

ADDRESSING THE GHOSTS THAT HAUNT US: A RE-ORIENTATION OF TIME
IN HISTORY EDUCATION

by

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(Under the Direction of Elizabeth A. St. Pierre)

ABSTRACT

In this post qualitative inquiry, I investigated the functions of time in two encounters with time in history education that forced me to think differently, or rather re-orient thought. Specifically, I thought with French philosopher Henri Bergson's concepts of time, intuition, creation of pure difference, and open society. In both encounters, I identified modern time as the underlying concept at play and identified its function as a barrier to justice through an erasure of the past injustices and dehumanizing certain people as not modern and thus not fully human. Re-orienting time towards a more continuous, indivisible concept of time such as Bergson's opened my thoughts to more possibilities for addressing the ghosts that haunt us in K-12 history education.

INDEX WORDS: Henri Bergson, post qualitative inquiry, time, history education
modern philosophy, encounters,

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my happy treasure in the meadow, my strong girl by the seashore, and my dependable prophet—my children, Anslea, Morgan, and Elijah. They are irreducibly entangled in every word that I write, breath that I take, and thought that I have.

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As Neil deGrasse Tyson articulated, we are all stardust entangled in this existence of co-creation. My dissertation is a collaborative project of many lives both human and non-human, spirit and matter. Barad in her preface and acknowledgments for *Meeting the Universe Halfway* wrote: “There is no singular point in time that marks the beginning of this book, nor is there an ‘I’ who saw the project through from beginning to end, nor is writing a process that any individual ‘I’ or even group of ‘I’s’ can claim credit for” (p. ix). Like Barad, I do not believe that this project solely belongs to me. While I cannot name all who have contributed to this becoming, a few bits of stardust shine brightly.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
CHAPTER	
1 TIME FOR BECOMING.....	1
Why does time matter?	5
Bergsonian Post Qualitative Inquiry, Or Inquiry in Duration.....	6
The Journey.....	12
2 TIME IN HISTORY EDUCATION.....	14
Time in History Education Research	15
Two Encounters with Modern Time in History Education.....	23
Conclusion	40
3 OF MODERN TIME	42
Modernity, Descartes, and Time.....	43
The Development of Time in Modern Philosophy	60
How Modern Time Functions.....	67
Time and the Modern Subject.....	68
Conclusion	76
4 BERGSON’S TIME.....	77
Bergson in Context	78

Bergson's Disentanglement	85
Conclusion	103
5 TIME AND JUSTICE.....	106
Bergsonian Justice	109
An Invitation to Talk with Ghosts	114
Addressing the Ghosts that Haunt Us	117
Conclusions in Duration	123
REFERENCES	125
APPENDICES	
A PROGRAM LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE	152
B FULL LESSON PLAN.....	153
C "LESSON WITHIN A LESSON" LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE.....	154
D INQUIRY LESSON CHART.....	156
E LESSON PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES	157

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Bergsonian Post Qualitative Inquiry.....	11
Table 2: Linnean Classification of Human Species	74

CHAPTER 1

TIME FOR BECOMING

A journey is called that because you cannot know what you will discover on the journey, what you will do, what you will find, or what you find will do to you.

(Baldwin, as cited in Peck, 2016)

This journey began, as much as one can mark beginnings, in a crumbling parking lot behind Glencliff Comprehensive High School in Nashville, TN between the barbed wire-topped chain link fence and the football field where I sat in my car on lunch break listening to a National Public Radio guest discuss the unknown nature of time. I would not have imagined then that this encounter would lead me on this dissertation adventure and the project this text has become. But that is the nature of what St. Pierre (2000) called *post qualitative inquiry*—a freedom to dream and think beyond what we thought we could imagine. At times, it has been a stressful and anxious journey that, as some might say, naturally accompanies the unknown. This trip, void of an itinerary, has been about fulfilling curiosity rather than productivity. Or as St. Pierre (2021) described it, post qualitative inquiry is a practice of “overturning methodology altogether so that something different could be thought” (p. 486). This liberation from prescribed methods is “the lure of the new” (p. xx) and an opportunity to do what Robin D. G. Kelley (2002) called *freedom dream*—to imagine a transformed future.

What you will find in this dissertation is an engagement with encounters—encounters with texts, with thoughts, with people, with my intuition. These encounters are ongoing events that have captured me. They have taken hold of me and no matter what I do, they haunt me. As philosopher Henri Bergson, whose philosophy grounds my thought in the real, might say, the past, represented in these encounters, is not separate from my present. These encounters instead have shaped how I proceed in the world and, very importantly, how I teach and live/think. They stick by me reminding me like a trustworthy friend that there is something to this issue of time in relation to a transformed future. In recalling these memories, I thought about Bergson's (1934/2007) argument that philosophy begins with "whispers" to a problem. Similarly, Deleuze (1968/1994) asserted "everything begins with misosophy" and advises to "count upon the contingency of an encounter with that which forces thought to raise up and educate the absolute necessity of an act of thought or passion to think" (p. 139). That day in the parking lot changed me. It whispered to me. While the exact details fade into a dream like remembrance, some intricacies of the moment remain as vivid as the day itself—the warm hue of the sky blue as a backdrop to scattered puffs of white clouds, the cool breeze on a warm Tennessee spring day, and the indescribable sensation of an intuitive whisper about the unknown nature of time. Unlike the first two that prompt warmth and reminders of home, the whisper haunts me like a specter of some future to come unsettling my body and spirit to act.

I had been teaching history, teaching in general, living even, as if I understood time despite what I learned from the physicists on the radio that day—time is an elusive and hotly debated concept in physics and philosophy. While the guest physicists on the

radio show explained that some aspects of time are more understood than others, such as its nonlinear nature and its different speeds and jumps, much about how and why time works as it does remain a mystery. Common knowledge, on the other hand, makes it seem as if time is obvious—it is linear, progressive, measured, quantifiable, and predictable. Yet, this conception of time is an illusion. As St. Pierre (2011a) argued, “It is only manmade history that brings time into being and establishes clear connections” (p. 619). Cartesian modern thought and its antecedent, positivism, dominates this socially constructed description of time making illusory cuts to create a past, present, and future that are distinctly separate from one another. As Latour (1991/1993) suggested, this description was intentional, but it was not the concept of time the radio show’s host and his guest scientists discussed (and it is not the time of Bergson). The differences between these interpretations of time intrigued me, to say the least. I wondered then, how might this non-linear, uncertain time suggested by the radio show change how history is thought? How would this different interpretation of time function in the teaching of history? Further, I wondered, is the history we teach in schools even thinkable in this different description of time?

Puzzled, I began studying the time of physics with its varying speeds and spooky, jumping nature. I read from science websites, studied articles written by physicists, and watched documentaries on the mysteries of time. Then, I asked the question “What is time?” to my high school history and government students as a challenge—if they focused on the lesson for the day, I told them, I would ask my favorite question at the end of class. At that point in my teaching career, I was limited by time itself in how far I could delve into this inquiry given the demands of teaching in an urban public school.

Large class sizes, constantly interrupted planning periods, and long, detailed discussions about data walls, charts, and spreadsheets—these daily realities of teaching were barriers to a more meaningful inquiry into time in history education. Nonetheless, I asked my students what they thought time was and then explained that the physicist Einstein, who they named “the smartest man who ever lived,” never knew the answer. Some were intrigued and some were confused. Some students shared their curiosity gathering by the door after class to ask a few more questions or share their theories on time. One of my students, now graduated from medical school, vowed that he would answer the question and continued to contact me with his latest thoughts on the matter. My curiosity remains.

Drawing from Deleuze and Guattari’s (1991/1994) discussions of the functions of concepts, my dissertation inquiry began with the broad question, what is the function of time? Unlike modern philosophy that I discuss in chapter 3, Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) did not pursue some objective truth. It is important then to understand how philosophical concepts function. The function of modern time, which I discuss more thoroughly in chapter 3, is a time of control, division, and the subjugation of ontology by epistemology. It is a time that looks forward and never back. It separates—past from present and future; knowing from being; mind from body. This concept of time functions very differently from a Bergsonian time of relationality, connectedness, and infinite movement that I discuss in chapter 4.

This quest has changed as my encounters with other whispers continue to change my relationship with this concept, time, and this project. This might be analogous to being on a trip and getting a recommendation to go to a “can’t miss” site or dine at a specific restaurant. These encounters happen in *duration*—Bergson’s conception of time

which I will discuss later—and, along the journey, take us places we did not expect to see or experience. Such encounters altered my course of inquiry, teaching, and living.

After two particular encounters with time as a social studies teacher educator that I explore in chapter 4, my general question about the function of time morphed to the function of time in education, and more specifically, history education. These encounters with time moved me away from the time of clocks, calendars, and measurements. As St. Pierre (2020) explained, this re-orientation of thought is what happens in post qualitative inquiry (p. 2). It is what happens in duration and, as Baldwin suggested, on journeys. In this dissertation, I engaged in a post qualitative re-orientation of thought through an investigation of the function of time in modern philosophy, Bergsonian concepts, and two encounters with time in history education.

Why Does Time Matter?

Time matters in two ways—it matters in a colloquial sense as in it is important and it matters in a more philosophical sense in that time materializes in how we choose to live. In the first sense of the word, time matters in the entanglement of our lives. In introducing the idea that time is unknown in my teaching, I asked students about the phrases they frequently heard or said about time. They provided examples like these: all the time; what time is it?; I don't have the time; time goes by so slowly; what time do you want to meet?; and time just flies by. Our lives to some degree are centered on time. In a different, Baradian (2007) agential realist manner, time literally matters as a force in that it materializes into the actions of how we live our lives. And different conceptions of time materialize in different ways as I argue throughout this dissertation. For example, when I began to think of time as unknown, uncertain, and non-linear after hearing that NPR

story, time worked differently in my life. I stopped worrying about being late so often and began reconsidering my tardy policies for students' work. While at that point I certainly was not thinking with a Bergsonian concept of time, a different orientation towards time had already materialized in my everyday decisions. This dissertation is a story about the materialization of time in my thought.

Bergsonian Post Qualitative Inquiry, Or Inquiry in Duration

My journey towards a re-orientation with time has resulted in what I call a Bergsonian post qualitative inquiry. Post qualitative inquiry, as St. Pierre (2011a) wrote, is “a reimagination of social science inquiry” (p. 613) that moves away from the increasingly formulaic and bureaucratic knowledge production of conventional humanist qualitative research influenced by a positivist science that seeks the certain and absolute truth of all there is. As St. Pierre suggested, the recent push in social science research to appear more “scientific” comes from the demand for causal, “scientifically based research” mandated in 2000 by the U.S. No Child Left Behind Act. This tightening of research methods and methodologies is what post qualitative inquiry pushes back against. Post qualitative inquiry seeks to open the boundaries and serves as a reminder that we do in fact “invent” methodologies. Therefore, we do not need any premade map to give us a prescriptive route, i.e. method, to lead us on the journey—we can forge our own paths. This of course does not mean that anything goes and everything is accepted. It is instead a resistance to a modern epistemology that for so long has limited who gets to discover knowledge and how the process of discovery may proceed to gain legitimacy and validity.

Post qualitative inquiry is more than a pushback against modern philosophy and the conventional, humanist systematic knowledge production. This approach to scholarship is based on the ontological turn in the theoretical lineage commonly referred to as the “posts” (e.g., postmodernism, poststructuralism, posthumanism) and the “new” (e.g., new empiricism, new materialism, new ontological). This “new” refers to the work of scholars such as Barad, Braidotti, and Haraway who imagine an ethico-onto-epistemology that refuses the Cartesian epistemology in modern philosophy and conventional humanist qualitative research. Post qualitative inquiry, then, pushes back against this form of knowledge production that eschews ontology and ethics and privileges epistemology (St. Pierre, 2014). Conventional humanist qualitative research methodology supports modernity in its increasing systematicity. It is inadequate for non-modern philosophies such as new materialisms, the posts, indigenous thought, and the philosophy of Bergson. As St. Pierre (2014) contended, it is impossible. The ontological *turn* in theory demands a different approach to inquiry. Post qualitative inquiry, then, is what Barad (2007) might term *ethico-onto-epistemological*. It is an attempt to create knowledge without separating knowing, being, and acting in relationality—an attempt to mend false cuts.

Ethico-onto-epistemology could be described as an approach to thinking, being, and acting in relation in the world that imagines these three as indivisible from one another. As St. Pierre, Jackson, and Mazzei (2016) explained, “how we conceive the relation of knowledge and being is a profoundly ethical issue” (p. 99). In an ethico-onto-epistemological relation, reality exists as a continuous force of ever-differing, entangled intra-actions between all types of matter—human and nonhuman. Barad (2010)

conceptualized these entanglements as more than a neutral interconnectedness of different kinds of matter. She described these entanglements as “relations of obligations” (p. 265). That is, in the world’s intra-active reconfiguring, our actions are not simply our own affecting only ourselves—they belong with the world and produce something with it.

An ethico-onto-epistemological entanglement, then, is not the same as the Cartesian arrangement that St. Pierre (2016) argued “established a new ontological order in which ontology is separated from and dominated by epistemology” (p. 114), where the knower is separate from the known and precedes the world. Post qualitative inquiry, on the other hand, is a practice of the *real*. With this real, comes a re-orientation towards time. As Bergson (1934/2007) argued, “It is not the ‘states,’ simple snapshots we have taken once again along the course of change, that are real; on the contrary, it is flux, the continuity of transition, it is change itself that is real” (p. 6). As such, conventional humanist qualitative research only captures representations, or images, of the real by studying the immobile, the static, stable subject in a stable, predictable present that is separated from the past. However, as Bergson argued, reality is not a series of simple stills connected by a string known as time. It is movement and creation.

Post qualitative inquiry functions not to abolish qualitative research but rather to open it up to what Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) might call a smooth space as opposed to a striated space. Striated space is closed and sedentary as it seeks to stabilize and cement—it measures, it predicts, it controls. To Deleuze and Guattari, conventional humanist qualitative research would be arborescent, stable, rooted like a tree in static time and space so it can “find” truth there. In contrast, they imagined smooth spaces on

horizontal planes that are open and moving, durational and intensive, that dance in becoming with striation in a process of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization:

What interests us in operations of striation and smoothing are precisely the passages or combinations: how the forces at work within space continually striate it, and how in the course of its striation it develops other forces and emits new smooth spaces. Even the most striated city gives rise to smooth spaces: to live in the city as a nomad, or as a cave dweller. Movements, speed and slowness, are sometimes not in themselves liberatory. But the struggle is changed or displaced in them, and life reconstitutes its stakes, confronts new obstacles, invents new paces, switches adversaries. Never believe that a smooth space will suffice to save us. (p. 500)

That is, striation is a colonization of smooth spaces through boundary crossings of the dominant systems of thought, like conventional humanist qualitative research or modern philosophy, while smooth space acts to reopen and disentangle itself from immobility. In the case of conventional humanist qualitative research, state and federal funding sources have forced the social sciences to move towards a more formulaic and less creative approach to research. As St. Pierre (2011a) wrote, “The ‘posts’ do not offer a corrective or a fix” (p. 631). Post qualitative inquiry will not save us, but it does offer smooth spaces as tactical bases in the Deleuzoguattarian war machine that fights the arborescence of thought—it holds the line so that difference can be imagined. I offer this experiment with thought, this Bergsonian post qualitative inquiry, as an attempt at smoothing the violence of modern time.

To do so, I could not rely on pre-existing social science research methodology as prescribed in qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research. Instead, this experiment with thought and the real will be a Bergsonian post qualitative inquiry. This is not a study in which I went into “the field” to collect data. I did not conduct interviews with a planned guide and then transcribe and code the words of participants (St. Pierre, 2013a). That does not mean that I have not engaged with people during the course of this study. I have carefully attended to the empirical but differently. Following post qualitative inquiry, I did not rely on systematic methods or methodologies (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013; Pannell, 2015; St. Pierre, 2011a; St. Pierre, 2013b; St. Pierre, 2014; Taguchi, 2016). Instead, like Bergson’s philosophy, I relied on an orchestrated arrangement of philosophies, concepts, and contact with the real. So what have I done then? I have read—books, documents, matter, people, the universe. I have continuously engaged with the world. I have created problems and questions, as well as responses. For Bergson (1934/2007), philosophy is a process of creation. In a similar manner, this study pursued “a perpetual creation of possibility and not only of reality” (p. 20). As St. Pierre (2013a) noted about post qualitative inquiry, it was an imagining of “possible worlds in which we might live differently” (p. 225). Drawing from Aghasaleh (2016) and St. Pierre (2018), Table 1 outlines how I lived differently in my Bergsonian approach to post qualitative inquiry.

This dissertation has been a practice of *inquiry in duration* and continues to be so. Following post qualitative inquiry, I have refused method (St. Pierre, 2021) and oriented myself towards an inquiry in duration. It was an experiment of being in contact with the

Table 1

Bergsonian Post Qualitative Inquiry

Bergsonian Post Qualitative Inquiry	
Philosophical Approach	Ethico-onto-epistemology
Goal	Action, creation of difference through intuition
Subject	The stable, independent, rational Cartesian subject does not exist. The subject instead is moving, changing, and entangled with the flow of all life.
Beginning	Does not exist in <i>duration</i> . Time is incapable of being captured in this manner. We may mark a beginning, but no true beginning is knowable.
Data	Conventional social science data is not thinkable; data is not planned but is entangled in encounters with the world.
Data Collection	Traditional data collection means are not thinkable. Collecting intuitive encounters is impossible. Intuitive alerts are not predictable or creatable.
Data Analysis	Traditional data analysis is not thinkable. Thinking with Bergson requires thinking in duration, or <i>intuition</i> , rather than a strict, formulaic process of data analysis in conventional humanist qualitative research.
Contributions to Academic Literature	The goal is not to fill voids in research. Instead the goal is the <i>creation of difference</i> through mending false cuts and re-orientation.
Limitations	Limitations are not thinkable. There are no limits to our creative minds if we reject a spatialized conception of time that solidifies thought. The idea of no limitation does not mean perfection. Every framing has smoothness within striation.

real. Like Baldwin's journeys, this process was one of openness and the unknown. I did not plan what I was studying or the paths that I would take (Peck, 2016). For me, the philosophy of Henri Bergson (1859-1941) and his concepts *duration*, *intuition*, and *creation of difference* have re-oriented my understanding of time. Instead of worrying about what to do, I embraced Bergson's concept of time and embarked on a journey of thinking in duration to create some thing without knowing how any of this would change me or turn out. As Deleuze and Parnet (1977/2007) surmised, Bergson's danger to the stasis of modern philosophy and Cartesian thought existed in "the theory and practice of

becomings of all kinds” (p.15). Bergson too, like post qualitative inquiry, helped me move away from the stability of modern time and instead allowed me to freedom dream during this dissertation journey.

The Journey

The interesting thing about journeys is that you do not quite know when they began and you do not quite know when they will end, but somehow you are changed in the process. In this dissertation, I explain this journey of inquiry that I have been on for so long and the changes, or re-orientation, to my thoughts in exploring the concept of time and how it functions in life, in education, in social studies education, and in history education. To be clear, this is not a linear journey. I have traveled and at times have leapt backwards in a quantum leap of sorts as the past and present intra-act in creation of the future. In chapter 2, I discuss time in K-12 history education through a review of literature and two encounters with time as a Graduate Teaching Assistant in a social studies education program that spurred this dissertation journey. In chapter 3, I identify modern time as the concept at play in history education and provide a discussion of time in modern philosophy focusing on René Descartes’ conception of time and how it functioned through Enlightenment and positivist thought. As a theorization of the two encounters I discuss in chapter 3, I argue that modern philosophy is based on Descartes’ concept of time with violent results. In chapter 4, I map Bergson’s time first contextualizing his life and work at the turn of the 20th century before discussing his concepts of *duration*, *intuition*, and *pure difference* and how they function differently than modern time. Then, I theorize the two encounters from chapter 2 with a re-orientation of time thinking with Bergson’s duration. Lastly in chapter 5, I discuss the

significance of re-orientation with time that allows for addressing the ghosts that haunt us. In doing so, I provide a discussion of Bergsonian justice and examples of how a re-orientation of thought has changed me and my teaching.

CHAPTER 2

TIME IN HISTORY EDUCATION

Do not count upon thought to ensure the relative necessity of what it thinks. Rather, count upon the contingency of an encounter with that which forces thought to raise up and educate the absolute necessity of an act of thought or a passion to think. (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 139)

As a friend of mine proclaimed confidently when discussing my dissertation topic, “Ma’am, they don’t teach time in social studies!” Of course, time is taught in social studies, I thought. Admittedly, before my initial encounter with time during the NPR radio report, I did not teach time explicitly. Moreover, upon further reflection on the Georgia (Georgia Department of Education, 2012, 2016), Tennessee (Tennessee Department of Education, 2014), National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010), and Advanced Placement (AP) (College Board AP, 2020a, 2020b) history course frameworks, I realized meaningful discussions of time are absent. These standards and guides only mention time in relation to social studies skills, such as constructing timelines, periodization, or abstract references to “continuity and change over time” (College Board AP, 2020a, 2020b; National Council for the Social Studies, 2010). Nothing explicit about time’s philosophical meaning or function appears in these documents. However, as I discuss in this chapter, a clear

conception of time is at work in history education and implicitly taught in history classes and school in general.

In addition to lessons on time in history courses in the U.S. education system, time is implicitly taught as an institutional praxis. Calendars (Fish, 2000; Lofty, 2000), bell schedules (Olsen & Jaramillo, 2000), grading policies (Feldman, 2019), perfect attendance awards (Conrad, 2020), time outs (Malacrida, 2005), and suspension time (Hashim, Strunk, & Dhaliwal, 2018) are used to configure time in a certain way, and, therefore, become part of the hidden curriculum (Jackson, 1968/1990). While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to engage in an in-depth discussion of these topics related to time in schools, it is essential to understand that time is an integral part of the structure of schools and that how we conceive of time as a concept becomes embedded in history classes as well as school in general.

To explore this implicit force of time in education, this chapter chronicles two encounters with what I would later identify as modern time in history education. I begin with a brief discussion of the meaning and functions of time identified in history education literature. Then, I present two encounters with what I know identify as modern time that have helped me theorize, along with Bergson and abolitionist and decolonial scholars, the function of time in history education.

Time in History Education Literature

Time is a fundamental concept in history education. Wineburg (2001) argued that understanding time is key to developing historical thinking skills. Wilschut (2019) referred to time as the backbone of historical thinking. Barton and Levstik (1996) argued that “Since history is so clearly concerned with the past, it hardly seems necessary to

explain why students must first understand time” (p. 420). While it is generally agreed upon that time is foundational in history education, the meaning of time in history education is not so clear. In part, this obscurity occurs because research on time in history education often does not include a description of what time is. It seems that the meaning of the concept of time is taken for granted. That is, since everyone knows what it means, discussions of time’s meaning are unnecessary and overlooked. As I explain in this section, the scant literature on time in history education provides little explanation of what time means or how it functions. However, more recently scholars in the field are beginning a change in thought about the meaning of time. In this section, I provide an overview of this development in history education literature, the problems with time identified in the literature, and proposed solutions to those problems.

Scholarly literature focusing on time in history education is limited. Searching the U.S. government’s Education Resource Information Center (ERIC) database resulted in approximately twenty journal articles on time in history education. In addition, searches of three of the most respected journals in social studies education—*Theory and Research in Social Education*, *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, and *The Social Studies*—and one of the top journals on education in the United States, *American Educational Research Journal*, yielded a total of five research articles on time in history education. In addition to the limited quantity of articles, the subject of research on time in history education is restricted too. Most of the existing research on time are studies of children’s ability to understand time (see Barton & Levstik, 1996; Bradley, 1947; Foerster, 1969; Friedman, 1944; Lello, 1980; McAulay, 1961; Muir 1990; Oakden & Sturt, 1922; Saxe, 1992; Thornton, 1987; Thornton & Vukelich, 1988). However, within

the last ten years or so, the focus of articles published on time in history education has begun to include theoretical inquiries. Still, there simply is not much scholarship on the topic of time in history education.

In addition to a modicum of research, most of the literature lacks a clear description of what time is. Part of my goal in this dissertation was to define time and its function in history education. However, when I turned to the literature on the topic, I found that even though scholars clearly identified historical time as the concept important in history education they failed to include a description of what historical time. For example, in their qualitative interview study on young children's understanding of time with fifty-eight students in kindergarten to sixth grade, Barton and Levstik (1996) did not clarify what they meant by historical time. Instead, they focused on describing what it means to *understand* historical time rather than explaining what they meant by historical time¹. The same can be said of Barton (2002), Wansink, Akkerman, Zuikker, and Wubbels (2018), de Groot-Reuvekamp, Ros, and van Boxtel (2019), and Pala (2021)—all research that focused on helping young children understand the concept of time but lacked an explanation of time. In addition, practitioner pieces such as Alleman and Brophy (2003), Doull and Townsend (2018), and Hammond, Oltman, and Salter (2019)

¹ While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss in depth different conceptions of historical time in the academic field of history, such as *la longue durée*, based on Bergson's duration (see Braudel, 1958/2009 and Inalcik, 1978), and Koselleck's (1979/2004) *abstract* versus *concrete* time (see Hellerma, 2020), it is important to note that the definition of historical time is not universal or simple. The Annales School and its concept *la longue durée* and German historian Reinhart Koselleck, for example, have tried to move the field of history away from a modernist conception of time associated with the march of historical progress. Instead, these conceptions of historical time (i.e. *longue durée* and abstract and concrete time) rely more on a philosophical concept of time rather than a scientific or positivist one. While the field is slowly moving towards some of these more recent conceptualizations of historical time, history education is stuck on a Western linear concept of historical time focused on progress and, in the U.S. in particular, lags behind scholarship elsewhere, for example, in Europe (Seixas, 2016).

also did not explain what they meant by time or historical time. Keynes (2021) theorized that *naturalization* is one reason for this ambiguity toward time in the literature. She argued that the modern Western conception of time is understood and assumed to be accepted by everyone—modern time is just natural and normal. As Keynes described, modern time is “a tacit temporal schema is always already structuring the process of disciplinary inquiry” (p. 425). That is, as I discuss in chapter 3, modern time functions to give the illusion that it is ontological—its purpose is to camouflage itself to make it seem normal, natural, and, most importantly, unquestionable.

While much of the literature excludes a description of time, a few scholars have recently attempted to provide more thorough discussions of what time means in history education. Typically, the literature categorizes time into objective, subjective, and historical. For example, De Groot-Reuvekamp, van Boxtel, Ros, and Harnett (2014) classified time as either objective, subjective, or historical. They described objective time as a natural, mathematical time and subjective time as the time of human experience. De Groot-Reuvekamp et al. argued that historical time acted as a mediator between objective and subjective time and the past and the present. Helmsing and Whitlock’s (2018) entry in the edited book *Keywords in the Social Studies: Concepts and Conversations* also focused on objective and subjective conceptualizations of time. Similarly to de Groot-Reuvekamp et al., objective time for Helmsing and Whitlock is precise and measurable as, for example, in the idea that there are seven equal days in a week, fifty-two equally measured weeks in a year. Conversely, subjective time according to Helmsing and

Whitlock is a more personal, lived time that rests on the idea that people, and social studies disciplines, experience varying speeds and encounters with modern time.²

Subsequently, Helmsing (2020) in a six-page theoretical essay described a subjective, lived time that brings “forth the materiality of the past and present, and thus afford students opportunities to see the ‘real’ of history – its pains, shock, disgust, anger, surprise and sadness” (p. 85). He argued that objective time not only hides itself but hides reality. Unlike de Groot-Reuvekamp et al., Helmsing and Whitlock, and Helmsing, Wilschut’s (2019) theoretical analysis of the connections between democracy and temporal thought marked a separation between historical time and how people intuitively experience time. That is, he argued that all time is subjective, and historical time is different from a time of lived experiences, or a “phenomenological point of view” (p. 833). Wilschut listed six unique characteristics of historical time that separate it from subjective, lived time: “chronology, anachronism, historical distance, contingency, evidence as a bridge between past and present, and historical narration” (p. 836). Based on Wineburg’s (2001) argument that historical thinking is not natural, Wilschut contended that historical time only develops “from a systematic study and should, therefore, be an object of education” (p. 837). That is, students must be explicitly taught what historical time is. While similar strands of thought manifest in these authors’ understanding of time, as the literature shows, the meaning of time is not universally understood or agreed upon in history education.

² It is important to note that while every other author in the book cites one or more authoritative scholars on their keyword, Helmsing and Whitlock (2018) cite none. This point is not to admonish the authors. Instead, I want to underscore one of the problems with time in history education—time is just assumed to be known and understood to the point that citational support in this case was not seen as necessary by the authors, reviewers, or editors. As a comparison, the entry on *Home* included citational support from Heidegger, Spivak, Dewey, and hooks to name a few.

In addition to texts that evaluated subjective, objective, and historical time, two articles I found identified and critiqued the dominant conception of time in history education as a product of modern, Western thought. In a theoretical analysis of the connections between time and transitional justice focusing on the Australian history curriculum, Keynes (2021) identified and critiqued the dominant time in history education as a Western conception. Keynes argued that in the West, time is linear, progressive, and a path to perfection—it is the basis of Western ontology as the background on which life occurs. Seixas (2012) also identified a modern thread in historical time that privileges the present: “In modern conceptions of historical time, simply put, the present is better than the past, and the future will be better than the present” (p. 859). Seixas critiqued this Western-centric time as problematic focusing on issues of time concerning American and Canadian histories. Keynes expanded this critique of modern time adding a connection between the dominant Western conceptualization of time and injustices against people of a global majority. That is, if history focuses on a time of progress in which life only gets better, then the history of the West is only a story of triumph and success without acknowledging wrongdoings committed in the name of progress to communities in Australia, what is now called the Americas³, Asia, and Africa.

Some scholars have suggested possible solutions to the problems associated with the conventional meaning of time in history education, particularly around the modern conception of linear time that Helmsing (2020), Keynes (2021), and Seixas (2012)

³ I use the phrase “what is now called the Americas” intentionally to challenge the common practice of referring to this land as America in pre-colonial times. Naming is important. While there is no universal term for this land prior to 1492, the many indigenous communities and their land that have been erased in the name of progress.

identified. Seixas (2012), for example, suggested applying post-modern thought to history education. He argued that post-modernism challenges modern historical progressivism's assumptions that history and the past are the same thing, the existence of grand narratives, and objective truths (as opposed to creating history through interpretations of primary sources). Blow, Lee, and Schemilt (2012) questioned the difference between chronology and time and argued that students would benefit from considering time beyond chronology because understanding a past that persists "is necessary for knowledge of the past to have an impact on individual attitudes and collective actions" (p. 33). Helmsing and Whitlock (2018) proposed moving toward teaching with a subjective concept of time that questions the fixity of dates and periods as truth. For example, they suggested explicitly helping students understand that eras and historical periods are created and that historians do not always agree on those dates. Helmsing (2020) asserted that thinking with a modernist linear concept of time stunts history education: "History education is anemic if all it does is attempt to reconstitute the events of the past, even if in the service of better understanding something in the present." (p. 85). He suggested that teachers create opportunities to think about history using temporal disruption and temporal uncertainty to address this problem, which would entail helping students understand the unfolding nature of the world, the discontinuities, and the ruptures exemplified throughout history. Keynes (2021) suggested denaturalizing time—bringing up the subject of time in history education not as a given but as a concept to be questioned. Specifically, Keynes recommended including different philosophical conceptions of time in history curriculum, such as those of Indigenous communities and peoples of a global majority, analyzing Western conceptions of time and history, and

questioning the certainty of periods and eras. In other words, Keynes proposed explicitly teaching the concept of time in history education and questioning its naturalization.

In discussing the purpose of history education, Wineburg (2001) wrote about the tensions between two orientations towards the past. One orientation he discussed was a familiar past in which history is used as a tool to help us connect to what came before us:

By tying our own stories to those who have come before us, the past becomes a useful resource in our everyday life, an endless storehouse of raw materials to be shaped or bent to meet our present needs. Situating ourselves in time is a basic human need. Indeed, it is impossible to conceptualize life on the planet without doing so. (p. 5-6)

There is a human need, he argued, to find one's place in the universe to help us understand ourselves. Time, he argued, is a tool for fulfilling that need. We see this evidenced in defining life by eras or generations that have some unique characteristics that can then be used to situate oneself compared to other generations or times or eras. Wineburg described the second orientation towards the past as an Epcot version of history:

The past "on its own terms," detached from the circumstances, concerns, and needs of the present, too often results in a kind of esoteric exoticism, precisely the impression one comes to after a tour through the monographic literature that defines contemporary historical practice. (p. 6)

The past placed distant from the present creates a window effect where, instead of connecting to what is on the outside, we find ourselves separated from it. The past becomes the exoticized other. As Wineburg argued, how time is viewed in history

education matters. Viewing time as universally understood, linear, and progressive creates a different orientation towards life than the time of, for example, Bergson, Ubuntu, Quechua, and Buddhism. In the next section, I discuss two encounters with modern time that forced me to think differently about time and its connection to justice.

Two Encounters with Modern Time in History Education

As Deleuze (1968/1994) wrote in the quotation that begins this chapter, *encounters* are “that which forces thought to raise up and educate the absolute necessity of an act of thought or passion to think...Something in the world forces us to think” (p. 139). Encounters are not mere experiences; as forces, they have power. As St. Pierre (2017) explained, an encounter creates such an intensity to act that it becomes as necessary as air or water—it creates a rupture. Deleuze wrote that encounters are not recognizable but are sensed. He argued that what we recognize does not make us think; however, encounters are strange and peculiar sensations we do not recognize and, as unrecognizable, compel us to think differently and act. I think of Alice in *Alice in Wonderland* and the peculiarities she encounters. Her journey was not prompted because she recognized a different world; rather, she grew curiouser and curiouser at the unknown that she faced. She sensed something that drove her to continue. Like Alice’s wonderland, encounters are not isolated, dead events. As Bergson (1889/2015) suggested, they are durative—they stay with us. Encounters move and change, and they change us in duration. In this section, I describe two encounters with modern time as a graduate teaching assistant in history education at a major southeastern public university and their significance.

The two encounters I discuss next changed me, re-orienting my thought and later actions. They captured me immediately like the NPR story about time that I described in chapter 1. They grabbed hold of me so tightly that I cannot escape them, and they drive me to inquire more, think more intensely, and live differently. They are intra-active forces created through what Barad (2007) might call *entanglement*. That is, a particular arrangement of ideas, objects, people, experiences, and actions all came together in these moments—the books I had read, the life I lived, and the people in it. A moment does not exist alone; instead, it is a creation of an indivisible past, present, and future. The encounters I describe in this section are durative encounters that stay with me in the present. Like I change because of them, they have changed too because my entanglement with the world—other ideas, people, texts, and encounters. These two encounters haunt me, calling me to act as they urge me to create a different future.

In some way, this call to act is a result of what Bergson (1907/1988) described as violence to the mind. That is, encounters such as these are violent in their ability to force a re-orientation with the world. The encounters I describe here are violent to my mind but also violent in their nature. They are interactions with thought, language, and actions that uphold white supremacy, coloniality, misogyny, capitalist inequities, and hierarchical binaries. I write about them with a heavy heart as I know the words and thoughts and their foundational underpinnings act in the world violently on the bodies and spirits of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people. These encounters are engagements with modern philosophy's violence and, specifically, a modern philosophical conception of time that constructs the world in such a way as to silence the past and ignore its injustices.

I write about these encounters with hope too. Thinking with a Bergsonian conception of time, I know the past is not dead. Because it is alive with us in the present, we can address its ghosts that haunt us, our society, and the world at large. As Barad (2007) suggested, addressing the past and future means “to speak with ghosts, [which] is not to entertain or reconstruct some narrative of the way it was, but to respond, to be responsible, to take responsibility for that which we inherit (from the past and the future)” (p. 264). I consider this dissertation an act of responsibility. We have inherited a concept of time from modern thought that allows injustices through an erasure of the past and the supremacy of the present. I argue that our collective responsibility is to address the ghosts that haunt us. As Amanda Gorman wrote in her poem “The Hill We Climb” which she recited at the 2021 Presidential Inauguration,

it’s the past we step into
and how we repair it

It is how we respond to the past, how we address it, that defines this life of entangled existence. We can choose to ignore the injustices of the past and let them fester as they re-enforce a violent system of power hoarding and abuse. Or we can be brave enough to address those specters and author a different, more just future.

Encounter 1: Be Happy with What You Have

My breath grows shallow and my muscles tense whenever I recall this first encounter. My soul aches from mere remembrance. Common colloquialisms like “Be happy with what you have” should not evoke such a physical reaction. Yet, the phrase holds much more memory, emotion, and violence given the context in which I

encountered it in relation to modern time in history education⁴. This first encounter with modern time occurred when I was a graduate teaching assistant (GTA) in a social studies education program at a major southeastern research university. The program faculty designed a collaborative teaching environment in which each faculty member and GTA worked with forty undergraduate and graduate pre-service teachers during the practicum semester of the program. Two faculty members taught seminar classes dividing the students into two groups of twenty. One faculty member held experiential learning sessions at a local public high school with five to nine pre-service teachers in one-week rotations. Four faculty members conducted book clubs with small cohorts of ten students each. Six GTAs, including myself, served as practicum field instructors with two to four cohorts of two to three students each. In addition, all faculty and GTAs met regularly to discuss pre-service teachers' progress and concerns. I served as field instructor for two cohorts—one with two pre-service teachers and the other with three. The two cohorts combined included two white males, one of whom was a graduate student, and three white females, one of whom was a graduate student. Both cohorts were placed with a mentor teacher at local high schools different from those they were assigned to for their experiential learning sessions. At their practicum placements, pre-service teachers gradually increased their teaching responsibilities beginning with introductions and

⁴ I have gotten so accustomed to thinking of an entangled existence that it no longer occurs to me to explain what I mean by “I” when I write, speak, or think of it. As Shara Cherniak and I discussed in our 2019 publication, our understanding of I is represented by the formula $I < “I” < 2$. I is an entangled more than one existence. This conception of the subject is exemplified in the African philosophy Ubuntu that translates to “I am because we are” (Dillard & Neal, 2020). It is important to note that this “we” is not a human-centered we. Rather, we encompasses the universe and it encompasses an indivisible past-present-future. This understanding is inherent in my discussions of I and we. When I write, “I served as a field instructor” the I that I discuss is full of the past-present-future entanglements with the world—education, family, students, always my students, the history of the South, the history of European colonization, misogyny, the power of the nature, stardust—including the pre-service teachers who will forever be entangled with me.

helping their mentor teacher as needed, then planning and implementing an opener, next adding a mini-lesson, and finally co-teaching at least one full lesson. Each GTA held breakout sessions with their cohorts to introduce lesson planning and the program's lesson planning template (see Appendix A) before their pre-service teachers taught any portion of a lesson.

During the forty-student cohort's first breakout session, teaching assistants introduced Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) Understanding by Design (UbD) and the concept of an *enduring understanding*. Wiggins and McTighe described an enduring understanding as an overarching idea or universal generalization that is transferable beyond one content area. It is a key takeaway from learning that is supposed to traverse beyond one lesson, one unit, or even the curriculum as a whole. It is knowledge that, as a teacher, one hopes will endure longer than the minutiae of particular content. Here, I use the term enduring understanding to mean a life lesson.

In a windowless classroom in the interior of a 1970s-era modern geometric concrete and red brick high-rise building, I introduced this concept to the five pre-service teachers and then asked them to identify one or more enduring understanding—the life lesson or lessons they wanted their future students to endure after leaving their classroom. In the first round of this activity, I included time for the pre-service teachers to brainstorm and write down their understanding before sharing it with the group. One pre-service student, the white, male undergraduate student, shared his enduring understanding—to paraphrase, “Be happy with what you have.” I was not sure how it was relevant to social studies curricula. Once all students had shared, we moved to the second round where students were expected to explain why their enduring understandings were

important to them. When it was this student's turn, he explained that this life lesson was important because, paraphrasing his words, Black people are no longer enslaved, so they should be happy with their freedoms.

My initial reaction was shock. I froze⁵ in the moment not knowing how to process or respond to this jarring statement. The world appeared in slow motion like a cinematographic fade in *The Twilight Zone*. It was a dizzying experience for me. Despite teaching in the southeast for ten years as either a public high school teacher or a graduate teaching assistant, I had not heard a student make such a blatant white supremacist statement in the classroom. The majority of my teaching career was spent at Glencliff High School in Nashville, Tennessee, which had a reputation for being the most diverse school in the state with students whose families were from over forty countries and spoke over twenty different languages. While I would not say that white supremacy did not exist in that space, considering that most of the administration and faculty were white, I had not heard statements like the one I heard that day. And I was not prepared for an immediate response to these violent words that easily slipped off his tongue. Instead of responding to the statement, I moved on to the next student. Of the four other students, only the white, male graduate student flinched with a puzzled look on his face, but no one said anything in response to the other male's comment.

Once the breakout session ended, I began to think about what to do. My first response was that he should be kicked out of the program. I did not believe that someone

⁵ In describing this encounter as shocking, some of the people who were kind enough to read this chapter have mentioned that the student's statement was not shocking for them—in fact, they had far too frequently heard violent utterances such as these. Like them, as someone who has lived her entire life in the South in rural, suburban, and urban areas, white supremacist statements are not uncommon for me to have heard like my readers. Regardless, each time has been as shocking as the last and in reflecting upon this experience I renew my commitment to not allowing myself to become desensitized to white supremacy.

with that underlying belief about reality and Black people should be given a teaching license and access to K-12 classrooms. In particular, I thought about his future entanglements in which he would carry this white supremacist belief—his access to public schools, like Glenclyff, where students who are Black, Brown, and Indigenous represent the majority of the population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021) and his access to white students and his ability to re-enforce white supremacist myths such as the one he believed. As a GTA, I did not have authority to remove him from the program, but I did have a forum at our program check-in meetings to discuss this student’s statement with our professors and other GTAs.

At that time, GTAs and professors met regularly to discuss our breakout sessions with pre-service teachers. When we met next, I explained my desire to kick him out of the social studies education program. The problem with that alternative was that he could simply enroll in a different teacher education program or appease our program faculty by seeming to do better or saying the “right” things (Castro, 2010). One professor confirmed that possibility and reminded me that it was my job to teach. And this certainly was a teachable moment for me and the pre-service teachers.

To begin theorizing a response, I turned to the history of white supremacy in education that I had studied and taught to my high school students. In the South where most states had banned education, even books and literacy, for Black people who were enslaved (Butchart, 2002/2020), post-Civil War anti-racist education meant arguing that Black people formerly enslaved should have access and resources to education. Specifically, this fight revolved around the Freedman’s Bureau, which provided federal aid in the form of shelter, food, jobs, and education for formerly enslaved people. Anti-

racist education in the late 19th century was a political fight supported by Black communities in the South despite the threat of the increasingly powerful Ku Klux Klan. Once the U.S. Supreme Court handed down the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision that established the “separate, but equal” doctrine, anti-racist education focused on securing equal educational opportunities for Black students, including desegregating schools and acquiring funding for adequate facilities, appropriate educational materials, and proper transportation. Many of these resources were secured by Black communities in the South, who, in some cases, were able to create more effective schools than the white schools in the area (Anderson, 1988).

Once *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) overruled *Plessy*, the fight for integration began. This struggle included pushing back against tracking systems in schools that created de facto segregation (Morris, 2001), fighting the defunding of schools through white flight to the suburbs (Renzulli and Evans, 2005), segregation academies (Champagne, 1973), and the firing of Black teachers (Oakley, Stowell, and Logan, 2019). The problem in anti-racist education was that the teaching force has remained primarily composed of white, female, middle-class teachers (Evans-Winters and Hines, 2020). Scholars such as James Banks (1993), Lisa Delpit (1995), Gloria Ladsen-Billings (1994/2009), and Geneva Gay (2000/2018) addressed anti-racist education through multicultural education, culturally relevant pedagogy, and culturally responsive teaching. These frameworks aim “to reform the school and other educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups will experience educational quality” (Banks, 1993, p. 3). Ladsen-Billings (1995) explained that this means empowerment through high expectations for success, cultural

competence, and critical consciousness that challenges the status quo. Recently, the turn has been to abolitionist education and not just having students survive educational institutions but thrive in them (Love, 2020). That is, it is no longer good enough to expect white teachers simply to treat students fairly: “Abolitionist teaching asks us to be accountable for the pain we have caused others, to restore justice, and to call into question liberal politics...to question the piece of the oppressor that lives in all of us” (Love, 2020, p. 123). The pre-service teacher’s white supremacist statement clearly showed that he was not an abolitionist teacher. However, he probably was (or still is) what Kendi (2016/2017) would call a *segregationist*—someone who “blamed Black people themselves for the racial disparities” (p.2).

I was concerned then about what pedagogical approach might move him away from *segregationist* thinking towards abolitionism.⁶ He did not seem to be a card-carrying KKK member or Neo-Nazi. Although it is possible that he genuinely desired to help young people, his white supremacist beliefs would undermine that goal and enact what King and Woodson (2017) called *educational psychic violence*—damage through careless pedagogical activities that, while well-intentioned, are founded on and reinforced by a white supremacist framework of the world. Directly addressing the student’s white

⁶ In theorizing this encounter, I understood this pre-service teacher as a dynamic individual capable of changing. Otherwise, what is the point of teaching at all if change is impossible. My goal was change because change is the ontology of Bergsonian philosophy—his thought is that of *élan vital*. However, I recognize too that words materialize and in writing about this encounter I run the danger of creating a frozen subject in this pre-service when the focus is on the philosophy behind the statement. The statement that the pre-service teacher made is stagnant. It is a part of a broader white supremacist discourse that has managed to maintain a steady message through propaganda, state control, and willful violation of both the laws of humanity and the laws of nature. This pre-service teacher, like we all are in the U.S., are bound up in a system that began based on notions of white superiority and used philosophy and science to support those beliefs. This encounter broke the matrix so to speak in my recognition of time being used as a tool for this white supremacist discourse within the field of history education. To be clear, my ultimate target in addressing this issue is history education. This pre-service teacher just happens to be who taught me, who helped me understand this connection between time and justice in history education. I am because we are.

supremacist statement seemed a less effective approach and what some refer to as *call-out culture*. Ahmad (2015) defined call-out culture as “the tendency among progressives, radicals, activists, and community organizers to publicly name instances or patterns of oppressive behaviour and language used by others. People can be called out for statements and actions that are sexist, racist, ableist, and the list goes on” (p. 1). In addition to risking performative allyship, call-out culture can be toxic and counterproductive as it can lead to cancel culture (Walters, 2017). Ng (2020) explained cancel culture as the “withdrawal of any kind of support...for those who are assessed to have said or done something unacceptable or highly problematic, generally from a social justice perspective especially alert to sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, racism, bullying, and related issues” (p. 623). Both options, although well-intentioned, have been criticized as dehumanizing approaches to social justice. One professor noted in our meeting that sometimes educators must address issues with students subtly. This approach would follow what Woods and Ruscher (2020) referred to as a *call-in* that indicates “a typically private confrontation used as a target-focused and compassionate teaching moment” (p. 51).

I certainly could have marched into our next class, called-out this student, and addressed the abhorrent nature of his response. But what good would that do? Would it have changed him or other students in the class who might hold the same views? As an experienced high school teacher who primarily worked with 17- and 18-year-olds only a few years younger than the pre-service teacher, I knew that a confrontational approach such as calling out would be unproductive and would likely ruin my effectiveness in the future as his mentor and teacher and possibly my relationship with the other future

teachers in the class. And clearly, white supremacist thinking was deeply embedded in his understanding of the world. So how could I call him in? In thinking about this process, I wanted a lesson that would call him in but not center on the violent encounter or ignore the program's goal of teaching all the students about lesson planning.

As I reflected on the statement, I pulled at each thread of his statement breaking it down piece by piece—*Black people aren't enslaved anymore so they should be happy with the freedoms they have*. There was the assumption that Black people are not happy with their rights. There was the assumption that the rights currently afforded to Black people in the United States are sufficient. There was the assumption that being free from bondage meant all your political, economic, and emotional woes disappeared. There was the assumption that the Black community needed a white, male teacher to set them straight, an assumption reminiscent of white man's burden and what Emdin (2016) called the white savior complex. And then there was the assumption that the past has disappeared—that because Black people no longer endure the brutal violence of White Southern chattel slavery, they are no longer oppressed. This encounter was my entry into understanding how a particular description of time—that the past is restricted to the past and does not persist into the present can be used to legitimize and reinforce white supremacy.

Ultimately, I created a lesson within a lesson over the course of a second breakout session with the five students. Each step of the lesson was meant to challenge a Western philosophical orientation that invents the illusion of a stable and unchangeable reality and set of universal truths (see Appendix B). We began by examining the objectivity of history, as suggested by Helmsing (2020), Helmsing and Whitlock (2018), Keynes

(2021), and Seixas (2012). Then, we discussed the subjective and white-centric story that the state standards tell, as described by Love (2020) and Shear, Knowles, Soden, and Castro (2015). Next, I provided instruction on the components of the program's lesson plan using a sample lesson on "When did slavery end in the U.S.?" (See Appendix C). As we went through each part of the lesson plan, the five pre-service teachers read primary and secondary sources that questioned the so-called objective truth that slavery is over while simultaneously discussing the construction of the lesson (see Appendix D and Appendix E).

At the end of the assignment, the student commented that slavery has not ended based on the evidence we studied, though I have no idea whether he had actually rethought his statement. As Felman (1982) suggested, perhaps teaching is impossible, and my attempts to teach were what she might call creating a different learning disposition. Either way, I have no way to evaluate whether the lesson worked.

Despite this uncertainty, I still hold that durative encounter in my body today like a specter urging me to listen to an unresolved plea. It is perhaps what Bergson (1934/2007) referred to when he discussed a whisper that alerts one to a problem or Deleuze's (1968/1994) misosophy of the encounter that urges one on a journey of inquiry. While Bergson referred to this call in terms of sound, it is deeply embodied for me in other senses as well. Remembering the student's comment calls forth a physical response. I find myself holding my breath, alert to some danger that I need to avert. As Baldwin (1965/1998) suggested, we carry history with us: "the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally *present* in all that we do" (p. 723). This encounter from the

past lingers with me, influencing how I think about time in its connections to issues of justice and how I act in the present to address issues with time in history education. In part, at least, I am sure it influenced the second encounter that I describe next.

Encounter 2: Cultures of the Past

The second encounter also occurred during my time as a GTA except in an undergraduate course on elementary school social studies teaching methods. Similar to the activity I did with the five secondary pre-service teachers discussed previously, I included an analysis of the elementary Georgia Standards of Excellence for Social Studies (GSE SS) with twenty elementary pre-service teachers. In the process of preparing for the class activity, I came across GSE SS2H2 (Georgia Department of Education, 2016), a second grade standard on American Indians:

SS2H2 Describe the Georgia Creek and Cherokee cultures of the past in terms of tools, clothing, homes, ways of making a living, and accomplishments.

5. Compare and contrast the Georgia Creek and Cherokee cultures of the past to those of Georgians today.

My immediate reaction was disbelief that the GSE SS2H2 standard ignores the existence of Creek and Cherokee people who live in and outside of the state of Georgia today, referring instead to “Georgians.”

This encounter with modern time like the first was violent with its horrific and dehumanizing erasure of the Creek and Cherokee. I already knew that stories created by state curricular mandates ignore the genocidal actions of Europeans like the attempted extinction of Indigenous peoples of the Americas (Mann, 2002; Stannard, 1992) and the United States government’s attempted erasure of Indigenous communities through

sanctioned actions such as the Trail of Tears and Wounded Knee. Simultaneously, through erasure, standards like GSE SS2H2 fail to celebrate Indigenous people's civic activism, including youth activists, today (Sabzalian, 2019). GSE SSUSH7 (Georgia Department of Education, 2016) for high school U.S. history, for example, asks students to "Investigate political, economic, and social developments during the Age of Jackson," including the Indian Removal Act, but fails to mention Indigenous resistance efforts such as the 1836 Protest Petition (Cherokee Nation & Ross, 1836) and *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831) and *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832).

Second, like the previous encounter with modern time, this state standard committed what Bergson (1907/1998) referred to as violence to my mind concerning the connections between concepts of time, history education, and the injustices that this assemblage creates. That is, this encounter like the previous one forced me to "go counter to the bent of the intellect" (p. 30) and instead follow a Bergsonian conceptualization of intuition upon which this shock to thought would carry me. This second encounter took me to a concept of time that functions as a tool to denigrate the past and allow curricular violence to occur. In modern time, the future is superior to the past. Kramnick (1995) argued that "faith in progress required a jaundiced view of the past" (p. xiv). As a state-mandated standard, GSE SS2H2 emphasizes and re-enforces a view of Indigenous people and their practices that relegates the violence they experienced to the past. Donald (2009) argued that "unquestioned, these idealized standards become part of official curriculum documents" (p. 4). Eurocentric views of Indigenous history become the official state story, and, for those who idly learn it, it becomes a constructed reality in which the continued violent oppression of Indigenous communities is erased just as their people are

written out of existence—if there are no Indigenous people, there can be no wrongdoing. Or, as Lawrence and Dua (2005) argued, history through the colonizers' viewpoint often focuses on “conquer and erase.”

The existence of Indigenous communities in Georgia was not the only information excluded from this standard. Baldwin (1964/2010) discussed the larger cover-up of Indigenous history in American schools:

I'm willing to bet anything you like that not many American children being taught American history have any real sense of what that collision was like, or what we really did, how we really achieved the [attempted] extermination of the Indians, or what that meant. (p. 92)

In his critique of history as a tool of oppression, Baldwin emphasized that the language used to relegate Native Americans to the past matters. That is, how we speak about Indigenous people, or any people, materializes in their life experiences. For example, referring to a woman as “girl” positions her subordinately to another woman referred to as a woman. In the case of the GSE SS2H2, Indigenous communities are referred to as “of the past” while Georgians are of “today.” Recent scholarship in history education verifies Baldwin's assertions that Indigenous history has been erased. In their mixed-methods study, Shear, Knowles, Soden, and Castro (2015) analyzed K-12 history standards from all fifty states and the District of Columbia for their representations of Indigenous people and found overwhelmingly that the standards focused on Indigenous history pre-1900. Moreover, state history standards, including the Georgia standard mentioned above, position Indigenous people as outsiders belonging to a distant past. As

GSE SS2H2 constructs it, Creek and Cherokee people and cultures are both outside American culture and absent from life today.

In addition to the problematic positioning of Indigenous people as in the past, Donald (2009) argued that school curriculum such as GSE SS2H2 focuses on shallow aspects of culture that leave reality for Indigenous people unscathed and insignificant. He wrote:

With reference to curriculum, the tipis and costumes approach has been applied in classrooms for many years, but leaves teachers and students with the unfortunate impression that Indians have not done much since the buffalo were killed off and the West was settled (p. 5).

The tipis and costumes approach that Donald discussed refers to the common practice of focusing on exoticized aspects of Indigenous culture that often become representative of all people indigenous to what we now call the Americas, for example, making totem poles in art class as my son's school chose to do. Iseke (2009) called out the misrepresentation of such a practice. In addition to the denigration of the Indigenous knowledges that are celebrated with what most know as totem poles, Iseke noted the inaccuracy of referring to all poles as totems supporting Donald's assertion about the shallowness of education on Indigenous topics. As Iseke asserted, only some poles are totems that denote a pole specifically related to family and relationships instead of a pole that details history. Just as totem poles are misunderstood and universalized in curriculum, tipis are universalized and often misattributed to use in all Indigenous communities.

Controversy arose in a local elementary school in Athens, Georgia over the tipis and costumes approach with literal tipis and costumes. The elementary school hosted a yearly tipi exhibit through a now-defunct business called *Ways of the Ancestors* (2013). The company's two non-Indigenous, white, male owners included teaching "primitive skills" in their demonstrations, including "how people long ago" cooked. In conjunction with this event, some kindergarten teachers invited their students to dress up as Pilgrims and Native Americans to connect with Georgia state standards relating to Thanksgiving. However, like the arguments of Baldwin and Donald, families in the school community noted in letters to the school that this curriculum was problematic and a misrepresentation of what were supposed to be activities connected to Georgia state social studies standards, including GSE SS2H2. The community members argued that the curriculum and associated events were harmful to Indigenous people through cultural appropriation, an identification of Indigenous practices as primitive, and a failure to convey the complexity of the histories of Indigenous communities and white settlers. I would add to that list of harms the reinforcement of the erasure of Indigenous life today through framing Indigenous ways as being of the past. Despite the communication and parents' attempts at educating school leaders and teachers, the school continued with the school-sanctioned curricular violence enacted with the tipi demonstration until the company, *Ways of the Ancestors*, shut down in 2019. In this case, even when confronted with the violence of its actions, this individual school continued to re-enforce the false knowledge created by the standards that erases Indigenous people and supports white supremacy while denigrating Indigenous ways of being as primitive and belonging to the inferior past.

Like the previous encounter with the NPR story and the white supremacist statement, this encounter with modern time in the second grade standard continued to encourage me on this journey with time. In this case, I was able to identify how the state uses time to propagate and reinforce white supremacist ideology through history education. Using what I now identify as a modern concept of time, state standards create a history in which the past is the past and the present is the present and superior to the past, never the two shall meet. In such an act, the state erases the lingering violence of enslavement and colonization. That is, the violence is erased from the past nullifying any possibility that it continues in the present.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined two encounters with modern time in history education following an intuitive whisper to a problem. As the existing research suggests, a discussion of the meaning of time in history education is limited and rarely discussed. Instead, it is assumed that time is generally understood—as modern—therefore does not require explanation (Keynes, 2021). However, as Keynes (2021) and Seixas (2012) have suggested, that taken-for-granted time is a modern, Western time, the Cartesian time I discuss in chapter 2. In the two encounters with modern time in history education I described here, this modern, linear, stable conception of time functioned to create distinctive cuts between the past and present, enabling the erasure of the past injustices.

These two encounters did what existing research could not do—they helped me connect the description of time in history education to broader issues of justice. They have done more than encourage curiosity and inquiry, as Deleuze (1964/1998) suggested—they have been lessons, durative lessons. The further I journey with them in

thought and practice, the more I learn to live differently with the world around me and even the world distant from me. While it may seem simple, my biggest lesson is that how we perceive time directly affects how we believe the world functions. That is, if we imagine time as divisible, stable, and an inactive backdrop to life like Descartes did as I discuss in the next chapter, then the injustices of the past can be erased, and people's humanity and existence can be erased as in my two encounters with modern time in history education.

CHAPTER 3 OF MODERN TIME

Modernity comes in as many versions as there are thinkers or journalists, yet all its definitions point, in one way or another, to the passage of time. (Latour, 1991/1993, p. 10)

Before that warm spring day in my car in the Glencliff High School parking lot, listening to guest physicists discuss time on NPR, I understood time as organizational. It was some *thing* that humans used to situate their lives in relation to others rather than a force that irreducibly binds us to life itself. In many ways, that chance encounter with the NPR radio show was a beginning of my re-orientation, or journey, with time. After that, my prior relationship with this elusive concept began to unravel. The foundations were eroding. It was as if I began to see cracks in the ground along some path, and a different, alternate world peered back at me—I could feel it, but I was not there yet. But I wanted to be there, and the philosophy of Henri Bergson, which I discuss in chapter 4, was my entrance ticket.

About 130 years ago, Bergson noticed those cracks in the ground of dominant Western thought and realized that the conventional description of time was problematic. While Bergson (1889/2015) focused his critique on determinism, in this chapter, I situate determinism within the context of the system of *modern philosophy*. I begin with a discussion of the origins of the “modern,” or modernity—René Descartes’s philosophy—

and how Descartes' assumptions about time frame his conceptualization of the subject and philosophical method. Next, I provide a brief history of the concept of time in modern philosophy. Finally, I discuss how modern time functions through the repetitious modern subject.

Modernity, Descartes, and Time

As Latour (1991/1993) suggested, modernity and time are entangled irreducibly—to critique time is to critique the foundations of what is known as modern philosophy. To understand modern philosophy, its concept of time and history, one must first understand the word *modern*. This word seems especially natural in the capitalist hegemony of the 21st century United States. Based on its etymology, the word *modern* originated in the 16th century, first meaning “now existing,” then evolving by 1808 to mean “not antiquated or obsolete” (Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d.). In both its original and evolved meanings, one finds a mark of presentism in the philosophical sense. Here, the new is opposed to the past, which is outmoded and dead. In everyday language, modern often refers to fresh innovations and progress—modern architecture, modern design, modern art, the modern world, the modern man. However, modern is not as simple as it seems. As I argue in this chapter, it is a rather sophisticated Western philosophical concept with deep and broad implications for living in the world in a particular way.

The foundations of modern philosophy began with French philosopher René Descartes who is commonly considered the father of modern Western philosophy because of his sharp departure from Aristotle and the Ancient Greeks (McOuat, 2008; Ott & Dunn, 2013; Scruton, 1981/2002; St. Pierre, 2000). Descartes called for a break from the past and a re-creation of philosophy (Sewall, 1901) despite the danger of such an

argument given that Aristotelian theories firmly supported Christian theology during Descartes' lifetime. In a letter to Marin Mersenne, a priest, mathematician, and Cartesian critic (Buccolini, 2019) on January 28, 1641, Descartes (1641/1901) acknowledged this danger when he assured Mersenne that his philosophy could take the place of Aristotle's in fully supporting Christian theology. Additionally, he reaffirmed the purpose of his *Meditations* as a replacement for Aristotelianism:

I now tell you, between ourselves, that these six Meditations contain all the foundations of my physics. But please don't tell people this, for that might make it harder for supporters of Aristotle to approve the *Meditations*. I hope that readers will gradually get used to *my* principles, and recognize their truth, before noticing that they destroy *Aristotle's*. (1641/2017, p. 3)

His removal of Aristotelianism as the basis of European philosophy involved a redescription of major philosophical concepts such as the *subject* and the *soul, method*, and, the focus of this dissertation, *time*. Like much of the Cartesian worldview upon which it is founded, modern philosophy creates a binary relationship with ancient philosophy. This modern/ancient, or new/old binary, favored the new and was skeptical of the past. But, as Descartes told Mersenne, his goal was a complete separation from past philosophical beliefs, which required a break between the past and present. Despite Descartes' claim that *cogito ergo sum* was the foundation of his philosophy, I argue that time is the foundation of his concept of the subject and his philosophical method. I begin this exploration of Cartesian philosophical ideas beginning with time before describing his conception of the subject and his philosophical method and how those rely on his assumptions about the nature of time.

Time

As Lloyd Waller (2014) purported, Descartes rarely discussed the concept of time, but what little he did write provides a clear image of his conceptualization of that elusive concept and how it evolved from that of Aristotle. Descartes' thoughts on time are critical to understanding his philosophical description of the subject, human being, and, more broadly, his separation of ontology and epistemology in creating the *cogito* that I discuss in the next section.

While he attempted to separate himself from what he considered the mediocrity of Aristotelian followers, Descartes' conception of a disaggregated time was, as Secada (1990) argued, no different from Aristotle's. Time for Aristotle and Descartes was an infinitely divisible phenomenon: "If A and B are separate segments of time, then no part of A is such that it is simultaneous with any part of B" (Secada, p. 48). That is, for both Aristotle and Descartes, the past cannot co-exist in the present or vice versa—they exist wholly separated from one another. Each moment is disconnected from all others like pearls on a string. Another example would be the face of a clock or watch, where seconds and minutes are separated from each other with each tick of the second hand creating a physical cut between the past and present. Bergson (1907/1998) used the analogy of beads on a necklace to describe this time that he critiqued—connected yet distinctly divided. However, the simple description of time as a succession of separate segments is the end of Aristotle and Descartes' agreement about time.

Cartesian time, while similar in meaning to Aristotle's, was not identical in function. One example of Descartes' departure from Aristotle's conception of time is his different understanding of causality and simultaneity. Secada (1990) pointed out that

while Descartes' concept of a divisible time aligned with Aristotle's, Descartes broke from the Ancients in terms of time's connection to causality. Unlike Aristotle, Descartes "does not allow the possibility of productive activity at a temporal distance" (p. 49). That is, Aristotle believed that the cause of a phenomenon could act at a distance in time. One example of this might be the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand as a temporally distant cause of the Great War. The Archduke's death caused fights between Serbia and Austria-Hungary which sparked alliances that resulted in what historians now call World War I. This interpretation would not be impossible in Descartes' conception of time. For Descartes, the present is entirely independent from the past unless there is direct causality based on simultaneity: "An effect can be caused only by something which exists at the time of its production" (Secada, 1990, p. 49). For Descartes, causality was more like a domino effect—Archduke's assassination would not be the cause, but the cause of a cause since there was no simultaneity between the lethal shot and the beginning of the war. Another example given by Wendt (2021) examined this form of causality with racism. He explained that Descartes' concept of causality could not account for structural racism because the creation of racist structures is temporally distant from acts of violence. In turn, racism can only exist on an individual level. To illustrate this argument, consider the murder of Trayvon Martin. If one thinks with a Cartesian conception of time and causation, George Zimmerman's shooting and killing the unarmed, 17-year-old high school student is not an issue of structural racism. It is instead a hurtful act by an individual. The cause can only be directly related to the effect. This conceptualization of time and causation disregards the societal influences on Zimmerman, such as adverse media images and adultification of young Black males (Dancy, 2014) or the origins of

racist ideas that have flowed through volumes of European and American social and scientific research beginning as early as Aristotle, leaving our histories in their wake (Kendi, 2016/2017; Sharpe, 2016). Only the individual is responsible for their actions. For Descartes, time functioned as a limited connection between adjacent events.

Another of Descartes' departures from Aristotle's time relates to the omnipotence of god.⁷ Before I can examine this difference, I must first explain Aristotle's divine intellect. Aristotle's god was a *divine intellect*, or *unmoved mover*, but not the cause of all things (Caston, 1999; Olson, 2012). Instead, Aristotle's god was a cause of thought. As an unmoved mover, an Aristotelian god is a part of nature as a mover or active changer of it. However, his god is unmoved or unaffected by nature (Olson, 2012). God's role in nature, that is, how god moves nature, is defined by the *final cause* of god. Aristotle (350 BCE/2009) explained this concept of the final cause in *Metaphysics V*: "The end, i.e., that for the sake of which a thing is; e.g., health is the cause of walking. For 'Why does one walk?' we say; 'that one may be healthy.'" While the final cause of walking is health, the final cause of god, i.e., the divine intellect, is thought. In *Metaphysics XII*, Aristotle (350 BCE/2009) defined god as the *actuality* of thought. Olson (2012) explained Aristotle's concept *actuality* as an "activity or act that admits of no change or motion; it is not a changing from something into something but, rather, activity that has its end or purpose in itself" (Olson, 2012, p. 105). An actuality is independent of everything else, hence the concept of the unmoved mover. Its purpose is wound up in itself. It is important to note

⁷ It is important to note that Aristotle's *divine intellect*, while the basis of much Catholic and Muslim scholarship, is not the same Judeo-Christian-Islamic God. The divine intellect is not a religious figure nor personified but rather a force of wisdom in the world. It would not be until scholars of the Abrahamic religions engaged in philosophical study of Aristotle that his concept gained religious meaning. For Catholicism, St. Thomas Aquinas created a religiously acceptable argument for the compatibility of Aristotle and Christianity—a relationship that Descartes critiqued. See Al-Khalili, 2011.

that Aristotle's god is not a creator. It did not create the world or existence. God's domain is simply the act of thought in the world—that which causes the world to think, and god (the divine intellect) is that which came into existence solely to act with thought. In relation to time, the divine intellect is not of time. As the divine intellect, or the unmoved mover, both transcendent and immanent, god is unchanging, seemingly endless, and “free of all determinations of time” yet not outside of time since god is immanent with the world (Olson, 2012, p. 105). The laws of time, in other words, do not affect Aristotle's god, but god's actions, i.e., thought, still exist in time—god is both of and outside of time.

In contrast, the Cartesian God is the Creator of all possible life. Descartes (1644/1901) theorized that “God alone is the true cause of all that is or can be” (p. 310). While both Aristotle and Descartes considered the simultaneity of the past, present, and future impossible, Descartes' God was simultaneous with all things and therefore the cause of all things since his conception of causality is based on simultaneity. Again, Descartes did not believe that the past could have causality on the present or future unless there was a direct simultaneity between the cause and the effect. God's omnipotent causality requires a different relationship with time. Gorham (2008) argued that Descartes established a temporal God who, while eternal, exists successively in the past, present, and future. That is, God is not timeless but rather encompasses time in a way that the human intellect cannot. Combined with his linear time, one could interpret Descartes' discussions of God as acting with distinction in the past, present, and future. God's simultaneity provided a unique advantage that the rest of life failed to have. This conception of time, in a sense, gave God its creative power. Humans cannot see and

know all that is, was, and will be. But God can and has the power to act in simultaneity. It is not the past that acts and causes something to happen in the future, or anything else for that matter, but rather the omnipresent spirit of God. God is the cause of everything. This fundamental difference between Aristotle's divine intellect acting in the world through thought and Descartes' God acting in the world as the Creator holds implications for their conceptions of time. Life existed prior to the divine intellect in an Aristotelian ontology. The past therefore mattered. For Descartes, however, nothing is prior to God, and the past is not alive in the present. God is.

It is essential to consider how Descartes viewed concepts such as time in relation to the subject to understand how Descartes could come to these conclusions about God, time, and causality. As I discuss in the following two sections, his understanding of time allowed Descartes to construct his conception of the human being, the subject, and his philosophical method, and ultimately modern philosophy.

The Subject and the Soul

Though I argue that time undergirds his philosophy, Descartes (1637/1993) declared his concept of the subject as the foundational truth of his philosophy, and thus modern philosophy in the following:

I observed that while I thus desired everything to be false, I, who thought, must of necessity be something; and remarking that this truth, I think; therefore I am, was so firm and so assured that all the most extravagant suppositions of the skeptics were unable to shake it, I judged that I could unhesitatingly accept it as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking. (p. 184)

His modern philosophy and description of its *cogito* came into being together and serve as the foundation of his philosophy, which established a different order for European thought that centers on the self in the form of the mind. As St. Pierre (2000) argued, “By defining himself as the all-knowing subject, the ‘I am,’ Descartes defined everything that is not subject as object” (p. 500). That statement also produces the mind/body dualism: “the soul by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body, and even easier to know than the body, and although the body were not, the soul would not cease to be all that it is” (p. 184). The mind and body for Descartes are entirely separate, much like his separation of the past, present, and future. The body itself is the shell for the superior mind and spirit of the soul. It is this disaggregated mind that establishes being, not the body. As Soffer (1984) argued, Descartes’ principles of a new philosophy included a rejection of Aristotle’s soul that was embodied and replaced with a soul belonging only to the mind, creating a mind/body dualism—if the soul belonged to the mind, then it must be superior to the body. For Descartes, the mind, the *cogito*, is the starting point of his philosophical principles. As I argue later in this chapter, while Descartes placed the mind as the center of his philosophy, the mind, and thus, his conception of the subject, cannot be thought without time.

Descartes’ Ontology

Before I move to that argument, understanding the Cartesian subject and its relationship to time requires a discussion of Descartes’ ontology. Descartes’ ontology began with the Catholic Christian God⁸ as the “Perfect and Infinite Being” (Descartes,

⁸ Despite his devout Catholicism throughout his life, the Catholic Church banned Descartes’ books by 1633. In addition, while the historical explanation of Descartes’ death is pneumonia, Theodor Ebert researched written evidence for any forensic clues and suggested a probable arsenic poisoning by a Catholic priest through a sacramental wafer. See Ebert, 2019.

1637/1901, p. 176) that is the cause “of all which we possess” (p. 175). Nolan (2019) described the Cartesian God as the "sole infinite substance" (p.89) that "conserves all things" (p. 90). As a pure soul without a body, God exists as both knower and Creator. The ontological question arises, *how was God created?* Descartes (1670/1901) answered, “the very immensity of his nature is the cause or reason why there is no need of any cause of his existence” (p. 367). To Descartes, God’s omnipresence and divine creative power meant that no other force could be the creator of God. He argued that because God knows himself, he creates himself. That is, God thinks itself into existence. As explained in the *Book of Genesis*, God created humans in its image. This belief would have been Descartes' belief because of the influence of the Catholic Church in France during his life. Made in the image of God, humans, then, are also created as knowers and creators. Or in Descartes’ words translated into English, “I think, therefore I am.” In a Cartesian ontology, God created knowing through the mind (i.e., a soul that never dies) and being by the divine gift of knowing.

So a knowing God becomes the foundation for the existence of humans, leading Descartes to divide the world into two substances, the soul, which Descartes referred to as the mind, and the body, or matter (Hatfield, 2019). As Descartes’ (c. 1633/1985) wrote, “These men will be composed, as we are, of a soul and a body” (p. 99). The body, he immediately described, was like a machine built by God. Descartes discussed early on that the body was related to “animal spirits” (p. 100). Only humans could possess a soul, or a thinking, rational mind, even if not all humans could be “perfectly reasonable” as he wrote in a letter to Queen Elisabeth of Bohemia (Descartes, 1646/2017, p. 46). Descartes (c.1633/1985) asserted that God united the animalistic body with the soul in “its principal

seat in the brain” (p. 102). Descartes continued to reinforce the hierarchy of the mind/body and human/nature dualisms throughout his ontological writings, as seen in his development of his concepts of mind and body through essences, attributes, and modes.

For Descartes, each substance (i.e., the mind and body) had its own essence, attributes, and modes—this is Cartesian reality (Nolan, 2019). The essence of a substance is its function. For the substance called the mind, its essence is the passive power of thought and active power of will (Hatfield, 2019). For the substance called the body, its essence is extension, its material being in the world. The mind is for thought, or, like Descartes (1637/1901) asserted, the mind's

whole essence or nature consists only in thinking, and which, that it may exist, has need of no place, not is dependent on any material thing; so that “I,” that is to say, the mind by which I am what I am, is wholly distinct from the body, and is even more easily known than the latter, and is such, that although the latter were not, it would still continue to be all that it is. (p. 171-172)

The mind, utterly separated from the body, exists solely in the act of thinking—the mind, then, is rational as opposed to empirical, and rationalism is Descartes' epistemology. The body, alternatively, exists through extension (Descartes, 1644/1901, p. 320). That is, extension is the measurable, empirical, physical aspect of life. It is important to note that, as Hatfield (2019) suggested, Descartes did not completely break the relationship between mind and body, soul and matter. While one can conceive the mind without the body, the mind needs the body to experience the sensations of the world. Instead, Descartes separated the *functions* of the two. While this separation of mind/body in and of itself is not problematic, Descartes established this relationship as a hierarchical

dualism stemming from his Catholic religious beliefs and the nature of God as described in his philosophy. As Descartes (1644/1901) argued, bodies are imperfect and inferior to the mind since God has no body (p. 310). Through its senses, the body is not a reliable source of knowledge—empiricism fails, and the rational mind is closer to the perfection of God.

In addition to substances and essences, Descartes' ontology includes the concept of attributes (Sowall, 2016). He considered attributes as generalities or constants of substances. Thought and acts of will are constants of the mind. The attributes of the body are general physical descriptions that are measurable, like shape, motion, weight, and dimensions. As Sowall (2016) explained, attributes are affections, and "All affections depend on God or on things that depend on God [i.e., substances]" (p. 38). Attributes and substances have a symbiotic relationship. Substances are ontologically distinct from their attributes, yet only through their attributes can substances be known to the world. For example, thought in general and acts of will are attributes of the mind (Nolan, 2019), which is a substance. These attributes of the mind help us know it—one can ascertain to some degree the mind of someone else by listening to their thoughts or experiencing their acts of will. The mind in this relationship remains the foundational substance, and its attributes are internal or external communications of that substance. An attribute cannot exist without its substance. Thought cannot exist without the mind. While the mind can exist without being known, it cannot be known without thought.

Finally, concerning attributes, modes in Cartesian philosophy can be understood as *ways of being* (Nolan, 2019). While attributes are generalities, modes are the specific details of a substance. The shape of a body, for example, might be spherical, and the

mode would be the particular measurements like the body's diameter or circumference. Its way of being is measured by its specific size and shape. For the mind, as Descartes (1641/1901) laid out in *Meditation III*, ideas are the “modes of consciousness which I call perceptions and imaginations, in as far only as they are modes of consciousness, exist in me” (p. 234). Ideas, perceptions, and imaginings are the modes of the mind as an internal substance. Descartes' ontology creates a mind that exists in an individual independent of and separate from the objects that it perceives, even if, as Hatfield (2019) argued, it does not entirely dissolve the connection between a human mind and a human body. That is, in a Cartesian ontology, humans (as the mind incarnate) are separate from the rest of the material world and superior to it. The objects are in and of themselves, and the mind, as independent and superior, holds the perceptions of the inferior objects. The way of being for the mind is not defined by the empirical, as would be the case with the material world, but rather by the quality of ideas that the mind produces. Descartes based his evaluation of the quality of ideas on his philosophical method discussed in the next section.

With this ontology, Descartes not only created hierarchical binaries between mind and body and human and nature, but he also created a hierarchical binary between thinking and being. Considering *cogito ergo sum*, thinking is a substance that precedes being. Descartes illustrated this idea with his proof and explanation of the existence of God—God only existed because of thought. The same, unless Descartes risked blasphemy and ex-communication by the Catholic Church or worse, would be true of man. As I contend, Descartes indirectly established being as an attribute of thought—an argument supported by considering Descartes' concept of time.

Time and the Cartesian Soul

In returning to my argument that time is at the foundation of Cartesian philosophy, I pose this question: where does time fit in a Cartesian ontology? According to Lloyd Waller (2014), Descartes explicitly stated that duration is an attribute of thought and time is its mode, or measurable way of being, in Principle 1.57:

Of these attributes or modes there are some which exist in the things themselves, and others that have only an existence in our thought; thus, for example, time, which we distinguish from duration taken in its generality, and call the measure of motion, is only a certain mode under which we think duration itself [...] But that we may comprehend the duration of all things under a common measure, we compare their duration with that of the greatest and most regular motions that give rise to years and days, and which we call time; hence what is so designated is nothing superadded to duration, taken in its generality, but a mode of thinking. (p. 322)

Thus, for Descartes, time is ontologically dependent on thought—time does not exist without the mind. As an attribute, we know the mind through duration. We measure that understanding with time.

In ordering reality with time as dependent on the mind rather than its existence in and of itself, Descartes pushed back against an Aristotelian logic that defined the subject as inextricably connected to a predicate, not independent of the past as Descartes believed. By creating his *cogito*'s existence as dependent on thought and not events of the past, Descartes broke the subject's connection to its past. From its conception at first thought, it appears that modern philosophy and Descartes' *cogito* denied a link to the past

as his cogito thinks before he exists. In this conceptualization, the past does not matter because time is just a measurement of bodies. Descartes (1670/1901) contended that “The present time is not dependent on that which immediately preceded it” (p. 376). The past has no meaning to the cogito because it is not a part of its existence. As Secada (1990) pointed out, there is a "demand for simultaneity between cause and effect" (p. 49) that requires a cause to be temporally connected to an effect. In the case of the cogito, the act of thinking, in *actu secundo*, exists prior to being while being becomes possible with first thought. That is, like his understanding of duration, Descartes situated being as an attribute of thought—being cannot be without thought. His assumption of time as a linear structure with direct and unentangled causality manifests with thinking existing before being and time. When the individual gains existence with its first thought, any ontological connections with the past are lost.

The Enlightenment brought a fervor for political freedom that some scholars, including Bergson (1932/1935), might call an extreme focus on individual rights. De Tocqueville (1835/2012) discussed the concept of individualism in his examination of the United States. The Enlightenment placed the Cartesian cogito, the thinking human, the “I,” as the center of the universe. In *Democracy in America*, de Tocqueville wrote that individualism:

disposes each member of the community to sever himself from the mass of his fellows and to draw apart with his family and his friends, so that after he has thus formed a little circle of his own, he willingly leaves society at large to itself. (p. 98)

In a Cartesian ontology, the independent subject separates himself from his contemporaries, as de Tocqueville suggested, and I would add from his ancestors and all that came before. This individualism, however, is a misjudgment that “originates as much in deficiencies of mind as in perversity of heart” (p. 98). De Tocqueville understood the danger of placing ourselves out of society and becoming isolated on our independent islands. Bergson (1932/1935) referred to this problem as *closed society*. He argued that when humans separate themselves from the rest of society and make decisions only out of self-interest, we create injustices and suffering in the world. He referred to this as a “breach of the social order” (p. 4), ignoring our interdependence with other humans and forgoing our obligations to society—key characteristics of the Cartesian subject. This Cartesian truth becomes important in conversations about *who* can think and thus be when I discuss the Cartesian subject, time, and race.⁹ As I explain in the next section, the mind is the beginning of method as well as the beginning of being.

Philosophical Method

As part of his goal of the total annihilation of Aristotle's philosophy, Descartes proposed a unified philosophical method to replace Aristotelian logic, one that, like the subject, was very much rooted in Cartesian time. He premised his method on the idea that there could be a legitimate method that, if followed in a precise linear order, would result in legitimate, true knowledge. In *Discourse on Methods*, Descartes (1644/1901) began a discussion of his methodological rules by suggesting that knowledge created by more

⁹ It is important to understand this connection between thinking first and then being. If, within the Western modern ontology, thinking must occur first, then to dehumanize someone the only weapon one needs is “proof” that the person cannot think. If they cannot think, they cannot *be* fully human. See Bell (1992), Baldwin (1964/2010), Fanon (1961/2007), hooks (1981/2015), Kendi (2016/2017), Latour (1991/1993), Lugones (2010), Said (1979), Spivak (1998), and Tuhiwai Smith (1999/2008).

than one person was bound for imperfection. Here, he argued that effective method starts with "a single master" (p. 156), thus relying upon his conception of the cogito as an independent subject. This foundation is the opposite of the classical Greek philosophers who gathered at places like Aristotle's Lyceum to engage in thought with, for example, the Socratic method. In these settings, they thought together. Speaking of the followers of Aristotle, Descartes claimed, "Their fashion of philosophizing, however, is well suited to persons whose abilities fall below mediocrity" (p. 198). According to Descartes, Aristotle's method was for simpletons; Descartes' method would be superior and advanced intellectually, pointing to his creation of a hierarchical conception that privileges thought above all else. Philosophy would belong to the privileged few marked as humans during this historical era—European, male, wealthy. In discussing his method, Descartes reasoned that there should be a straightforward method of thought with a few rules "rigidly administered" (p. 161). He presented his four rules that, if followed correctly, would provide the perfect method for discovering the truth:

The FIRST was never to accept anything for true which I did not clearly know to be such; that is to say, carefully to avoid precipitancy and prejudice, and to comprise nothing more in my judgment than what was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly as to exclude all ground of doubt.

The SECOND, to divide each of the difficulties under examination into as many parts as possible, and as might be necessary for its adequate solution.

The THIRD, to conduct my thoughts in such order that, by commencing with objects the simplest and easiest to know, I might ascend by little and little, and, as it were, step by step, to the knowledge of the more complex; assigning in thought

a certain order even to those objects which in their own nature do not stand in a relation of antecedence and sequence.

At the LAST, in every case to make enumerations so complete, and reviews so general, that I might be assured that nothing was omitted. (p. 161)

These four rules focused on order, reason, deduction, and perfection. Descartes even used the analogy of rebuilding a house, suggesting that he was starting over with the construction of philosophy. He outlined his philosophical principles, creating a rigid system of method based on his own philosophical beliefs about the nature of reality—a stable, independent subject, a linear progression of time, and the ability to separate oneself from the past. For Descartes (1637/1995), knowledge is deduced from rational thought just as attributes are deduced from substances: “always observe the necessary order in deducing one from the other, there can be none so remote that they may not be reached, or so hidden that they may not be discovered” (p. 182-3). In this act, Descartes created a reality not rooted in the real, the empirical, but in his mind. Instead of basing reality on what he could observe with his senses, he created a world in which the rational mind, using his method, could produce valid knowledge. Here, one sees the division of epistemology into the rational/empirical binary debated throughout the Enlightenment era.

Descartes’ concepts of time and causality supported his philosophical method based on rationalism. He discussed the development of European civilization as “starting from a semi-barbarous state and advancing to civilization by slow degrees” (Descartes, 1637/1995, p. 156), implying a forward and superior progression of human advancement through time and the development of the human being from a state of infancy without

mature, or correct, Reason (p. 157) as if humans somehow become magically correct at a certain age. In both instances, Descartes privileges the present with assumptions that the past is inferior to the present. Descartes' ontology and epistemology both rely on a natural hierarchy that a progressive concept of time reinforces. It also created an obsession with moving forward, avoiding the past, and a rigid linear order to the world. As St. Pierre (2000) concluded,

Descartes established foundationalism, the view that knowledge must be constructed from the bottom up; that first principles, truths, can be discovered using the mind of man; and that this foundation can shore up an ordered, unified structure of truths that are logically linked together. (p. 494)

That is, Cartesian thought claims that the rational man establishes knowledge that is the solid, foundational base for legitimate truth. This method relies on his linear conception of time. As I discuss in the next section, the concept of time underlying Cartesian ontology and epistemology would come to stand as the foundation of modern philosophy and the laurels on which Western society would rest.

The Development of Time in Modern Philosophy

Winfield (2007) explained that modernity is a philosophical movement rather than just an historical era. He argued that “modernity is a normative project, aiming to establish a civilization in which rational autonomy can be at home. For that reason, modernity is subject to philosophical investigation” (p. 11). Modern thought is not a neutral field; it has an agenda and has been quite successful in its pursuit of neutralizing the past. As described earlier in this chapter, modernity created itself to be the norm and appears as natural as the wind rustling leaves—what is modern is obviously good, right?

Who could possibly have a problem with a philosophical project that encourages freedom from the past that, as Winfield described, holds the future hostage? Time is a quintessential barrier to the advancements of the modern project. As Latour (1991/1993) argued in the quotation that begins this chapter, time encapsulates the project of modernity. He contended that among the various conceptions of modern thought, the common thread is its conception of time in which what comes before the modern is to be abandoned to progress. In Descartes' rationale, the invention of modern as a concept throughout his philosophy created a binary between "old" and "new" and, in so doing, a fundamental change occurred in how Europeans viewed and used time. Based on Latour's assertion about time as the foundation of modern thought, in this section, I provide a brief history of how this belief about time and the superiority of modern thought continued throughout the Enlightenment and extended into positivism.

It may help first to discuss how time is treated today in mainstream Western philosophy to more fully grasp the development of the concept of time to contextualize modern philosophy's and Bergson's places in the discussion. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* divides time into two categories—*time* (Emery, Markosian, & Sullivan, 2020) and *temporal consciousness* (Daiton, 2018). The former concept is commonly considered social time or how one situates oneself within the world. Baron and Miller (2019) explained this conception of time as how "we make sense of ourselves, today, by understanding who we were yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that" (p. 1). One might consider this an organizational time that helps us situate ourselves in relation to one another; as I discuss in chapter 4, scholars in history education often refer

to this time as objective. For example, we might think about how long it has been since we have seen or talked with someone to consider our temporal distance to their lives.

The second category of time is temporal consciousness, or our (human) awareness or experience of time. For example, one might be in a meeting that seems to last hours even though only 15 or 20 minutes have passed. Alternatively, perhaps one has the feeling of time flying by too quickly though only an hour has passed. These are common examples of temporal consciousness in modernity. However, Bergson (1889/2015) proposed a different conception of time and critiqued both categories of time (time and temporal consciousness) for their unidimensional ontological foundations. Bergson argued that our awareness of the world comes not from separating ourselves from the world, as Descartes' time does, nor from remaining in the internal (as in temporal consciousness); instead, our understanding of the world comes from our engagement with both the internal and external. Of these different descriptions of time, modern philosophy uses the external description of time as opposed to an internal time of temporal consciousness or a Bergsonian *duration* that is both internal and external. That is, for modern philosophy, time is an objective mode outside of the body and not an internal, personal experience or a durative, ontological time. In the following discussion regarding the development of time in Enlightenment thought and positivist philosophy, modern time refers to an external time that exists outside the human being.

The Enlightenment

Kramnick (1995) marked the 1680s as the Enlightenment's beginning, corresponding with England's Glorious Revolution, and the 1790s as its end with the conclusion of Western Europe's liberal political revolutions. The Enlightenment was a

continuation of the disdain European Renaissance artists and scholars held for the dominance of Christian ideals that had overtaken Greek and Roman classicism. In other words, it was a continuation of the exaltation of reason over the unscientific, irrational faith of Christianity. One of the extraordinary claims of Enlightenment thought was that human beings could access the truth themselves and did not need to rely on the clergy's access to God but "through the scientific method of experiment and empirical observance" (Kramnick, 1996, p. xii) could produce true knowledge themselves. That belief implied that the universe was orderly, stable, and masterable using systematic observations and precise methods—knowledge was valid if found through the correct use of reason. According to Kramnick, "Science and technology were engines of progress enabling modern men and women to force nature to serve their well-being and further their happiness" (p. xii). The Enlightenment extended Cartesian modern thought and separated science from philosophy, solidifying the idea that science and its methods are the only real way to develop truth—including truths about time (Foucault, 1984; Peters, 2019). It was an era when scholars aimed to improve the human condition in part by banishing the past.

The Enlightenment focused on looking ahead. The past was dead for these scholars. Foucault (1984) reiterated this point when discussing Kant's (1784) *Was ist Aufklärung?* Foucault argued that Kant's question, "What difference does today introduce with respect to yesterday?" (p. 34) defined the Enlightenment. That question reflects the Enlightenment's foundational conception of time with the past, present, and future distinctly separate from one another. The Enlightenment took another modern step towards erasing the past—the present and modernism silenced the past, "releasing us

from the states of 'immaturity'" (p. 34). As Foucault explained, escaping immaturity meant attaining free will utterly independent of the opinions of others—not a book, not a religion, not an expert, and certainly not those of ancestors. Kramnick (1995) argued that the Enlightenment centered the present so that “faith in progress required a jaundiced view of the past” (p. xiv). Thomas Jefferson (as cited in Kramnick) displayed contempt for the past referring to the “the annals of our ancestors” (p. xiv). With its conception of time, modern philosophy is a break from the past, not just as a break from tradition but a literal attempt to make the past invisible. This conception of the present as independent of the past and future is also foundational in another philosophical approach that owes much to Enlightenment thought, positivism.

Positivism

Based on the work of the father of sociology, Auguste Comte, positivism came about near the end of the Enlightenment era. Its chief claim was that the methods appropriate for studying the inert, material world are equally suitable for the study of the human experience. That is, the methods we use to study the material world can also be used to study the thoughts and behaviors of humans. In his book, *A General View of Positivism* (1880), Comte wrote, “The object of all true Philosophy is to frame a system which shall comprehend human life under every aspect, social as well as individual” (p. 6). This one statement encompasses what Harding (2005) described as the three major tenets of positivism—a high value of scientific knowledge over every other kind of knowledge, the importance of using the proper method to achieve scientific knowledge, and the claim that the correct method leads to social progress. The foundations of positivism result in an epistemology in which all knowledge exists in the world for us to

discover if only we use the proper method. In this regard, Tuhiwai Smith (1999/2008) wrote the following:

Positivism takes a position that applies views about how the natural world can be examined and understood to the social world of human beings and human societies. Understanding is viewed as being akin to measuring. As the ways we try to understand the world are reduced to issues of measurement, the focus of understanding becomes more concerned with procedural problems. The challenge then for understanding the social world becomes one of developing operational definitions of phenomena which are reliable and valid. (p. 42)

For Comte, knowing the human and being able to predict and control its behavior, and thus the future, was simply a matter of using correct scientific methods.

Like Tuhiwai Smith, Henri Bergson (1934/2007) objected to the ontological claims of positivism and especially to its goal of scientizing the social. Bergson recalled that the origins of positivism were in the study of the natural world. Matter, he posited, was more appropriate for the realm of the scientific method, while the mind and the social were the realms of metaphysics: "[Positivist science] and metaphysics differ in object and method" (p. 31). Another of Bergson's critiques of positivism was that science and philosophy do not exist in opposition but in relation with one another. Positivists of Bergson's day did not accept his argument and instead refused the legitimacy of metaphysics. As Harding (2005) and St. Pierre (2006; 2014) pointed out, positivism manufactured the boundaries for legitimate knowledge resulting in a narrow construction of what knowledge counts. These constructed confines meant that authoritative research on both matter and the human mind could only arise from stringent scientific methods.

Beyond the tenets of positivism mentioned by Harding, Bergson (1889/2015) noted an issue with the concept of time at the foundations of positivism—determinism. Determinism suggests that through the correct understanding of the world, one can predict the future. As Holton (2013) argued, determinism might be a concept of time such that "if one knew the initial conditions and the laws of nature, then one could, given enough time and computing power, work out what would happen" (p. 87). Bergson explicitly expressed that his concept of time was in response to the problems of determinism. He identified one problem of determinism as its erasure of free will. That is, with determinism, free will does not exist because the future is predictable. In that case, humans are predictable, and, as such, free will cannot exist because our actions are determined by rational responses to the world. Bergson (1889/2015) objected to this idea, arguing instead that once the confusions of a deterministic time are disproven, "we may perhaps witness the disappearance of the objections raised against free will, of the definitions given it, and, in a certain sense, of the problem of free will itself" (p. xx). Bergson understood that how we conceive of time has implications for how we understand life and live it. As Foucault (1984) argued, positivism was a reactionary response to preserving the attitude of modernity that changed the way reality, and thus life, is perceived. That is, Foucault argued that positivism as an image of thought focused on an erasure of the past and the prediction and realization of a perfected future. While the Enlightenment erased the past, determinism erased the possibility of any choice over our futures. Choice or free will is useless in a system such as modern thought whose destiny is to perfect the future for us.

How Modern Time Functions

Time is one thread of the fabric that holds together the illusion of the validity of modern philosophy. Lugones (2010) began her critique of the modern by describing its underlying structure: "Modernity organizes the world ontologically in terms of atomic, homogenous, separable categories" (p. 742). Following this argument about modern philosophy's nature, time, as a part of the world, is distinctly categorized and compartmentalized into the past, present, and future. As Bordo (1986) suggested, "For Descartes, indeed, discontinuity is the central fact of human experience" (p. 441). In this modern image of thought, time has a stable and isolated identity—and, as an extension, the human does as well. This identity is one of independence from the past and from the rest of the world. Ultimately, modern time is predictable and controllable. Time simply marches on, measured, orderly, with one second different and separate from the next without any possibility of change. In this image of thought, time does not change a person. That is, a person has an essence that stays the same without time acting as a force in and of itself. Instead, rationality changes a person by creating knowledge of the natural world and human experience through solidified, systematic, reproducible experiments that uncover, not create, knowledge that awaits us. We change by what we learn—I think, therefore I am. It is always thought before being. It is never being itself that changes us, that educates us.

As I argue here, modern philosophy created time so that it functions invisibly. Modernity's conception, its invention, of time has become normal four hundred years after its creation, and modern philosophy seems normal too after almost half a

millennium of embodied and internalized practices. It is a sneaky philosophy. Modernity claims that its truths are inevitable, yet, as Tuhiwai Smith (1999/2008) noted, theories:

are underpinned by a cultural system of classification and representation, by views about human nature, human morality and virtue, by conceptions of space and time, by conceptions of gender and race. Ideas about these things help determine what counts as real. (p. 44)

That is, underneath modernity's appearance of stability, neutrality, and objectivity lies a set of beliefs and assumptions that determine the boundaries of knowledge and reality. This invisibility would be what Butler (1992) called an "authoritarian ruse" (p.4). That is, this system of modern philosophy and the societal structures of which it is the foundation provides the illusion of ultimate truth and thus an unquestionable reality. As Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) wrote, modern philosophy is arborescent—deeply rooted in the foundations of what power structures tell us is absolute reality. Foucault (1984) described modernity as an attitude and "a mode of relating to contemporary reality" (p. 39). Modernity, he said, "is often characterized in terms of consciousness of discontinuity of time: a break from tradition, a feeling of novelty, of vertigo in the passing moment" (p. 39). Modern philosophy, in other words, creates a specific ideology of life—a set of beliefs rationalized despite having no grounding in reality and, in fact, breaks with the realities of time, particularly the past.

Time and the Modern Subject

How we perceive time affects how we perceive reality, as I have discussed throughout this dissertation. For example, how Descartes and Bergson conceived of time influenced their conceptions about philosophical method with two different conceptions

of time resulting in two different conceptions of method. Similarly, how we understand time influences what it means to be human. My two encounters with modern time in history education illustrate this point.

As I discussed in this chapter, modern time is one strand of a larger, violent system of thought. Concepts do not exist alone (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987) but are aligned to produce a system of thought. For example, different descriptions of time enable different ontologies—different descriptions of being and human being more specifically. Pulling at a single thread of a constructed reality of concepts strips away the givenness, the normality, of a dogmatic image of thought (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). As Wineburg (2001) suggested, given that the nature of history education is a tool for “humanizing us” by “tying our own stories to those who have come before us” (p. 5), it seems important to investigate the kind of human that modern philosophy created and the role time plays in that construction. In this section, I investigate the connections between modern time and the modern subject to help explain the two encounters with modern time in history education that I described chapter 2. As I identify it, a veiled and unquestioned modern conception of time functions in history education, specifically, historical time as identified by scholars such as Barton and Levstik (1996), de Groot-Reuvekamp, van Boxtel, Ros, and Harnett (2014), Keynes (2021), and Seixas (2012). Just as a Western philosophical orientation is taught in science with a living/non-living Cartesian dualism (Cherniak, 2020) and witnessed in the positivist scientization of educational research, teacher education, and schooling in general (St. Pierre, 2006), a

modern philosophical conception of time is taught in history¹⁰. This dominant conception of time in history education mirrors the Cartesian concept of time that I discussed in this chapter. It is a linear, stable time that separates the past from the present and future and creates the illusion of one definitive reality based on universal truths. I begin with a general description of the modern subject and then discuss the connections between modern time and a racialized modern subject that are at play in the two encounters that urged me to stay on this journey with time.

The modern philosophical ontology based on Cartesian thought is bound up, functions through, and creates a specific conception of the subject that is at the foundation of Cartesian philosophy (Bordo; 1986; Pannell, 2015; St. Pierre, 2000; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999/2008). Modern philosophy constructed the subject as rational, stable, and independent. For Descartes (1637/1995), his subject was the center of philosophy, although, his conception of the modern subject was not possible without modern time. Modernity firmly stands upon an epistemologically-centered reality that clearly defines humanity by its reason and its independence from and superiority to the rest of being, the rest of reality (Bordo, 1986; St. Pierre, 2000). As Bordo argued, Descartes created a subject independent from the rest of the world with clear boundaries for what was subject and what was object. One of these boundaries included the idea that the subject was the mind and the object was everything else, including the body. As St. Pierre (2000) argued, “By defining himself as the all-knowing subject, Descartes defined everything that is not subject as object. By defining his self as identity, he defined

¹⁰ To be clear, I do not mean that every teacher in every school teaches a modern conception of time. What I mean is that the overarching discourse on time reflects a tendency towards modern time. Modern time is the groove in which we live. It is not the only way to live, but it is the dominant conception of time in U.S. society as seen through its institutions, laws, and customs.

everything else as difference: ipseity vs. alterity” (p. 500). In his construction of the subject, Descartes privileged the mind over the body based on his beliefs about the nature of God as a knower. With this mind/body dualism, Descartes established a hierarchy of human mind over the physical world. This hierarchy resulted in a European categorization of humans as either modern or pre-modern (Latour, 1991/1993).

This image of thought created by modern philosophy constructs time in such a way to exclude and erase those considered less than fully human (women, people of color, children) from the privileged position of the present and attempts to write them out of the future. That is the very nature of modern time and modern philosophy. Latour (1991/1993) discussed how the invention of *modern* as a concept erased everything marked pre-modern. That is, history would start with the *real* humans, the modern human. Bordo (1986) argued the real humans were distinctly gendered as male, and as Francis Bacon (1603/1964) argued, Descartes’ era brought about “truly the masculine birth of time” (p. 92).¹¹ Women and Others were not a part of modernity. While the boundaries of science and philosophy excluded women, modern philosophy also created a racialized subject (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). It is no coincidence that Descartes’ dream that inspired his philosophy occurred in 1619, a few months after the first known enslaved people from Africa stepped foot in Jamestown (Hannah-Jones, 2019), and that the Atlantic slave trade then rapidly exploded (Slave Voyages, n.d.).

¹¹ This idea of a masculine time came from Bacon’s thoughts on epistemology. Bacon argued that his era was the time for moving away from learning based on intuition (associated with femininity) toward a masculine method for constructing legitimate knowledge through a formulaic process or method. It is also interesting to note the use of the term “birth.” With this language, Bacon insinuates that the masculine form of creation is intellectual, of the mind, rather than the bodily birth associated with childbirth and women. See Bacon (1603/1964) and Reiss (1982).

In addition, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the concept of barbarian began to change from meaning a subordinate group of people to denoting a hierarchy of race and intellect (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Or as Latour (1991/1993) suggested, modern thought “designates a break in the regular passage of time, and it designates a combat in which there are victors and vanquished” (p. 10) whether that is the Ancients like Aristotle or what Lugones (2010) and Latour called non-modern¹². In this way, victors were modern men, and the vanquished were obsolete, or pre-modern. This modern pattern of thought separated the Europeans from what they considered “savage” thus reinforcing the idea of a modern/pre-modern binary (Latour, 1991/1993; Lugones, 2008, 2010; Maldonado-Torres, 2007). People not deemed as rationally discovering knowledge through approved scientific experiments with rigorous methodological practice were not quite human and certainly not deserving of power in the hierarchy of humanity (Cherniak and Walker, 2020; Todd, 2016; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999/2008). In other words, if people did not use European approved research methods, then their knowledge was not valid. Thus, the modern subject became an exclusive club limiting who was recognized as present and who was of the past. With this subjugation of knowledge, came the scientific construction of race (Golash-Boza, 2018).

The Enlightenment would further this violence through a rigid construction of hierarchical racial categories, specifically through the work of Swedish botanist Carl

¹² It is important to understand the nuanced differences between the concepts *non-modern* and *pre-modern*. As both Lugones (2010) and Latour (1991/1993) explained, Western scholars traditionally have used the term pre-modern to refer to non-European civilizations seen as lacking advancement, industrialization, or modernity. Both authors chose to use the term non-modern to refer to those historically subjugated groups. Latour went a step further arguing that we are all non-modern. That is, everyone, and thing, has never been modern, because we have not lost the freedoms and rights that modern philosophy has stripped from those not conceived as the Western, white, male subject. Instead, we have lived under its illusion of reality and its false boundaries.

Linnaeus. Linnaeus's classification of *homo varias*, or human variety, in 1735 systematically began to mark traits among humans from around the world and propelled a scientific rationale for the supremacy of white, male Europeans. Following Enlightenment beliefs, Linnaeus, the "Father of Taxonomy," created a hierarchy of nature and a hierarchy of human beings, creating the categories *Africanus*, *Americanus*, *Europeus*, and *Asiaticus* using supposed valid scientific methods and empirical observations. His assumption was that all humans belonged to one of these four categories. While Linnaeus never used the term race, the Head of Collections at The Linnean Society of London, Isabelle Charmantier (n.d.), argued that this classification "became the basis for scientific racism" (See Table 2). Linnaeus outlined five basic attributes: (1) skin color, medical temperament, and body posture, (2) physical traits, (3) behavior, (4) manner of clothing, and (5) form of government. Sociologist Tanya Maria Golash-Boza (2018) explained that these attributes were neatly constructed with internal and external characteristics to provide legitimacy to the past actions of Europeans. Although existing simultaneously, three non-European racial categories did not belong to the same time as Europeans. To qualify as modern meant to attain certain characteristics. Linnaeus laid out these characteristics in science as illustrated in *Table 2*—Europeus as the light, wise, and inventive naturally held the traits of wisdom and inventiveness while the other three racial categories were characterized negatively as obstinate, lazy, and greedy. Through supposed scientific law, Linnaeus codified European racial superiority.

While Descartes did not directly contribute to this codification, nor would he admit he owed any responsibility to its creation based on his ideas on causality, the Cartesian concept of modern time supported this violent and enduring system of

Table 2

Linnean Classification of Human Species

Species	1	2	3	4	5
Americanus	Red, choleric and straight	Straight, black and thick hair; gaping nostrils; [freckled] face; beardless chin	Unyielding, cheerful, free	Paints himself in a maze of red lines	Governed by customary right
Europaeus	White, sanguine, muscular	Plenty of yellow hair; blue eyes	Light, wise, inventor	Protected by tight clothing	Governed by rites
Asiaticus	Sallow, melancholic, stiff	Blackish hair, dark eyes	Stern, haughty, greedy	Protected by loose garments	Governed by opinions
Africanus	Black, phlegmatic, lazy	Dark hair, with many twisting braids; silky skin; flat nose; swollen lips; Women [with] elongated labia; breasts lactating profusely.	Sly, sluggish, neglectful	Anoints himself with fat	Governed by choice [caprice]

hierarchical racial categorization. The construction of an ontology based on the present, which is the basis of the modern concept of time according to Descartes (1641/1993), helped these falsely constructed racial categories become marks of invisibility and inhumanity. While simultaneously in existence, Europeaus managed to set Africanus, Americanus, and Asiaticus in a different time—Europeaus as modern and the other three racial categories as pre-modern. Additionally, Descartes rid Europeans of any responsibility for their actions with his concept of time that separated the modern subject from the past.

European colonizers and enslavers used Descartes' concept of time to skirt responsibility for their dehumanization of non-Europeans and the violence that resulted. As Mignolo (2013) asserted, when enslaved Africans were cut off from their histories, inequality began on a massive scale. Here we see at least one way in which time has been

manipulated to subjugate, dehumanize, and delegitimize human beings by attempting to make cuts from the past. Our histories are powerful. Enslavers knew this. Modern time functions to solidify these ideas as stable and the basis of our unquestionable reality. The modern conception of time played an incredible role in constructing the modern subject. Europeans could not have conceived of a hierarchical racial categorization without a conception of time that isolates and denigrates the past as inferior. Moreover, statements that continue to cut off Black communities from their history or standards that erase the existence of millions of Indigenous people would not be possible without the modern conception of time. In referring to both the Black and Indigenous communities, Baldwin (1964/2010) described a history in the United States that has silenced the past for generations and discussed the violence of forgetting: “I’m not talking about the crime; I’m talking about denying what one does” (p. 92). The forgetting, he argued, is more important, possibly more violent, than the crime itself.

The modern conception of the subject is exemplified in both encounters with modern time in history education that I discussed in this chapter. In the first encounter, the white, male, undergraduate pre-service teacher forgot the crimes of which Baldwin spoke. Instead, he expected the Black community to forget past unaddressed injustices—the past does not matter, so be happy with what you have now. In the second encounter, the Georgia second grade social studies standard perpetuated an erasure of the past by positioning Indigenous communities in the past, or pre-modern, and Georgians today in the present, or modern. Underlying assumptions about time in both encounters led to a specific understanding of the subject as modern.

Conclusion

To be clear, this project is not about time itself but rather about seeking justice by unraveling an illusory veil of reality one strand at a time as my two encounters with time in history education taught me, gradually loosening the false appearance of a solid object and slowly making what is behind the cloth more and more transparent. In this chapter, I attempted to briefly explain how modern philosophy, its conception of time, and modern time function together. I also tried to show that without its specific concept of time, the modern image of thought would be unthinkable. That is, modern philosophy, at least in part, rests on its conception of time. Tracing its lineage through Enlightenment and positivist thought, I endeavored to show how this one seemingly simple and often invisible concept functions to uphold the goal of modern philosophy to erase the past and control the future. In the following chapter, I continue the conversation of how time functions focusing on Henri Bergson's concept *duration*, his different image of thought, and how it functions to create different possibilities for life and a re-orientation of thought in history education.

CHAPTER 4

BERGSON'S TIME

It is, we were saying, indivisible and indestructible continuity of a melody where the past enters into the present and forms with it an undivided whole which remains undivided and even indivisible in spite of what is added at every instant, or rather, thanks to what is added. (Bergson, 1934/2007, p. 55)

While the guest physicists on NPR may have piqued my curiosity of time sending me on this long and sometimes peculiar journey, it was French philosopher Henri Bergson who helped give me the language and theory with which to think about this problem with time. If you search the University of Georgia's dissertation and thesis database for titles including Henri Bergson, you will find zero results. People living one hundred years ago during the height of Bergson's academic career would quite possibly be shocked by this omission. This man was *the* philosopher of his time (Mullarkey, 1995, Wheeler, 1922). Because of the wide-spread popularity and familiarity with this Nobel Prize-winner for literature, Bergson's speeches and appearances drew crowds that filled European and American auditoriums and lecture halls and overflowed into the streets (Wheeler, 1922). Lipmann (1912) observed that no word of Bergson's "goes unreported" (p. 100). Therefore, Bergson's disappearance as a major figure is puzzling. One reason might be that the era in which he lived was drowned in wars, depression, and genocide.

Or maybe it is plausible that Bergson's philosophy, described by Hallström (1928/1968) as taking "up arms against" rationalistic science, pushed him to the edges of acceptability as scientific rationalism gained favor. His concept of time alone, which he referred to as *duration*, stirred controversy around the world in philosophical and scientific communities and put him in direct debate with Einstein's positivist version of time (Canales, 2015). However, after the fallout from a meeting between the physicist and the philosopher, Einstein remained a household name often flaunted as the "smartest man ever to live" and Bergson was left, for the most part, to the annals of dead philosophers. It has been only in recent years that scholars have revisited his philosophy, mostly in connection to that of Gilles Deleuze and an ontological turn (Van der Tuin, 2011). In this chapter, I provide a brief historical contextualization of Bergson's work that has been controversial for some. Then I map the functions of Bergson's disentanglement from Cartesian, positivist philosophy through his concept of time, *duration*, and explain how it informs two more of his foundational concepts—*intuition* and *creation of pure difference*. These concepts together function to create a philosophy of movement that challenges the stable independent, thinking Cartesian subject, the hegemony of the rationalist, scientific intellect, and the notions of how we achieve knowledge according to positivism. I conclude with a discussion of the significance of his work in general.

Bergson in Context

To put Bergson's philosophy in context, it is important to understand the historical period in which he lived. Bergson's life (1859-1941) and academic career began in an era of increasing industrialization supported by the movement of work and science towards greater efficiency and accuracy. This was the era of scientific

management and the pursuit of the efficient production of goods and profit growths. His study of time occurred during a rising focus on an international coordination of time. During the late 19th century, the United States and industrialized nations all over the world, created standards of time (i.e., coordinating clocks all over the world) in order to keep up with the demands of the railroad transportation revolution, globalization in the form of Western imperialism, and capitalists' demands for public policy that would increase their wealth. For Bergson (1889/2015), this increasing desire in science to accurately measure and standardize time seemed to be a problem. For example, Bergson witnessed the creation of time zones in the United States in 1883 and scientific debates about the accuracy of time's measurement through the late 19th century (Canales, 2015). Need some of these dates earlier... In response, while at the University of Paris, he pursued his philosophical investigation of time with his concept *duration* and wrote his critique of positivism and the Cartesian subject in his dissertation published as *The Data of Immediate Conscious* (published as *Time and Free Will* for English audiences) (1889). *Matter and Memory* (1896/2010) and *Creative Evolution* (1907/1998) extended his philosophical discussions of time and his critique of positivism. In the former, he theorized the relationship between mind and matter asserting that the two are separate yet inseparable leading to a characterization of his philosophy as a sort of simultaneous dualism and monism. In the latter, he extended Darwinian evolution using his concept duration to move towards an ontological time beyond personal experience. *Duration and Simultaneity* (1922/1965) was his response to Einstein's spatialized conception of time in his theory of relativity. Facing much criticism, this book might signal Bergson's fall from

popularity because of its incomplete argument that even the author agreed needed revision (Canales, 2015).

Despite his conflicts with Einstein and the criticisms that followed, Bergson continued his philosophical work. In *Two Sources of Spirituality and Religion* (1932/1935), Bergson moved towards political philosophy in theorizing open and closed love and society. In response to this work, positivist scientists and philosophers criticized Bergson as a spiritualist and mystic (Baugh, 2016). Finally, Bergson published *Creative Mind* (1934/2007) which was a compilation of several of his lectures and additional texts that he used to expand upon his philosophy in general. In Bergson's will, he instructed his wife to destroy all his papers after his death (Lawlor & Moulard Leonard, 2016). Thus, other than his published works and letters, little is left of his philosophical history. The reason for this destruction of his legacy is unknown.

While the philosophical school to which Bergson belonged continues to be debated with suggested classifications including dualism, monism, vitalism, philosophy of life, continental philosophy, post-Cartesian philosophy, and postmodern science, there is some agreement that Bergson was not part of the mainstream philosophy of his day. Massumi (1980/1987) described Bergson as part of an "orphan line" of philosophers: "Between Lucretius, Hume, Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Bergson there exists a 'secret link constituted by the critique of negativity, the cultivation of joy, the hatred of interiority, the exteriority of forces and relations, the denunciation of power'" (p. x). Likewise, Grosz (2013) refers to this philosophical line as "wayward" (p. 219), and Pannell (2015) characterized them as "rebellious" (p. 13). Bergson and the others were not state philosophers such as Plato, Descartes, Kant, and other philosophers within the dominant

circulation of power and knowledge who engaged in “representational thinking” (Massumi, 1980/1987, p. xi). As Massumi noted, Deleuze and Guattari spoke back against the “attributes of sameness and constancy” (p. xi) and against the erect arborescence of state philosophy’s violent reproduction and dissemination. Bergson’s philosophy of movement and change and a non-systematic method (or anti-method) has prompted scholars to compare his work to that of Deleuze. Boundas (1991) argued that because of the influence of Bergson’s conception of duration, “Bergson’s intuition is identical with Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism” (p. 87). Like Bergson, Deleuze displayed his philosophical commitment to the real with his transcendental empiricism in which he speaks back against transcendentalism. This transcendental empiricism, then, is what St. Pierre (2016) referred to as “a radical empiricism” that is not a plane of “discovering” or “uncovering” knowledge—it is an empiricism of movement with the real (p. 118). That is, it is immanent—everywhere and in experience. Alluding to Deleuze’s philosophy of immanence, Pannell (2015) wrote that Bergson’s “empiricism is immanent...it is the force of ongoing differentiation and becoming” (p. 249). As Barad (2007) put it:

Knowing is not about seeing from above or outside or even seeing from a prosthetically enhanced human body. Knowing is a matter of intra-acting. Knowing entails specific practices through which the world is differentially articulated and accounted for...Knowing is not a bounded or closed practice but an ongoing performance of the world. (p. 149)

In other words, Deleuze, Bergson, and Barad spoke back against the “god’s eye view” (Haraway, 1988) from nowhere perspective and instead argued that knowing comes from

contact with the real. Contact with the real occurs in relation with the world rather than being a solely transcendental experience such as Kant might suggest. Philosophy, and to Bergson, life occurs in the phenomena that are *the* movements of the world rather than in transcendent thought. Or as Barad (2007) asserted, “knowing does not come from standing at a distance and representing but rather from *a direct material engagement with the world*” (p. 49). For Bergson, this direct material engagement, or contact with the real, led to creation rather than an uncovering or discovery of knowledge. That is, Bergson, and scholars such as Deleuze, Guattari, and Barad, sought to change how we perceive reality and knowledge construction that challenged the positivist paradigm.

Despite how one might categorize Bergson, his influence during his life and after his death was widespread and powerful, shaping philosophers, post-Great War politics, and quantum physics. Merleau-Ponty took up Bergson’s conception of an unmeasurable time (Canales, 2015; Wambacq, 2011), William James said Bergson’s book *Creative Evolution* was a miracle and the start of new era (Cohen, 1999), and echoes of Bergson’s concept duration can be traced through Virginia Wolff (1929/2011) who wrote, “the mind...has no single state of being” (p. 107). More recently, spurred by his connections to Deleuze’s ontological turn, Bergson’s work has been taken up by feminist scholars such as Elizabeth Grosz (2000, 2004, 2005, 2007, & 2013), Iris van der Tuin (2011), and Bridget Pannell (2015) and recognized by scholars involved in what is referred to as the new materialisms and empiricisms (De Freitas, 2016; De Freitas & Ferrara, 2015; Denzin & Giardina, 2016; Jackson, 2013; Lefebvre, 2011). Yet, these were not the first feminist scholars to take an interest in Bergson’s ideas. As Herring (2019) noted, most attendees at Bergson’s lectures were women, sometimes derogatorily referred to as *caillettes*

(babbling women), *snobinettes*, or *Bergsoniennes*. In addition to influencing philosophers, Bergson was active in French politics. During World War I, Bergson served as a French diplomat. After the war, his philosophy influenced the creation and functioning of the League of Nations, and he served as president of its International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (Canales, 2015). Bergson's (1932/1395) concept of *open society* inspired a different theorization of ethical relations in politics arguing that in an open society "one has obligations to others simply as human beings" (Baugh, 2016, p. 354). Outside of philosophy and politics, Niels Bohr and other "founders" of quantum physics used Bergson's concepts to argue against Einstein's theory of relativity and his positivist physics. Bergson's writings on continuity and discontinuity influenced the development of the two-slit experiment that resulted in electrons exhibiting characteristics of both waves and particles inspired. Heisenberg developed his uncertainty principle, in part at least, after his reading Bergson's defense of indeterminism (Canales, 2015, p. 231-233).

Regardless of his popularity and influence, leading philosophers and physicists critiqued Bergson's philosophy. Heidegger argued that Bergson was an anti-intellectual who defended irrationality and over-emphasized the past (Canales, 2015; Heidegger, 1924/1992; Massey, 2005). Bertrand Russell also characterized Bergson as anti-intellectual, called Bergson's philosophy obscure and difficult to read (Russell, 1912/2016), and associated it "with that of Nazi-occupied France" (Canales, 2015, p. 186). Horkheimer's Frankfurt School Critical Theory project was, in part, an alternative to Bergson's "philosophy of life" and post-Kantian philosophy. Horkheimer argued that Bergson's philosophy of indivisible life belied the binary divisions within human life—

happy/unhappy, ruling/ruled, healthy/sick. Bergson's popularity among women reduced his standing in some circles and fueled his critics' arguments that Bergson was not a real philosopher (Herring, 2019). In addition to general critiques, Bergson faced much criticism because of his famous debate with Albert Einstein who argued that Bergson did not understand the theory of relativity and that the time of philosophers did not exist (Canales, 2015). Bergson responded that he did in fact understand the theory of relativity. He contended that his objections to Einstein's time focused on the errors of a quantifiable and measurable time and that the physicist failed to add anything significant to our understanding of time—a critique that led to Einstein winning the Nobel Prize for the law of photoelectric effect instead of for his famed theory of relativity (Canales, 2005). This debate launched a seemingly insurmountable cleavage—one side supporting Einstein and positivist science and the other supporting Bergson's metaphysics and an ontological turn. In the end, Einstein's positivism prevailed in mainstream academia and society.

Bergson's philosophy of change and movement that pushed the limits of the existing doxa of science and philosophy lost its popular appeal. While the precise reason for his fall from the spotlight is unknown, a combination of events such as his controversial debate with Einstein (Canales, 2018), the much-criticized publication *Duration and Simultaneity*, his popularity amongst women, and an increased legitimization of science over philosophy in the Post-WWII and Cold War years. As Bergson (1907/1998) wrote, “we must break with scientific habits which are adapted to the fundamental requirements of thought, we must do violence to the mind, go counter to the natural bent of the intellect. But that is just the function of philosophy” (p. 30). Perhaps, Lippman (1912) was correct when he characterized Bergson as “the most

dangerous man in the world” (p. 101). Conceivably, for some, Bergson’s philosophy, with his seemingly radical conceptions of duration, intuition, and creation that I discuss in this chapter, was too violent to the mind or too rebellious against the dominant dogma of science, philosophy, and life while Einstein’s theories comfortably continued the status quo and the hierarchy of positivist scientific thought. Regardless of support or criticism, as Lipmann asserted, Bergson was “not so much a prophet as a herald in whom the unrest of modern times has found a voice” (p. 100). In the Winter of 1941, his life ended from complications of pneumonia in Paris shortly after standing in line in his pajamas, bathrobe, and slippers to register as a Jew in Nazi-occupied France (Lawlor & Moulard Leonard, 2016).

Bergson’s Disentanglement

Bergson (1934/2007) wrote that philosophy begins with an intuitive alert to a problem that “whispers into the philosopher’s ear the word: *Impossible!*” (p. 89). For Bergson, *intuition*, a concept I discuss more thoroughly later, is a hesitation in the flow of life that leads us to a *turn*—a movement of creation away from what already exists in actuality towards something not yet actualized. Bergson’s whisper led to his disentanglement from mainstream Western philosophy dominated by Cartesian thought and the problems he associated with positivism specifically in regard to the conception of time, the intellect, and the production of knowledge. That is, his philosophy sought to move away from the problems of positivist science and philosophy and turn towards the real of duration. For Bergson, as Wheeler (1922) suggested, what is real is change.

While duration is the real, intuition was Bergson’s method for immersion into the real and its ongoing process of creation. This turn of Bergson’s created a controversial

method entirely different from the dominant line of philosophy and science of his day. While Bergson embraced intuition as the method for investigating the real and duration as a flowing, indivisible time, conventional Western philosophy and science were toughening. This toughening of thought appeared in a more scientized philosophy that focused on the empirical evidence and rigidity of method. The philosophy that Bergson laid out challenged traditional notions of a stable, measurable, rational subject and time, or what he called *duration* (1889/2015). This turn away from existing philosophical foundations is, for Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994), what characterized the function of the plane of thought. As Pannell (2015) described their work, the plane is “the generation of an image of thought that challenges the doxa of mainstream philosophy.” (p. 31). Throughout Bergson’s work, a mere two thousand pages or so in total, he laid out his plane of openness, movement, and creativity that juts away from the commonly held philosophical views of a stable, isolatable reality and subject. Bergson’s philosophy is one of *extension*, or a disentanglement from what exists, towards a different creation. It is not that he broke away from the past. This is impossible in Bergson’s duration because the past is indivisible from and in co-creation with the present. Instead, for Bergson, life and philosophy were about the unceasing evolution of the creation of difference. In the sections to come, I discuss how Bergson’s concepts duration, intuition, and creation function to disentangle philosophy from positivism and Cartesian thought. In effect, Bergson created a philosophical image of thought that refused what Deleuze (1968/1994) later called the “dogmatic image of thought” (p. 148) that informs much of Western thought.

Duration

Bergson began his disentanglement from Cartesian-influenced positivism with his concept of time, or duration, which was a term he used to mark a departure from conventional time. As Jankélévitch (1959/2015) wrote, “Duration, much more so than Intuition, is the living center of [Bergson’s] doctrine” (p. 4). Without duration, Bergson’s concepts of intuition and creation would be impossible since their invention relies on his different conception of time. Bergson (1934/2007) characterized duration as “flow,” “mobility,” “continuity,” “extension,” “growth,” “unceasing creation” and “causes everything to happen” (p. 2). In this section, I provide a brief overview of the evolution of duration within Bergson’s philosophy followed by a discussion of how this concept challenged Cartesian influenced positivism.

Duration, as Massey (2015) explained, evolved throughout Bergson’s work, changing from a time of lived experience in *Time and Free Will* (1889/2015) to an ontological conception in *Matter and Memory* (1896/2010) and his subsequent texts. In the former, Bergson’s duration was a personal time of internal states and lived experiences, or what he called *intensities*, which are incapable of being measured because of unceasing of change:

Pure duration might well be nothing but a succession of qualitative changes, which melt into and permeate one another, without precise outlines, without any tendency to externalize themselves in relation to one another, without any affiliation with number: it would be pure heterogeneity. (Bergson, 1889/2015, p. 104)

In duration, there is no separation of one internal state from another. Rather, time is like a melody that is constantly changing notes yet continues in the same flow. Duration implies a movement and continuity that cannot be measured or divided into parts and thus cannot be marked as a certain point. Or, as Jankélévitch (1975) asserted, “to say ‘continuity’ is to say ‘infinity’” (p. 5). In his later work, Bergson connected duration with a reality beyond just mere experience of the self. That is, Bergson moved towards an ontological time rather than simply a time of personal experience. This conception of duration developed with his concept of memory (i.e., the past) that he argued is not stored in our brains or consciousnesses—there is instead an ontological nature to duration. He wrote, memory, the past, “is just the intersection of mind and matter” (p. 7). When mind and matter meet, the past occurs. The past manifests in our interactions with the present material world. The past is not a former state of being rather, it is always being created. As Bergson (1934/2007) contended,

It is, we were saying, indivisible and indestructible continuity of a melody where the past enters into the present and forms with it an undivided whole which remains undivided and even indivisible in spite of what is added at every instant, or rather, thanks to what is added. (p. 55)

Every moment is added to a whole. Like a drop of water into a lake, each moment melds with the previous as if they were never separate to begin with. Bergson’s duration comes into stark contrast to a modern time in which the present seems to be racing to escape the past rather than join it. This different ontological description of the nature of time changed further in *Creative Evolution* (1907/1998) where he applied duration to evolution. He remarked, “The universe *endures*. The more we study the nature of time,

the more we shall comprehend that duration means invention, the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new” (p. 11). Not only do intensities continually change, but the universe itself is nothing but difference. Duration is the force of change itself. These changes and difference, since indivisible, cannot be counted or measured—they are qualitative because they have no mass or magnitude. That is, Bergson argued that in duration there is not, for example, more or less sad or more or less developed—an approach in which one thing is compared to another stable thing. Rather there is an ever-changing differing of existence. Duration is a whole of infinite creation, but it is an incomplete whole characterized by unceasing movement and change.

Duration then functioned for Bergson as a challenge to the positivist paradigm throughout its evolution in various ways. In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson directly confronted positivist research methods that rely on an ontology in which things exist, that as they stop, they are static, not changing or becoming, so they can be measured and counted. Unlike external objects, he argued, intensities cannot be quantified and measured because they are not spatial. This issue was one of his main points in his debate against Einstein. By quantifying time, positivists falsely made time align with their (also faulty) description of space—linear, stable, and homogenous, or consisting of a multiplicity of separate entities. Bergson (1934/2007) described this kind of time as “states which have become distinct like the beads of a necklace and therefore require, in order to hold them together, a thread which is neither this or that...an empty entity” (p. 55). Or as Wambacq (2011) wrote of Bergson’s critique, “Time is thus reduced to a homogeneous line—it is the same at all moments and evolves linearly—on which things can occupy different places” (p. 235). Scientific time was stable, unchanging, and

standardized. For Bergson, the intellectual scam, or what Butler (1992) called an “authoritarian ruse” (p.4), rested on the positivist claim that time was stable and measurable and that as such all of life and reality could be studied as if it were inert matter—“dead” things. To Bergson, studies using this understanding of time only captured representations, or images, of the real. As Barad (2007) wrote, “representationalism marks a failure to take account of the practices through which representations are produced. Images or representations are not snapshots or depictions of what awaits us but rather condensations or traces of multiple practices of engagement” (p. 53). Representationalism attempts to capture the uncatchable and leaves the mobility and indivisibility of life unacknowledged. Positivist science and Cartesian philosophy created illusions and simply could not capture the real, which is always becoming. Positivist time, Bergson (1889/2015) maintained, “conceived under the form of a homogenous medium, is nothing but the ghost of space haunting the reflective consciousness” (p. 99). To quantify intensities, according to Bergson, meant to immobilize the mobile. This in turn lead to a symbolic representation of inner states—a specter of the real. Bergson saw time as more than a resource for human consumption, production, and experimentation. His time of change and indivisibility, of course, had direct implications for the ethics of human life (Wheeler, 1922). To misunderstand the reality of life as stable, unchanging, and predictable was to misunderstand life itself—that was his major criticism of Cartesian-influenced positivism and the reason for his disentanglement from it.

In addition, duration pushed back against positivism’s deterministic desire to predict and then control. If we know enough, if we research using the correct scientific methods, then we will be able to tell the future. This idea is common in positivist science

today. In a recent article in *The Atlantic* titled, “There’s No Such Thing as Free Will: But we’re better off believing in it anyway,” Cave (2016) discussed medical research about the relationship between neurons and our actions “in an unbroken chain that stretches back to our birth and beyond. In theory, we are therefore completely predictable.” The idea is that what we do, is not chosen—it is destined for us by a series of cause and effect encounters. This argument resoundingly mirrors that of determinists in Bergson’s day. In contrast, Bergson argued that duration changed causality. As Hallström (1928/1968) suggested, with duration

cause and effect here are fused; nothing can be foreseen with certainty, for certainty resides in the act, simple in itself, and can be established only by this act.

Living time is the realm of free choice and new creations, the realm in which something is produced only once and is never repeated in quite the same manner.

The idea that our future is predictable and predetermined is impossible to think with duration. In duration, there is constant change and creation of the new—only in a particular moment is a specific act possible. For Bergson (1907/1998), action, free will, occurs in the duration of the world: “And the more we descend from the motionless idea, wound itself, to the words that unwind it, the more room is left for contingency and choice” (p. 233). Once we connect to Bergson’s description of ontological time, we can experience varying degrees of freedom through intuition. Duration has no preconceived destination. It may have focus, it may have direction, but it is in flux with a future that is open and ready to be (re)created. In other words, our actions, thoughts, or neurons do not lead to some planned, determined, or divine destiny. Bergson here moved beyond finalism and mechanism extending upon and creating something *different in kind*, a

concept I discuss later, from the positivism of traditional Western philosophy—time is not laid out for life to fulfill some transcendental plan, nor can we predict the future through knowing all the parts or by figuring out some formula. As Deleuze (1966/1988) contended, “Duration...is a case of a ‘transition’ of a ‘change’, a becoming but it is a becoming that endures a change that is substance itself” (p. 37). Time is a constant differing.

Moreover, duration challenged the idea of a stable reality and a stable, independent self where mind and body are separable, and individuals can deduce knowledge from a world completely external to the self. In Bergson’s later work, in which duration is not isolated to the self but exists in communication with other durations, he moved his focus to the mind-body problem. As Massey (2015) suggested, “If mind and body, consciousness and matter, can be understood in terms of time, then there is no need to reduce one to the other (as in materialism and idealism) or to view them as fundamentally opposed (as in ordinary dualism)” (p. 172). Characteristic of his dualism, he argued that matter and mind (body and spirit) are distinct yet inseparable. Bergson (1896/2010) wrote:

Matter...is an aggregate of “images.” And by “image” we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a representation, but less than that which the realist calls a thing;—an existence placed half-way between the “thing” and the “representation.” (p. 5)

Objects external to us do not exist as representations in our minds, nor do they exist independently of our perceptions of them. For example, I see a cat. According to Bergson, the cat is not just a cat before me as an independent object, nor does the cat

exist only in my mind. The existence of the cat is a coming together of our existences. If I have a fear of cats, then the cat becomes fear-cat or, if I associate cats with furriness, then the cat becomes furry-cat. Descartes' human subject that is independent of everything else, separate from it, then is obsolete. The self cannot be independent and does not exist purely as a thinking intellect. The self lies somewhere in-between, and this self is, unlike the Cartesian-influenced positivist subject, unstable and ever-differing. The measurable time of science, Bergson (1889/2015) contended, was "a kind of reaction against that heterogeneity which is the very ground of our experience" (p. 97). Bergson's idea of difference being ontological would undo the systematic method of studying the world supported by positivists and Cartesian philosophers. Once we think about time as Bergson conceptualized it, the foundations of reality on which positivist science and Cartesian thought rested melt away.

Intuition (or thinking in duration)

Another important concept in Bergson's philosophy and his critique of Cartesian influenced positivism is *intuition*, or *thinking in duration*. In writing about intuition, Deleuze (1966/1988) argued it "is neither a feeling, an inspiration, nor a disorderly sympathy, but a fully developed method, one of the most fully developed methods in philosophy" (p. 13). While Deleuze characterized it as a method, it is not what is typical social science method but a philosophical approach between a formulaic model and relativity. In other words, Bergson's intuition is somewhere between highly methodological and systematic and complete disorganization. As Alfaro Altamirano (2017) suggested, Bergson "believed that there is a human faculty, beyond reason and sensibility, that gives us access to a privileged kind of knowledge, namely 'intuition'" (p.

iii). It is a route to knowledge quite different from the exceedingly intellectualized rationality of Descartes and modern philosophy. Bergson (1896/2010) articulated this *turn* first describing traditional philosophical practice followed by his movement away from it as follows:

Such is, in truth, the ordinary course of philosophic thought: we start from what we take to be experience, we attempt various possible arrangements of the fragments which apparently compose it, and when at last we feel bound to acknowledge the fragility of every edifice that we have built, we end by giving up all effort to build. But there is a last enterprise that might be undertaken. It would be to seek experience at its source, or rather above that decisive *turn* where, taking a bias in the direction of our utility, it becomes properly human experience...By unmaking that which these needs have made, we may restore to intuition its original purity and so recover contact with the real. (p. 100)

In other words, Bergson suggested that the primary practice in philosophy relied on a misunderstanding of reality that resulted in the study of a representation of the world rather than “the real.” Intuition, as van der Tuin (2011) noted, functioned to reconnect reality with knowledge construction—to restore the false cuts that Cartesian thought, and positivism made to ontology and epistemology. Van der Tuin related Bergson’s philosophy to a Baradian onto-epistemology because of intuition’s connection of reality and knowing. That is, this is not the commonsense understanding of intuition we often refer to but a knowing entangled with living, being. Intuition is a philosophical concept that defines thought as inseparable from life itself: thinking in a durative time that is moving, fleeting, and constantly changing. As Bergson (1934/2007) wrote, “Intuition,

bound up to a duration which is growth, perceives in it an uninterrupted continuity of unforeseeable novelty” (p. 22). That is, intuition as a form of knowing is inextricable from the reality of duration. This onto-epistemology of intuition, as Allen (2013) suggested, “changes the value of knowledge in a way that must change philosophy” (p. 38). Bergson’s concept intuition directly challenged positivist thought which focuses on and privileged cognitive knowing separate from the world. In this section, I discuss Bergson’s intuition and his distinction between instinct and intellect and map how intuition functions to deprivilege the intellect and, as with duration, push back against the problems of representationalism in positivist thought.

As Bergson (1907/1988) explained, instinct, intellect, and intuition are three different ways of knowing that are always entangled with one another. Instinct is lived rather than chosen; and intuition, a heightened instinct, involves the notion of choice, or free will, by way of a pause or hesitation where choice is possible and can be actualized through creation. Intellect, on the other hand, is different from instinct and intuition. It “dislikes what is fluid, and solidifies everything it touches” (p. 46); intellectual thought is set upon firm foundations, not that of a contingent duration—here we are limited as the intellect only takes us so far. Like Bergson, Deleuze suggested that intellectual understanding is not the desired end of philosophy because of its likeness to tree roots and phallic arborescence that fight against movement. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) proclaimed “We’re tired of trees. We should stop believing in trees, roots, and radicles. They’ve made us suffer too much” (p. 15). That is, to uproot, or disentangle, is to free up movement for “all manner of becomings” (p. 21). For Bergson, intuition is that tool for uprooting the foundations of a false stability.

However, this does not mean that Bergson was an anti-intellectual as has been suggested (Canales, 2015; Russell, B., 1912/2016; and Russell, J.E., 1912). Instead, as Linstead and Mullarkey (2003) asserted, Bergson's argument was "anti-intellectualist, though without being anti-intellectual" (p. 4). Bergson (1934/2007) argued that the intellect is one part of knowing that he holds in "high esteem" (p. 65). Yet, he also argued that the intellect was constructed through philosophy as "what supposedly constitutes the superiority of the mind" (p. 66). That is, Western philosophy placed the rational, logical intellect at the pinnacle of the hierarchy of knowledge while intuition and instinct became subjugated forms of knowing—intellect being of the mind and intuition and instinct of the body. Bergson, instead of dismissing the intellect, challenged the hierarchical relationship between instinct, intellect, and intuition within the existing philosophical doxa. He wrote, "Intuition will be communicated only by intelligence. It is more than idea; nevertheless, in order to be transmitted, it will have to use ideas as a conveyance" (p. 29). That is, instead of a hierarchical relationship of separate modes, Bergson considered the intellect and intuition as entangled and reliant on each other. Bergson (1907/1998) argued that instinct and intellect are in concert with one another despite their differences:

they accompany each other only because they are complementary, and they are complementary only because they are different, what is instinctive in instinct being opposite to what is intelligent in intelligence...Moreover, neither intelligence nor instinct lends itself to rigid definition: they are tendencies, and not things. (p. 136)

Intelligence is the tendency towards conscious thought and instinct towards unconscious action. It is the intellect, Bergson argued, that “nails us down to the solid ground” (p. 192). In relation to the other two modes of knowing, intuition, thinking in duration, in the movement of life, is like cutting “the knot that reasoning has tied and will not unloose” (p. 192). That is, the intellect “treats the living like the inert” (p. 195). Intuition then functioned as a complement to the intellect and a tendency to disentangle thinking from the arborescence of rational, logical thought.

Another function of this disentanglement from stasis is that intuition moves us away from representationalism and towards contact with the real. Bergson (1934/2007), while not a realist, was an empiricist who argued that philosophy occurs in the immanence of life. Philosophy, as he insisted, “consists in placing oneself within the object itself by an effort of intuition” (p. 150). It is the intuitive method that places us in *contact with the real* drawing us “closer to life” (p. 87). Part of Bergson’s onto-epistemological method of intuition is a movement away from representational thought—that is, relying on the snapshot images created by a spatialized time. This error in philosophical and scientific thought, as Bergson argued, comes from trying to capture a still, stable subject in an equally still and false reality. Intuition, according to Bergson, brings the mind back to duration so that

it will seize upon one identical change which keeps ever lengthening as in a melody where everything is becoming but where becoming, being itself substantial, has no need of support. No more inert states, no more dead things; nothing but the mobility of which the stability of life is made. (p. 105)

Traditional philosophical, scientific, and social science methods cannot capture this in a step-by-step, systematic, approach to studying life. Life is change and movement and inquiry must follow in this manner.

Bergson imagined an onto-epistemology in which theorizing “fits tightly to its object” (p. 1) instead of being a representation of the real. It is Bergson’s philosophical move to disentangle from representationalism that Barad (2007) described as “so deeply entrenched within Western culture that it has taken on a common-sense appeal... a particularly inconspicuous consequence of the Cartesian division between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ that breaks along the line of the knowing subject” (p. 48). Pushing back against the idea of a stable, unchanging subject, Bergson’s intuition joins the internal and external to create an onto-epistemology of the in-between. In other words, intuition makes possible a philosophy of movement, action, and freedom. According to Bergson (1907/1998),

Rare indeed are the moments when we are self-possessed to this extent: it is then that our actions are truly free. And even at these moments we do not completely possess ourselves. Our feeling of duration, I should say the actual coinciding of ourself [sic] with itself, admits of degrees. But the more the feeling is deep and the coincidence complete, the more the life in which it replaces us absorbs intellectuality by transcending it. (p. 200)

Life happens in the middle, in the relationality of the material and immaterial world.

Moreover, life is the continual creation of pure difference. Bergson (1934/2007) argued that intuition functions to open up the flow or “to get back the movement and rhythm, of the composition, to live again creative evolution by being one with it in sympathy” (p.

69). Or as Coelho (1988) wrote in *The Alchemist*, “The boy was beginning to understand that intuition is really a sudden immersion of the soul into the universal current of life, where the histories of all people are connected, and we are able to know everything, because it is all written there” (p. 76-77).

Creation of pure difference

In duration, as Deleuze (1968/1994), influenced by Bergson, argued, “Difference is behind everything, but behind difference there is nothing” (p. 57)—difference is ontological. In duration, becoming and thinking, there is nothing but difference. Pannell (2015) described this idea of difference with Heraclitus’s quote: “No man ever steps in the same river twice” (p. 184). We may repeat, we may go back to the river, but we come back different and to a different river. In other words, difference is constantly created in duration and that is the gist of intuition, thinking in duration—to create difference. In a durative reality of constant change, true philosophical creation for Bergson was the invention of something *different in kind*, not *different in degree* or *difference from*, as in this chemical is different from that chemical. Difference in kind is *pure difference*, difference in itself. The creation of difference then is an important concept for Bergson’s philosophy about which he wrote two books—*Creative Evolution* and *The Creative Mind*. However, the power of this concept lies in its implications for the future—the creation of pure difference is the hope of duration. No longer are we stuck in a stagnant, static, dead world. We can dream a different life, a more ethical reality in duration. We are not stuck in some loop beyond our control. We can influence real, meaningful change in the world. This idea of change was a legitimate concern for Bergson. He was deeply troubled by the events of his time—international conflict, pandemic, global depression,

the rise of fascism, and genocide. Unfortunately, these concerns remain real for our lives today and the foreseeable future. In this section, I discuss the concept of the creation of pure difference and how it functions to contest the rigidity of positivism.

Both Bergson and Deleuze discussed two variations of difference, which Bergson refers to as (1) difference in degree and (2) difference in kind, or pure difference. Deleuze (1964/1998) characterized difference in degree as follows: “The difference 'between' two things is only empirical, and the corresponding determinations are only extrinsic” (p. 28). This difference in degree functions as more of a tool of comparison than an ontological foundation. Grosz (2005) contended that difference in degree either uses some third term to qualify the objects of comparison, or those objects are constructed as binaries of *whole/not-whole*. For example, the difference between man and woman is that woman is not-man and the binary then is man/not-man. Therefore, this binary sets up a negative and hierarchical relation between “things” rather than an acknowledgement of the ontological existence of difference.

For Bergson, pure difference is the ontological difference of duration. Deleuze (1964/1998) mapped difference in kind as “instead of something distinguished from something else, imagine something which distinguishes itself—and yet that from which it distinguishes itself does not distinguish itself from it” (p. 28). Pure difference functions as difference within the thing itself and not as difference “between” things. In duration, the thing itself constantly differs from itself—there is no stability within it or about it. That is, what is always changing, always becoming different in continuous change is the thing itself. Difference in an immanent onto-epistemology is understanding that we are different in kind from ourselves—we are always changing as are our thoughts and

everything around us. This means that we are differentiating within relationality—we do not change on our own, but we do constantly change. The things in relationality with us are changing and thus changing us in simultaneity.

For Bergson, this philosophical difference in kind occurs through creation. Inquiry, then, is not about finding some knowledge that existed undiscovered in the universe; rather, it is about creation. Creation, novelty, pure difference, is an extension of what previously existed, or a disentanglement. That is, it is continuously entangled, impregnated, yet it is also continuously disentangling from itself to create something different. In reference to philosophy, Deleuze (1968/1994) remarked, “We may conclude that there is no true beginning in philosophy, or rather that the true philosophical beginning, Difference, is in-itself already Repetition” (p. 129). Difference in philosophy cannot simply be a difference in degree as if philosophy is circular. Instead, Deleuze argued for a pure difference in which there is a complex repetition of reconfiguration. In this, there is a movement away from a universal image of thought that Deleuze argued only inspires conformities and a movement towards pure difference indivisible from the past—that complex repetition. Philosophy, for Deleuze, as for Bergson, begins with a problem, “everything begins with misosophy...count upon the contingency of an encounter with that which forces thought to raise up and educate the absolute necessity of an act of thought or a passion to think” (p. 139). Thus, knowledge cannot be systemized as if there were some formulaic method that can reveal all the knowledge in the world. Bergson believed that there were no limits on creation. That is, it is an impossible, and intellectual goal, to “know it all.”

Difference is the result of Bergson's philosophy. That is, intuition, thinking in duration, results in the creation of something different in kind from what existed prior to it. His is a philosophy that moves differently from the static, rooted way of thinking that maintains a quiet forcefulness in social and political institutions including the educational system that Massumi (1980/1987) described as follows:

The annals of official philosophy are populated by "bureaucrats of pure reason" who speak in "the shadow of the despot" and are in historical complicity with the State. They invent "a properly spiritual...absolute State that...effectively functions in the mind." Theirs is the discourse of sovereign judgment, of stable subjectivity legislated by "good" sense, of rocklike identity, "universal" truth, and (white male) justice. (p. ix)

Bergson spoke against the systemization or the bureaucratization of philosophy in which red tape binds the free movement of thought with organization, checkpoints, and procedures. This philosophy functions differently than state philosophy that works within boundaries and by rules and formal methods.

Bergson, Deleuze, and Guattari disrupted the foundations of a violent Western philosophy that cut the individual loose from any ties to a reality in which "he is determined only by himself" (Spinoza, 1677/1996, p. 68). In other words, these philosophers confronted the false Cartesian reality that "I think, therefore I am" (1637/1993). This orphan line of philosophy instead gradually dissolves the individual separated from the rest of existence and turns towards a relational existence to life. Through his concepts of duration, intuition, and the creation of pure difference, Bergson created a different ontology, one in which knowing and being are inseparable from one

another, and life is the action of becoming different. Bergson (1934/2007) asserted, “It is not the ‘states,’ simple snapshots we have taken once again along the course of change, that are real; on the contrary, it is flux, the continuity of transition, it is change itself that is real” (p. 6). As part of an undivided time, what we create cannot be disconnected from what came before—the past is implicated in the present and future. The creation of the form, the creation of the idea comes from when—it comes in duration. That is, within duration, that moving, flowing flux, life is called to keep going through infinite creation. Dynamism for Bergson is life (Grosz, 2007). This thought is central throughout his work from his conception of duration as movement and flow to his arguments regarding the interactions between the internal and external as centers of action with intuition. As Bergson (1907/1998) argued, it is in the action between the internal, the self, and the external, the world beyond the self, that knowledge is created.

Conclusion

Bergson heard a whisper. He recognized that a problem, multiple problems, existed in the practices of Cartesian, positivist thought. From this whisper, he disentangled the knots created by a modern conception of time and orientation towards life. Yet, Bergson’s plane of thought does not repeat what existed differently—that is to say, his work is not simply a difference in degree from the positivism so pervasive then and today. Instead, it is a difference in kind. Through his concepts duration, intuition, and creation of difference, Bergson’s philosophy was a reconceptualization of time, a decentering of the intellect, a disentanglement from the false cuts made to ontology and epistemology, and a recognition of the hopeful creation of pure difference. The function

of his plane of thought thus opens toward possibilities of what we can create and what might come into being.

Moreover, these concepts I have discussed in this chapter thought together created a different subject from Descartes' stable, rational, independent man who can know everything if he uses the proper methods to discover them. When one thinks difference, which is the substance of duration, then one loses the capability of thinking that a stable subject can exist. Life is an ever-changing creation of difference. We are differing and the universe is differing together. Our becoming is no longer focused on the self—our knowing and existence occurs in relation with the world. The past can never be dead. We can never erase the past or ignore its existence in the presence as was the case in my encounters with time in history education that I described in chapter 2.

Bergson's philosophy, then, becomes entangled with ethics. The idea of free will, or intentionality, of the subject changes. It becomes the freedom to do something different because one understands the entangled nature of life. While the ability exists to make choices for ourselves and move in different directions, there is never a moment in which we can fully disentangle from the past, relationality, or responsibility. These concepts are both continuous—time indivisible and our existence inseparable from time. As Barad (2010) acknowledged, within these relations, we have "obligations for reworking the material effects of the past and the future" (p. 266). Bergson's philosophy is a method for doing this—honoring the action of the past while moving toward and creating a different present and the possibility of a more just future. As Barad (2007) conceived

Justice, which entails acknowledgment, recognition, and loving attention, is not a state that can be achieved once and for all. There are no solutions; there is only the ongoing practice of being open and alive to each meeting, each intra-action, to help awaken, to breathe life into ever new possibilities for living justly. (p. x)

Injustices of the past are not a problem with action. The problem of injustice is the failure to acknowledge the ongoing action of the past—it is a stuckness that produces repetition and leaves us in knots. Bergson’s philosophy does not allow one to think stability. The past is not dead, and the universe endures in constant change and differing. As Barad (2010) contended, we live in “relations of obligation—being bound to the other” (p. 265) and with a responsibility to address the ghosts that haunt us. Bergson’s philosophy is dangerous because his plane of thought, as Pannell (2015) asserted, challenged the doxa that existed in his day and challenges still positivism and the Cartesian subject stuck in a still conception of modern time that endures.

CHAPTER 5
TIME AND JUSTICE

Questions of space, time, and matter are intimately connected, indeed entangled, with questions of justice.

Karen Barad, 2007, p. 236

How does time function? This question has been my focus throughout this Bergsonian post-qualitative inquiry. I allowed myself to ride along with this question as a passenger immersed in what Bergson would call the *real* of life—the flowing, continuous, indivisible duration. I allowed myself to think in duration as the past washed over me into present entanglements with students, thoughts, standards, and texts of all sorts to create images of a possible future. I allowed my mind to wander with the unknown and with uncertainty. I allowed myself to become swept up by encounters that did violence to and re-oriented thought. As Baldwin expressed in the quotation that began this dissertation, I allowed myself to change along the journey, not knowing how that might happen. I did not expect to end up here, pondering the connections between time and justice. But here I am.

My initial encounter with the NPR story about time began with what seemed like a simple curiosity, but it became entangled with ideas I had learned from my past—scholars I read as an undergraduate and graduate student like Foucault, Said, and de

Tocqueville, with teaching high school social studies, and with life as a single mother. Mirrored structures of power, othering, extreme individualism, never enough time, NEVER ENOUGH TIME—that is what my past screamed at me. All these forces came together whispering that time is not so simple—there is more. Then in my doctoral program, St. Pierre (2011a) introduced me to Barad who wrote that time was entangled with everything else. Then I read Deleuze who, according to Murphy (1998), proposed that “within each structure there are multiple times, subsisting in a virtual state, waiting to be actualized through the movement of the structure” (p. 220). Next, I read Bergson, this late 19th, early 20th century, almost entirely forgotten rockstar philosopher. His philosophy took me away: “time is mobility...time is what is happening, and more than that, it is what causes everything to happen” (1934/2007, p. 2). The time he described is a force of change. But his description of time was not the time I experienced every day, because modern time with its clocks, deadlines, measurements, control, order—never enough time—structured my days. I began to understand that modern time focuses on control and not on experimentation or creativity.

But Bergson’s time has, indeed, re-oriented my thought and enabled the two encounters with modern time in history education that I have described. It was in these encounters that “the world kick[ed] back” (Barad, 2007, p. 215), that something in the world forced me to think. What became startling and urgent is that, in both encounters, modern time was connected to injustice. In both cases, Bergson’s time enabled me to diagnose the injustice in the student’s white supremacist comment and in the Georgia elementary social studies standard as problems with modern time. Bergson’s philosophy

does not allow one to see the past as past and finished or to erase the past to preserve an unjust present.

So I read more. I read abolitionist and anti-racist thought, and I read decolonial theories. And there, in all of them, was time. Baldwin (1964/2010) wrote that we carry the past with us and about the injustice of covering up the past. Kendi (2016/2017) argued that Africans enslaved and trafficked across the Atlantic were stamped with a mark of inferiority from the beginning of their oppression in the Americas based on a sophisticated structure of European and American ideas.¹³ Donald (2009), Lugones (2010), and Tuhiwai Smith (1999/2008) discussed the relegation of Indigenous life, beliefs, culture, and knowledges to the past and their erasure in the present. In all these texts, time was connected to injustice. However, it was not Bergson's time that those texts critiqued. It was modern time, a divisive time separating the past from the present and the future, separating certain groups from their humanity, and separating the human from their interdependence and responsibility to the rest of the world. It was modern time that I believed was the problem.

In chapter 1, I introduced my initial encounter with time and discussed the Bergsonian post qualitative inquiry I would use to satisfy the curiosities that the NPR story on time awakened in me. In chapter 2, I investigated two encounters, two ghostly apparatuses, in history education that helped me theorize how modern time enables the silencing of past injustices that Maldonado-Torres (2007), Baldwin (1964/2010), Barad (2007), and Latour (1991/1993) discussed. In chapter 3, I discussed the origins of modern

¹³ Kendi argued that American ideas about race originated with European philosophy and science. Specifically, he discussed Aristotle's negative comments about Black Africans and Linnaeus's construction of "scientifically-based" racial categories. He did not mention Descartes.

time in Cartesian philosophy and traced that thought through the Enlightenment and positivist philosophy. I argued that a modern conception of time in history education functions to separate the past from the present and allows violence in the past to disappear from the present. As Barad suggested in the quotation that begins this chapter, time and justice are intricately connected. In chapter 4, I showed how Bergson problematized modern time through a re-orientation of time with his concepts of *duration*, *intuition*, and *pure difference*.

To attend to the often haphazardly mentioned concept of justice in social justice scholarship (Tuck and Yang, 2018), I begin this chapter with a discussion of the Bergsonian subject and Bergsonian justice. Then, I offer an opportunity to talk with ghosts. Specifically, I discuss the ghosts of the past related to racial injustice based on my encounters with modern time in history education and acknowledge other specters of injustice. Next, I describe my efforts to address the ghosts that haunt me in history education curriculum, not as a “how to change things,” but as an example of the possibilities of thinking/being and teaching in duration with a Bergsonian justice.

Bergsonian Justice

When I heard that NPR story about time years ago, justice was certainly not my initial thought. Yet over the course of this durative inquiry, the two concepts, time and justice, appeared to have a connection. As I discussed in chapter 4, when Bergson (1889/2015) introduced a different conception of time that brings the past back from the dead, he thereby created a reconciliation of time and justice. In this section, I begin with a brief description of the Bergsonian subject before discussing Bergsonian justice.

Just as Descartes' subject relies on his description of time, I argue here that Bergson's subject relies on his description of time, or duration. Bergson's time is fundamentally based on a conception of the world in which the past, present, and future are indelibly connected in a continuous flow of movement and change. This conception of time necessarily creates a different conception of the subject as incapable of being separated from the world as is Descartes' subject. Bergson's subject thinks/lives in duration rather than with Cartesian logic (Bergson, 1934/2007). Bergson's subject is not gendered¹⁴, aged, or racialized (Bergson, 1889/2014, 1932/1935). Like Barad's subject (2007), Bergson's subject becomes responsible to the world as a part of it in its inseparability from the force of life. Or, as Barad (2010) explained,

Entanglements are not intertwinings of separate entities, but rather irreducible relations of responsibility. There is no fixed dividing line between "self" and "other," "past" and "present" and "future," "here" and "now," "cause" and "effect." Quantum discontinuity is no ordinary disjunction. Cartesian cuts are undone. (p. 265)

Bergson's philosophy of life changes what justice entails in mending the false cuts of Cartesian logic similar to Barad's agential realism. Without divisions or Cartesian binaries, subjects live in "irreducible relations of responsibility" (Barad, 2010, p. 265).

Based on his writing about justice, Bergson (1932/1935) would have agreed with Barad's assertion that we cannot escape our obligations to the past, our present world, or the future. In the real of Bergson's life, he responded to the injustices of the world by creating a different philosophy of justice. Bergson lived during a time of rising

¹⁴ I can imagine this point was part of the appeal for female scholars who followed Bergson (See Herring, 2019).

nationalism that swelled into the Great War. During this time, he stopped publishing any major works and shifted from being a philosopher to being a diplomat. Bergson (1915) spoke out against German aggression during World War I warning of the dangers of a foreshadowing of what he would later call *closed society*: “If the German race is the elect, it will be the only race which has an unconditional right to live; the others will be tolerated races, and this toleration will be precisely what is called ‘the state of peace’” (p. 31). That is, Bergson argued that German nationalism sought to elevate Germany above all else including the lives of those on the outside of the German race.¹⁵ From these experiences, Bergson created his philosophy of justice.

For Bergson, justice was indelibly linked to responsibility, and he discussed two sources of obligation: social pressure, in the form of societal laws and norms, and aspiration, in the form of an immersion in the world that forces action. Bergson critiqued the obligations from social pressure, because he argued that humans as social animals are likely to blindly follow laws. That is, we resist murder because we face societal pressure from laws rather than resisting it because it is wrong. Likewise, the pressure may require members of the society to follow unjust laws, such as Black Codes, Nuremberg Laws, or violent immigration policies.¹⁶ Bergson called this arrangement a *closed society* that he described as “static, and this obligation, which is tantamount to pressure, [is] the very

¹⁵ In addition to foreshadowing what would become Bergson’s (1932/1935) book *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, Bergson’s letter on war foreshadowed the rise of the fascist German state through the Nazi Party that began its antisemitism immediately after the Great War ended.

¹⁶ Bergson would have witnessed the rising antisemitism in the Interwar Period. He would have read about Hitler and the rising Nazi Party. In some ways, he predicted what would result from a closed society as he described Germany to be. Published in 1932 in France and translated into English in 1935, his warning came too late for Jewish communities in Germany who would suffer under Nuremberg laws immediately set in place after the Nazi insurrection in April of 1933. I have always wondered how Hitler could convince regular people to commit such atrocities, and Bergson has offered one explanation for this tragedy with his concepts of open and closed societies.

substance of closed society” (p. 229-230). Closed society is not of duration; instead, it is stagnated and without creation. That is, a law is a law, and we follow unjust laws because that’s just the way things are.¹⁷ In a closed society, concern about the outside world is always second to concern about one’s own society, and obligations to its members come first. Examples of a closed society in action might be U.S. isolationism at the beginning of World War II when the atrocities to Jews were well known or Trump’s America First campaign, which focused on the idea of America only. As Gontier (2015) suggested, closed societies, as conceptualized by political philosopher Eric Voegelin, exhibit a structural corruption that is a “characteristic feature of *modern* [emphasis added] societies” (p. 23).

However, there is another form of society that requires a responsibility to everyone. Bergson referred to this justice as *open society*:¹⁸ “The open society is the society which is deemed in principle to embrace all humanity” (p. 230). With its inclusivity, open society moves past the walls of protection granted only to those closest to us, i.e., our families or direct communities, and extends concern to everyone. Instead

¹⁷ As Journell (2010) pointed out, obeying laws is often included in students’ definition of what it means to be a good citizen and listed in social studies standards for civics.

¹⁸ It is important to understand the history of the term *open society* and its connection to recent politics. The concept of open society disrupts the status quo of capitalist colonial societies. The term open society was popularized by Karl Popper. However, the concept originates with Bergson in *Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1932/1935) (see Popper, 1945/2013; and McInnes, 2002). More recently, open society has been associated with George Soros’s organization, Open Society Foundations. Far-right reactionary groups like QANON and right-wing propaganda distributors such as the Blaze and Fox News Channel have targeted George Soros and his Open Society Foundations in particular for supporting what they call the radical liberals. Conspiracy theories include Soros and Open Society Foundations owning ANTIFA and Black Lives Matter, rigging the 2020 election in Biden’s favor, and secretly influencing the Biden administration’s agenda (Reuters Staff, 2020; Schoffstall, 2022). It is particularly interesting to consider why the political right would be opposed to the idea of an open society and offer this as an invitation to talk with these ghosts.

of social pressure, open society originates with an *aspiration* that Bergson (1932/1935) explained as

The impulse given by feeling can indeed closely resemble obligation. Analyse the passion of love, particularly in its early stages: is pleasure its aim? Could we not as well say it is pain? Perhaps a tragedy lies ahead, a whole life wrecked, wasted, ruined, we know it, we feel it, no matter, we must because we must. (p. 39)

Like his philosophical whisper to a problem, Bergson argued that aspiration is spurred by intuition to act, but this time in the name of justice (see Bergson, 1934/2007). As Bergson (1889/2014) argued, the openness of the subject depended on an understanding of time as open. In modern time, life is stagnated, laws are stagnated, things just are the way they are—*Black people aren't slaves anymore so they should be happy with the rights they have*. The possibility of change does not exist; life moves on the same progressive, linear trajectory. So people do not create change. However, thinking in duration, life is always changing; therefore, if there is a perceived injustice then of course it can be addressed—the creative mind can go to work. That is, the openness of the subject leads to the openness of humanity. Time, the subject, and justice—they are tied together to form Bergson's image of thought.

I think of open society when I think of justice. I imagine what it might be like to embrace the universe as a whole—collectively to care and be cared for. No more ghosts. No more dead things. No more standards that erase the past. No more statements that expect people to get over the past without healing from it. A Bergsonian image of thought, the composition of his concepts like duration, intuition, creation, and justice, helps me understand the world a little better. Or rather, it helps me imagine a better

world. This hopeful imaging does not mean an idyllic, utopian future. Instead, a Bergsonian idea is based on a realism of human imperfection. An open society is not one that is perfect but seeks to do better. Will the goal of embracing all humans be met? Probably not. Thinking with Bergson, life is change. I cannot reach a stagnated version of reality in which all is just. However, the pursuit of that goal, the pursuit of addressing ghosts, the pursuit of a more just, open society is certainly worth imagining and setting into motion.

Invitations to Talk with Ghosts

Derrida (1994) suggested that ghosts are here to remind us of the past we lose when we fail to address injustices to come. We live in a world of ghosts who haunt us in our personal lives and in society. While I borrow the idea from Barad, who borrowed it from Derrida, who was possibly inspired by the specter that Marx and Engels discussed in *The Communist Manifesto*, I understand ghosts as parts of the past that we in the present fail to acknowledge or address. The ghosts are here to remind us of what we attempt to forget, and, as Barad (2010) asserted:

To address the past (and future), to speak with ghosts, is not to entertain or reconstruct some narrative of the way it was, but to respond, to be responsible, to take responsibility for that which we inherit (from the past and the future), for the entangled relationalities of inheritance that “we” *are*, to acknowledge and be responsive to the noncontemporaneity of the present, to put oneself at risk, to risk oneself (which is never one or self), to open oneself up to indeterminacy in moving towards what is to come. (p. 264)

This section is an invitation to talk with ghosts specifically in relation to white supremacy based on my two encounters with modern time. And it is an open invitation to consider other ghosts in relation to time or justice or women's rights or class or disability or gun control or domestic violence or mental health or religion or sexual orientation or gender identity or nationality or immigration status or education. That is, there are far too many unresolved issues from the past to address in the context of U.S. and global politics.

In the case of U.S. society, the ghosts reside in Confederate flags, a failed reconstruction, Jim Crow laws, and broken treaties. Here, the living are treated as ghosts as Indigenous communities are relegated to the past like walking dead in what Maldonado-Torres (2009) called a coloniality of being. Ghosts of the past reside in the gender pay gap and victim-blaming for sexual assault or domestic violence. Ghosts reside in limited funding for mental healthcare and healthcare in general. Ghosts reside in the failure to pass gun control laws that prevent mass shootings, like the 2022 shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. All these injustices are tied to violences of the past, either physical or theoretical. And, unfortunately, schools are not free of any of these ghosts.

While it would be nice to separate schools from real life, it is impossible. As Walker and Cherniak (2019) asserted, schools are political spaces: "just as students bring their political views to school, teachers, whether knowingly or not, carry their own figurative backpacks of political opinions" (p. 13). Schools are not immune to the world's injustices beyond the schoolyard. I did not intend to focus on pedagogy and curriculum in this dissertation. However, I do know that these injustices related to time confront teachers, students, parents, and communities daily. Education must be a part of the conversation because it already is.

Too often in the news, we hear of teachers asking students to lie on the floor as if they are enslaved in a slave ship crossing the Middle Passage (Farberov, 2018), holding mock slave auctions (Moynihan & Chapman, 2019), making funny comments under photos of enslaved people (Wright, 2019), roleplaying with white students as slave owners and Black students as enslaved people (Schwartz, 2019), or dressing up as “pilgrims and Indians” (Aina, 2018). Jones (2020) wrote about the violent lessons on slavery that she endured as a student being forced to pick cotton to understand the difficulty of the task. Donald (2009) wrote about tipis as a colonization of school curriculum. King and Woodson (2017) theorized these practices with the concept *educative psychic violence*—“a type of psychological violence” that originates in learning activities that minimize, misrepresent, or simplify the present and past stories of people of color (p. 2). These examples all connect to a failed understanding of time and an ignorance or willful refusal to address the ghosts of the past.

Recent trends indicate a tremendous push in communities around the U.S. to further erase the past in history classes by restricting whose history can be taught in schools. Groups like Moms for Liberty, government officials like Marjorie Taylor Greene, Ron DeSantis, Madison Cawthorn, Lauren Boebert, and their more reactionary rightist comrades try to ban African American history. School board meetings across the country have exploded with protests calling for banning books and curricula perceived as containing critical race theory. In Williamson County, Tennessee, Moms for Liberty called for banning a book about Martin Luther King, Jr. because it contained images of

segregated facilities that might make their white children feel badly (Borter, 2021).¹⁹ They were not concerned about how children of color, in this case, Black children, might feel about having the history of their ancestors erased. Like my undergraduate student, the individuals making these calls for the erasure of the past assume that the past is dead, that it is not here with us, acting on and haunting us. Or, perhaps, they understand that erasing the past is a tool for subjugation, as Maldonado-Torres (2009) and Baldwin (1964/2010) argued.

Addressing the Ghosts that Haunt Us

While I certainly cannot provide a list of what should be done now based on the content of this dissertation, I can speak about how I have attempted to address the ghosts that haunt me. The primary purpose of this dissertation was to re-orient thought away from a Cartesian, modern conception of time toward Bergson's *duration*. Duration acknowledges that time is more than a method for organizing society or a tool of measurement; it understands that the past is still alive in us, living through us and with us, making us who we are. According to Bergson (1932/1935), this interconnectedness of time is an interconnectedness of humanity, and I extend that to include the universe, as Barad (2007) suggested. In her book *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, Sharpe (2016) identified *wake work* as a way to address the past. Wake work focuses on a re-orientation of time. Sharpe conceived of the wake in three ways: the aftermath of chattel slavery, drawing on the images of the wake of the slave ship, a wake as in the remembrance of those passed, and the wake or recoil of a gun referencing the ongoing

¹⁹ In addition to race, the initial complaint from June 2021 included language about gender (Herald Reports, 2021). While the group's complaint was denied, they continue to advocate for book banning. Recently, the Williamson County, Tennessee group targeted library apps such as Epic because it included books about LGBTQ pride (Ingram, 2022).

state violence against Black bodies. The wake then is both past and present. Sharpe wrote, “In the wake, the past that is not the past reappears, always, to rupture the present” (p. 9). Wake work acknowledges that we carry the past with us and commits to addressing the ghosts that haunt us.

It is important to understand that addressing the ghosts that haunt the collective us, the we, does not mean taking personal, individual responsibility for the past. That orientation is founded in the Cartesian subject (the idea that there is an individual isolated I that can take sole responsibility). Instead, this task is a collective one. As described by Sharpe, this work is “hard emotional, physical, and intellectual work that demands vigilant attendance to the needs of the dying, to ease their way, and also to the needs of the living” (p. 10). The wake is both the place of trauma and the place of healing. How could we ever separate the two? For some people with some violences, addressing the ghosts that haunt us may be a difficult and even violent work. However, in this entangled existing and thinking with Bergsonian justice, embracing all humanity means bearing the burdens with and for others in certain times of heartache and struggle as we honor the limits of who can give what. For instance, as Love (2020) argued, abolitionist, or anti-racist, work cannot be placed solely on the backs of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people. White people must take up the cause too. And the same goes for those affected by domestic violence, sexual assault survivors, Indigenous communities, immigrants, the differently abled, the neuro-divergent, and the list goes on. A Bergsonian open society is what Rodríguez (2020) discussed as radical love, or “putting love into practice without the aid of mechanical learning.” Open society with its inherent imperfections is open as in it, in theory at the very least, lacks the rigidity, the mechanization, of a modern

Cartesian ontology. Here, I offer a few examples in duration of how I use theory to teach history in the wake, to attempt to address the ghosts that haunt us, always already in an imperfect way.

Questioning Time

Modern time has become naturalized as a part of modern society. To question what has become natural, Blow, Lee, and Schemilt (2012), Keynes (2021), and Seixas (2012) argued that different descriptions of time should be explicitly taught in schools. Seixas specifically suggested turning to postmodern thought, while Keynes suggested exploring concepts of time from Indigenous communities and people with a global majority. Roy (2005) suggested exploring the difference between time and duration as an entryway into a Bergsonian philosophy in the classroom.

As these scholars suggested, I explicitly teach time. In my classes, students investigate the history of timekeeping in different civilizations. In addition, I introduce different types of time such as clock time, historical time, and ontological time. We study the purposes and functions of different descriptions of time. For example, I might ask students what the purpose of clock time is and ask them to compare that time to historical time. So, in AP World History: Modern, we question what the College Board means by “modern” and then we discuss the modern era, where that idea originated, and why it is important and dangerous.

Questioning Objectivity

Questioning objectivity goes along with questioning time. Addressing the ghosts that haunt us is an attempt to undermine the idea that there is one objective truth of history and the past. Like Haraway’s (1988) challenge to a “god’s eye view,” Seixas

(2012) argued that “the historian is a historical being, and cannot claim a removed or objective platform on which to stand” (p. 867). There is no position from nowhere in history. Bergson (1934/2007) also discussed the limitations of objective truths. For Bergson, truth, which he associated with fixity and discovery, is what the intellect seeks whereas intuition is movement towards creation and change related to subjectivity.

Applying this re-orientation of time to teaching, I now begin my history classes with a personal history textbook project that asks students to outline a five-chapter textbook about their own personal history. I ask them to reflect on what makes them who they are, what has influenced them, and what they value and why. During this project, I ask my students if other people would write the same textbook—their parents, their friends, their worst enemy. This question leads to a class discussion about what is included and excluded from history textbooks and who decides. Finally, we discuss how history is *made* based on someone’s perspective using interpretations of primary and secondary sources. I intentionally use the word *made* in order to challenge the idea that history is a set of objective facts waiting for us to discover.

Questioning the Self

Bergson (1932/1935), Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987), Barad (2007), St. Pierre (2011b), Lugones (1994), Tuhiwai Smith (1999/2008), Gaztambide-Fernández (2012), Glissant (1990/2010), and Wynter (1989) all push away from the stable, rational, independent Cartesian cogito. Instead the subject in each of these scholars’ work focuses on a subject in relationality in some way. For example, Gaztambide-Fernández explained that “there is no ‘I’ outside of ‘we’ and there is no ‘we’ without a ‘they’” (p. 52). Barad and Deleuze and Guattari also speak about a different conception of the I that is not

independent but rather multiplicitous. The concept of the self with these scholars is one of entangled responsibility.

I attempted to create an open society of sorts in my classroom. This task has been the most difficult and the least concrete of my attempts at a Bergsonian orientation in the classroom. My goal in this re-orientation of thought is to encourage students to move away from the idea of competition and self-interest and towards collective learning. In some cases, my strategies worked, and students formed a community in which each class member was embraced and supported. In other cases, some students are able to do that work while others never quite get there. In one specific class, students revolted. During a Jigsaw activity in which five groups of students were assigned a different reading to summarize and add notes to a shared document, students refused, stating that none of them liked each other, so they were not going to work together.²⁰

Doing History in Duration

“Doing history” has become a popular approach to teaching history (Kirchner, Helm, Pierce, and Galloway, 2011; Levstik and Barton, 1997/2011; Loewen, 2018; Nordgren, 2016). As Levstik and Barton (1997/2011) explained, doing history means engaging in traditional historical analysis—“questioning, collecting data, interpreting, explaining” (p. 14). This conception of doing history, while helpful in pushing back against the idea of an objective historical truth, only studies dead things. That is, time in this form of history is separated from the present.

²⁰ This event is yet another encounter that has captured me. I still do not know what to make of this encounter and continue to think about geniuses in that classroom that resisted learning and community. Perhaps, I went about it in the wrong method. Perhaps I touched a nerve with some students that perhaps were not ready or in the space to work as a team. It very well could be my failing as a teacher. And I often wonder what role the system of education and society at large played that allowed this obviously brilliant group of students to feel this way about learning and their peers.

Based on my understanding of time as a continuous link between the past, present, and future, I have conceptualized doing history education differently. For me, this involves attending to the fact that “*what we practice at the small scale sets the pattern for the whole system*” (brown, 2017, p. 53). It is not enough to simply think time differently. We must do time differently too. As an entangled part of the whole system, my past-present-future students and I have the ability to pull at the threads of the tightly and systematically woven cloth of modern philosophy.²¹ It is important for me act on a small scale as a history teacher. This means that as a teacher I have agency in the Baradian (2007) sense of the word to act in that position and to provide students with the opportunity to act on the small scale. For example, students engage in democratic processes such as debating ideas for addressing the negative effects of urban renewal from the 1950s and 60s that still haunt Black communities. In an activity such as this one, students are encouraged to change their habits of mind, their tendency of thought, by not focusing on history in the past but instead thinking about the past being in the present—that is the past is not over. Most importantly, students begin to understand that addressing these injustices of the past is not only possible but a responsibility. By re-orienting time in history classrooms away from a modern conception of time and towards a time of duration and connection, I try to provide my students as many opportunities to study, contemplate, and propose solutions for the societal, economic, and political ghosts they find pressing. These opportunities mean that I no longer focus on a dead history but allow

²¹ The organized and systemized structure of modern philosophy is one of its strengths and one of the reasons that it is so difficult to push back against it. Through the illusion only methodically created knowledge is legitimate (i.e., planned and organized) it leaves out the possibility, erases, disintegrates, the possibility of knowledge construction outside of this tiny window of possibility. However, each nip or tug at the threads loosens the structure, compromises its integrity. This observation is one reason that brown (2017) suggested powerful action on the small scale.

students to be part of history-making by problem-solving the issues that matter to them and considering how to change the future. As Dillard (2022) argued, this means “teaching about the past to improve the future” (p. 55). As a history educator, it is not enough to simply teach “the facts,” tell a story, or to describe injustices. My goal is to help students explore possible solutions for a more just future.

Conclusions in Duration

Through this Bergsonian post qualitative inquiry, I have attempted to explore the function of time in history education. In the process of this journey, I visited the ghost of Descartes’ taken-for-granted subject who lives a certain time and is woven into the fabric of mainstream Western life. Then, I explored the philosophy of Henri Bergson and how it challenges the Cartesian image of thought with a constellation of concepts such as duration, intuition, and creation of difference that constitute a philosophy opposed to stasis, division, and individualism. Bergson provided a different way to imagine the world, one that is open for creation rather than focused on discovering what is already there. Thinking in duration alerted me to two encounters with time in history education that I diagnosed as injustices enabled by modern time. These two encounters rested on a Cartesian conception of a past separated and distinct from the present—a dead past that can erase injustice—and alerted me to the relation between time and justice that I had not recognized before. Bergson’s conception of time and the encounters it enabled not only changed my teaching as I discussed in the previous section, but also my life. I cannot live the way I used to live. I can no longer ignore the pasts of the world around me. The encounters with the preservice teacher and the Georgia elementary school social studies standard stay with me reminding me that the past is always here.

In closing, I realize that this dissertation process is a becoming and not a culmination. Just as I cannot mark an exact beginning for this project, I cannot mark an ending. I cannot capture a final moment. Bergson will not let me do it. His philosophy has re-oriented the way I think and live so much that I can never go back to believing in the solidity and immobility of modern thought and modern time. Instead, as I do the next thing, I will continue thinking and living not only with Bergson's time but also with an understanding of the violence of modern time and a recognition that just as post qualitative inquiry is not an ultimate solution to the world's problems, a Bergsonian orientation is not an end all be all answer to the ghosts that haunt us. It is one creation out of a multitude of possibilities. This work is about living with the ghosts that haunt us, forcing us to re-orient thought and life, to keep moving, and to do the next thing whatever that might be.

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APPENDIX A
PROGRAM LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

Lesson Template

Georgia High School US History Standard(s):

Step 1- Desired Results

- 1- What is the big idea/question?
- 2- How does that question relate to the standard?
- 3- What should students know, understand, and be able to do as a result of the lesson?

Step 2- Assessment Evidence

- 1- What formative assessments will you use to gauge understanding?

Step 3- Learning Plan

- 1- What are your learning activities? (Step by step from start to finish, detailed enough for someone else to follow, describing who will do what. Be sure to attach any materials to be used in the lesson)
 - a. **Opener:**
 - b. **Lesson:**
 - c. **Closer:**

APPENDIX B

FULL LESSON PLAN

Lesson: The Subjectivity of History

Subjectivity as being produced and producing

- Personal History Book activity
 - o What are the five most important events in your life?
 - o In what order would you arrange them in the book *The History of (You)*?
 - o Would your mom/dad/best friend/ex-girlfriend/boyfriend/partner choose the same five to include in your book? Would they arrange them in the same order? Would they include the same details?
 - o Points to make:
 - There is a subjective aspect to history.
 - Most historians no longer believe that there is one ‘true’ history. The job of the historian is to gather evidence to tell a convincing story.
 - This is why you are learning to teach students to support their thoughts with evidence.
 - The standards, as one student noted last week, tell a story. So what story do the standards tell about “exploration”?
- Evaluate standards
 - o Pull up the US history standards.
 - What story is told?
 - What stories are not?
- Intro to lesson within a lesson
 - o Make a list of controversial topics
 - o Why are these controversial?
 - o The next activity serves a few purposes
 - Gives an example of how you might approach teaching a controversial issue
 - Model lesson planning and assessment
 - How to write a lesson plan
- Lesson within a lesson (see other lesson plan)

APPENDIX C

“LESSON WITHIN A LESSON” LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

Lesson Template

Georgia High School US History Standard(s):

- Describe the significance of the 13th amendment
- Explain Black Codes, the Ku Klux Klan, and other forms of resistance to racial equality during Reconstruction.
- Analyze how the presidential election of 1876 and the subsequent compromise of 1877 marked the end of Reconstruction.
- Describe the rise of Jim Crow

Step 1- Desired Results

- 1- What is the big idea/question?
 - Do things change or/and do things continue as they are?
- 2- How does that question relate to the standard?
 - We will be thinking about when slavery ended (i.e. is it change or continuity or both?)
- 3- What should students know, understand, and be able to do as a result of the lesson?
 - Support their answer to the question “When did slavery end?” with evidence from the texts provided during the inquiry.

Step 2- Assessment Evidence

- 1- What formative assessments will you use to gauge understanding?
 - Ask students at the beginning “When did slavery end?”
 - Looking over responses as students work
 - The questions that students pose
 - The graphic organizer that students will complete
 - Students’ response at the end of the lesson to the inquiry question

Step 3- Learning Plan

- 1- What are your learning activities? (Step by step from start to finish, detailed enough for someone else to follow, describing who will do what. Be sure to attach any materials to be used in the lesson)

a. Opener:

When did slavery end?

I will pose this question at the beginning of class to illicit interest in the lesson. I imagine that students will begin to see that the answer is not so simple and this will motivate them to find out more.

b. Lesson:

- Introduce the lesson including the following:
 - Put students in their groups
 - Distribute the graphic organizer and documents
 - **Explain** the inquiry lesson in which students will engage including the following:
 - The purpose of the lesson
 - Directions
 - Procedures for completing the lesson
 - Individual roles for each group
 - Reader
 - Underliner
 - Question asker
 - Time keeper
 - (Paper distributor & collector if groups of 5)
 - How long students will have to complete each reading
- Students will rotate with their groups to different stations (see below). As students work, I will walk with purpose to the different groups to make myself accessible for help and to check students' progress so that I can ask students if they might need more time. Students will have 12-15 minutes at the first station and 8-10 minutes at each station after that.
 - Station 1: What is slavery, Emancipation Proclamation, and 13th Amendment
 - Station 2: Peonage and the restriction of Rights
 - Station 3: Today?
- Once groups are finished, students will individually answer the inquiry question in writing also including supporting evidence that they took from the various sources. The writing prompt is:
- Students will then complete the assignment with a pair-share-share. That is students will share with a partner. Then partners will share with the whole class.

c. Closer:

How do the stories we've told today respond to our larger question about continuity and change?

APPENDIX D
INQUIRY LESSON CHART

Inquiry Question: When did slavery end?

Station	How do these resources respond to our inquiry question?	Write a quote from the text that supports your response.
Station 1		
Station 2		
Station 3		

Using the evidence that you gathered above, write a paragraph that answers the inquiry question, "When did slavery end?"

APPENDIX E

LESSON PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

Station 1: *Slavery, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the 13th Amendment*

Part 1: Definitions of Slavery

slav·er·y *n.* *pl.* slav·er·ies

1. The condition in which one person is owned as property by another and is under the owner's control, especially in involuntary servitude.
2.
 - a. The practice of owning slaves.
 - b. A mode of production in which slaves constitute the principal work force.
3. The condition of being subject or addicted to a specified influence.
4. A condition of hard work and subjection: *wage slavery*.

Source: American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition. Copyright © 2011 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

slavery *n*

1. (Law) the state or condition of being a slave; a civil relationship whereby one person has absolute power over another and controls his life, liberty, and fortune
2. the subjection of a person to another person, esp in being forced into work
3. the condition of being subject to some influence or habit
4. (Industrial Relations & HR Terms) work done in harsh conditions for low pay

Source: Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged, 12th Edition 2014 © HarperCollins Publishers 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2014

slav·er·y *n.*

1. the condition of a slave; bondage.
2. the keeping of slaves as a practice or institution.
3. a state of subjection like that of a slave.
4. severe toil; drudgery.

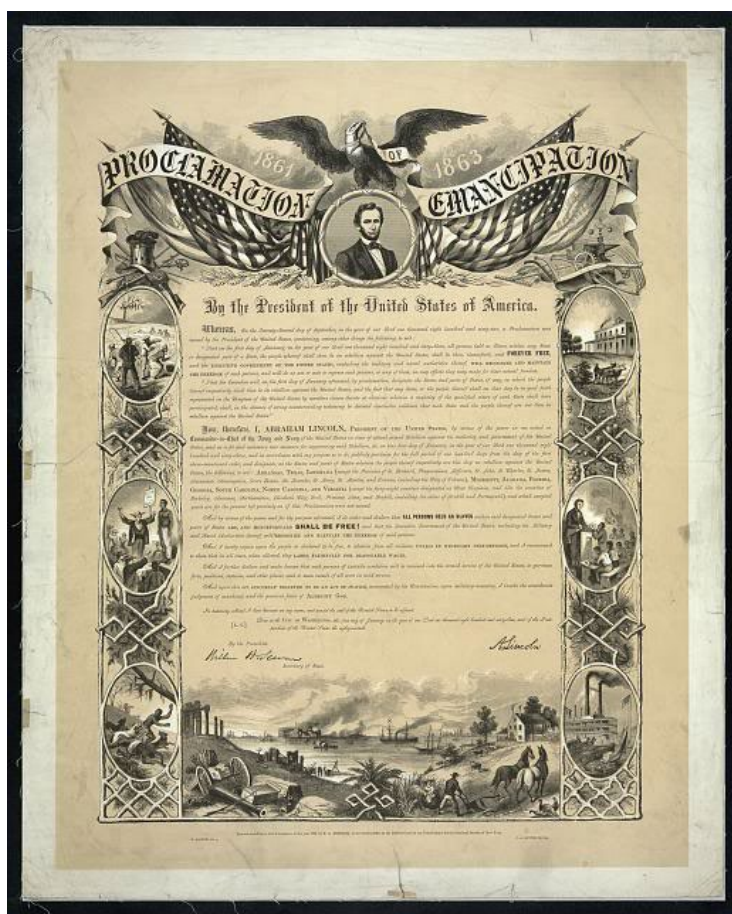
[1545–55]

syn: **slavery, bondage, servitude** refer to involuntary subjection to another or others. **slavery** emphasizes the idea of complete ownership and control by a master: *to be sold*

into slavery. **bondage** indicates a state of subjugation or captivity often involving burdensome and degrading labor: *in bondage to a cruel master*. **servitude** is compulsory service, often such as is required by law: *penal servitude*.

Source: Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary, © 2010 K Dictionaries Ltd. Copyright 2005, 1997, 1991 by Random House, Inc. All rights reserved.
Part 2: The Emancipation Proclamation

President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, as the nation approached its third year of bloody civil war. The proclamation declared "that all persons held as slaves" **within the rebellious states** "are, and henceforward shall be free."



Part 3: The 13th Amendment

Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.^[1]

Station 2: *Peonage and Restrictions on Rights*

Part 1: Definition of peonage.

1 a : the use of laborers bound in servitude because of debt b : a system of convict labor by which convicts are leased to contractors. 2 : the condition of a peon.

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/peonage>

Part 2: Excerpt From *Slavery by Another Name*

<https://www.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name/themes/peonage/>

Peonage, also called debt slavery or debt servitude, is a system where an employer compels a worker to pay off a debt with work. Legally, peonage was outlawed by Congress in 1867. However, after Reconstruction, many Southern black men were swept into peonage through different methods, and the system was not completely eradicated until the 1940s.

In some cases, employers advanced workers some pay or initial transportation costs, and workers willingly agreed to work without pay in order to pay it off. Sometimes those debts were quickly paid off, and a fair wage worker/employer relationship established. In many more cases, however, workers became indebted to planters (through sharecropping loans), merchants (through credit), or company stores (through living expenses). Workers were often unable to re-pay the debt, and found themselves in a continuous work-without-pay cycle.

But the most corrupt and abusive peonage occurred in concert with southern state and county government. In the south, many black men were picked up for minor crimes or on trumped-up charges, and, when faced with staggering fines and court fees, forced to work for a local employer who would pay their fines for them. Southern states also leased their convicts en masse to local industrialists. The paperwork and debt record of individual prisoners was often lost, and these men found themselves trapped in inescapable situations.

Part 3: Black Code and Jim Crow Law examples

Some common elements of Black Codes were:

- Race was defined by blood; the presence of any amount of black blood made one black.
- Employment was required of all freedmen; violators faced vagrancy charges.
- Freedmen could not assemble without the presence of a white person.

- Freedmen were assumed to be agricultural workers and their duties and hours were tightly regulated.
- Freedmen were not to be taught to read or write.
- Public facilities were segregated.
- Violators of these laws were subject to being whipped or branded.

Some Black Codes in Louisiana:

- Any negro found drunk, within the said parish shall pay a fine of five dollars, or in default thereof work five days on the public road, or suffer corporeal punishment as hereinafter provided.
- No negro who is not in the military service shall be allowed to carry fire-arms, or any kind of weapons, within the parish, without the special written permission of his employers, approved and indorsed by the nearest and most convenient chief of patrol.
- No negro shall be permitted to preach, exhort, or otherwise declaim to congregations of colored people, without a special permission in writing from the president of the police jury.
- Every negro is required to be in the regular service of some white person, or former owner, who shall be held responsible for the conduct of said negro. But said employer or former owner may permit said negro to hire his own time by special permission in writing, which permission shall not extend over seven days at any one time.
- No negro shall be permitted to rent or keep a house within said parish. Any negro violating this provision shall be immediately ejected and compelled to find an employer; and any person who shall rent, or give the use of any house to any negro, in violation of this section, shall pay a fine of five dollars for each offence.

Some Black Codes in Mississippi:

- All freedmen, free negroes and mulattoes in this State, over the age of eighteen years, found on the second Monday in January, 1866, or thereafter, with no lawful employment or business, or found unlawfully assembling themselves together, either in the day or night time, and all white persons so assembling themselves with freedmen, free negroes or mulattoes, or usually associating with freedmen, free negroes or mulattoes, on terms of equality, or living in adultery or fornication with a freed woman, free negro or mulatto, shall be deemed vagrants, and on conviction thereof shall be fined in a sum not exceeding, in the case of a freedman, free negro or mulatto, fifty dollars, and a white man two hundred dollars, and imprisoned at the discretion of the court, the free negro not exceeding ten days, and the white man not exceeding six months.
- If any freedman, free negro, or mulatto, convicted of any of the misdemeanors provided against in this act, shall fail or refuse for the space of five days, after conviction, to pay the fine and costs imposed, such person shall be hired out by

the sheriff or other officer, at public outcry, to any white person who will pay said fine and all costs, and take said convict for the shortest time.

Some South Carolina Black Codes:

- "No person of color shall migrate into and reside in this state, unless, within twenty days after his arrival within the same, he shall enter into a bond with two freeholders as sureties"
- "Servants shall not be absent from the premises without the permission of the master"
- Servants must assist their masters "in the defense of his own person, family, premises, or property"
- No person of color could become an artisan, mechanic, or shopkeeper unless he obtained a license from the judge of the district court – a license that could cost \$100 or more.

Georgia:

- “No colored barber shall serve as a barber to white women or girls.”
- 1865: Miscegenation [Statute] Unlawful for officials to issue marriage licenses to persons of African descent and the other a white person. Penalty: A misdemeanor that carried a fine between \$200 and \$500, or confinement in jail for three months, or both. Ministers who married such persons also guilty of a misdemeanor, and fined between \$500 and \$1,000, or confined in jail for six months, or both.
- 1870: Barred railroad segregation [Statute] Railroads required to furnish equal accommodations to all, without regard to race, color, or previous condition of servitude. Penalty: Violators could be sued, and the injured party could collect as much as \$10,000.
- 1872: Education [Statute] Called for separate schools for white and black children. Penalty: Schools that admitted both races would receive no monies from the public school fund.
- 1877: Education [Constitution] Schools shall be free to all children of the state, but separate schools shall be provided for white and black children.
- 1891: Railroad and streetcars [Statute] All railroads to furnish equal accommodations, in separate cars, for white and black passengers. Law did not apply to sleeping-cars. Streetcar conductors to assign passengers to seats, separating the races as must as practicable. Penalty: Passengers who did not comply were guilty of a misdemeanor and could be ejected by a conductor.
- 1895: Education [State Code] Black and white children not allowed to attend the same school. Penalty: Teachers who taught white and black pupils in the same school would not be compensated out of the public school fund.
- 1899: Railroads [Statute] Railroad companies had the right to assign passengers to seats and berths, and would separate white and colored passengers in sleeping cars. White and colored passengers would not be allowed to occupy the same

compartment. Companies were not compelled to carry blacks in sleeping cars or parlor cars.

- 1905: Public accommodations [Statute] Any person could donate lands to a city for a park, with the condition that the use of a park be limited to the white race only, or to white women and children only, or to the colored race. Municipalities could accept such gifts for the "exclusive use of the class named."
- 1908: Penal institutions [Statute] Separate eating and sleeping accommodations were required for white and black prisoners, and while working.
- 1925: Business licenses [Statute] No license would be issued to any person of "the white or Caucasian race to operate a billiard room to be used, frequented, or patronized by persons of the Negro race" and vice versa.
- 1926: Race classification [State Code] Classified a "Negro" as any person with at least one quarter Negro blood.
- 1926: Education [State Code] Required schools to be racially segregated. Teachers who were guilty of receiving or teaching white and colored pupils in the same school would not be compensated.
- 1926: Miscegenation [State Code]
- Colored clergyman can marry Negroes only. Also nullified interracial marriages if parties went to another jurisdiction where such marriages were legal.
- 1927: Miscegenation [Statute] "Unlawful for a white person to marry anyone except a white person." Another statute enacted the same year changed the law to read that all persons with any ascertainable trace of Negro blood must be classified as persons of color. Penalty: Both races would be imprisoned in the penitentiary for one to two years.
- 1927: Public accommodations [City Ordinance] No Negro barber in Atlanta allowed to serve white children under fourteen years of age. Court later declared the ordinance unconstitutional.
- 1928: Miscegenation [State Code] Miscegenation declared a felony. Also unlawful for Caucasian persons to marry Asians or Malays.
- 1928: Race classification [Statute] Required all persons to fill out voter registration forms with information concerning their racial ancestry. If there was any admixture of Negro blood in the veins of any registrant, person would be considered a person of color.
- 1931: Public carriers [Statute] Motor common carriers could confine themselves to carry either white or colored passengers.
- 1933: Education [State Code] The board of education was responsible to provide instruction of black and white children in separate schools.
- 1935: Miscegenation [State Code] Illegal for a white to marry anyone but a white. Penalty: Felony, one to two years imprisonment.
- 1935: Health Care [State Code] Separate mental hospitals to be established for blacks.
- 1935: Public Carriers [Statute] Required segregation on all public transportation.
- 1945: Education [Constitution] Separate schools to be provided for the white and colored races.

- 1949: Voting rights [Statute] Those persons registering to vote were required to correctly answer ten out of thirty questions. Many of the questions were quite difficult.
- 1955: Voting rights protected [State Code] Repealed poll tax 1957: Public accommodations and recreation [State Code] Political subdivisions may alienate parks, etc.
- 1957: Education [State Code] No public funds to be allocated to non-segregated schools. Penalty: felony.
- 1958: Voting rights [Statute] This statute made voter registration extremely tedious and difficult. Law was designated as "An act to effect a complete revision of the laws of this state relating to the qualification and registration of voters." For example, one of the questions asked "Under what constitutional classification do you desire to make application for registration?"
- 1958: Public carriers [State Code] Segregation on public carriers
- 1963: Public carrier segregation barred [City Ordinance] The city of Albany, Ga, repealed the ordinances which had required segregation in transportation, ticket sales and restaurants.
- 1963: Public accommodations segregation barred [City Ordinance] The city of Atlanta passed an ordinance which repealed all city ordinances "which required the separation of persons because of race, color or creed in public transportation, recreation, entertainment and other facilities.

Sources:

<https://sites.google.com/a/email.cpcc.edu/black-codes-and-jim-crow/black-code-and-jim-crow-law-examples>

<https://www.fau.edu/artsandletters/pjhr/chhre/pdf/sjc-map-jim-crow-america.pdf>

Station 3: *Today???*

Using good media literacy practices such as evaluating headlines for bias, choosing reliable sources, and checking multiple sources, research one of the following topics:

- College football
- Human Trafficking
- Sex Slave Trade
- Prisons
- Undocumented Workers
- Wage slavery