Oh, How Quickly We Forget
Curriculum Theorizing in the "New" Post-truth Era

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THE CURRICULUM STUDIES FIELD is situated in a paradoxical time and place. Curriculum theorists currently work in a post-truth era wracked by resurgent authoritarianism throughout the world. Neoliberal globalization produces widening economic and political inequalities through accumulation by dispossession, starkly exemplified by Puerto Rico's fate in the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Maria. And, in an interesting twist on the gendered mind-body split, both intellect and empathy have been rendered superfluous. Institutional power cultivates an historical amnesia that dissolves the world's complexity "onto a flattened never-ending 'now'" (Pinar, 2012, p. 227). The outrage expressed about Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, for example, elides discussion of the often violent subversion of other governments by the United States. The unwillingness to reflect on such a self-serving historical narrative suggests that we suffer a "psychosis of permanent war" in which we claim victimhood and disavow our complicity in creating "the very militancy we purport to fight" (Hedges, 2014, p. 48).

On the other hand, amid our current post-truth anti-politics, the discipline of curriculum studies generates provocative counter-narratives in an educational research field enthralled to improving learning outcomes through audit culture's "governmental demands for evidence-based practice" (Lather, 2007, p. 2). Curriculum theorizing in this post-truth era complicates the present, unearths subjugated histories and knowledges, and opens spaces where one can historically situate oneself in issues of critical importance to all humanity. Curriculum studies provides generative spaces in which a special kind of humanity can emerge in response to dark times (Arendt, 1968), embodied by those who speak and hear truth as an ethic of care for the self and the world.

This paper reflects my concerns about the current post-truth moment as a regime of veridiction (Foucault, 2008), which forms a system of governmentality that effects institutional power through bodies. I first situate my inquiry in Foucault's (2003, 2008) tactic of genealogy and theorization of biopolitics (Foucault, 2003, 2007) to trace the conditions of possibility that produced the present post-truth moment. Second, I grapple with my reconstruction of truth through two brief autobiographical reflections. Finally, I discuss *parrhēsia*, or "free-spokenness" (Foucault, 2011), as a technology of self-care and a politics of truth embodied through a hermeneutic process of subject formation and reformation. Importantly, one can speak freely and not embody *parrhēsia*. In a pejorative sense, *parrhēsia* includes speaking out of self-interest, to

manipulate others, or speech that cannot link discourse "to a principle of rationality and truth" (Foucault, 2011, p. 10). As the Greeks understood, *parrhēsia* embodied in the pejorative sense can endanger democracy, corrupt institutions, and produce demagogues. The resurgence of authoritarian populism throughout the world seems to illustrate a form of free speech that has produced a dangerous era of denuded truth.

Theory and Method

Genealogy: Erudite Knowledge and What People Know

Genealogy historically traces the production of regimes of truth and how they effect political power as specialized knowledges. Regimes of truth form totalizing narratives that support prevailing relations of institutional power. Genealogical analysis determines the regime of truth established at a given moment and uncovers local critiques of totalizing, elite discourses that dismiss certain histories, knowledge, and experience as unsophisticated or non-erudite.

> It is thanks to the reappearance of these knowledges: the knowledge of the psychiatrized, the patient, the nurse, the doctor, that is parallel to, marginal to, medical knowledge, the knowledge of the delinquent…it is the reappearance of what people know at a local level, of these disqualified knowledges, that made the critique possible. (Foucault, 2003, p. 7)

Genealogies, thus, form histories of present phenomena, in this case post-truth politics, to understand the points at which institutional discourses coalesce to exercise power over populations through specialized knowledges. I trace current post-truth politics to the development of sophisticated public relations and propaganda tactics during the early 20th century in the United States. Yet, genealogies also excavate subjugated knowledges and histories, which I demonstrate in my autobiographical reflections. Uncovering "the historical knowledge of struggles" against oppressive regimes of truth allows us to "make use of that knowledge in contemporary tactics" (Foucault, 2003, pp. 8-9) and embody counter-conduct against unjust configurations of institutional power.

Biopolitics

Biopolitics reflects the concern of nation-states with security and governing by developing the state's human and economic resources. Biopolitical states exercise the power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death, which requires macro and micro-level seizures of bodies (Foucault, 1978/1990). First, anatomo-politics seeks to understand the physical functions and capabilities of bodies and how to harness and increase their capacities. Second, a macro-level biopolitics of the population conceptualizes the body as a defined species or nation. State-sponsored racism is essential to biopolitics to bond a national group together and fragment that group from others. Biopolitics, thus, reframes political struggles as internal or external biological threats to the population that must be eliminated to improve the species or race.

Biopolitics also expands the concept of racism. In addition to eliminating racialized others and sacrificing their own citizens to purify and strengthen the species or race, state-sponsored

racism also targets criminals, the mentally ill, and sexual "deviants" to rationalize their institutionalization and execution. The biopolitical "death function" purports that "the death of others makes one biologically stronger" insofar as one is a member of a "unitary living plurality" (Foucault, 2003, p. 258). Biopolitical death transcends physical killing to include political death such as mass incarceration, political and economic disenfranchisement, environmental racism, the isolation of Indigenous peoples on reservations, epistemic erasure, and the denial of the civil and political rights of LGBTQ people. Biopolitical mythologies, thus, delimit the norm from the abject, friend from foe, and the licit from the delinquent.

Synoptic Analysis and Autobiography

Synoptic analysis engages with texts in both documentary and worklike dimensions. The documentary situates a text "in terms of factual or literal dimensions" and conveys information about it (LaCapra, 1983, p. 30). The worklike dimension transforms a text by deconstructing and reconstructing it to create something that did not previously exist (LaCapra, 1983). The interplay between the documentary and the worklike reflects an intertextuality in the "relationship between text and context" (Jay, 1988, p. 53). I, thus, paraphrase seminal critical media studies texts to trace the development of public relations and propaganda techniques that have contributed significantly to the production of the current post-truth era.

I also use brief autobiographical reflections to demonstrate speaking truth as writing, a vital technology of the self (Foucault, 1988). Writing as self-enactment, an important part of my ontology of truth, is subjective in its self-focus and reflexivity and also a form of social expression that reaches out to engage the world (Pinar, 2011). I also borrow from *currere* the element of historicized distance, in which my lived experience becomes a data source for analysis and reimagination of the future (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman 1995). I, thus, seek distance from a collective identity to "write" myself outside of a "preapproved form" (Pinar, 2011, p. 102). The physical, temporal, affective, and intellectual places of which I write serve as spaces of defamiliarization from what I consider my home. That sense of estrangement, embraced lovingly, is where the possibility of an educative process lives (Wang, 2004).

A Brief Genealogy of Post-truth

Donald Trump's presidency is associated with a new post-truth era defined by the newspeak of "alternative facts" and "fake news." But the late American playwright Steve Tesich (1992), reflecting on the 1991 U.S. War against Iraq, expressed grave concern about post-truth in a *Nation* essay:

> All the dictators up to now have had to work hard at suppressing the truth. We, by our actions, are saying that this is no longer necessary, that we have acquired a spiritual mechanism that can denude truth of any significance. In a very fundamental way we, as a free people, have freely decided that we want to live in some post-truth world. (p. 13)

Tesich (1992) concluded that awaiting us on the other side of the mirage of the U.S. as a military superpower would be a "monster with a human face…to inform us with whom we have been

collaborating" (p. 14). Perhaps President Trump is the "monstrous" embodiment of the post-truth era, but I am concerned that an ahistoric presentism (Pinar, 2012) that interprets figures like Trump and phenomena like post-truth as new or an aberration will obfuscate the conditions of possibility of the present. Historicizing and locating oneself in the past and the present to reimagine the future, a core tenet of post-Reconceptualization curriculum theorizing, is essential to understand, counter, subvert, and perhaps transcend this post-truth era.

Shortly after the 2016 presidential election, I reread *It Can't Happen Here* by Sinclair Lewis (1935) and found his Depression-era novel about the fascistic rise of Berzelius "Buzz" Windrip timely. Lewis depicted an American public both incredulous and welcoming of a populist dictator, all in the name of national restoration and security. The "Fifteen Points of Victory for the Forgotten Men," Windrip's *Mein Kampf*-like blueprint to make America great again, *Zero Hour*, the subversion and cooptation of the press and courts, and Windrip's armed militia, the "Minute Men," resonated uncannily. Lewis (1935), through his fictional, devoted communist, Karl Pascal, incisively characterized Windrip as the inevitable product of a rotten system:

> Altogether too easy to explain everything just blaming it on Windrip…. Why, Windrip's just something nasty that's been vomited up. Plenty of others still left fermenting in the stomach—quack economists with every sort of economic ptomaine! No, Buzz isn't important—it's the sickness that made us throw him up that we've got to attend to. (p. 110)

Karl characterized the focus on Buzz Windrip as a distraction from a diseased system. It seems that Donald Trump is similarly distracting many Americans from a system in which, as Karl asserted, there are plenty of others still fermenting.

Reading *It Can't Happen Here* reminded me that, like today, the early twentieth century witnessed a struggle for truth that accompanied many social upheavals. Progressive journalists publicized predatory business practices and the plight of the working class and questioned commonsense assumptions about free enterprise capitalism. Progressive elites initially viewed the public as literate, engaged, and necessary to democratic life and thought publicizing corporate corruption, graft, inequality, and brutal working conditions might ignite a social reform movement (Ewen, 1996). But Progressive publicity quickly morphed into public relations and propaganda tactics to engineer consent (Bernays, 1947). The emergence of the social sciences convinced many Progressives that a benevolent elite could socially engineer an orderly, efficient society, and they regarded democracy as an inconvenience. Lippmann (1922/1997) foresaw the persuasive power of public relations techniques:

> Persuasion has become a self-conscious art and a regular organ of popular government. None of us begins to understand the consequences, but it is no daring prophecy to say that the knowledge of how to create consent will alter every political calculation and modify every political premise. (p. 158)

Lippmann (1927/1993) also denigrated the public as "spectators of action" who should be put in their place "so that each of us may live free of the trampling and the roar of the bewildered herd" (p. 145).

Progressive intellectuals like Lippmann, thus, contributed to, as Lasch (1996) concludes, a revolt of the elites against the public:

At best public debate was a disagreeable necessity not the very essence of democracy but its "primary defect"…. Lippmann had forgotten what he learned (or should have learned) from William James and John Dewey: that our search for reliable information is itself guided by the questions that arise during arguments about a given course of action. It is only by subjecting our preferences and projects to the test of debate that we come to understand what we know and what we still need to learn. (pp. 169-170)

Early Progressive intellectuals had illuminated threats to democracy like monopoly capitalism, political corruption and graft, and abysmal working conditions, which generated support for organized labor, women's suffrage, and political and economic reforms. But increased working and middle-class hostility toward industry threatened social disintegration in the increasingly conservative minds of Progressive elites (Ewen, 1996). As print media became profitable through advertising, corporate consolidation quickly ensued. The reconfiguration of Progressive media as sensationalist, tabloid journalism driven by advertising revenue set the stage for a media model that has remained remarkably stable as a propaganda platform. The "propaganda filters" identified by Herman and Chomsky (1988)—corporate consolidation, advertising, reliance on state officials and "experts" for information—remain evident today.

Progressive intellectuals, thus, pioneered public relations techniques to manufacture news and to create, study, and manipulate various publics. Advertising, for example, has built a consumer culture that fragments people along demographic lines, focuses consumers on personal gain, and diverts attention from challenging authority (Chomsky, 2016). Perhaps no better example of the effectiveness of public relations and propaganda exists than war. President Wilson, for example, recruited Progressive journalist George Creel to head the Committee on Public Information (CPI). The CPI, which Creel called the "House of Truth," was Wilson's propaganda bureau that successfully sold World War I to the public with marketing pitches like "Make the World Safe for Democracy," deployed local business and community leaders to speak in favor of the War, used academics to write pro-war pamphlets, published its own newspaper, and created a 24-hour news cycle. While the CPI marketed the War with ideals of freedom and democracy, the Espionage and Sedition Acts suppressed dissent against the War and even criminalized criticism of the Wilson Administration.

The CPI set a precedent that has informed every U.S. military escapade since World War I. Public relations and propaganda, often based on lies such as the Gulf of Tonkin Incident and weapons of mass destruction, have manipulated the public into supporting U.S. militarism. The U.S. "War on Terror," begun in 2001, has also facilitated a dangerous erosion of our civil and political liberties. On the eve of World War I, Wilson used the Espionage Act to imprison Eugene Debs for making an anti-war speech in Ohio. The Bush and Obama Administrations used that same Espionage Act to prosecute and imprison whistle blowers like Chelsea Manning, John Kiriakou, and Reality Winner. Edward Snowden, still in exile after he revealed National Security Agency bulk data collection operations, may never be able to return to the United States. Figures like Debs and Snowden demonstrate the danger of a political system that withholds so much information from the public. Such opacity introduces great difficulty in determining the veracity of the truth claims made by the state and obfuscates the biopolitical nature of the propaganda that impels us to support militarism. The "War on Terror," for example, has created the terrorist from an assemblage of biopolitical fears: a perversely raced, gendered, sexualized Other who threatens the survival of a carefully-defined social body that comprises the "homeland" (Puar, 2007).

Demographic technologies have subverted democracy by targeting specific groups with messages they want to hear to generate and amplify group hostilities (Ewen, 1996). Social rationalization-fragmentation is an effective biopolitical tactic, with perhaps no better current example than the use and abuse of Facebook, which markets itself as a worldwide social network that connects people. But the platform's real purpose is collecting and selling user data, and Facebook has been hijacked by myriad political entities to deliver specific content to well-defined demographic groups. In addition to the misinformation spread through Facebook during the 2016 U.S. presidential election, Facebook has been implicated in the spread of propaganda during the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom and the rise of authoritarian governments in India, the Philippines, Kenya, Poland, Hungary, and Indonesia (Vaidhyanathan, 2018).

With more than two billion users globally, Facebook suffers three problems: the spread of information "pollution"; the amplification of content that registers strong emotional reactions; and the "filter bubble" created by an algorithmically-driven platform that rewards users with more of what they like and narrows their fields of vision (Vaidhyanathan, 2018). Facebook collects detailed user data with which to classify and manipulate users who receive affirmation based on their "likes" and "shares." Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and other technology elites embody a techno-fundamentalist ethos, and like past elites, their hubris regarding their expertise feeds a libertarian belief that they should be free to engage in for-profit social engineering without public scrutiny or political accountability. Techno-fundamentalism has infiltrated schools as well (Pinar & Grumet, 2015), which reduces education to technologically-mediated schooling. Technology also facilitates panoptic data collection, which constructs a "meticulous archive" (Foucault, 1977/1995, p. 189) that focuses a normalizing gaze on students and teachers alike. Often punitive technologies, such as high-stakes standardized assessments and fatally-flawed value-added measures (VAM) of teacher effectiveness (Berliner, 2014), actually depoliticize education issues and decision making processes by providing a veneer of scientific objectivity absent subjective context.

Science denial, notably about climate change, is certainly part of our post-truth dilemma. So, too, is the proliferation of scientific-sounding but empirically flawed reports produced by corporate-funded think tanks, which form the basis for much education legislation and policy. The suppression of scientific information by the tobacco, fossil fuel, and pharmaceutical industries about the known dangers of their products further exacerbates the contentiousness around the language of science and truth. The politics of truth have certainly assumed greater visibility in the Trump era. How might we contribute to new politics that reconstruct the spiritual mechanism that, as Tesich (1992) suggested, denudes truth of any significance?

A Personal Politics of Truth

Part of the spiritual mechanism necessary to seek truth lies in the capacity to reconstruct and share my understanding of myself and the world as an ethic of care. I, therefore, reflect on my struggle for truth through two brief autobiographical reflections. In the first, I return to Okinawa, where I was stationed while in the Marines. In the second, I reflect on a day spent at Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Both, as Wang (2004) notes, were places of estrangement from myself and from what I consider to be my country.

The Long Nightmare of Okinawa

As a young man of 18, I romanticized the military out of ignorance of its reality. My father, a Navy veteran, had lost his father and an uncle to World War II. After he left the Navy, my father worked for a defense contractor where exposure to asbestos eventually killed him as well. When I enlisted in the Marines, though, I felt invincible. The Reaganomic fairy tale that we could have guns and butter and that lower taxes on the rich would trickle down to everyone else became a regime of truth that still hypnotizes many. Reagan's agenda to rehabilitate the U.S. military's image after Vietnam also resonated with my naiveté about military culture.

The romance abruptly ended when I arrived in San Diego late one November night for basic training, replaced with dirt, sweat, sleep deprivation, physical abuse, and constant "mind games." The majority of my platoon were young men of color, mostly Latinos and African Americans from Southern California and the Southwestern United States. There were also a few older recruits who had joined the Marines because the military was the only company hiring during the recession early in Reagan's presidency. Over the years, I've realized that my partial truth about the military, and much else, starkly differed from theirs. As a white, middle-class boy, I chose to enlist, but many of my buddies enlisted with their backs to the wall. Slick military marketing appealed to their self-interest—a steady paycheck, medical care, travel, maybe some college— while it also demanded the perversely patriotic *quid pro quo* of self-sacrifice.

I spent most of my eight years in the Marines overseas, and like many, I served on Okinawa. Military indoctrination consisted of propaganda—"peace is our profession"—woven together by Kubrick-like caricatures to justify the long-term "benevolent" U.S. colonization of Okinawa. As elsewhere in its "potentially ruinous global empire of bases" (Johnson, 2010, p. 184), my country had transformed Okinawa into a place where everyone constantly encounters the United States. Jet and helicopter noise, the stench of turbine fuel, convoys, artillery fire, the sex "industry," an economy that catered to the colonizer, and agreements that established extraterritorial legal protections for U.S. troops made Okinawa an imperial plaything.

My encounters with Okinawan people helped me to see myself, my country, and the world differently. I learned that Okinawa had, like Hawai'i, once been an independent kingdom that had been overthrown and annexed. The Japanese government had sacrificed Okinawa during World War II to avoid a full-scale military invasion. After the war, Okinawa had again been sacrificed to minimize the number of American troops stationed on mainland Japan. The U.S. government declared Okinawans who resisted the occupation communists, deported them, and built bases on the stolen land.

I left the Marines at age 26 to study political science and Japanese history, language, and literature and meandered toward becoming a high school teacher and education professor. One of my political science professors introduced me to the work of Chalmers Johnson, a former Navy officer, CIA analyst, and Asia scholar. As I followed his scholarship critical of the post-9/11 U.S. Empire, Johnson's (2004) brief summary of U.S. conduct on Okinawa further contextualized and clarified my understanding of my role as a U.S. Marine on Okinawa:

> From 1945 to 1972, the United States held on to the island as a colony directly governed by the Pentagon. During this period, the 1.3 million Okinawans became stateless, unrecognized as citizens of either Japan or the United States, governed by an American lieutenant general. They could not travel to Japan or anywhere else without special documents issued by American military authorities. Okinawa was closed to the outside

world, a secret enclave of military airfields, submarine pens, intelligence facilities, and CIA safe houses. Some Okinawans who protested these conditions were declared probable Communists and hundreds of them were transported to Bolivia, where they were dumped in the remote countryside of the Amazon headwaters to fend for themselves. (Johnson, 2004, p. 199)

With years of distance, the edifice of the "truth" to which I had clung that my country is a force for freedom, democracy, or even security has disintegrated. Indeed, my subjective reconstruction is similar to that of Major General Smedley Butler, one of the heroes we Marines were taught to worship. Butler's role as a vocal anti-war activist and critic of capitalism when he left the Marines after 33 years, however, didn't fit the Marines' curricular regime of truth. Butler concluded in 1935:

I spent most of my time being a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and for the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. I helped make Mexico…safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street…. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went on its way unmolested. (p. 40)

Butler's (1935/2003) characterization of war as a "racket" sold to the public as "beautiful ideals" like "make the world safe for democracy" (p. 35) presaged Eisenhower's 1961 warning about the military-industrial complex. Today's post-truth war racket, similarly marketed with beautiful ideals, facilitates the bipartisan flow of money "into what is laughably called 'national security'" (Englehardt, 2018, p. 1). The failed "War on Terror" consumes enormous financial, human, and spiritual resources, and sophisticated regimes of truth with terrible histories—kill the Indian, save the man; American Exceptionalism; Manifest Destiny; make the world safe for democracy; the axis of evil—continue to fuel the U.S. militarism that may reduce the United States to an "empire of nothing at all" (Englehardt, 2018, p. 5). The "War on Terror" has also produced a nearly religious deference to the military that has circumvented critique and dissent. The U.S. National Football League starkly illustrates the dissonance between military-funded "patriotic" displays and the dissent of black players who kneel during the national anthem to protest police violence against people of color. Analyses of our violent history often elide the imbrication of white supremacy with militarism and capitalism. Working for four years in South Dakota confronted me with that aspect of the American Empire.

Wounded Knee

Education scholarship has often presented Native American communities through voyeuristic, damage-centered research (Tuck, 2009). Scholarship based on such logics of extraction forms a regime of truth that "privileges discrete, fully knowable entities that remain consistent across time and space, absent…material context" (Kuntz, 2015, p. 44). Indigenous scholars have, however, created counter-narratives of survivance that portray Indigenous "active resistance and repudiation of dominance, obtrusive themes of tragedy, nihilism, and victimry" and create "an active presence, more than the instincts of survival, function, or subsistence" (Vizenor,

2008, p. 11). As with my experience on Okinawa, my encounters on Pine Ridge opened spaces in which I reconstructed many truths to which I had long been enthralled.

I had been to Pine Ridge, home of some of my students and colleagues, several times while working in South Dakota, but as I prepared to leave the State for a new job, I returned to Wounded Knee alone. As I drove West across South Dakota one Friday morning in December 2014, I noticed, more acutely this time, the signage along Interstate 90 that conveyed a regime of truth that Takaki (2008) called the "Master Narrative of American History."

> According to this powerful and popular but inaccurate story, our country was settled by European immigrants, and Americans are white…. Not to be "white" is to be designated as the "Other"—different, inferior, and unassimilable. (p. 4)

Interspersed with advertisements for car dealers and farm equipment were signs that professed the sanctity of life and the ruin of sin on land where white Christians nearly exterminated the buffalo, massacred the tribes, and stole land and resources long held in common through force and fraud. To complete the deculturalization (Spring, 2009) of the tribes, Indian boarding schools effected the family separation policy of that time and place. The Master Narrative is a myth of raw power: a white, straight, "exceptional" Christian nation bequeathed by a loving and vengeful God to hard-working pioneers who "civilized" the Indians, spread the false religion of rugged individualism and private property rights, and put the "idle" land to "productive" use. And, our "Manifest Destiny" fantasies, through the alchemy of neoliberal globalization and military Keynesianism, have only expanded as we have declared ourselves the world's lone superpower.

After about seven hours, I arrived on Pine Ridge. That early December afternoon was warm, sunny, and accompanied by the ubiquitous "breeze" that crosses the plains. The landscape east of the Missouri River, rationalized by agribusiness and colonized with genetically modified commodity crops, had given way to bluffs that reached skyward as living, historical texts. As I drove through the reservation, I stopped often to survey the terrain against the December sky.

There are nine reservations in South Dakota, and nearly 10 percent of the population is Native American. Pine Ridge, located in southwestern South Dakota, borders Nebraska to the south and is not far from the eastern border of Wyoming. Red Cloud, who led the Lakota people onto what became Pine Ridge after signing the Fort Laramie Treaty in 1868 and who lies buried on the Reservation, led a combined force of Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho in what the U.S. Army called Red Cloud's War between 1866 and 1868. In December 1866, Red Cloud's forces dealt the Army its worst defeat—until the massacre of Custer in 1876 at Little Big Horn—when they wiped-out Captain William Fetterman's entire detachment.

Juxtaposed with the memory of Red Cloud is Whiteclay, Nebraska. With a population of about 15, Whiteclay lies just across the southern border of Pine Ridge where the sale of alcohol is illegal. Whiteclay has long been infamous for an economy reliant solely on a couple of stores that sold about 13,500 individual cans of beer per day to Native Americans. In April 2017, after years of automatic renewals, Nebraska revoked the liquor licenses of Whiteclay's beer stores, which remain closed as of this writing (Hammel, 2018). Sadly, the state's decision to revoke those licenses reflects a concern with Whiteclay's reputation as it seeks economic redevelopment (Hammel, 2018). Befitting another component with the racialized and classist "personal responsibility" regime of truth, the responsibility for dealing with the Reservation's alcohol problem, created by whites who have profited handsomely from it, rests with the victims.

I didn't sleep well that night. Early Saturday morning, I left the Lakota Prairie Ranch and drove the 30 miles to Wounded Knee. As I emerged from my car in the monument's deserted parking lot, a leaden sky and biting wind had overtaken the previous day's sun and warmth. I stood alone before a sign in the parking lot inscribed on both sides with the story of the massacre. As I surveyed the killing field, I remembered a photograph of Chief Big Foot, whose Lakota name was Spotted Elk, lying frozen in the snow where he had been killed. He had been sick with pneumonia at the time of the massacre and had been leading the people to Pine Ridge where the U.S. Army intercepted them and where they surrendered and set-up camp. My gaze followed the wind toward the monument where a Christian church and cemetery also stand, and I recalled photos I had seen of the mass burial of the massacred Lakota people by a party of white civilians escorted by Army troops a few days after the massacre. To my right as I faced the monument, I saw a building with a sign that read: "Holocaust Museum at Wounded Knee." The signs I had passed on I-90 that professed the sanctity of life flashed to mind.

As the wind rustled the grass, I crossed the road and walked around the locked museum building. Grates covered the building's windows, and the roof, mostly plywood and some corrugated metal, was secured in a few spots with large rocks or chunks of cement. I climbed the small hill, stood at the memorial's entrance for several minutes, and wondered whether or not I should enter. I looked down onto the massacre site and visualized the Hotchkiss guns that had rained canister shot on defenseless Lakota men, women, and children, as well as some of the Army's own troops. The technologies of death ubiquitous in our history—from the Hotchkiss guns used at Wounded Knee to today's drones—have rendered others' lives cheap and killing easier and more anonymous. As I walked through the arch, topped by a Christian cross, toward the memorial to the massacred Lakota, I saw only paradox.

The weathered monument to the dead rose from the ground inside a chain-link fence. Although the fence had a gate, I remained outside and read through the list of names carved into the monument, which began with Chief Big Foot. I turned toward the entrance and saw that both pillars that supported the arch had been inscribed with an historical counter-narrative. The pillar to the left had been painted over in black. Undeterred, the anonymous historian re-inscribed their truth, their survivance narrative, on the right pillar in hues of blue, green, and black (See Figure 1 below).
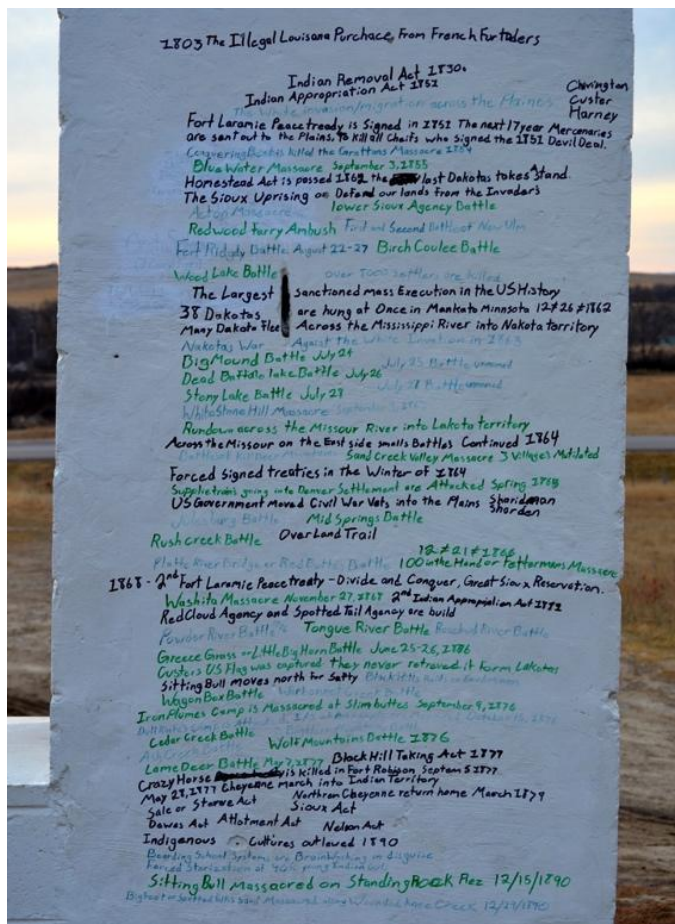
Figure 1. An anonymous historical counter-narrative at Wounded Knee

The timeline reminded me of the grievances enumerated by Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence as justification for revolution against Britain. A critical history confronted me: Jefferson's illegal Louisiana Purchase; the Fort Laramie Treaties; the largest mass execution in U.S. history of 38 Dakota men on December 26, 1862, ordered by the "Great Emancipator" Abraham Lincoln; the murder of Sitting Bull at Standing Rock; the capture of Custer's flag; the Dawes Act; Sand Creek; Big Foot, Crazy Horse, and Chivington. The list seemed more compelling than Jefferson's and asserted the writer's existence and refusal to melt into the pot:

> I am visible—see this Indian face—yet I am invisible. I both blind them with my beak nose and am their blind spot. But I exist, we exist. They'd like to think I have melted into the pot. But I haven't. We haven't. (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 86)

Wounded Knee simultaneously celebrates lives lived and commemorates the victims of unspeakable violence. It comprises Lakota traditions, Christianity, and Western modernity. Wounded Knee and Okinawa are two of the places where Baldwin's (1965/1998) reading of history whose force comes from "the fact that we carry it within us" and is "present in all that we do" (p. 723) became axiomatic. Seeing my country from a distance, both from Okinawa and Pine Ridge, and through others' eyes and histories has further exposed the value gap in which the lives and fortunes of white people are valued more than others (Glaude, 2016) and on which successive

regimes of truth, currently "Make America Great Again," have functioned. It has taken me years to begin to understand that.

Curriculum Theorizing as the Courage of Truth

> *In great pain and terror one begins to assess the history which has placed one where one is and formed one's point of view. In great pain and terror because, therefore, one enters into battle with that historical creation, Oneself, and attempts to recreate oneself according to a principle more humane and more liberating; one begins the attempt to achieve a level of personal maturity and freedom which robs history of its tyrannical power, and also changes history*. (Baldwin, 1965/1998, p. 723)

Our post-truth era reflects a bundle of recurring historical motifs—anti-intellectualism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, rapacious capitalism, religious intolerance, nationalism, militarism, xenophobia, techno-fundamentalism, and the hubris of class elites. Curriculum theorizing in our post-truth times can open some of the complex dialogic spaces in which we as a nation and world might begin to speak and listen to each other and run the course toward finding truth together. Considering these dark times and looming existential crises associated with human impact on the biosphere, war, forced migration, and resource depletion, engaging in those complicated conversations will certainly be an act of courage. Perhaps the hope in this post-truth era lies in our recognition of the powerful, insidious propaganda technologies that manipulate and conceal truth, fragment us, and render us compliant to power.

In the United States, the Trump Presidency has made many historical paradoxes more visible. Curriculum theorizing in and against the post-truth era can contribute provocative counter-narratives through new genealogical histories of the present in which curriculum scholars illuminate the complex conditions of possibility of the current phenomena we experience. As I suggested above, a regime of truth comprised of a complex history of power relations and institutional public relations and propaganda technologies has helped produce our current post-truth anti-politics. Similarly, my autobiographical reflections illustrate the historicization of regimes of truth related to the biopolitics of U.S. militarism and my subjective reconstruction of those truths. Based on this inquiry into myself, it seems to me that most of the pressing social issues we face have emerged over long periods of time, and those issues, including post-truth, militarism, and the violence perpetrated against Native peoples, have not emerged through linear paths or in isolation. Importantly, dissent, resistance, and counter-conduct over time has been integral to those histories, which suggests, as Foucault (2007) asserted, that power relations are always in motion and contestable.

In these post-truth times, President Trump and his allies have spoken the language of racism, xenophobia, and white nationalism, but like Buzz Windrip, he has also deftly exploited the economic fears and distress of many who both major U.S. political parties have abandoned and promised security against nebulous biopolitical threats and to "make America great again." Troublingly, other national leaders, notably Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, have followed the same path, targeting LGBTQ people, Indigenous communities and their lands, and the poor while promising the restoration of a mythic, national greatness. None of these tactics are new. Trump's xenophobic, racist, neo-America-first rhetoric borrows from that pioneered in the 1930s by Nazi sympathizer

Charles Lindbergh, who in a 1939 article entitled *Aviation, Geography and Race*, urged the United States to rebuild its "White ramparts" to guard against "Mongol and Persian and Moor" (quoted in Stanley, 2018, p. xii).

Trump's rhetoric appeared in sharp contrast to globalist candidate Hillary Clinton. While Trump channeled his supporters' anger toward Muslim asylum seekers and immigrants, particularly from Mexico, Clinton, who helped reconfigure the Democratic Party as a center-right organization committed to neoliberalism, dismissed Trump's supporters as a "basket of deplorables." Hearkening back to Lippmann's characterization of the "bewildered herd," Clinton in one phrase denigrated and alienated large swathes of the public. And, in the context of the Progressive revolt of the elites, the Clinton campaign illustrated a system of governmentality that has come to define the moribund American left, in which allowable discourse must comply with elite, liberal-establishment orthodoxy.

Transcending the current post-truth era, thus, presents us with a significant challenge. Many throughout the world have lost confidence in the liberal democratic institutions that should mediate the social, political, and economic upheavals that have fueled resurgent authoritarian populist movements. Curriculum theorizing in the post-truth era might help create a new politics of truth through the enactment of a "pedagogical model of the public sphere" in which all interlocutors attempt to teach rather than impose their beliefs and explain their points of view "while working to understand others'" (Pinar, 2006, p. 8). I suggest that Pinar (2006) describes a *parrhēsiatic* space in which we embody the courage to speak truth through our work, particularly in historicizing and complicating issues crucial to all humanity.

The Courage of Truth

In his final series of lectures completed just a few months before his death, Foucault (2011) discussed *parrhēsia* as the embodiment of truth in how we live. Judith Butler (2005) characterizes *parrhēsia* as an act of publishing oneself in dialogic encounter with others, making oneself appear before others, and a public accounting of oneself as a form of action "that is already a moral practice and a way of life" (p. 126). Curriculum theorizing imbued with a *parrhēsiatic* ethic can create dialogic spaces in which we seek truth through our subjective reconstruction, to understand the conditions of possibility that form the problems of the present, and recover the complexity of subjugated knowledges, wisdom traditions, and histories. Foucault (2005, 2011) characterizes *parrhēsia*, or the *parrhēsiatic* game, as an aesthetic experience, an interlocutionary practice that requires the courage to both speak one's truth and listen to the truths of others, which carries the risk that one's truths and understanding of oneself, others, and the world are partial or erroneous. For me, *parrhēsia*, particularly as a technology of the self, privileges the importance of the Other, not as a foil by which to define myself, but as an interlocutor with whom I can dialogue to better understand myself, others, and my situation in the world. *Parrhēsia*, as an act of caring for the self, can help us situate ourselves in the world, connect us to the whole world, impel us to action, and set limits on the actions we take in the world (Foucault, 2005). Self-care impels us to act as subjects related to a human community that transcends the single plurality associated with biopolitics and encompasses humanity in its entirety.

Foucault (2011) discerned three features of *parrhēsia* that can inform our curriculum theorizing in an age of denuded truth. First, speak truth "without concealment, reserve, empty manner of speech, or rhetorical ornament which might encode or hide it" (Foucault, 2011, p. 10).

Second, speaking truth is a grave ethical act because we are bound to the consequences of our speech. Third, speaking truth involves risks, which include angering others and being confronted by others with the painful truth that our assumptions and beliefs are wrong. *Parrhēsia* is, thus, a "way of being which is akin to a virtue, a mode of action" (Foucault, 2011, p. 25) rather than rhetorical techniques that conceal meaning. In the current post-truth era, where free speech often resembles dogmatic battles of entitlement to opinions, flawed as they may be, a *parrhēsiatic* ethic of curriculum theorizing might resemble that described by Lasch (1996):

> It is the act of articulating and defending our views that lifts them out of the category of "opinions," gives them shape and definition, and makes it possible for others to recognize them as a description of their own experience as well. In short, we come to know our own minds only by explaining ourselves to others…. Argument is risky and unpredictable, therefore educational. Most of us tend to think of it (as Lippmann thought of it) as a clash of rival dogmas, a shouting match in which neither side gives any ground. But arguments are not won by shouting down opponents. They are won by changing opponents' minds— something that can happen only if we give opposing arguments a respectful hearing and still persuade their advocates that there is something wrong with those arguments. In the course of this activity we may well decide that there is something wrong with our own. (pp. 170-171)

Writing this paper, for example, has helped me, as Lasch (1996) notes, to give shape and definition to my experiences, better understand my own mind, reflect on the reconstruction of my previous misperceptions, and offer to others the possibility that they may recognize some aspects of my experience in their own lives. Curriculum scholarship in the post-truth era may also contribute to a politics of truth in which we narrate and embody truth through how we live and by listening to others' truths to understand, question, and subject our truths to ongoing self and social verification.

Ruminating on my past and the histories of the people and places I've encountered in the context of inquiry into the post-truth present has taught me that the search for and meaning of truth, long debated, is complex. As a curriculum scholar working to historicize the current post-truth phenomenon, I have begun to rethink my ontology of truth in terms of *parrhēsia* as a technology of the self, particularly through writing myself for others. I have also learned that truth can be manipulated through both the language of science and technologies of propaganda that create, filter, and restrict public discourse. The discourse of science has also been used to justify frightening biopolitical agendas, including eugenics and "race science," that were broadly accepted by political and academic elites. Likewise, fascistic emotional appeals like those currently seen in the United States and Brazil have historically proven just as dangerous. The search for truth requires both intellectual engagement and, as Wang (2004) suggests, the empathy to lovingly embrace the estrangement and alterity through which to engage with the educative processes of truth seeking. In the spirit of that ethic of care, curriculum theorizing in the post-truth era may help us to reconstruct ourselves and our world "according to a principle more humane and more liberating" (Baldwin, 1965/1998, p. 723).

What might curriculum theorizing in the post-truth present look like? One possibility, particularly relevant to address existential threats such as climate change, includes engagement with the epistemologies of the Global South. Reconstructing my lived experiences on Okinawa and at Wounded Knee exposed some of the partial and erroneous assumptions embedded in the social theories of the Global North and revealed connections inherent in common struggles of

seemingly disparate communities throughout the world, particularly in terms of environmental protection and peace. In post-truth institutions enthralled to the logics of neoliberal globalization, genealogical study of settler-colonialism, capitalism and military Keynesianism, forced human and animal migration, climate breakdown and environmental sustainability, and the persistent effects of coloniality and slavery could generate a more complex understanding of the conditions of possibility of the intersected global problems that demand our attention.

Another important aspect of the intellectual and emotional labor of curriculum theorizing in a post-truth age lies in remaining mindful of the possibility of creating our own systems of governmentality that could, inadvertently or not, descend into disciplinary policing of the difficult, long-overdue dialogues in which we must engage. We should remember the trap into which liberal intellectuals of the past such as Lippmann, Creel, and Bernays fell where they claimed the authorial voice of the expert social engineer and rendered the public superfluous to the demos.

Finally, one of the lessons I've learned from my experiences on Okinawa and Wounded Knee is that we in the Global North have become enthralled to violence as spectacle—events and actions that are "immediate in time, explosive and spectacular in space" and erupt "into instant sensational visibility" (Nixon, 2011, p. 2). But beneath the viral videos, consumerist distractions, and "alternative facts" that emanate from the U.S. White House lies a history of "incremental and accretive" slow violence, the "calamitous repercussions" of which play out "across a range of temporal scales" (Nixon, 2011, p. 2). It has taken years for me to realize that I witnessed the results of slow violence on Okinawa and Pine Ridge. More importantly, I also learned of the histories of resistance against that violence. The intergenerational effects of climate change, environmental toxicity caused by industry and war, impoverishment, and the traumas of slavery and settler-colonialism continue to afflict people, the earth, and all its species. Yet, what Nixon (2011) calls the "environmentalism of the poor" (p. 4)—the environmental actions of those disproportionately affected by slow violence—also has a long history and is accelerating in response. From Standing Rock to Okinawa, from Flint to Puerto Rico, from the South American rainforests to the farmers of South Asia, the impoverished, colonized, and dispossessed have long embodied the courage of truth against a morbid capitalist-militarist regime of truth, the sand on which the American empire of nothing at all is built and into which it will inevitably sink. Considering the numerous existential crises we all face in the post-truth era, the role of curriculum theorizing has arguably never been more important.

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