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## ARTICLE

### "One aneithar": A Joycean Critique of Educational Research

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For Maxine Greene:

"A learner with the simplest, a teacher of the thoughtfullest . . . "

Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (1892/2002, p. 73)

#### On Assignment with Maxine Greene

A few years ago, the two of us attended a Maxine Greene lecture at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She told an inspiring story about an articulate teenager from the Bronx critiquing the ups and downs of respect, status, and the coming of age and rage in the metropolis. The teenager's words, she said, reminded her of Walt Whitman, and she read two lines from his *Leaves of Grass* to make her point. We had with us a copy of her wonderful first book, *The Public School and the Private Vision* (1965), an intellectual history of American dreams and wishes for education in a democracy. We quickly looked up the Whitman section, and there were the same lines from the poet on life in the "en masse":

I do not call one greater and lesser

That which fills its period and place is equal to any. (Whitman, 1892/2002, p. 115)

There too was her discussion:

To be educated, to achieve a personality was, for the poet, to move outward, to enter into others. In America, where there were multitudes, it was to link hands in the en masse. (Greene, 1965, p. 110)

Thereby also she presented an account of what she had been doing between writing the book in our hands and giving the lecture we were listening to, between her first reading of Whitman and her telling us of the teenager from the Bronx. For four decades, she had been "a learner with the simplest, a teacher of the thoughtfullest." With a brief story from the Bronx and a two-line quote from Whitman reaching into "the en masse," she offered an outline of her life's work, mediated always by Thoreau, Melville, Dewey, and Sartre, driven often by powerful role-model women from the Bronx, or versions thereof: Jane Addams, Hannah Arendt, Adrienne Rich, and Toni Morrison, yes, and stimulated by the excitement of her Lincoln Center Institute (Greene, 2001), where so many teenagers from around the city have engaged the arts. Across the years, she brought many texts and voices to the fore, and she taught us how to appreciate their mutual relevance. She would juxtapose them and find similarities where no one else had looked. She would find Whitman in young girls left out and left behind, and then celebrate the young girls for what they could have brought to Whitman in his day, or to Toni Morrison today. Through it all, she always had the same goal for herself and for all those she taught, in her own words: "To be educated, to achieve a personality . . . to move outward, to enter into others . . . to link hands in the en masse."

And how are we to do this? How are we to get educated, to find ourselves, to sing our own song? How are we to continue on Maxine Greene's path? It involves moving outward, of course, from wherever we are, but to where and, again, how? It involves moving into "the en masse." It is never to be done alone (although it might often feel lonely along the way). In her fine book, *The Dialectic of Freedom* (1988), she offers generalized advice on the roads to take. She recommends the arts and other edgy ways of thinking. She recommends gathering the courage to reject what is easy, mundane, there for no reason, and theirs, and not ours, for no reason. She recommends engaging others, all the others, in a search for what might move them forward and open our horizons.

Along with the general invitation to open ourselves to new experiences and new ways of thinking about experience, Maxine Greene adds the specific task we focus on in this paper: "to break through, whenever possible the persisting either/ors" (1988, p. 8). To gain a release and relief from received categories, we must reject the packaging that noisily demands what must be thought about and silently directs how it can be thought about. She is not the first to call for a sustained assault of dichotomous thinking, and her most prized authors have been relentless in the pursuit of tearing apart dualisms that, though appropriate on some occasions, might push a community in unhelpful directions on other occasions. John Dewey, for example, reformulated a few dichotomies in every one of his major writings across 70 years (Flower & Murphey, 1977). Dewey collapsed and restated stimulus and response, mind and body, perception and conception, subject

and object, and true and false, all again and again, but perhaps his recovery of the ground in the excluded middle between art and nature is most important for Maxine Greene's work:

the true antithesis of nature is not art but arbitrary conceit, fantasy, and stereotyped convention.<sup>[1]</sup> (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 152)

Neither Maxine Greene nor even John Dewey were the first to take direct aim at dualistic thinking, but of all the precursors, it is perhaps Whitman's resistance to pre-established either/ors that defines our assignment from Maxine Greene. Take just a few lines from a Maxine Greene favorite, Whitman's "Song of Myself":

I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise,  
Regardless of others, ever regardful of others,  
Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well as a man,  
Stuff'd with the stuff that is course and Stuff'd with the  
stuff that is fine,  
One of the Nations of many nations, the smallest the same  
and the largest the same . . . (p. 72)  
I am the poet of the body and I am the poet of the Soul,  
The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell  
are with me,  
The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I  
translate into a new tongue.  
I am the poet of the woman the same as the man . . . (p. 77)

The assignment is clear. Engage and rearrange false choices. Read Whitman and Dewey for guidance, and then go to the Bronx to get more grounded and ground up versions. Listen carefully. Bring the classic texts to what appears inarticulate in our own lives. Mix them, listen more carefully, restate them, and find a new wisdom of the moment and for the moment (McDermott, 1988).

For the remainder of the paper, we take Maxine Greene's assignment in our own direction. We take her assignment to reframe either/ors and use the arts of another author – an unexpected author – to tackle a persistent series of false, or better, falsifying dichotomies that get in the way of educational research and reform. About midway between Dewey and Maxine Green, there was James Joyce (his first novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, appeared in 1916, a year before both Maxine Greene's birth and the midway point of Dewey's publishing career from 1882 to 1952). Although Joyce had little (and nothing nice) to say about education in Ireland and of course nothing to say about educational research in the United States, he developed word play techniques for taking on false or annoying choices wherever they appear. Two Joyce scholars have claimed that complicating dichotomies is exactly at the heart of his work: "The strategy of evoking and simultaneously complicating oppositions is entirely characteristic of Joyce's writing and of his attitude to cultural and political issues" (Attridge & Howes, 2000). They offer a salutation of only nine words from *Finnegans Wake* and unpack three overstated and two melted oppositions. The nine words are:

Gentes and laitymen, fullstoppers and semicolonials, hybrids and lubberds! (Joyce, 1939, p. 152)

The main oppositions contrast gentlemen and ladies, high-breds and low-breds (or lubbers), and natives fully embedded and expatriate colonials semi-embedded. The melted oppositions conflate gentes and lady-men and native fullstoppers and hybrids. All the dichotomies, whether opposed or collapsed, are destabilized by humor.

We proceed in three sections. First, we consider how James Joyce laid out the problem of received dichotomies and, more importantly, how he offered, if not a solution, then a mode of confrontation: Whenever pressed by a false choice, he urged us to take "*one aneithar*"<sup>[2]</sup> – not this, not that, not a little of this mixed with a little of that, but "*one aneithar*" (1939, p. 101). He rejects not only one side and then the other, but their very opposition; he rejects not only both sides in favor of a unification – as in Whitman's old and young, foolish and wise, man and woman – but their existence as sides. Not art or nature, not art and nature, but something beyond art and/or nature, something beyond what neither art nor nature can afford, something, with Dewey, beyond "arbitrary conceit . . . and stereotyped convention." "*One aneithar*" is semantic play with a long reach into the demand of categories that leave us working against ourselves. Second, we apply Joyce's method to three headache dichotomies – and to more by implication – that dominate life in Schools of Education. The unjust trio contrasts individual/social, theory/practice, and quantitative/qualitative. And, third, we recommend four ways for educators and researchers, spurred by the demands of circumstance and hoped-for outcomes, to work with, work

through, work around, and confront troublesome dichotomies. Our hope is that Maxine Greene might enjoy our excursion.

### "One aneithar"

Early in his portrait of the artist as a young boy away at school, James Joyce describes Stephen Daedalus in a difficult situation. In front of a group of students, Wells, an older boy, asks Stephen a question:

- Tell us Daedalus, do you kiss your mother before you go to bed?

Stephen answered:

- Yes, I do.

Wells turned to the other fellows and said:

- O, I say, here's a fellow says he kisses his mother every night before he goes to bed. The other fellows stopped their game and turned around, laughing. Stephen blushed under their eyes and said:

- I do not.

Wells said:

- O, I say, here's a fellow says he doesn't kiss his mother every night before he goes to bed.

They all laughed again. Stephen tried to laugh with them. He felt his whole body hot and confused in a moment.

What was the right answer to the question? He had given two and still Wells laughed. (1916, p. 14)

A difficult choice: two equally unattractive alternatives, each made worse by the presence of the one not picked. Take either one and get in trouble for not picking the other. There is no way to get things straight inside the frame of Joyce's choices. Whatever Stephen does is simultaneously wrong, right, and neither. The choices intimate and intimidate and leave "his whole body hot and confused."

Kiss mother or not? This is not a choice in many cultures, and not much of a choice in many others (Boon, 1999; Kendon, 1976). Stephen Daedalus never quite recovers. Most immediately, he dreams of going home for the upcoming vacation, but with new doubts:

Holly and ivy for him and for Christmas

Lovely . . .

All the people. Welcome home, Stephen! Noises of welcome. His mother kissed him. Was that right? (p. 21)

What would Wells say to that? Wells taught Stephen to worry not just about the timing of a kiss, but even about the word kiss:

Was it right to kiss his mother or wrong to kiss his mother? What did that mean, to kiss? You put your face up like that to say goodnight and then his mother put her face down. That was to kiss. His mother put her lips on his cheek; her lips were soft and they wetted his cheek; and they made a tiny little noise: kiss. Why did people do that with their two faces? (p. 15)

Long later, the doubts have grown. With the threat of Wells perhaps in the shadows, the portrait of Stephen as a young man ends with his being unwilling to declare a love for his own mother:

Do you love your mother? Stephen shook his head slowly. I don't know what your words mean, he said simply. (p. 240)

We only know that whatever a kiss might be, inside a kissing culture, whether to kiss or not, or whether to admit to kissing or not, amounts to something of a liar's paradox to the young child surrounded by the more seasoned mother kissers of the culture. It takes a whole society of kissers and non-kissers, and of exposers and degraders of kissers and non-kissers, to put together the frame in which Stephen suffers saying always exactly the wrong thing. No even-Stephen for Daedalus! How much should we be surprised when, 24 years later, in his portrait of the artist as a linotype terrorist at *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce comes up with an alternative:

Do tell us all about. As we want to hear allabout. So tellus tellas allabout. The why or whether she looked alloty like ussies and whether he had his wimdop like themses shut. Notes and queries, tipbits and answers, the laugh and the shout, the ards and downs. Now list to one aneithar and liss them down and smoothen out your leaves of rose. The war is o'er. (1939, p.

*One neither!* Joyce takes neither choice, rejects the pair, both one at a time and simultaneously, much like he had Molly Bloom in *Ulysses* reject both sides when faced with a more primal dichotomy, less obviously conceptual, less obviously public, the one on Leopold Bloom's rear end, "where we haven't 1 atom of any kind of expression in us all of us the same 2 lumps of lard" (1922, p. 727). That's what Molly says of her husband's buttocks; she'll take *one neither* from both sides. *One neither* uses humor to break frame and offers a new place to stand, laughing not at the person—neither Stephen nor Bloom—caught in the dichotomy, but laughing at the very existence of the dichotomy. It is neither right nor wrong to kiss mother. It is neither right nor wrong to not kiss mother. What is wrong is to construct a world where kissing or not, both choices being isolated without regard to circumstances, leaves a person without choice and always wrong. We must give careful *attenshune* (Joyce, 1939, p. 100) to the either/or choices that leave us without a choice. We should attend to them enough to shun their negative consequences.

Specific social and moral choices offered by Dublin 1904 may have given way, but Joyce's general war against dichotomies is not "over," not yet, nor will it ever end. All languages are held together by contrast sets, and received vocabulary can be dominated by nasty and stale choices that leave speakers and thinkers unable to deal better with their own lives, endlessly so and mutually so. We should get new choices, better choices. William Butler Yeats, in his poem on "Vacillation" in 1933, was descriptively right that "between extremities, man runs his course." Yeats also knew the danger – that "half and half" relentlessly "consume what they renew":

A tree there is that from its topmost bough  
Is half all glittering flame and half all green  
Abounding foliage moistened with the dew;  
And half is half and yet is all a scene. (1983, p. 250)

Closer to the subject of this chapter, in "Among School Children" in 1928, Yeats asks:

O chestnut-tree, great-rooted blossomer,  
Are you the leaf, the blossom, or the bole?  
Oh body swayed to music, O brightening glance,  
How can we know the dancer from the dance? (1983, p. 217)

With only two well-tried and mutually erasing choices available – glittering flame/all green, glittering flame/all green – in one domain after another, the appearance of either one does not really mean the disappearance of the other. Whichever one is picked, the first choice is dominated by the not chosen second choice. Having picked the answer that he does kiss mother, young Stephen excludes the answer that he does not kiss mother, at least sometimes, and this is news. So when he says he does not kiss mother, not saying that he does at least sometimes, however begrudgingly, kiss mother, leaves him accused of never kissing mother, high and dry without the wet lips that make the little noise: kiss. Tough circle to be caught in. The good news: The circles are made by people, and they can get changed by people.

### **Foisted on their Own Façade**

We can use Joyce's *one neither* banter as an intervention against the easy and false analytic power implied by using any one side of the muted dichotomies:

individual/social, theory/practice, and quantitative/qualitative.

We do this in three stops, one stop for each dichotomy, and so should we stop all three. In each case, we recommend *one neither*, and we introduce a *one neither* disruption:

individual/social becomes indivisible/*sourcial*  
theory/practice becomes *dreary/access*, and  
quantitative/qualitative becomes *quantentative/squalortative*.

Each new word pair says more directly, by *properbanter*, what the previous pairs seemed both to invoke and to hide. In refusing an established contrast set, each new word pair resists analytic suicide by dichotomy.

*Indivisible* and *sourcial*: It does not have to be wrong to focus on individual or social one at a time. But

it is wrong to construct a world in which individual and social, and related dualisms – nature/culture, real/social – are choices that leave a person with more foist than choice and often in trouble. It is enough to leave one's "whole body hot and confused." We should turn to the *generalizutility* of *indivisible* and *sourcial*.

*Indivisible* and *sourcial* are more accurate emotionally, easier to critique, and have the advantage that they laugh at each other. The term *indivisible* captures what speakers would like to achieve with individual, but it is over stated enough to make the lone hero ludicrous. No individual is indivisible, not with liberty and justice for all. Torn this way and that, needed here and there, of one moment and then the next, every person is by perception, responsibility, and consequence embedded in a fast moving sea of connections and relations, all complexities ignored by an easy use of the term individual. *Indivisible* points to itself as a target and forces laughter not at the lone person, but at the very idea that any person is independent of others and a coherent source of anything.

*Sourcial* performs the same magic for social. Every social theory identifies a source of constancy in the behavior of persons, and, to the extent so, every social theory is over stated. *Sourcial* points to itself as a target, and forces laughter not at the overly socialized person, but at the very idea that the social – taken without individuals – is a coherent source of everything.

*Dreary* and *access*: It does not have to be wrong to focus on theory or practice one at a time. But it is wrong to construct a world in which theory and practice and related dualisms – abstract/concrete, generalizable/particular, competence/performance, knowledge and action – are choices that leave a person with more foist than choice and often wrong. It is enough to leave one's "whole body hot and confused." We should turn to the *generalizutility* of *dreary* and *access*.

*Access* captures what speakers and writers of theory would like to achieve with practice: access of all to level playing fields. Most practice, even in education, does not lead to access, and by using *access* instead of practice we at least highlight what is not being accomplished. Without access, what is theory about? What could invite more immediately the term dreary than theoretical ideas without a home in next activities and consequences. The term *access*, more than practice, points to itself as a target, and forces laughter not at the people locked out of access, but at the idea that successful access can be achieved by theoretical nuance without political and economic confrontation.

*Dreary* performs the same magic for theory. *Dreary* points to itself as a target, and forces laughter not at those committed to theory, but at the very idea that theory – without muscle, without engagements that might make theory interesting – can lead to anything other than, ouch, access only in theory. The term *dreary* forces laughter not at the people with no time to go to the library (as the term theory sometimes does), but at those limited to the library, as if ideas about equality were on their own a coherent source of access.

*Quantentative* and *squalortative*: It does not have to be wrong to focus on quantitative or qualitative research one at a time. But it is wrong to construct a world in which quantitative or qualitative and related dualisms – objective/subjective, laboratory/natural, context bound/context free, hard data/soft data – are choices that leave a person with more foist than choice and always wrong. We should turn to the *generalizutility* of *quantentative* and *squalortative*.

The term *quantentative* is quite accurate for a science that reaches conclusions based on a theory of probability. The best findings report on what is more likely the case than the worst findings. This is the only promise. Quantitative theories that *malevidently* identify constancy in the behavior of individuals have cheated on the tentative implications of the aggregate for the specific. In making their units of analysis falsely concrete, they risk reducing children to eunuchs of analysis. No finding is ever indivisible, definite, or complete, but always tentative, partial, and dependent. Under the *guys* of rational certainty, quanto-macho man of old *fascioned* psychology has delivered mostly an abuse of substance – hard nosed with premature calculation and *impirically* imposed by evidence debased findings from thin, middle crass measures of thick lives. The term *quantentative* forces laughter not at the person with mismeasured learning, but at the very idea that learning is available as an easy rigorous variable of analysis and every child available as a *eunuch* of *analyseize*.

*Squalortative* performs the same magic for qualitative. *Squalortative* research is down and dirty, in the trenches, where life is dealt, felt, and cried over one squall after another. The term *squalortative* delivers the emotional load, points to itself as a target, and forces laughter not at the ever pitied person seemingly living in squalor, but at the *outrighteous rantpages* of field workers thinking of the lives of people as data, of people as subjects of *analywish*, sweaty and uncounted perhaps, but discounted and *eunuchs nonethemore*. Those left out and those left in, working class voice and upper crass foist, tend toward each “other in an endless circle,” erasing *rigormiss* analysis and leaving us thinking in squalor.

## Dueling with Dualisms

Arguments over current dichotomies take four shapes, each in turn an improvement over the one before, but each in turn is more difficult to state and more cumbersome to use in critique and reform.

First, *one or the other*: Everyone picks a side and argues against the other side. To talk about social invites immediately a claim for the individual, and of course the other way around, and around again. Ugh! Can we live through another generation of people who, when told they are socially organized, say with complete earnestness that every individual is different, as if the second statement had something to do with the first? The contrast set between individual and socially constructed is false and foolish. The term individual did not always stand for an isolate. Only a millennium ago, the term individual included the social: exactly that from which it is indivisible as in, said Raymond Williams (1961, p. 90), the Christian Trinity, with God, Son, and the Holy Spirit being each an individual, and each at the same time indivisible in unity of the Trinity. If the contemporary term maintained a similarly flexible relation to the social, there would not be a one or another from which to choose.

Similarly, as if by reflex – make that reflux – talk of cognition gets us a reminder of the importance of motivation, objective a reminder of subjective, theoretical a reminder of practical, and so on, and on. Wars are made of such things. Jonathon Swift, in *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), made the tiny people of Lilliput fight it out over whether to open the egg at the thin or the wide end, and tiny-minded American educational research seems hardly a step ahead. Such a world comes in only two colors: black and white. Pick your side, argue your side, and hold on. Short-term political circumstances can insist that we go one way or another, but intellectually, and, in the long run, intellectually and politically, we need a more nuanced approach.

Second, *one and the other*: Help almost always arrives, usually to the tune of a middle way. It is not so much one side and not the other – individual and not social, or theory and not practice – says the moderating soul, but the interaction of one with the other. Between every Scylla and Charybdis, from Aristotle and Mencius to most every academic paper written in the form of “Not X, not Y, but a synthesis,” there is the same route down the middle, making nice, taking from both sides, a mix for every match, a little social and a little individual, a little theory and a little practice. Shakespeare (c. 1596-1598) recommended it momentarily:

They are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that  
starve with nothing.  
It is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean.  
*The Merchant of Venice* I.ii.5-8

No mean happiness, perhaps, but also no mean protection from either side. The world comes now in three colors: black, white, and a dulling gray defined by its sides. The reasoning gets more complex this way. It beats taking one side or the other, but the polar ends stay intact. In an essay breaking down the mostly unnecessary debate between Formal and Informal Logic, Gilbert Ryle stated the more general case: “[N]either party is right, though both are more nearly right than the appeasers who try to blend the operations of the one party with the operations of the other” (1954:114). The Marquis de Side always returns, for working the middle keeps both ends intact. Mark de side, yes, you will, one way and the other, both at the same time. The one and the other stay intact, and life in the middle is confined by adherents on both sides yelling, “in or out, in or out.” Help! The dichotomy is massaged briefly and returned to its assumed natural state where it nurtures the middle gray, not here, not there, not much anywhere. Kids sitting in door jams, half in and half out, know better.

Third, and not so often, *the one and the other make one another*: This zenny conversation takes intellectual shape when a wise soul announces a radical alternative. Analytically, paired opposites, or at least the most troublesome of them, rarely pair divergent realities. Paired opposites often pair nothing more than opposing points of view on the same reality. It is not good enough to say, “If no individual, then no social, and vice-versa, and therefore individual and social in interaction.”

It is not good enough to say, "If no mind, then no body, and vice-versa, and therefore mind and body in interaction." Rather, individuals in society and minds in bodies, just like society in individuals and bodies in minds, are all a single phenomenon and only parsed into separate corners to allow different angles of vision, different specialties, and in universities, different departments, each important, each an analytic and political free space for a moment, but only for a moment. Only if we remember that each side is never more than a perspective – and a partial perspective – can we gain by using the terms carefully: Each side gives a perspective, each a promise, and each a trap. That there is an "objective reality to perspective" (Mead, 1927) does not mean that every perspective delivers a reality straight on, front and center. That there is an empirical reality to perspectives does not mean that every perspective delivers a reality straight on, front and center. Each perspective has its moment, and must be used in time and rhyme, in sequence, just in time, and not at the wrong time. Yes, you too, warns Irish rock group U2 in Dublin's City a century after Stephen's dual with Wells: "You've got to get yourself together; you got caught in a moment and you can't get out" (U2, 2002). Black and white, like yin and yang, like Protestant white and Catholic white in Belfast, are contexts for each other. They do more than interact: The two sides create each other, both falsely relative to the unity that has them seemingly in opposition. Shakespeare (c. 1599-1601) understood this version as well:

The violence of either grief or joy  
Their own enactures with themselves destroy.  
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;  
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.  
*Hamlet* III.ii.194-7

From his experiments with nitrous-oxide-gas intoxication, William James reported that his patients understood how words in contrast constitute each other, that their minds perceived "how each term *belonged* to its contrast through a knife-edge moment of transition which *it* effected" (1897/1967, p. 295). He also gave us a delicious list of contrasts that can be and should be understood as mutually constituted:

God and devil, good and evil, life and death, I and thou, sober and drunk, matter and form, black and white, quantity and quality, shiver of ecstasy and shudder of horror, vomiting and swallowing, inspiration and expiration, fate and reason, great and small, extent and intent, joke and earnest, tragic and comic, and fifty other contrasts. (p. 295; on laughing and crying, see Plessner, 1961/1970)

This is a great advance, achieved occasionally in good seminars and difficult texts, among shamans, poets and Irish rock groups, and in every class taught by Maxine Greene, but rarely imported back to the research workbench and even more rarely exported into institutional reform.

Fourth, but almost never, *one neither*: A more radical question is advanced by this position:

- first, by a laugh at the foolish choice,
- second, by a refusal to choose,
- third, by a search for a less constraining alternative,
- and fourth, by an effort to change the conditions that make the apparent choice point momentarily sensible and even enforceable.

Analytically, the power of the new question is to lay bare and confront the social conditions that make distorting contrast sets look natural and normal enough that we must inquire into the world in their terms only. If individual and social are not seen as different perspectives, but as different realities, what conditions are served by the false choice and what would happen if we refused to conform, if we rejected not just the choice, but the people who appear interested in our going one way or the other? In educational research, the U.S. government has recently taken a strong stand that the science of children should be evidence based, which means based on quantitative data from the outcomes of large-scale, controlled treatment designs, ala pharmaceutical research. Thirty years of qualitative research in education has made educational research swing back the other way (McDermott & Hall, 2007). Quantitative vs. qualitative has always been a silly choice. Let's not take one, nor the other, nor both in interaction, nor both even in cahoots. Let's instead take *one neither* and keep track of who shows up to do battle. "Here comes everybody," warned Joyce, thinking perhaps of the day everyone laughed at him for kissing, or not kissing, his mother (1939, p. 32). Here comes everybody: those who control the research money, who make the policy, and who decide how and when the policies are consequential. The government is insisting



that educational researchers study *imperial* realities in ways that leave social hierarchies undisturbed. Access has become only *accessment*, only another excuse for another test. Was any of this really so different when the educational establishment was calling for liberal qualitative studies instead of conservative-backed quantitative studies? Yeah, yeah, there are differences, but mostly it is the same upper classes that get served by education, and the same poor who are denied access. Whether science-based, science-debased, science free-based, it all stays the same. Quantitative vs. qualitative may not be where we should waste our time. Maybe we should direct our change efforts at the people most profiting – as if science rebased – from the system working the way it does. These are pressing political questions.

Every false dichotomy has its one-sided adherents (one or the other), its mediators (one and the other), and its zenny analytic slow dancers (Oh Noh: the one and the other make one another), and its disrupters (*one aneithar*). To get to the fourth position, it helps to remember that most of the choices have not always been choices, or certainly not choices of the kind they are today. What historical forces arranged the terms into contrast sets of two? What current arrangements keep them that way enough so adherents must arm themselves and take sides? How might we change them? These questions, if we address them relentlessly, can, at the least, keep various dichotomies from swallowing the good sense of educational research.

## Conclusion

Going on assignment with Maxine Greene demands serious political work. Received categories come loaded with the *status quo* arrangements of the day before. Confronting received dichotomies is only one way of trying to arrange change. Life would be easier if theory and practice weren't forced into separate camps. So too for individual and social and the silly division of research into quantitative and qualitative, but hundreds of other dichotomies constrain us daily. Pick a spot in the world and a time of the day, and there they are: East/West, white/black, Protestant/Catholic, Shiite/Sunni, sacred/profane, expert/novice, rich/poor, credentialed/uncredentialed, male/female, and so on. To upend them, one must read, among others, Shakespeare, Whitman, Dewey, Joyce, and Greene, and, just as importantly, one must go to the Bronx to work with others to make change. We have reframed only three dichotomies as a place to start. The seriousness of it all is oppressive, but it can be fun as well. Down with the dichotomy between serious and fun. Who tricked us into that one? Making change is serious fun, and those who would keep serious and fun apart are a serious problem. There are people to work with, words to play with, and new lives to be experienced. When in doubt, ask Maxine Greene.

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## Notes

[\[1\]](#) Or again: "The enemies of the esthetic are neither the practical nor the intellectual. They are the humdrum; slackness of loose ends, submission to convention in practice and intellectual procedure. Rigid abstinence, coerced submission, tightness on one side and dissipation, incoherence and aimless indulgence on the other, deviations in opposite directions from the unity of experience" (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 40).

[\[2\]](#) Words purposely misspelled or misused are in italics.