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Routledge Critical Studies in Gender and Sexuality in Education

GENDER AND CARE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

**A FEMINIST MATERIAL APPROACH TO EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

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3 Mattering Threads, Knots, and Black Holes

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This book focusses on questions that educators and I took up in an inquiry project that considered gender and care as related to young children in an early childhood education setting. Feminist materialism is not the dominant (or historical) theoretical perspective associated with research within early childhood education, childhood studies, or qualitative research in general, or within theorizing gender and care. In this chapter I endeavour to delineate how my feminist materialist orientation is positioned with/in more dominant “pronouncements on the world” (Barad, 2012, p. 207). To do so, I tell a few tales. They are incomplete tales and all too brief. In (spite of) their partiality, I aim to story the complexity of theorizing/practicing gender and care and attend to the mattering of particular “knots” and “black holes” (Haraway, 1994, p. 64). Through “A Tale of Development,” “A Tale of Resistance,” and “A Tale of Materialization,” I work to highlight the materiality of theory. “Cracking open possibilities for belief in more liveable worlds,” as Donna Haraway (1994, p. 64) writes, is one connective thread (along with the threads of gender, care, and childhood) that knots these tales together.

The three tales that follow are not an attempt to nail down precise differences between theories, a veritable “she said, she said” theoretical standoff, or to caricaturize someone else’s work. Rather, leaning on Karen Barad (from an interview by Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012), my tales are an attempt to pay attention to the details (of texts, histories, theories, stories) in order *to be responsive and response-able*, as described in Chapters 1 and 2. What do (different) theories do (differently)?

I recognize that telling these tales one after the other as I have done—development, resistance, materialization—runs the risk that they will be viewed by the reader as separately contained (hi)stories, as linear progress narratives—good, better, best. While there are some linear aspects to these tales, with some of the characters appearing before others because they worked, wrote, and theorized in an earlier time, it would be a mistake to read aspects of “A Tale of Development” as only a nineteenth- and

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twentieth-century story. Developmentalism is, after all, a very dominant, lingering story. It would also be a mistake to think of “A Tale of Materialization” as a twenty-first-century arrival out of the blue, unattached to the other tales and without contention, contradiction, or risk. The material-theoretical stories in these tales have shaped and continue to shape each other, though not necessarily in equal measure or as equitably profitable for all. My hope is that the reader will read these tales diffractively. Barad has argued that “diffraction, both as methodology and as physical phenomenon, does not traffic in a temporality of the new as a supercessionary break with the old” (in Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012, p. 13). On the contrary, she explains, “diffraction is a matter of inheritance and indebtedness to the past as well as the future” (p. 13). In the tales that follow, I walk with many others in my exploration of incisive theories and scientific undertakings that theorize/research/practice gender and care for/with young children. Reading their stories through each other has taken me “somewhere interesting that [I] never would have predicted” (Barad in Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012, p. 13). Perhaps the reader of these tales will find the same.

A Tale of Development

One of the questions we entered into our project with was in regards to how gender and care emerge in early years practices. The classroom where this project took place, our collective child care “expertise,” and the care that families entrust to educators with that expertise in such classrooms have entangled historied presences with/in science, psychology, and educational theory, institutions, policies, and practices. Therefore, my development tale tells some stories that foreshadow how it is that we (a group of co-researcher-educators) could be in this particular place (an early childhood education classroom on the west coast of Canada) to ask questions about gender and care. It is a tale of indebtedness to a Euro-Western evolution of paying careful attention to children. There is a risk that the stories I tell will romanticize this evolution and be taken up simply as matters of fact (Latour, 2004; see “A Tale of Materialization” for more). My intention is to illuminate the materialization of developmental theory—theory bred institutions and practices; practices and institutions bred theory—as well as highlight through selected stories the always already gendered (and racialized, classed, heterosexualized) aspects of this materialization. In the sections that follow, I offer several stories related to paying attention to children as matters of care (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017).

Paying Careful Attention to Children

Charles Darwin (1877) wrote *A Biographical Sketch of an Infant* based on observations of his first-born son between 1839 and 1841 (Freeman, 1977).

This publication is sometimes regarded as the beginning of childhood studies. Though this origin is contestable (see Smuts, Smuts, Smuts, Smuts, & Chase-Lansdale, 2006), it is generally agreed that Darwin's work was instrumental in generating a "wave of interest in child development in the form of the Child Study movement" (Prout, 2005, p. 45). Darwin's work can be situated in a time and place where the demand for scientific legitimacy, which had evolved from the Enlightenment, dominated in all fields. As Gaile Cannella (1997) points out, within Western contexts this particular scientism consequently shifted perspectives from religious, philosophical, and intuitive to the more secular, rational, and positivist. The scientific method developed in the early 1600s by René Descartes for the natural sciences was now readily applied to the study of social phenomena (Lather, 2007). This application is evident within the spectrum of Darwin's work and writings—from coral reefs, barnacles, and climbing plants to Man's origin, emotions, and social descent (see Darwin, 1859, 1872; see Freeman, 1977 for a bibliography). When I first read *A Biographical Sketch*, the carefully observed, documented, and followed details were apparent, but my critical interpretation of them recognized only the (as I perceived it to be) detached scientific method application. Perhaps in my first reading and interpretation I "failed the obligation of curiosity" (Haraway, 2008, p. 312, note 29) in my zeal to challenge (even if only in my mind) the mattering of scientific methodologies.¹ Darwin (1877), as an example, wrote:

With respect to vision, his eyes were fixed on a candle as early as the 9th day, and up to the 45th day nothing else seemed thus to fix them; but on the 49th day his attention was attracted by a bright-coloured tassel, as was shown by his eyes becoming fixed and the movements of his arms ceasing. It was surprising how slowly he acquired the power of following with his eyes an object if swinging at all rapidly; for he could not do this well when seven and a half months old. At the age of 32 days he perceived his mother's bosom when three or four inches from it, as was shown by the protrusion of his lips and his eyes becoming fixed; but I much doubt whether this had any connection with vision; he certainly had not touched the bosom. Whether he was guided through smell or the sensation of warmth or through association with the position in which he was held, I do not at all know.

(p. 286)

Yet, when I now reread *A Biographical Sketch*, previously apparent categories (scientist, objective, observation) begin to blur with other *seemingly* separate categories (father, subjective, engagement). Words like "perfection" and "warm soft hand applied to his face" (p. 285) conjure different images for me. They emote an intimacy threaded through

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Darwin's account (e.g., a mother breastfeeding her child, a father's finger held by his infant son's grasp), a reminder that these observations occurred in his home (as documented by Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2010, Darwin worked and wrote from their family home) in moments of watching but also of engaged interaction. Darwin continued:

The first sign of moral sense was noticed at the age of nearly 13 months: I said "Doddy (his nickname) won't give poor papa a kiss—naughty Doddy". These words, without doubt, made him feel slightly uncomfortable; and at last when I had returned to my chair, he protruded his lips as a sign that he was ready to kiss me; and he then shook his hand in an angry manner until I came and received his kiss. Nearly the same little scene recurred in a few days, and the reconciliation seemed to give him so much satisfaction, that several times afterwards he pretended to be angry and slapped me, and then insisted on giving me a kiss. So that here we have a touch of the dramatic art, which is so strongly pronounced in most young children.
(p. 291)

A Biographical Sketch was produced within a tangle of (among other things) scientific method (legitimacy), Darwin's emerging theory of evolution, and fatherly love (a dangerously indefinable term that perhaps says more about me in my reading of Darwin than it does about Darwin).² While this example illustrates that theory and practice emerge with/in/through intra-active entanglements, it also challenges the iconic image of the detached Victorian paterfamilias. Trev Broughton and Helen Rogers (2007) provide several accounts that complicate the notion that "involved fathers" are a late twentieth/early twenty-first-century invention.³ Beginning this tale of development with a few threads from Darwin's *A Biographical Sketch of an Infant* points to a careful attention paid to children that would burgeon into a field of child studies that would reach/influence/spawn many disciplines. It also points to the importance of paying careful attention to *who* is paying attention to children and *how* this attention is defined ("A Tale of Resistance" will expand this idea).

Fathering and Mothering Pedagogy and Care

Darwin's influence on child studies was profound, and by the late nineteenth century, child study societies and associations were emerging in Europe and North America (Bradbury, 1937; Burman, 2017; Cannella, 1997). Paying attention to children (as in how to care for them, how they develop, how to educate them, and so forth) did not simply/only emerge in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as examples from Ariès's (1962) *Social History of Family Life* and Lascarides and Hinitz's (2013) *History of Early Childhood Education* both illustrate. In

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the West, seventeenth-century British philosopher John Locke and eighteenth-century Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau both played parts in the how, who, when, and why of paying attention to children (see Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2013; Prochner, 2000; Smuts et al., 2006). However, what grew during the time of the child study movement significantly changed the understandings and practices of Western pedagogy and care. There are several stories of particular “fathers” (for there are other stories and other fathers not told in this tale) who have come to be known as integral to this evolution of paying attention to children. Traces of these stories have shaped and continue to shape (gendered care) practices (which will also be considered further in “A Tale of Resistance”). The point of this subsection is not to provide the reader with a full account of the history of education and care in North America. While a “complete” account is arguably an impossible task, the point here is to highlight key figures that relate to the establishment of today’s early childhood education discourses and practices and to trace some of the materialization of their theories. For more detailed accounts of the history of formal early childhood education in Canada, see Dixon (1994) and Prochner (2000, 2009).

Swiss pedagogue and educational reformer Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi has come to be known by many as the father of modern pedagogy or the father of public school.⁴ Pestalozzi applied the Enlightenment spirit of equality of opportunity to the classroom. As his writings suggest, he was influenced by Rousseau and saw the child as a “seed with potential” (as cited by Kilpatrick, 1951, p. ix). He therefore believed that educators should take care “that no untoward influence shall disturb nature’s march of developments” (p. ix). The chief work on Pestalozzi’s educational principles was *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children* (first published in 1801, translated into English in 1894, see Pestalozzi, 1973). The main problems with education that Pestalozzi articulated were that (1) the poorest children were excluded from education, (2) education focused on recitation not understanding, and (3) children, rather than their teachers, were blamed for their educational failure (Kilpatrick, 1951; Krüsi, 1895). Pestalozzi’s values regarding the care and education of children included parents and educators and rippled into many care/pedagogical practices that continue today.

A report by Victor Cousin (originally written in French in 1831 and translated into English in 1833) about the success of the Prussian schools and seminaries (i.e., teacher education/training, which in North America would come to be called normal schools) that had evolved from Prussian educators who had studied with Pestalozzi seems to have greatly impacted the dissemination of Pestalozzi’s methods. The Prussian schools became part of the American education reform between 1830 and 1860, and according to William Kilpatrick (1951), “from this source came our

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first normal schools" (p. xi). A critical figure in the US education reform movement was Massachusetts-born Horace Mann, often crowned the father of American education.⁵ Hermann Krüsi (1895) pointed to the influence of Cousin's report (which he credited a Mrs. Austin for translating, p. 231) on education reformists and noted that during Mann's European tour of schools in 1843, it was the Prussian schools inspired by Pestalozzi that had the greatest impact on him. Mann described his tour in his influential seventh annual report to the Massachusetts Board of Education, a report about which Krüsi stated that "probably no educational document in this country has ever had a greater circulation, or created so deep a sensation" (p. 235). Mann was an advocate for the reformation of public education, the establishment of normal schools for teacher training, and the recruitment of women to be trained as pedagogues. By the mid-1800s, normal schools⁶ were recognized as "becoming centers for the dissemination of new ideas concerning [the standard of education]" (Krüsi, 1895, p. 236).

Pestalozzi's methods were also very influential for Friedrich Froebel, well known in Euro-Western education worlds as the father of kindergarten (Woodard, 1979). Froebel grew up during the early German romanticism period and, like Pestalozzi, had a romanticized egalitarian vision of education. He wanted "to educate men to be free, to think, to take action for themselves" (Froebel, 1828, as cited in Lilley, 1967, p. 41). Froebel studied and observed at Pestalozzi's Institute at Yverdon between 1808 and 1810 (Kilpatrick, 1951). Susan Blow (1894/1908) wrote that there were points of resemblance between Pestalozzi and Rousseau and points of resemblance between Pestalozzi and Froebel, but for Blow, there were only differences between Rousseau and Froebel. Herbert Bowen (1892/1916) also pointed to the differences between Rousseau and Froebel, particularly in terms of seeing children's development as dependent on social relationships (e.g., placing children with other children in a kindergarten) and guidance (e.g., with trained adults to "guard, guide and help" the children's development; p. 93). Yet Dewey (1915b) pointed to similarities between Froebel and Pestalozzi in their "zealous" efforts to "reduc[e] inspiration from Rousseau into the details of schoolroom work. They took the vague idea of natural development and translated it into formulae which teachers could use from day to day" (p. 61). Like Pestalozzi, Froebel's theories challenged previous pedagogical practices by insisting that children's learning should occur through direct interaction and engagement with materials in play and handwork, building on Pestalozzi's notion of *Anschaung*, or "object-lesson" (see Bowen, 1892/1916; Dewey, 1915b; Peabody & Mann, 1860/1877). Also like Pestalozzi, Froebel's philosophies were aimed at training both parents (in particular mothers) and educators, and their take-up was particularly devoted to promoting the *value* of

motherhood (Allen, 1982). Like Locke, Rousseau, and Darwin before, these “fathers of education” turned their careful attention (gaze) towards children, educators, *and* parents with the hopes of bettering the lives of children (for the sake of mankind/society) with their (particular) belief in the possibility of creating more liveable worlds (for some). “A Tale of Resistance” will address some of the important issues that arise from this particular attention, but the legacy of the theorizing and advocacy work of these “fathers” is inseparable from questions about care in early years practices today. How do children (and which ones) come to be in these practices? How have we come to define what this care is (and for whom it is offered/regulated)? How do the spaces, materials, and practitioners of care (so taken for granted in our neighbourhoods today) come to be there?

The establishment of early childhood programs in Canada and the United States⁷ during the nineteenth century was highly influenced by these European philosophers (e.g., Locke, Rousseau, Darwin) and education pioneers (e.g., Pestalozzi, Mann, Froebel), as well as by the early care and education advocates who had established crèches and day nurseries (e.g., Adelaide de Pastoret and John Frederic Oberlin in France; Robert Owen, James Buchanan, and Samuel Wilderspin in the United Kingdom; see Prochner, 2000). As suggested, the legacy of the educational theorists described thus far was instrumental to the development of current early education pedagogy, but the spreading of their ideas and the on-the-floor action that materialized them were due to the work of many others, including many women.⁸ Reading the histories of these “educare” legacies, it is important to highlight that these ideologies (of male educators/theorists whose names are typically remembered) were more often than not actualized by women (the educators, theorists, and advocates whose names are far less known). Telling a few of these “mother” stories helps to illuminate their (often unnamed) material-discursive legacies. Making these stories visible *does* something because, as Haraway (2016) insists, “it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with” (p. 12). Again, the intention is not to romanticize the work these “mothers” engaged in, the ideas they helped spread, and the legacy they contributed to leaving. As already noted in Chapter 2 and as the next two tales and those in Chapters 4 and 5 will demonstrate, everything is dangerous (Foucault, 1983).

Writing about the early establishment of charitable care for young children in Canada, Larry Prochner (2000) points to the role of wealthy white women in advocating, establishing, and running said care. One of the first Canadian infant schools was opened in Montreal in 1828 “by several ladies of the city” (Montreal Infant School Society, 1831, as cited by Prochner, 2000, p. 20), and infant schools as charitable organizations continued to open in Canada through the mid-1800s (e.g., in Charlottetown, Halifax, Quebec City, Toronto, Kingston, Nova Scotia’s Madras

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by the 1870s, most [privately funded infant schools] had succumbed to a maternalist ideology that called for mothers to be in sole charge of early education and that held the belief that young children were harmed by the overstimulation of their fragile minds. The few remaining infant schools, mostly run by charities in the Atlantic provinces, were joined by an alternative form of early education, Froebel's kindergarten.

(p. 22)

Prochner's story points to the tangle of care and education, pedagogues, caregivers, and parents in nineteenth-century Canada, as well as the arrival of Froebelian philosophies and practices to Canada. (It also points to the contentious ongoing debate [governing tool] about whose care is best.) Perhaps the most important figure in disseminating Froebel's educational philosophy was Baroness Berthe von Marenholtz-Bülow, who actively campaigned to spread the kindergarten idea throughout Germany and other countries (Allen, 1982). Champions who helped spread the kindergarten movement to North America included Henrietta B. Haines, Maria Kraus-Bolte, Bertha Meyer, Elizabeth Peabody, Mary Tyler Peabody Mann (Elizabeth Peabody's sister and Horace Mann's wife), and Susan Blow. As letters, books, meeting records, newspaper clippings, and magazine and journal entries indicate, each of these women contributed to the Froebel movement through their advocacy work as well as their writing (e.g., Blow, 1894/1908; Peabody, 1862; Peabody & Mann, 1860/1877). They described in great detail the specificities of the environment, materials, and program of the Froebelian kindergarten and the kindergartner's practice. Margarethe Schurz is believed to have opened the first kindergarten in North America in 1856, in her home in Watertown, Wisconsin (Prochner, 2000). Elizabeth Peabody opened a private kindergarten in Boston in 1860, and Susan Blow opened the first public kindergarten in St. Louis in 1873 (Baylor, 1965). Adaline (Ada) Marean, who trained at the normal school in Albany, New York, and worked under former Froebel pupil Maria Kraus-Bolte, opened a private kindergarten in 1877 in St. John, New Brunswick, and then one the following year in Toronto, Ontario, upon her move there (Dixon, 1994). Due in large part to advocates for free kindergarten education, the first public kindergarten in Canada opened in Toronto in 1883 under the direction of Ada Marean (Dixon, 1994; Prochner, 2000) and by 1895 there were forty-five kindergartens in public schools in Canada (Prochner, 2000). Today kindergarten is an assumed practice and the field of early childhood education is growing. The majority of Canadian children engage with/in these practices in

some capacity (Friendly, Halfon, Beach, & Forer, 2013), and both the provincial and federal governments are currently investing in the establishment of more comprehensive early learning and care systems (Government of British Columbia, 2017; Government of Canada, 2017). Commonplace everyday practices can render invisible not only that these ideas and practices actually emerged from somewhere, but that they were, and are still, politically and ethically charged, which Chapters 4 through 6 will address further.

The Science of Pedagogy and Care

By the late nineteenth century, the ongoing evolution of early childhood care and education was concurrent (entwined) with the emergence of child study societies and associations in Europe and America. The origin of the child study movement in North America is typically associated with G. Stanley Hall and his work at Johns Hopkins University from 1882 to 1888 and Clark University from 1888 to 1920 (Clark, Gleason, & Petrina, 2012; Smuts et al., 2006; Varga, 2011). For Dorothy Bradbury (1937), the child study movement in the United States began in 1883 with Hall's study, *The Contents of Children's Minds on Entering School*. Hall was deeply influenced by Darwin's theories of evolution (Brooks-Gunn & Johnson, 2006; Goodchild, 2012). With the philosophical romanticism of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ernst Haeckel's theory of recapitulation, "which seemed to Hall a scientific rendering of both Emerson's and Darwin's ideas" (Goodchild, 2012, p. 64), and Herbert Spencer's educational philosophy, Hall developed his own explicit interpretation of a social Darwinist scientific pedagogy (which Lester Goodchild [2012] puts forth as Hallianism) dedicated to "the reconstruction of psychology in order to encompass the study of children of all ages" (Brooks-Gunn & Johnson, 2006, p. 252). According to Hall (1910), the child study movement was "devoted to the collection, diffusion, and increase of the scientific knowledge of childhood" (as cited in Brooks-Gunn & Johnson, 2006, p. 252). Hall's efforts to systematically collect and diffuse information, to move from single accounts (e.g., Darwin's) to larger questionnaires, helped advance the belief that pursuing childhood studies is worthwhile and laid the foundation for what would become applied developmental psychology. Though his observational and questionnaire methods would eventually be criticized in regards to reliability and validity (Bradbury, 1937; Varga, 2011), his work—as a researcher, writer, and teacher—was instrumental to establishing pathways for paying careful attention to "the importance of childhood *per se*" (Bradbury, 1937, p. 36, italics in original). Hall was also instrumental to spreading the science of childhood to parents, providing child-rearing advice and urging mothers to pay attention to scientific information (Brooks-Gunn & Johnson, 2006; Smuts et al., 2006).

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Bradbury (1937) ascertained that before Hall, serious consideration of children had really only occurred through “educational theorists” and “philosophers,” but she claimed that with Hall, paying attention to children moved towards (legitimate) science. According to Bradbury,

the founding of the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station in 1917 marks the close of the child study movement as here we find for the first time an emphasis laid on the scientific value of the study of children rather than upon its educational value. Its founding heralded the dawn of a new day in the study of childhood. Childhood had come into its own as a problem of major scientific interest to be studied not by the parent, the teacher, the philosopher, or the educator, but by the scientist.

(pp. 34–35)

Of course, parents’, teachers’, philosophers’, and educators’ interest in children and childhood in no way disappeared, but Bradbury’s comment speaks to the overtaking of (a particular kind of) science to understand children’s development and to teach that understanding to others. The belief (hope) that scientific knowledge of the child would “contribute advice about childrearing or individualization, normalization, and socialization processes” (Clark et al., 2012, p. 33) was in part an attempt to “solve and prevent social problems that challenged growing cities across North America” (p. 32; see also Burman, 2017; Smuts et al., 2006; this is taken up further below in “A Tale of Resistance”). Though the seeds of social concern and *paying attention to children* were planted much earlier, A. B. Smuts and colleagues (2006) assert that “child sciences were institutionalized and professionalized in dramatic developments in the decade and a half following the end of World War I” (p. 1)⁹ and significantly contributed to the propagation of scientific motherhood (Smuts et al., 2006) and fatherhood (Comacchio, 1997; Griswold, 1993). Again, women played a significant role in these innovations, building on the advocacy and actions of suffragists and social feminists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁰ For Smuts et al. (2006), “in these efforts women were innovators, while male scientists were quick to cooperate with them” (p. 3). Penney Clark and her colleagues (2012) point out that by the late 1910s there were more women researchers in psychology than any other discipline outside of domestic science. Through the 1920s, women authored scholarship on the study of children, and baby and preschool test authors were predominantly women. Drawing on Prochner (2000) and Donna Varga (1997), Clark et al. (2012) surmise that

day care, nursery schools, and kindergartens were coincident with and shaped through the practices of child research or child science

inasmuch as through the policies of child-rearing, child saving, and reform; scientization and domestication converged as potent forces in early childhood education and the lives of preschoolers, parents, and teachers.

(p. 33)

An important avenue for these forces was the university-affiliated laboratory school, one of the most famous of which emerged under the direction of John Dewey. Dewey had been a student of Stanley Hall while obtaining his PhD in philosophy from Johns Hopkins University (completed in 1884) under the supervision of Sylvester Morris. Following his mentor Morris, Dewey taught at the University of Michigan in their philosophy department from 1884 through 1894 (save for one year, 1888–1889, when he was at the University of Minnesota), beginning his career at Michigan as an instructor and ending as a professor and the chair of the department (Eames, 1969). In 1894 Dewey left for the University of Chicago, then in operation for just four years, to head their philosophy department (Harms & DePencier, 1996). While Dewey's pedagogical theories were beginning, at University of Michigan, to move from traditional Hegelianism to the form of pragmatism he is associated with (Eames, 1969), it is his work at University of Chicago Laboratory School that is considered most instrumental in shaping progressive ideals about children and education. Both Hall and Dewey "recognized the limitations of laboratory science" and shared "romantic views of the importance of discovering and liberating the natural, uncorrupted child" (Smuts et al., 2006, p. 43), but their scientific pedagogy differed in important ways. Comparing Hall's and Dewey's take-up of social Darwinism (Dewey being a moderate acceptor of Darwinian thought), Lester Goodchild (2012) suggests that "Dewey conceived an educational pragmatism focused on the societal and community dimensions that greatly outdistanced Hall's more deterministic individualist pedagogy" (p. 70). Influenced by Pestalozzian educational values, Dewey's pedagogic creed included the belief "that the school must represent present life—life as real and vital to the child as that which he carries on in the home, in the neighborhood, or on the playground" (Dewey, 1897, Article II). His educational theories were put to the test in his experimental school, founded in 1896 as the Dewey School,¹¹ where he, unlike Hall, "tested children in a learning situation" (Smuts et al., 2006, p. 40). Shortly after 1900, the Dewey School began to be referred to as the Laboratory School, and their educational principles (e.g., no break between home activities and first contact with the school; children's learning should be for living in the present, not preparing for future adulthood; learning is led through/by a child's curiosity; the child is the centre rather than the subject matter; the teacher's job is to select the most appropriate avenues to stimulate child curiosity based on theory

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abilities and interests) had attracted considerable national attention (Harms & DePencier, 1996).

Progressive education, often referred at the time as the New Education movement, challenged the Froebelian dominance of early education at the turn of the century. Executing Froebel's precise pedagogy was reportedly becoming difficult in larger class sizes in urban schools (Prochner, 2000) and was increasingly publicly critiqued as being restrictive (e.g., *not* actually child centred; Dewey, 1915a; Pratt, 1948/2008). Keeping in the spirit of naming "fathers" related to the pioneering of education practices in use today, Dewey is often regarded as the father of progressive education (sometimes in the running with Colonel Francis Parker). Jerry Aldridge and colleagues (2014) provide an interesting and important expansion of the (typical) *history* of progressive education by including the foundational work of Julia S. Tutwiler (1841–1916), whom they term a "forgotten Caucasian mother," and Booker T. Washington (1856–1915), "an African American father" (p. 125). Their review speaks to the marginalization (erasure) of bodies/ideas due to race and gender and provides examples of Washington's and Tutwiler's integration *prior* to Dewey of ideals associated with progressive education. They point out that both Tutwiler and Washington were

presidents of successful institutions that have developed into 21st century accredited universities with extensive undergraduate and graduate programs. Both Washington and Tutwiler implemented practical applications of progressivism at their respective schools before Parker and Dewey began their experiments with progressive education.

(p. 131)

Like the Froebelians before, many women educators were instrumental in spreading Progressive Era ideals and practices. For example, in 1902 Charlotte Hawkins Brown opened in the Palmer Memorial Institute¹² in Sedalia, near Greensboro, North Carolina, a school run for and by African Americans. Marietta Johnson's School for Organic Education¹³ was established in 1907 in Fairhope, Alabama, and was one of the progressive schools highlighted in Dewey's (1915b) *Schools of Tomorrow*. Caroline Pratt¹⁴ opened the City and Country School (originally named the Play School) in 1914 in Greenwich Village, New York (Hendry, 2008; Pratt, 1948/2008), also mentioned in *Schools of Tomorrow*. Lucy Sprague Mitchell, along with her husband, Wesley Mitchell, and colleague Harriet Johnson, founded the Bureau of Educational Experiments (BEE) in New York City in 1916 that went on to include a nursery school the following year; BEE would evolve to become Bank Street College of Education.¹⁵ Pratt, Mitchell, and Johnson worked together for ten years through BEE and City and Country School as "laboratories" for

collecting longitudinal research of children (Hendry, 2008). The Dalton School¹⁶ (originally called the Children's University School) was founded in New York City in 1919 by Helen Parkhurst, who had originated her Laboratory Plan in 1916 in a high school at Dalton, Massachusetts. In varying ways these educators¹⁷ helped to put forward that

children should not only learn to participate in a democratic society (the Deweyan perspective), but to create a democratic society through their social interactions learned at the earliest age through play. Play was the embodiment of democracy and became the center of the curriculum—in essence, play was the work of democracy. Relationships emerged through learning through experience which empowered children to see themselves as active agents in shaping their social world.

(Hendry, 2008, para. 13)

The closest Canadian equivalent to the University of Chicago's Laboratory School and other child study centres in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s was the Child Study Institute at the University of Toronto (U of T; Rubin, 1975). In the mid-1920s, the establishment of a research clinic and preschool at U of T (originally called St. George's Nursery School) was funded through the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Foundation, along with ones at McGill University, but McGill's lasted only five years (Clark et al., 2012). William Blatz received his PhD in psychology from the University of Chicago in 1924 (he had held a medical degree since 1921) and was subsequently hired to direct and coordinate research and as an assistant professor in the U of T psychology department. With Blatz at the helm as director from 1926 to 1964, the department conducted research through its nursery school and parent education program that was extremely influential in shaping views and practices related to caring for children in Canada (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2006; Varga, 2000).

The selected stories I have told so far illuminate particular pathways for doing and thinking about caring for children that were instigated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Clark et al. (2012) suggest, these avenues touched a variety of practices. Kindergartens, laboratory schools, child study institutes, training institutions (normal schools), and mothers' clubs and societies all *contributed to and were shaped by* the growing attention paid to the healthy development of children. Ideas were shared through (international, national, and local) conferences, meetings, symposia, lectures, as well as books and new journals aimed at both an academic and "layperson" (e.g., parent/teacher) audience (Bradbury, 1937; Brooks-Gunn & Johnson, 2009; Prochner, 2000), all of which continue today as mechanisms for the consideration of childhood care practices. While I may be oriented to theoretical and

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methodological frameworks that do not align with the developmentalism inherent in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century child studies and early education movements described in this tale, my work as an educator, pedagogist, researcher, and writer is tied to the avenues that these movements helped to establish. The fathers and mothers of pedagogy and care that I have introduced or reacquainted the reader with here will reemerge, some by name, all by inheritance, in the analyses of our gender care inquiry project and the thinking-with dolls and cars I engage in in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively. In “A Tale of Resistance” that follows, I explore different aspects of the legacy of developmentalism in relation to childhood(s), gender, and care, paying attention to how particular resistances informed the way that we considered and took up our gender care classroom inquiry.

A Tale of Resistance

“A Tale of Development” started to situate how a group of co-researcher-educators came to be in an early years classroom on the west coast of Canada to engage in an inquiry project related to gender and care. If developmentalism were our only inheritance, the questions we took up in relation to gender and care would have been extremely different than what was presented in the Chapter 1 introduction—and this would have been an altogether different book. The particular kind of attention paid to children described in “A Tale of Development” has been critically challenged on many fronts and has led to calls for approaches that contest universal practice prescriptions that do not attend to the complexities of childhood (Burman, 2017; Cannella, 1997), pedagogy (Battiste, 2013; Dahlberg et al., 2013; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2015), and research itself (Lather, 2017; Law, 2004; Smith, 2012). The aim of this second tale is to think with these resistances to look more closely at how they helped shape the questions we carried with us through our gender and care inquiry project. In its exploration of resistance to single stories of childhood, gender, and care, it is a tale that relies much on the work/thinking of feminism, with its relentless belief (hope) that “the world can be otherwise” (Haraway, 1994, p. 62).

Childhoods

The kind of paying attention to childhood described in the previous tale helped to establish the dominance of developmental psychology in practices related to early childhood. Based on modernist conceptualizations of science and childhood, these early childhood studies operated with particular assumptions that continue to have implications for childhood research today: (1) that childhood is a distinct, unfinished state (drawing from Rousseau) constructed in opposition to adulthood and can be

studied to better understand adult development; (2) that a normal core of development unfolds according to biological principles; (3) that scientific research on children can be universalized and used in the surveillance, regulation, and control of groups and societies; and (4) that social phenomena can be studied compartmentally, including the dichotomous separation of the social and the biological (see Burman, 2017; Cannella, 1997; Prout, 2005; Varga, 2011).¹⁸ Essentially, through proper science the child can be known objectively and the child's observed natural characteristics, their biologically directed development, can be interpreted as universal.¹⁹

Postfoundational²⁰ theories have added much to the troubling of a modernist understanding of childhood. Simply put, postfoundational theoretical and political positions (often referred to as "the posts") problematize what have been assumed to be stable concepts, such as knowledge, truth, reason, power, the subject, objectivity, reality, science, normal, and so forth. Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre (2013) summarizes that "the posts provided extensive critiques of Enlightenment humanism's ontologies as well as its epistemologies and its science" (p. 647). The belief in and acknowledgement of multivocality and contested meanings is a unifying thread through theories and practices situated within the posts. This contestation fuelled what was termed a reconceptualist movement in early childhood education (see Cannella, 1997; Dahlberg et al., 2013; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Pence, 2005). In regards to scholars labelled as "post," St. Pierre (2012) explains:

We offer critiques that can be used to examine and open up any structure we create, any signifier or metanarrative that becomes totalizing and all-explanatory, such as science. The task of "post" critiques is to take seriously such structures, which are necessarily exclusionary, to examine them so seriously that they deconstruct themselves, reveal their disciplinary goals and lose their innocence.

(pp. 496–497)

Dismantling "common sense" assumptions and recognizing the *noninnocence* (the ethical and political embeddedness) of the materialization of theories, questioning very seriously who and what are excluded in/with/through theories and practices (including our own) is another connecting thread through the posts, as well as the approach we took up within our inquiry project. Explorations of the politics and ethics of early childhood education have been taken up by many (e.g., Cannella, 1997; Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Dahlberg et al., 2013; Moss & Petrie, 2002), and have influenced how pedagogy and curriculum are presented and lived (e.g., MacNaughton, 2003; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2015). These reconceptualizings have been fuelled, in part, by the belief that modernist

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theory/practices have been and are marginalizing (devastating might be a better word) to many.

Erica Burman (2017) has argued that through the nineteenth century, “science, as the tool of reason and progress fostered and harnessed by the modern state, put into practice enlightenment philosophies of protection and care of citizens, the realisation of which presupposed greater monitoring and control” (p. 26). The development of childhood research, which is imbricated with the development of the different forms of psychology, occurred within this modernist science and the state’s use of it in regulating its citizens (Burman, 2017; Cannella, 1997; Prout, 2005). This history is deeply enmeshed with European imperialism, including the rise of anthropological studies of “primitives” in the search for understanding (white) Man’s development and the “scientific evidence” of racial superiority that provided the justification for colonial rule (Burman, 2017; Cannella, 1997; Cannella & Viruru, 2004; Smith, 2012). Drawing on Nikolas Rose (1985), both Burman (2017) and Cannella (1997) note that the rise of individual psychology occurred in tandem with the social upheaval of the late nineteenth century, including working-class challenges to the working conditions of industrialization, demands for the right to vote, and increased immigration. Individual psychology became instrumental to the comparison, regulation, and control of groups through the development and use of assessment tools and classifications and the establishment of “norms” (Burman, 2017; Cannella, 1997; Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2006; Varga, 2011). “Even the authors of the early child studies,” Burman writes, “were quick to move from observation to advice, from empirical ‘fact’ to social application” (2017, p. 26) through such practices as childhood education, teacher training, child training and parent education, social welfare/reform, the field of paediatrics, and, more broadly, public health (see also Clark et al., 2012; Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2006; Prout, 2005; Smuts et al., 2006). As Cannella (1997) argues, the establishment of norms, and the pedagogical and parenting advice that follow, “creates privilege for those who fit that [normalized] vision and places in the margin as deficient, wrong, or abnormal, those who do not” (p. 60).

Let’s think for a minute about the implications of these critiques in terms of a group of researcher-educators in an early years classroom on the west coast of Canada engaging in an inquiry project related to gender and care. First, we (the group members) are well versed in developmental knowledge and its accompanying assessments, interventions, curricula, and pedagogy plans, trained to look for and support what has been and is deemed normal (for examples of typical Western early childhood education textbooks/manuals see Beaty, 2014; Berk, 2012; Bertrand & Gestwicki, 2016; Gestwicki, 2017; Gordon & Browne, 2017; Santrock, MacKenzie-Rivers, Malcomson, & Leung, 2011). Second, within our

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Canadian context, which is demographically rich with many cultures, our education system and care institutions were founded on and continue to operate within Eurocentric developmental understandings of “normal” that grew out of the histories partially described in the first tale. These constructions were (and remain) particularly enforcing towards those living in poverty and towards racialized children and families, even though they are often presented and rationalized under the guise of helping (saving) the less fortunate and the would-be delinquent.²¹ An example from William Blatz (1944) illuminated a trace of this history when he asked: “What, then, is the solution of the problem of delinquency?” Blatz (as cited by Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2006, p. 191) then provided the solution: “What is necessary, of course, is a comprehensive plan for the training of children in the first two decades of life.” Substitute “self-regulation” for “delinquency” and you get some sense of our twenty-first-century “problems” deemed in need of a good early plan (e.g., Bertrand & Gestwicki, 2016; Gestwicki, 2017; Gordon & Browne, 2017). Education has been, and continues to be, a crucial apparatus for regulation and control, of some bodies more than others. Eli Clare (2015) puts forward, “What better way to maintain a power structure—white supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism, a binary and rigid gender system—than to drill the lessons of who is dominant and who is subordinate into the bodies of children” (as cited by Ahmed, 2017, p. 273, note 6). There is perhaps no greater example of education for the purposes of domination and subordination than the history of forced assimilative education policies for Indigenous peoples in Canada, of which residential schooling was a central tool (Battiste, 2013; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

Catholic, United, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches in Canada administered residential schools in partnership with the federal government. The first schools opened in partnership with the federal government in pre-Confederation Canada in the nineteenth century, and the number of schools expanded steadily, with peak enrolment in the 1950s. By the time the last federally supported residential schools closed in the 1990s, “at least 150,000 First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students had passed through the system” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 3). Residential schools were an integral part of the purposeful cultural genocide of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) explains that cultural genocide:

is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly to

the issue at hand, families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next. In its dealing with Aboriginal people, Canada did all these things.

(p. 1)

Indulge me with yet another long quote, for to try and summarize would diminish the retelling. All of the words matter. As recorded in the House of Commons debates in 1883, Sir John A. Macdonald, the first prime minister of Canada (1867–1873 and 1878–1891), justified the government's residential school policy with the following statement:

When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. It has been strongly pressed on myself, as the head of the Department, that Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men.

(as cited in Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 2)

This is our Canadian heritage—a heritage that lives on with the predominance of cognitive imperialism in schooling (Battiste, 2013), the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in Canada's child welfare system today, when more children are in care than were in residential schools at their zenith (Blackstock, 2007; McKenzie, Varcoe, Browne, & Day, 2016), and the disproportionate poor health outcomes for Indigenous peoples in Canada (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2013). Not all childhoods are (created) equal. It is a heritage that grew out of, in particular for Canada, British, and French imperialist and colonial ideologies and actions that included the extraction of "fragments of Indigenous worlds, animals, plants and human beings" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 4) and the governance, regulation, and genocide of Indigenous peoples for the benefit of the colonizers (see also Cannella & Viruru, 2004; Preston, 2017). With the formation of settler colonial nation-states such as Canada, "total appropriation of Indigenous life and land, rather than the selective expropriation of profit-producing fragments" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5) was required for the colonial capitalist project. Imperialist and colonial actions were grounded (justified) on created racialized hierarchies that continue to shape racism today. I close this section that explored academic resistances to universality in relation to childhood with two important points: colonialism and racism are (1) inseparable historical and present-day projects and (2) while