privileges nomadic becomings via an extended semiotic apprenticeship. To render these notions more concrete, I will now briefly outline their horizons and link them with the lives of teachers in BC.

Rendering curricular practice (a/e)ffective

According to Roy, “teachers need not merely a separate set of skills, but new lenses through which to rethink curriculum as a whole” (Roy, 2003, p. 85). This particularly applies to prevailing notions of curricular structure and standardized — or ‘preferred’ — learning outcomes. This is because, argues Roy, learning “occurs or emerges at the intersection of complex factors that cannot be fully controlled” (p. 86). Moreover, “every movement, gesture, autobiographical event, and accidental phenomenon can become a learning opportunity, including those that are considered disruptive behavior” (p. 91). In contrast with Roy's emphasis on curriculum as productive and contingent, prevailing attitudes towards curricular practice emphasize ‘accountability’ to ‘prescribed learning outcomes’, and functionally position students as *consumers* of curricula. In this way, argues Roy, teachers can inadvertently affirm a version of curricular practice which results “in turning away from creative openings and toward a self-imposed containment in representational space” (p. 85).

Given that teachers in BC are obligated to follow provincially-mandated prescribed learning outcomes and prepare students for provincially-mandated standardized assessments, it might be helpful to consider public education in BC as a counter-example of Roy's suggested approach to curricular practice. Specifically, whereas Roy emphasizes students as *producers* of curricula, it should be apparent that *consumption* is privileged in BC. For instance, it is difficult to argue that students are in any meaningful way *producers* of the curricula so long as the outcomes are pre-ordained - which is clearly the case in BC and elsewhere. Even still, it is essential to categorically emphasize that there are many instances across the province where students are given meaningful latitude in shaping the horizons of their study. It is, however, exceedingly unlikely that these approaches will become normative — so long as as policy makers discursively link standardization with ‘accountability’, and teachers are yolked to habitual frames of ‘teaching to the test’ or dubious notions of ‘objectivity’. With that said, teachers in and beyond BC might see reason for simultaneously advocating for and idiosyncratically making use of Roy's vision for “a different kind of conceptualization of schooling, an epistemological and ontological shift, in order to appreciate the somewhat open, leaky, and indeterminate spaces that can better accommodate ‘border’ youth” (Roy, 2003, p. 85).

Rendering curricular practice as nomadic becoming

The nomad has a territory; he [*sic*] follows customary paths; he goes from one point to another; he is not ignorant of points (water points, dwelling points, assembly points, etc.). But the question is what in nomad life is a principal and what is only a consequence. To begin with, although the points determine paths, they are strictly subordinated to the paths they determine, the reverse happens with the sedentary. The water point is reached only in order to be left behind; every point is a relay and exists only as a relay. A path is always between two points, but the in-between has taken on all the consistency and enjoys both an autonomy and a direction of its own. The life of the nomad is the intermezzo. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 380)

On a reductive level, Roy's *TiNS* operationalizes the process of becoming nomad for teachers. This is important because — according to Roy — teachers' stress is often directly linked with “strict category-oriented thinking” (Roy, 2003, p. 96). In other words, teachers' reliance on category-bound notions of identity (e.g., ‘at-risk’, ‘delinquent’, ‘responsible’) can be said to ‘overcode’ the learning encounter — and when difference irrupts, stress is likely to follow. Teachers who enact versions of curricular practice which privilege nomadic becoming, however, ‘understand themselves not as identities that return every day, day after day, but as “crowned anarchies” or systems of simulacra in which only affirmation returns as a differential’ (p. 158). Phrased differently, teachers who embody curricular practice as nomadic becoming can be said to reject *being* for *becoming*. Far from a meaningless semantic twist, “a change in the conceptual structure in which one is immured can significantly influence affective states and thereby positively affect stress” (p. 154). Or, to reiterate the words of Nietzsche, we must “*learn to think differently* — in order to attain even more: *to feel differently* [emphasis in the original]” (Nietzsche, 1982, p. 103).

The Research Department of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation periodically conducts surveys of public school teachers to get a window on life in BC's schools. The "2009 Worklife of BC Teachers" survey asked teachers to choose the most significant from among 47 different sources of stress. It is meaningful to note that at least 60% of the teachers who participated in the survey rated levels of support for students with disruptive behaviour, class composition issues, levels of support for non-designated students, and frustration over students' needs going unmet as factors which give rise to "high stress" or "very-high stress" (Naylor & White, 2010, p. 2). More provocatively, "the attitude of the provincial government is rated as the fifth highest source of stress for teachers, slightly higher than inclusion issues" (p. iv). One reading of these data is that 'solutions' to the 'problem' of teacher stress in BC are contingent on macro-politics (e.g., ameliorative policies which directly affirm teachers' grievances). However, another reading of the data is that teachers across BC are stressed because of category-bound thinking: Would it not be possible, for example, for teachers in BC to associate the causes of their stress with governance which upholds economic functionalism and 'efficiency' over the professional agency of teachers? Moreover, if teachers across BC are stressed, is it *their* problem or *our* problem? In other words, if teachers are stressed, it is very likely that students are stressed. Indeed, a recent Canada-wide survey conducted by Angus Reid found that BC leads the country in 'stressed-out students' (Hoekstra, 2011). Taken together, teachers could reject the category-bound thinking which currently frames their understanding of workplace stress to build solidarity in advocating for reforms which are more affirmative of teachers' work. In so doing, teachers could depart from category-bound states of stress and initiate nomadic becomings of resistance.

Be that as it may, nomadic becomings should be understood as inextricably micro-political unfoldings — even if they have macro-effects. More concretely, becoming nomad may be the pursuit of subjects, but not collectives. This is because nomads do not program actions in advance, or devote themselves to any ulterior aim other than "maximizing creative difference in repetition" (Holland, 2010, p. 21). This means that teachers in BC would need to begin their own paths to nomadic becomings, and should not wait for policymakers to make macro-political reforms. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that teachers' micro-politics can give rise to unforeseeable difference and may give rise to macro-political change. An elementary teacher in BC strikingly demonstrated this ability to link micro-politics with a call for macro-political change. Noting that students consistently attended her class without basic supplies, Carrie Gelson wrote an open letter that went viral and gave rise to a flood of community support (Steffenhagen, 2011). Ms. Gelson illustrates nomadic becoming by refusing to accommodate the categories that feed her stress, and simultaneously highlights the potency of a single voice as a means of affirming difference and triggering nomadic becomings in others.

Rendering curricular practice as semiotic apprenticeship

The densest portion of *TiNS* is reserved for a discussion on what Roy calls "the apprenticeship of the sign" (Roy, 2003, p. 120). In summary, Roy offers a programmatic approach for "semiotic experimentation," a diagram by which a "practitioner might undertake so as to be able to insinuate oneself into differential spaces" (p. 120). The apprenticeship is positioned as one of the major purposes of the book, and the author stresses that teachers are specifically called-upon and particularly suited for uncovering the nuances of signs. To elaborate, Roy draws on Deleuze to argue that

Learning is essentially concerned with *signs*. Signs are the object of a temporal apprenticeship, not of an abstract knowledge. To learn is first of all to consider a substance, an object, a being as if they emitted signs.... Everything which teaches us something emits signs, every act of learning is an interpretation of signs or hieroglyphs. (Deleuze, cited in Roy, 2003, p. 120)

Owing to the complexity of argumentation, many readers are likely to find this section of *TiNS* especially challenging. Nevertheless, it is Roy's contention that "to deny complexity is to abet hegemony" (Roy, 2003, p. 121), and the determined reader will find a toolbox of concepts for waging "hand-to-hand combat with signs" (p. 120). In a very practical sense, Roy hopes the apprenticeship will help teachers learn to problematize what they are "seeing" and to avoid the trap of "naive realism" (p. 122). Thus, the apprenticeship is filled with generative uncertainty, and it offers a tonic for essentialization and category-bound thinking.

The apprenticeship speaks directly to the needs of teachers in BC: Under sustained attack from economically reductive policy agendas, teachers could draw on the apprenticeship to “step back from dominant or ideal significations to observe the rise of the simulacra” (Roy, 2003, p. 127). For instance, BC’s Ministry of Education (2011) recently released an updated ‘education plan’ which includes a promise of “tens” of millions of dollars in additional funding for students with special needs. This ameliorative policy can be put in sharp relief by considering that in 2002 the Liberal Party stripped \$275 million in funding for students with special needs from the province’s yearly budget. In today’s dollars that amounts to around \$330 million (Ehrcke, 2011). After a decade of ‘making due with less’, now schools will be asked to compete amongst themselves for arbitrarily scarce resources. I say ‘arbitrarily’ because over the last decade the provincial government has enacted corporate tax cuts which tally to a minimum loss of \$7 billion in tax revenues (BC Federation of Labour, 2011). In this example, an ameliorative policy reifies schools as sorting machines while “protecting both the institution and the educator from self doubt” (Apple, 2004, p. 127). The provincial government can appear magnanimous and teachers can more easily be corralled into advocating against their [students’] collective interests.

However, if teachers were to engage in semiotic experimentation it is reasonable to think that they could significantly impact the public discourse. For one thing, if teachers forsook “all tendency toward nostalgia in reading signs and treat[ed] them as a fresh problematic” (Roy, 2003, p. 147), they could make headway in troubling the provincial government’s status as operating ‘in the public good’. In other words, teachers could deliberately and publicly experiment with the categories which structure the provincial government’s view of public education. Of course, semiotic experimentation should not be misconstrued as a panacea, and yet: “The most subversive kind of transformation is... not necessarily the largest and the most grandiose, but the almost invisible fracture, the instantaneous that can annihilate old structures” (p. 129). In any event, Roy’s apprenticeship of the signs offers teachers in BC a functional means of deterritorializing boundaries and affirming difference.

Over and above any potential impact on political discourse, the apprenticeship of the signs also has functional implications vis-à-vis curricular practice. As an illustration, it might be helpful to reflect on how thoroughly schools are saturated with classificatory grids: age, (dis)ability, (un)popularity, sexuality/gender, race, class, vocationalist/practical, managerialist/entrepreneurial, etc. These structural contours allow schools to homogenize difference beneath the veneer of ‘common sense’, and operationalize schooling as a sorting and selecting mechanism (e.g., Anyon, 1981; Apple, 2004). Teachers who undertake an apprenticeship of the signs, however, can attempt a “semiotization of the pedagogic encounter so that the heterogeneous series that emerge from encounters, as well as the resonances between their elements that are the result of difference and divergence [can] be seen as productive” (Roy, 2003, p. 134). Phrased differently, Roy argues that teachers who undergo an apprenticeship of the signs can learn to enact versions of curricular practice that are capable of affirming difference and unsettling deeply ideological categories which have the appearance of ‘common sense’. In this way, teachers can use the apprenticeship to learn to affirm students in their difference — which is quite different from homogenizing them within categories.

Bridges to Deleuze-o-Guattari-land

In recent years the work of Deleuze and Guattari (D&G) has been increasingly ascendant on the theoretical scene, and education studies are no exception. Indeed, it would not at all be inaccurate to say that there is a veritable army of education researchers who have been inspired by D&G (e.g., Semetsky, 2007, 2008; Webb, 2009). Roy’s *TiNS* fits squarely within this field, and may even be said to be an exemplar — but it should be understood as a variation on a theme, not an icon suitable for reproduction or essentialization. With this in mind, I will now briefly contrast Roy’s *TiNS* with two other D&G-inspired approaches to curricular practice.

Inna Semetsky’s (2008) *Nomadic Education: Variations on a Theme by Deleuze and Guattari* complements and contrasts *TiNS* in meaningful ways: It is an edited volume so it has greater diversity and breadth of voice, more attention is given to D&G-inspired research methodologies for studies in education, and a wider survey of D&G’s thought is attempted. However, Semetsky’s volume is *philosophical* whereas Roy’s *TiNS* is more explicitly *functional*. By that I mean to say that Semetsky privileges concepts to a greater degree than Roy, and Roy foregrounds the usefulness curricular practice more than Semetsky. In any event,

readers of *TiNS* are likely to appreciate Semetsky's volume for its breadth, and value it as a provocative supplement to Roy's *TiNS*.

Focusing more specifically on early childhood education, Olsson's (2009) *Movement and Experimentation in Young Children's Learning: Deleuze and Guattari in Early Childhood Education* is more directly comparable with Roy's *TiNS*. Drawing on case studies in Swedish preschools, Olsson stresses the need for challenging dominant ways of thinking about early childhood education — particularly insofar as they emphasize fixed categories and predetermined outcomes. Like Roy's *TiNS*, Olsson specifically sets out to provide researchers and teachers with theoretical frameworks that are suited for curricular practice. With that said, an obvious point of difference is that Olsson's emphasis on micro-politics speaks more directly to the lives of elementary teachers, while Roy's *TiNS* focuses more generally on the micro-political tactics of high school teachers. Nevertheless, many high school teachers will find that Olsson's theorization of movement and experimentation in young children's learning is a powerful extension of Roy's emphasis on becoming and difference.

Contra-conclusion

I began this review by framing the field of education in BC as a war of attrition, and positioned teachers as under attack, stressed-out, and in need of new and meaningful forms of resistance. With this in mind, I forwarded Roy's (2003) *Teachers in Nomadic Spaces* as a resource for affirming difference and becoming vis-à-vis curricular practice. After surveying the concepts and conceptual emanations advanced by Roy, I attempted to explicitly link them with the lives of teachers in BC. Having situated *TiNS* as a strategic resource for teachers, I then related it with complementary approaches to curricular practice. All things considered, I hope to have affirmed the relevance of Roy's work for teachers and policy activists while introducing my own minor 'swerve'. In any event, following Roy, Deleuze, and Nietzsche, I have shot a flurry of arrows into the dark — in the naive hope that they will be picked up and put to use in altogether different and unforeseeable contexts.

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