Youth Participatory Action Research in School:
A Posthumanist Account of Participation and Mattering

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Abstract

This posthumanist study examines a youth participatory action research (YPAR) practitioner's first attempt at bringing YPAR into her classroom. The paper explores the question: in what ways do human, non-human, and discursive bodies intra-act in the classroom, and what do their intra-actions produce? Participant observations and interviews were used to explore the students, teacher, and non-human agent intra-actions. A posthumanist framing via Barad's (2007) intra-action and Bennett's (2010) thing-power thus afforded the acknowledgement of actors often unacknowledged in humanist-centered scholarship.

Keywords: YPAR, high school, posthumanism, intra-action, thing-power

Introduction

Public schools in the United States are spaces where youth may develop skills to critically engage as democratic citizens (see Beane & Apple, 2007). However, today, students face numerous dehumanizing challenges in schools. Neoliberal framings of education emphasize individualism, consumerism, and passivity (Mirra & Morrell, 2011). For example, performance on standardized tests mark success rather than collaboration or community enrichment (Herr, 2017). With the push for standardization, curriculum can reinforce banking methods of education positioning youth as passive receivers of knowledge rather than agents in their own education (Freire, 1970). Zero-tolerance policies, white-washed curriculum, oppressive teaching practices, and the heavy policing of Black and Brown children are far too common in schools. Too often, public school curriculum emphasizes Eurocentrism (Krueger-Henney, 2019) and can operate as a form of epistemic and discursive racialized forms of violence (Dozono, 2020). The current educational climate illustrates how schools center social regulation and reproduction, which reproduce social inequities (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Patel, 2016; Vaught, 2017).

Teachers and researchers have engaged with liberatory practices and epistemologies to push back against the dehumanizing aspects of schooling. One such endeavor is youth participatory action research (YPAR) (see Brion-Meisels & Alter, 2018; Rubin, Ayala & Zaal, 2017). The literature below demonstrates how YPAR centers democratic collaboration, positions youth as valid knowledge producers, and uses inquiry to take action, challenging inequity (Ayala, 2009; McIntyre, 2000).

To understand the possibilities of using YPAR in schools, researchers have looked at how YPAR bolsters sociopolitical development along with enhancing academic and civic competencies (Kornbluh, Ozer, Allen & Kirshner, 2015; Nelson, Maloney & Hodges, 2017;

Scorza, Bertrand, Bautista, Morrell & Matthews, 2017). On the other hand, researchers have identified a fear of YPAR being co-opted within schools for the use of improving standardized performance (Brion-Meisels & Alter, 2018). There have also been difficulties in relation to YPAR endeavors in schools living up to the epistemological and ontological commitments of YPAR (see Buttimer, 2018; Rubin, Ayala & Zaal, 2017). While this body of literature has expanded our understanding of YPAR in school, there is little accounting of the relational agency of non-human actors and the co-constitutive entanglement of human, non-human, and discursive bodies within such school-based endeavors. As Martin (2019) noted, "for education researchers to ignore the role of the material and materials' agentic capacities is to undermine a crucial and generative fount of insight" (p. 87). What might happen when we recognize the agency of material, the thing-power of the more-than-human educational agents (Bennett, 2010)? Thing-power illustrates "the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle" (Bennett, 2010, p. 6). Within school spaces, there are a myriad of agents beyond the human that are playing an active role through varied entanglements.

Surveying the YPAR literature prompted me to study an example of bringing YPAR into a school, with specific attentiveness to non-human agency. More specifically, this paper examines a novice YPAR practitioner's first attempt at bringing YPAR into her classroom, and accounts for the intra-acting agents that emerged within the YPAR projects. As Barad (2007) asserts, "the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through their intra-action" (p. 33). Here, intra-action emphasizes the entanglement and co-constitution of agents (e.g., human, non-human, and discursive bodies). For example, a student, or teacher, is not a self-contained entity but is co-constituted through intra-acting agents (e.g., the materiality of the body, discourses on gender/race/human/schooling/and the like, and a variety of other entangled agents that come to co-constitute the individual within a specific time, place, and space). Within this paper, I use a posthumanist approach accounting for the participation of non-human agents and thing-power (Bennett, 2010), a framing meant to push the field of YPAR scholarship by taking into account those non-human participants that often go unacknowledged. Posthumanism recognizes the entanglement of the human with the more-than-human world, rather than positioning humans as separate (Barad, 2007; Taylor, 2016).

In what follows, I aim to unpack and account for the intra-acting agents within the YPAR endeavor. First, I discuss how YPAR is a tool for creating change within schools. Second, I move into the research site, context, and research participants. I then elaborate on the methodology used to understand more fully the research phenomena. Fourth, I explore how YPAR lived in Ms. Jones 9th grade class. I conclude the paper with a discussion of why YPAR scholars need to embrace a posthumanist lens to account for both human and non-human participation.

YPAR's Potential for Creating Change in Oppressive Spaces

YPAR taps into the knowledge of marginalized communities and is a "pedagogy of resistance" that offers youth a platform to "engage transformational resistance" (Cammarota & Fine, 2008, p. 4). For example, Yang (2009) co-constituted a YPAR space where youth utilized SPSS software, statistics, and critical social theories to critically assess their school and community by generating community presentations, a film, and website to engage with and inform the public about issues at their school. Decades of scholarship illustrate how schools and

schooling emphasize social regulation and reproduction that dehumanizes and racializes youth (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Patel, 2016; Vaught, 2017). YPAR is "counter-hegemonic research" (Ayala, 2009, p. 67). Through a communal approach, YPAR challenges who can produce knowledge and research (Bautista, Bertrand, Morrell, Scorza & Matthews, 2013), and can operate as a "bridge between the students' lived context and the curriculum" (Cammarota & Romero, 2009, p. 54). YPAR can also help students develop academic skills, critical epistemologies, organizing skills, civic engagement strategies, and leadership skills (Caraballo, Lozenski, Lyiscott & Morrell, 2017).

While on the one hand, public schools are often spaces of domination, on the other they are also full of opportunities for YPAR interventions, as they "are the largest and most democratically accessed institutions in the country" (Warren, 2005, p. 136). According to Kornbluh, Ozer, Allen & Kirshner (2015), YPAR provides the benefits of: (1) improved critical thinking and academic achievement, (2) sociopolitical development, (3) social networks, and (4) enhancing youth voice in decision-making processes. Also, YPAR in schools has the potential for improving student attendance and school engagement (Voight & Velez, 2018). YPAR is a place of possibility, where participants can cultivate new epistemologies—perhaps even onto-epistemologies—and gain skills to navigate and transform the world. We must also recognize some of the relational aspects of YPAR predate Western thought and are indebted to indigenous ways of knowing and being (see Tuck, 2009).

While the aforementioned YPAR scholarship has enhanced our understanding of the possibilities, challenges, and affordance of YPAR, they have centered and emphasized humanism. This article adds new avenues of inquiry and posits a theoretical shift from humanism to posthumanism, acknowledging those actors that are often overlooked. The posthumanist lens changes the view of participation by taking into account the agency of non-human actors and entanglements of human, non-human, and discursive actors. Focusing on the usage of YPAR in schools via a posthumanist lens offers new insights into the field by recognizing the thing-power (Bennett, 2010) of material.

Research Site and Context

The primary research site was Vantage High School (all names in this project are pseudonyms), a western Massachusetts high school where 72% of the roughly 1,200-1,300 students identified as Latinx (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2018). Two years prior to this study, the state's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education put the school under state receivership because of poor academic performance (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2015). The receivership put pressure on the school staff to improve academic performance.

The YPAR project emerged from a dialogue with Ms. Stevens, the District's Coordinator of Ethnic Studies. Ms. Stevens heard about my work in YPAR and reached out to me. Our dialogues focused on current normative educational practices that stifle student agency and voice. Out of these dialogues, Ms. Stevens asked if I could assist her teachers as they had no experience with YPAR, but were interested in taking it on during the coming year. I agreed and we co-created a structure for my involvement. Throughout the school year, I co-facilitated a YPAR professional development learning community. Ms. Jones, a 9th grade Ethnic Studies teacher, took up an end-of-year YPAR project within one of her classes. Ms. Jones allowed for me to research how the YPAR process unfolded. I did not participate as a YPAR coach, but

rather operated as a floating support that students could come to when they had questions, concerns, or just wanted to talk.

As a participant in the space, I played a role in the various entanglements. I am a white, hetero, cis-gendered, man and each component of my identity was important both to how I operated and was perceived. As an early career scholar I was viewed as having some expertise, which was reinforced by white hegemony. Academically, I trained in African American Studies, social justice education, and theory (e.g., critical theory, critical race theory, posthumanism); this academic background is entangled with how I view schools and schooling. These ways of knowing influence my interpretive apparatuses.

Beyond the individuals within the space, there was also the physical make-up of the school. I recorded the following observation based on my entering the high school for the first time:

> *I stood waiting, staring ahead through the heavy metal doors waiting to be buzzed in. I recognized a camera in the upper right-hand corner above the door, a demonstration of the nature of surveillance within schools…bzzzz…The door clicked, I pulled, it opened. The heavy door and clicking sound evoked some anxiety as my hands started to sweat. I walked through another set of doors and entered the main hallway. The office was to the right. I entered the office noticing five seats to the left, a wide space of nearly eight feet, and then a dividing barrier separating the office staff from visitors. A welcome sign, a student tardy sign-in log, and a visitor sign-in sheet were on the countertop* (Fieldnote, 10-6-17).

This phenomenon illustrates a relationship among humans, non-human bodies, and discourse. As the human, I intra-acted with and was affected by the discourse of surveillance and the non-human actors of the door, the buzzer, and physical layout of the office. The material construction of the school (e.g., the camera, locked doors, and barrier in the office) played an active role as an agent intra-acting with and on me. These non-human agents buttress the coercive and oppressive forms of traditional schooling (e.g., hierarchical relationships, surveillance, disciplined bodies, etc.).

Participants in the Research

There were a plethora of human, non-human, and discursive agents operating in Vantage High School. Ms. Jones, a woman of color, was excited about bringing YPAR into her classroom. Social justice was a driving force for Ms. Jones becoming an educator. She believed YPAR could elevate student voice and agency in the class. During her undergraduate training, Ms. Jones was introduced to critical race theory, which heavily influenced her work. Prior to coming to Vantage, Ms. Jones received a Master's degree in teaching social studies from an Ivy League University and taught for eight years in a neighboring community's public high school.

The YPAR project took place in Ms. Jones's class. Upon entering her class for the first time I noted:

> *There were pictures, maps, quotes, and other graphics hanging on the walls. The door was near the front of the classroom. To the left, along the wall were milk crates where students put their class binders. Further back, where the corners of the room connect,*

was the teacher's desk. The teacher's desk was angled so the students were in front and within line of sight. On the middle, of the back wall is an "Ethnic Studies Word Wall," with terms like hegemony, imperialism, internalized oppression, institutionalized racism, and colonization. The desks were arranged in a horseshoe U-shape. Directly across from the classroom entrance was a wall of windows (Fieldnote, 10-6-17).

While visiting the classroom during a YPAR session I noticed:

The U-shape of the desks created a space that emphasized an orientation towards the front whiteboard. As the U-shape was positioned towards the front of the room, it allowed for individuals to see each other when they spoke, but it also reinforced hierarchy as Ms. Jones was standing in the middle of the space (Fieldnote, 5-11-18).

The classroom was a place of a variety of intra-actions. For instance, when Ms. Jones was standing in the front of the U-shape of desks, there was a reinforcement of hierarchy and at other moments, the setup allowed for humanizing interactions. As Jackson and Mazzei (2012) remind us, intra-action refers to ways that "discourse and matter are understood to be mutually constituted in the production of knowing" (p. 115). Within this article, I look at the intra-action of non-human agents (handouts, desks, the classroom, school, etc.), humans (teachers, students, researcher), discourses (schooling), and how those entanglements mold the co-constitutive actors. To better understand these intra-actions I utilized a method that required ethnographic detail and thinking through data with theory.

Methodology: From Ethnography to Posthumanism

In this ten-month long study, I attempted to account for the intra-acting agents within the classroom. My study was guided by the research question: In what ways do human, non-human, and discursive bodies intra-act in the classroom, and what do their intra-actions produce? I used the following methods to answer this question. To conduct this work I used ethnography and enacted posthumanism (Barad, 2007; Hong, 2011; Madison, 2011). During the 2017-2018 school year, I spent a total of 45 hours in the field completing participant observations and interviews; 29 of those hours were in the classroom, 8 in various meetings, and 8 conducting interviews. There were 17 in-class YPAR sessions, 6 teacher meetings, and 8 interviews.

Ethnography

I utilized a method similar to Hong's (2011) layered ethnography where I paid attention to what was happening in the field while also being attentive to my relationship with the participants (human and non-human). For example, I took jottings and fieldnotes observing what occurred in the space while tracking how I engaged with those events and participants. This afforded me the ability to take note of what was happening via my interpretive apparatuses, both while in the field and when looking at the writing at a later time. These fieldnotes were also agents entangled in the co-construction of the study. As Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) asserted, ethnography is about "the study of groups and people as they go about their everyday lives" (p. 1). Critical ethnography takes this a step further by paying attention to power and domination (Vaught, 2017). Participant observation was key, as the observations occurred during the in-class YPAR. These participant observations allow one to "learn firsthand how the actions of research participants correspond to their words" (Glesne, 2006, p. 49). Interviews played a key

part of this research as, "interviewer and interviewee are in partnership and dialogue as they construct memory, meaning, and experience together" (Madison, 2011, p. 28).

I chose the four students as they had quite different experiences with YPAR. To conduct these interviews, I engaged in Freire's (1970) notion of dialogue, a generative act based upon horizontal relationships and communication that, "must not serve as a crafty instrument for the domination of one person by another" (p. 89). By working together, we tried to understand our intra-actions with the world. Rather than being driven by an extractive modality, the interviews were a space driven by the experience of the interviewee. The interviewee drove the direction of the conversation.

Posthumanism

Ethnographic work often centers the human. There was a need to engage with post-humanism as humans were not the only actors or agents in Ms. Jones's class. Non-human agents acted upon humans, and vice versa. Using posthumanism as a mode of inquiry, as Rosiek (2019) notes intra-action, "is not primarily a means of discovering the nature of objects, but is a process of entanglement in which two agents are mutually co-constituted" (p. 79). Because actors are co-constituted, I analyzed the entanglement of humans (students, teachers, researcher), non-human agents (e.g., school building, physical classroom, handouts, etc.), and discourses (schooling). Moving from humanism to posthumanism "involves replacing the idea that the human is a separate category from 'everything else' with an ethic of mutual relations" (Taylor, 2016, p. 8). Posthumanism widened my theoretical lens to see new possibilities, the agency of matter.

Barad's (2007) conceptualization of intra-actions helped me explore the connectivity between the various actors and how they are co-constitutive. Intra-action focuses on the mutual co-constitution via the entangling of humans, non-humans, and discourse. In one particular study, as an example, Jocson (2016) illustrates how the material and the discursive are mutually constitutive for learning and teaching processes. Discourse, according to Barad (2003)

> is not a synonym for language…To think of discourse as mere spoken or written words forming descriptive statements is to enact the mistake of representationalist thinking. Discourse is not what is said; it is that which constrains and enables what can be said. (p. 219)

Discourses of schooling and their intra-action with individuals constrained, and enabled, certain actions within Ms. Jones's classroom.

Beyond intra-action, Barad's (2007) conceptualization of onto-epistemology played a part in my findings. Onto-epistemology is "the study of practices of knowing in being" (Barad, 2007, p. 185). Jackson and Mazzei (2012) add that within onto-epistemology, "knowing and being cannot be isolated from one another, but rather are mutually implicated" (p. 116). For example, our being in the world influences our knowing in and of the world. We do not live or learn in a vacuum, but rather through our entanglements with other agents (human, non-human, and discursive). Taking up this framing, I demonstrate how the students' knowing and being cannot be separated from the entanglement of human, non-human, and discursive agents.

Findings: YPAR in Ms. Jones's Class

I participated in Ms. Jones's 9th grade YPAR project to better understand how human, non-human, and discursive bodies intra-acted in the classroom, and what their intra-actions produced. The YPAR project (i.e., the 17 sessions) occurred in Ms. Jones's first period class which consisted of 36 ninth graders (children aged between 14 and 15 years old). Students chose if they wanted to work in teams or individually.

In relation to more standard pedagogical methods within schools, bringing YPAR into the classroom can result in many complicating factors. As Rubin, Ayala, and Zaal (2017) noted, "the YPAR approach…is epistemologically at odds with the ways that teaching and learning are structured in regular public schools" (p. 189). There can be a schoolification of YPAR when bringing it into schools. Schoolification is a "transformation of the inquiry and action process from internally motivated and holistic to a series of graded assignments" (p. 184). Grades are both an entanglement of the non-human agent (e.g., the letter grade on the physical report card) and the discourses of schooling and neoliberalism (e.g., the intra-action between what students are 'given' for what they 'produce'). YPAR can stand in opposition to schoolification, embracing learning that is unpredictable and avoids hierarchical grading (Patel, 2016). As YPAR takes up this notion of unpredictability, it runs counter to the standardized curriculum and hierarchical ways of knowing and teaching within schools.

To better understand the more-than-human entanglements within the YPAR project, I first discuss entanglements of time and size. I then go on to discuss the human, non-human, and discursive intra-actions with a handout.

Time and Size

Within Ms. Jones's class, there was the issue of size and time, and the way in which the two were entangled. There were 36 students doing a variety of projects. As the teacher, Ms. Jones often stated she could not support all of the students in the ways she felt she needed. Beyond this class, there were larger issues of her overall student-load and the work required to support her classes. Ms. Jones stated, "I cannot do what I want with nearly one hundred and fifty students…I can do really good work with seventy-five students; I cannot with one hundred and fifty."

Ozer, Ritterman, and Wanis (2010) found similar constraints where they had limited time and a large class size undermining the "effectiveness of efforts to meaningfully engage less receptive students in the PAR project" (p. 157). Samantha, a student in the class, stated, "the class was packed, there were too many people; the class was just too big and too rowdy." With only 50 minutes per class session, like Kornbluh, Ozer, Allen, and Kirshner (2015), time was an issue in his project. Time, within the school, was an agent operating on the minds and bodies of those within the space.[1] For example, school days are broken into blocks, weeks into units, months/ semesters into fixed assessed intervals, and years into age-based progress (Saul, 2020). This is not

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[1] This paper wrestles with time via entanglements of participants' work with and in institutions using capitalist ClockTime logics of time. I recognize that time is entangled with differently in different communities (e.g., Indigenous North American communities, African communities, The Slow Movement, etc.) (See Barad, 2017; Killsback, 2013; Ulmer, 2017; Wildcat, 2005). The linearity of time has even been challenged in the Western tradition via temporal diffraction (see Barad, 2017).

neutral but latent with issues of power. Time influences how teachers/administrators structure their work and how students navigate learning and schooling. The time constriction of the curricular allotment and class time of 50 minutes played a role intra-acting with Ms. Jones in her development of the YPAR endeavor. I too felt this tension as a teacher remembering the structure of my days, classroom, aspirations for each session, and the rigidity of district curriculum. There were tensions from traditional schooling discourses emphasizing that each day needs a learning outcome/measurable, which run counter to YPAR.

During day three, after Ms. Jones provided the youth with example projects and potential next steps, there was only twenty minutes to conduct independent research. At the end of each session, students often felt lost or wanted to stay after to continue the work. Samantha stated, "it was crammed into one big thing; I just felt lost." There is a tension between schooling's prescriptive notion of time and linear learning with YPAR's emphasis on research and learning as unpredictable. The structural and time constraints of a 50-minute class runs counter to the onto-epistemology of YPAR.

The oversized class, the prescriptive constraints of classes being 50 minutes, and the larger structure of time within the school operated as agents intra-acting with the students. Time is not a passive entity, but rather it, "disciplines us, empowers us, disempowers us, and socializes us into sanctioned ways of knowing and being" (Saul, 2020, p. 66). These components of time influenced Ms. Jones's, the students', and my ways of knowing and being.

Handouts and Thing-Power

Beyond time and class size, there were other human, discursive, and non-human intra-actions impacting the space. For example, during one session, I noted:

> *I felt a sense of schoolification operating today as the students were entangled with and appeared more focused on the handout as if it is an assignment rather than the core of their projects. The handout went from an aid to that of an assignment, even though the handout will not be graded* (Fieldnote, 5-11-18).

The handouts (e.g., collections of graphic organizers) were meant to aid the students in their YPAR projects; they were not assignments. Rather than assisting the students however, these handouts appeared to be a hindrance to students owning the projects. Students looked to finish the handouts rather than using the handouts to assist them. The handout became the task for the students rather than acting as a support in their YPAR projects. Ms. Jones, after handing out the handout, stated it was meant to help students organize their thoughts, if they needed to, but it was not to be turned in or graded. She even laughed stating that if they didn't want to use it they could toss it on the ground. Ms. Jones comically dropped her handout on the floor. Seen through a materialist lens, this intra-action could have elevated an attunement to the handout. There was an entanglement of the handout moving through space, hitting the floor, and a co-constitution of sound emanating from the intra-action producing further intra-actions with the humans in the classroom. However, when Ms. Jones handed out the handout, the students went to work on the document as if it were an assignment. As I circulated throughout the class, the students were copying one another and going from section to section without discussing how this connected to their YPAR work. Initially, I was confused. I thought to myself, did Ms. Jones not clearly articulate what YPAR was or how to use this handout? Did the students not understand

YPAR? I was left wondering what fostered this miscommunication. However, this initial way of looking at this intra-active phenomenon was framed from a humanist lens and did not acknowledge the agency of the handout. The handout was an agent and had a sense of thing-power (Bennett, 2010), intra-acting with Ms. Jones, the students, and the larger pervasive discourses of schooling.

When looking at the handout there was an intra-action between discourses (schooling), matter (the handout), and humans (students and teachers), which were co-constitutive. Ms. Jones provided the handout hoping it would help students collect their thoughts, data, and next steps. The students, rather than seeing it as a tool, engaged with it as an assignment. Within schools and schooling, most handouts are curricular assignments to be finished and submitted for a grade. The students' beliefs about school, shaped by their being in school, affected their participation in the YPAR endeavor. Intra-actions between the discourses of school (notions of assignments, curriculum, how to participate in school, etc.), the physical environment (classroom, desk, etc.), the handout, the teachers, and students co-constituted the agents.

For some students, the add-on nature of the project and the handouts reinforced a notion of schooling. As a teacher, I remember how many of the handouts I utilized were entangled with issues of surveillance and schooling (e.g., work to be finished, turned in, and graded). While Ms. Jones had one intention for the handout, it had a quite different effect. Similarly, reflecting upon observing a session where one group of students were using a problem-tree handout to analyze social ills, I noted the following:

> *The students would not work as a group but rather copied one another and were not drawing connections between the roots of the problem with the fruits of those issues. There was little to no dialogue. They mostly filled out the handout, their perceived assignment* (Fieldnote, 5-15-18).

The handouts, rather than being supportive tools, often intra-acted with the students and discourses buttressing schooling.

Implications for Research and Practice

Bringing YPAR into schools demands an onto-epistemological framing, not an add-on structure, as there is a need to disrupt not only the ways of knowing, but the ways of being in school. As Barad (2007) reminds us, "we don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are of the world" (p. 185). Moving to an onto-epistemological framing of YPAR demands a different application than an add-on. A large constraint and challenge of bringing YPAR into schools is that schooling operates in a hierarchical manner emphasizing control and regulation while YPAR aims to destabilize hierarchy, challenging systems of domination. As Herr (2017) asserted, "the aims of collaborative practitioner research across power and hierarchy lines seem to be an inherent contradiction to the structures of schooling" (p. 455). The ways of being and knowing in schools often run counter to YPAR. We cannot just bring YPAR in schools, but we must also re-imagine the classroom as part of the process.

We need to move beyond humanism and recognize "an ecology of human/non-human relations in which we (all) are embedded and entangled" (Taylor, 2016, p. 13). This framework allows for scholars to see the intra-actions between these human and non-human bodies. For

example, the narrative of Ms. Jones's handout illustrated the complex intra-actions between discourse, human, and non-human bodies within the school. By attending to material objects, the agency of material objects, and intra-actions within the projects I was able to have a more nuanced and textured analysis than a humanist framing allowed. This posthumanist framing allows for us to widen our understanding of the actors.

Towards the More-Than-Human

Bringing YPAR into schools, as this paper demonstrated, can be quite complex. Findings from the study illustrate that humans are not the only agents in YPAR endeavors. Structurally, there are constraints of schools being state apparatuses that coincide with the nature of 'schooling' in a neoliberal context. Within Ms. Jones's class, time and size were agents that constrained the projects. Similarly, time, handouts, desks, the discourse of schooling, and other non-human agents played an active role in co-constituting the YPAR endeavor. Ms. Jones's classroom was a space full of various entanglements influenced by the more-than-human environment.

To advance approaches to YPAR in schools, we need to move beyond humanism and acknowledge the role of non-human actors. Posthumanist accountings expand our notions of agency, entanglements, and agents. For example, as noted earlier, a humanist framing would not account for the agency of the handout or the co-constitutive entanglement of students, teacher, discourses of schooling, and the handout. Furthering our analysis and recognition of intra-actions and non-human agency allows for us to recognize and forward social justice work as emanating from the more-than-human world, rather than solely a humanist endeavor. For example, a materialist posthumanist turn affords us the possibility to see schooling itself as an agent, rather than solely as an outcome or effect. A posthumanist approach will help us develop a wider analytical lens to explore what matter is mattering (Barad, 2007).

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