

---

# OUTLINES - CRITICAL PRACTICE STUDIES

---

• Vol. 21, No. 1 • 2020 • (01-05) •  
[www.outlines.dk](http://www.outlines.dk)

---

## Editorial

### **Eduardo Vianna**

LaGuardia Community College and The Graduate Center- CUNY  
New York, United States of America

### **Mike Rifino**

The Graduate Center- CUNY  
New York, United States of America

### **André Sales**

Pontifícia Universidade Católica –PUC-SP  
São Paulo, Brazil

Though the current issue is long overdue, we are proud that we were able to pull it off in the midst of this COVID-19 pandemic. Probably like most of our readership, we are hunkered down in our homes, the luckiest in comfortable houses in green suburbs while others in crowded apartments in dense urban areas. Indeed, we write this editorial from Queens, New York City, currently the epicenter of the epicenter of COVID-19 (McVane, 2020). In the past weeks, we have personally witnessed students, colleagues, and friends become ill and, the most vulnerable, die. As in other severe crises, this pandemic has accentuated the obscene inequalities and class divides in our societies, including racial/ethnic disparities (e.g., COVID-19 kills twice as many Black and Latin@s than Whites in the U.S., see Mays & Newman 2020) and further exposed the vulnerability of the disabled and the elderly (Hakim, 2020). Unnervingly, we look ahead with great uncertainty about what our lives will be like, except perhaps with a conviction that grows stronger everyday that our lives will not be the same as before, especially those of us in the hardest-hit areas, such as the New York metropolitan region.

The articles in this volume were all received and reviewed before the COVID-19 pandemic, which now seems like ages ago. One could easily wonder, what relevance would there be in reading them today when our reality has changed so drastically and so quickly? Our readership can rest assured that that is not at all the case. Uncannily, the articles published in this volume raise issues that not only dovetail with the issues we are all grappling with during this pandemic but indeed make their relevance all the more salient. As a matter of fact, this should not at all be surprising for a journal that boasts on

---

its title not only a critical approach to practice but one that cherishes unfinished accounts that outline (pun intended to explain our title) what's dynamic, shifting, emerging and often incipient in our social practices and reality. While the authors of the current volume could not have anticipated the global coronavirus collapse, it does not take much of a stretch to see signs of the impending crisis lurking in their themes that speak of disability and the struggle for inclusion, that challenge us to further our dialogues about meaning and understanding and think deeply about how texts can disrupt a capitalist education.

The first paper, by Katie Entigar, presciently exhorts us to address theorizing in ways that probe possible new questions, particularly those that are open to silences and omissions, to what is not yet attended to, to what is overlooked and excluded. As one reviewer keenly remarked, by moving beyond common approaches and final thoughts, this paper calls for "listening closely while reflecting on what is not said, what is left unread and unheard and thus, unimagined. In this method, the author opens up ways for new intellectual and political possibilities, and sensibilities, beyond what already exists." While honoring the contribution of critical perspectives for revealing oppression of marginalized groups, Entigar probes further into what she refers to as 'rangier' conceptualizations of silence that can open up to an unknown territory wherein silence might operate as a force indexing different possibilities and directions. In this search for what she aptly terms 'articulate unknowing' we are not only reminded but called on to 'hear silence' in open-ended and daring ways so that "human society might begin to embrace alternatives brought forth by silence that destabilize false monological realities."

Such a call to destabilize a false monological reality echoes in David Kellogg's compelling defense of Ruqaiya Hasan's oeuvre. Offered as "a kind of manifesto of her ideal of human progress," a progress that is "always revolutionary, i.e. crisis-ridden and critical," the article is cogently structured around the analysis of two highly contrasting texts, namely the Bren Light Machine Gun Manual and the Communist Manifesto with the problem of a capitalist education as its backdrop. Kellogg masterfully provides a concise yet in-depth synopsis of Hasan's method of linguistic analysis, at the intersecting sociological, ontogenetic and textual timescales, with an emphasis on her concept of register. As he argues, Hasan posits that at this logogenetic timescale the problem of a capitalist education is "one of forging a register of language that cements technical skills as habits but consistently stops these habits short of developing into critical, intelligent free will." Responding to critiques that Hasan's work is based on 'deficit' linguistics, Kellogg points to differences in semantic codes as different orientations to meaning potential. To further entice the reader, we highlight the following inspiring passage about registers with the meaning potential for the construction of a new society, and quite apropos our current situation in which much that seemed solid has all but melted into air. In it, Kellogg argues that "it is entirely possible for changes in text to amount to changes in context as well; this is in fact what happens when highly valued texts like the Manifesto alter public discourse and through it to act on the material situational settings of a culture as well."

The third article is a response by Sam Gardner and Steve Also to Wolff-Michael Roth's article published in 2015 by *Outlines* about Heeding Wittgenstein on understanding and meaning in which Roth problematizes the use of the terms "understanding" and "meaning" in education discourse. As the authors put it, their paper "continues a

conversation about Wittgenstein's picture of language and meaning and its potential applications for educational theorizing." While concurring with Roth on a number of central points, including that it is not representation but performance in language that matters, the authors claim that he "has gone too far in calling for an eliminativist solution to settle any unease or vexation we might have with the two terms in question." In the process of presenting their rendition of 'heeding Wittgenstein', Gardner and Alsop scrutinize Roth's take on pragmatism and 'language-games and his use of some of Vygotsky's ideas. Among other insights about Heeding Wittgenstein in science education, the authors point out to asking questions more concerned with describing the signs we use and the ways science students use them. Similarly, they propose that how one knows "how to go on with signs of interest" are the questions from which to look upon a learner's developing mastery of the use of signs. The reader will surely find many other thought-provoking points in this provocative overture to further dialogue with Roth, Wittgenstein and many others relevant to *Wittgenstein's thought that are generative and fruitful in thinking about education*.

The fourth paper by Fabiola de Souza e Silviane Barbato seeks to make a contribution to the fields of cultural-historical theory at the intersection of disability studies, especially to the developmental study of intellectual disability in its most widely studied manifestation in Down Syndrome (DS). Their point of departure is the innovative theorization of disability that follows Vygotsky's theory of disontogenesis based on the developmental dynamics between primary and secondary deficits corresponding to elementary (EPF) and higher psychological functions (HPF). Their aim is to provide empirical support to and reveal the enormous potential of Vygotsky's principle of compensation, which posits development of persons with ID as open-ended and reliant on cultural mediation, to expand the prevailing narrow focus on static, primary (biological) deficits typical of cognitivist approaches. Thus, they focus on buttressing research on compensation with a review of empirical evidence from studies on DS on topics such as its neuropsychological profile, language and memory development, and school learning while critically examining different methodologies. One key finding they report is that most of those studies are based on a static view of human functioning, which focus actions in separate fields over a specific period of time, with a glaring dearth of studies that focus on processes of change. Among many fascinating points the discussion of the dynamics of affective and cognitive dimensions of compensation based on the common finding of high self-esteem among people diagnosed with DS. Overall, the article certainly takes important steps toward putting compensation and modern DS studies into a true dialogue.

Last but certainly not least, the volume closes with Dušana Podlucka's ambitious yet concise and compelling article that boldly proposes steps to move beyond the status quo of inclusive education. Though her focus is on higher education, the article begins by reviewing different strands of theory, policy, and practice from across several institutional levels, effectively bringing them into dialogue. Ingeniously, the author adds illuminating comments from her own research to disclose gaps while suggesting how to close them and connect dots in higher education for students with disability and the corollary approaches and theories that underpin current efforts (e.g., individualized accommodations based on learning styles) at providing inclusive educations to those students. The upshot of her shrewd and penetrating analysis is that, despite important advances, recent approaches to accessibility and inclusion, including progressive frameworks (e.g., Universal Design for

Learning, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy), still do not adequately address the relationship between and development. Then the author presents a very clear and concise review of Vygotsky's theory of defectology followed by a discussion of how the transformative activist stance (TAS) can provide grounds for reconceptualizing inclusive education on the basis of an education that provides tools for radical transformative pedagogy. According to her, to create equitable, transformative, anti-ableist educational opportunities for all students, there is a dire need to recognize disability not only as socially constructed, but most critically, through the lens of a critical developmental perspective of learning and development.

As one expects from *Outlines Critical Practice Studies*, the collection of articles published in this volume provides insightful critiques of the status quo. At this time, when private health systems, in particular in the U.S., have proven tragically dysfunctional (e.g., leaving states to outbid one another for medical supplies and equipment leading to corporate profiteering of the misery of the populace) and the flaws of neoliberal policies that led governments across the world to disinvest in public services have been disavowed as deadly by liberal and conservative venues, such as the *New York Times*, *The Financial Times*, *El País*, *Il Corriere Della Sera*, *Folha de São Paulo* and many others, the papers in this volume bring some reassurance in the sense that our authors knew all along that we were in need of broad change, as the range of their topics and fields testifies. It is remarkable that the last articles in this issue have as their theme disability from a Vygotskian perspective notorious for unsettling the traditional dichotomy between normal vs. abnormal, able-bodied vs. disabled by locating development and psychological functioning in socially organized and culturally mediated practices. At a time when a good deal of the world is going through death and disease, and the lucky ones who remain safely locked down live in fear getting infected, are perhaps experiencing for the first time what it feels like to be effectively disabled, as their community practices and culturally mediation suddenly vanished, leaving us insecure and challenging our mental health, their message rings as a clarion call to heed our ineluctably collective existence. As Žižek (2020) reminded us, this viral epidemic affects “our most elementary interactions with other people and objects around us, including our own bodies.” By making visible that even the air we breath is collaboratively produced by each one of us every time we exhale, at least in dense urban centers or in enclosed venues where urban life takes place, the COVID-19 pandemic has made explicit how interconnected and interdependent humanity is. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. put it “ we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality.”

We hope the messages in this volume brings critical hope that we sharpen our minds and strengthen our spirits to fight for our right to lead healthy, sustainable, and equitably productive lives.

## References

- McVane, B. (2020, April 5). I'm a doctor at the 'epicenter of the epicenter'. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Hakim, D. (2020, April 8). 'It's hit our front door': Homes for the disabled see a surge of COVID-19. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Mays, J. C., & Newman, A. (2020, April 8). Virus is twice as deadly for Black and Latino people than Whites in N.Y.C. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Žižek, S. (2020). Coronavirus is 'Kill Bill'-esque blow to capitalism and could lead to reinvention of communism. *RT*. Retrieved from <https://www.rt.com>