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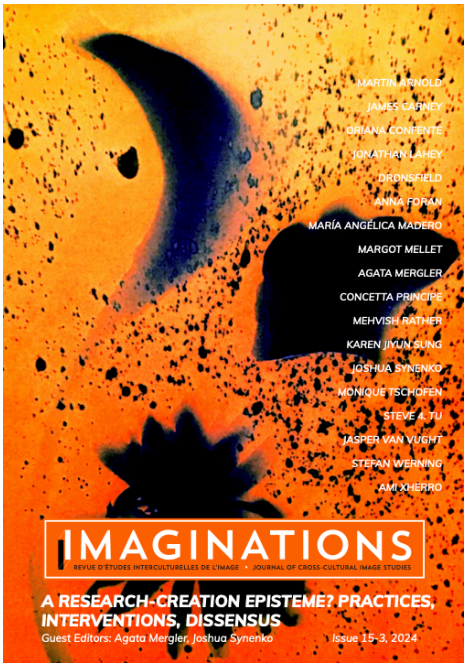

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A Research-Creation Episteme? Practices, Interventions, Dissensus
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GUERILLA PEDAGOGY: REVALUATING KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION IN RESEARCH-CREATION AND SUSTAINING ART IN CONFLICT ZONES

MEHVISH RATHER

This article focusses on the exploration of avenues of dissemination within research-creation methodology – and whether the pedagogical boundaries that research-creation attempts at dismantling within research and practice (especially with respect to film and media) are sustained when the project reaches the dissemination stage. Much like guerilla warfare, where smaller bands of rebels and fighters attack and take on an enemy seemingly much bigger in power than themselves, I view guerilla pedagogy as a methodology of teaching, creating, and disseminating knowledge and art that challenges the confines of corporatized neoliberal universities and hypocritical geopolitical processes which restrict the flow of knowledge in spaces

Cet article explore les avenues de diffusion au sein de la méthodologie de recherche-création et interroge si les frontières pédagogiques que cette approche cherche à démanteler dans la recherche et la pratique (notamment en lien avec le cinéma et les médias) sont maintenues lors de l'étape de diffusion du projet. À l'image de la guérilla, où de petits groupes de combattants affrontent un ennemi apparemment bien plus puissant, je considère la pédagogie de guérilla comme une méthodologie d'enseignement, de création et de diffusion des savoirs et de l'art qui remet en question les limites des universités néolibérales corporatisées ainsi que les processus géopolitiques hypocrites restreignant la circulation des savoirs dans les zones de conflit. Cette approche subvertit fondamentalement les idées préconçues sur les

of conflict zones, and fundamentally subverts pre-conceived ideas of the roles of the pedagogue and the student. Through understanding the critical nature of research-creation in decolonizing the production of knowledge, this article explores the necessity of decolonizing prevailing methods of knowledge mobilization. To that end, we try to understand what decolonized knowledge mobilization could look like *within* research-creation and *as* research-creation itself. This evaluation happens through studying guerilla pedagogy both as a way of knowledge production in research as well as a method of knowledge mobilization within research-creation. This is done through the extensive academic work conducted on guerilla techniques in different aspects of academia, pedagogy, and activism, as well as through an experiential account of my fieldwork in Kashmir. Research-creation has the potential to facilitate the processes of guerilla pedagogy, creatively evolving it for different political and epistemological circumstances – catering it to the audience and students who require it the most in the way they need it the most. As Weems mentions, "our task is to engage the world's subaltern in places where they speak, unheard."

rôles du pédagogue et de l'étudiant. En reconnaissant le rôle critique de la recherche-création dans la décolonisation de la production des savoirs, cet article met en lumière la nécessité de décoloniser les modes dominants de mobilisation des connaissances. À cette fin, nous tentons de comprendre à quoi pourrait ressembler une mobilisation des connaissances décolonisée à travers et en tant que recherche-création. Cette analyse s'appuie sur l'étude de la pédagogie de guérilla, à la fois comme mode de production des savoirs dans la recherche et comme méthode de mobilisation des connaissances au sein de la recherche-création. Elle repose sur une exploration approfondie des travaux universitaires consacrés aux techniques de guérilla dans divers domaines de l'université, de la pédagogie et de l'activisme, ainsi que sur un compte rendu expérientiel de mon travail de terrain au Cachemire. La recherche-création possède le potentiel d'alimenter les processus de la pédagogie de guérilla en les faisant évoluer de manière créative selon les contextes politiques et épistémologiques – en les adaptant aux publics et aux étudiants qui en ont le plus besoin, de la manière dont ils en ont le plus besoin. Comme le souligne Weems, « notre tâche est d'engager les subalternes du monde dans les espaces où ils parlent, sans être entendus. »

"In the present circumstances, I'd say that the only thing worth globalizing is dissent."[1]
– Arundhati Roy

INTRODUCTION

Much like guerilla warfare, where smaller bands of rebels and fighters attack and take on an enemy seemingly much bigger in power than themselves, I view guerilla pedagogy as a methodology of teaching, creating, and disseminating knowledge and art that challenges the confines of corporatized neoliberal universities and hypocritical geopolitical processes which restrict the flow of knowledge in spaces of conflict zones, and fundamentally subverts pre-conceived ideas of the roles of the pedagogue and the student. Through understanding the critical nature of research-creation in decolonizing the production of knowledge, this article will explore the necessity of decolonizing prevailing methods of knowledge mobilization. To that end, we will try to understand what decolonized knowledge mobilization could look like *within* research-creation and *as* research-creation itself. This evaluation will happen through studying guerilla pedagogy both as a way of knowledge production in research as well as a method of knowledge mobilization within research-creation. This will be done through the extensive academic work conducted on guerilla techniques in different aspects of academia, pedagogy, and activism, as well as through an experiential account of my fieldwork in Kashmir.

This article focusses not on how knowledge is created within research-creation but how it is mobilized *after* its creation. Firstly, I will explore the importance of knowledge mobilization within research-creation—for the outcomes generated through this practice. The dissolution of boundaries of what constitutes knowledge within the academic framework through research-creation has led to a wider acceptance of knowledge created through artistic and community-based practices already prevalent and functional in different communities of Indigenous peoples and in the Global South. However, this practice of decolonizing the understanding of knowledge needs to

further proliferate into its methods of dissemination as well. These methods have to be developed in deep cognizance of the landscape within which such knowledge demands to be mobilized. For this article, I will be focussing on how knowledge can be mobilized within a neo-colonial occupied territory such as Kashmir. In the continued aftermath of a (neo)colonial occupation, educational institutions remain thinly veiled instrument of colonization itself. Such institutions, by virtue of being financially and politically dependent on the colonial masters, cannot and will not support knowledge creation or its dissemination which goes against the occupation itself. An art-based research practice within an institutional framework in such a space fundamentally cannot be decolonized. Therefore, it requires creativity in understanding how said knowledge, education, and skills can be mobilized outside of the institutional framework. To that end, I propose guerilla pedagogy as a form of research-creation itself and a way of mobilizing knowledge created through research-creation.

Owen Chapman views research-creation as a generative practice as well as a category—one that invites a coalition of different disciplines and practices of learning in order to create knowledge in unbound potentialities. Finding the strength in its elusive nature (elusive both in terms of its boundaries and categorization), Chapman sees research-creation not as an opposition to "traditional" scholarship or just a method, but rather as

> "an un-assimilate-able challenge to the boxing-in of critical thinking represented by linear metrics of research achievements – metrics through which power flows, as it always does, unequally. It continues to unravel basic assumptions around knowledge, how to create it, how to share it, and how to put resources at the disposal of those who would devote time and energy to research-creating."[2]

This understanding of research-creation acknowledges and alludes to the inherent power dynamics present within the creation and dissemination of knowledge through institutionalized frameworks. Building upon this concept I want to focus on two specific aspects of

research-creation—first, "how to share it," and second, how to unravel the histories and complexities of power relations that come with knowledge sharing—both of which are deeply intertwined.

UNDERSTANDING DECOLONIZATION AND KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

Decolonization is a complex term that has been a historically defining feature of the 20th century global politics. Yet, a single comprehensive definition of this term is difficult to narrow down. Jan Jansen and Jürgen Osterhammel provide a comprehensive outlook to understand decolonization as a historical moment for different former colonies as well as a process of realization within the previously colonized people regarding their political independence.[3] The crux of the argument revolves around the matter of political control on a territorial and international level—when and how this control was relinquished by the colonial powers and how it was perceived by the ones who were colonized. It focusses on the relationship of the people with the state and the colonial powers, and how the international order was restructured. They encourage us to also look at decolonization as a process, especially with an approach they term "decolonization from below," in order to understand it as a continuing process. With respect to education and pedagogy Jansen and Osterhammel pose the question,

> "To what extent did the colonial power intervene in local society through cultural and educational policy (directed by both the state and missionaries)? What difference did colonial intervention make at the primary education (as indicated, for example, by the degree of literacy) and secondary education levels? Did it contribute to the emergence of Western- trained and Western- educated groups among the colonized population?"[4]

These questions form an important basis for understanding the pervasive nature of colonialism and its continued effect on education and future generations. It urges us to evaluate the methods presently

available to the previously and currently colonized people through which education is imparted and received. Further study is required to see how many of those methods are designed and handed down through the colonial infrastructure and how many are the traditional forms of pedagogy that predate colonization of the territory and the people. These questions are important for understanding how knowledge has been mobilized within these communities, and what purpose it serves.

Several Indigenous scholars view decolonization beyond governance, transfer of power, and international world order—with a reflection on how it can be seen as a method of cultural, social, and pedagogical reclamation of their identity that is not built on erasing the past but moving towards the future. Kathleen Absolon sees decolonization, especially within pedagogy, as a process of "detoxing and clearing out the colonizing knowledge and practices that we have ingested and adopted."[5] Absolon focusses on the role of educators within this process of decolonization, which can act as a catalyst for the decolonization of the minds of future generations. Leyla Tavernaro-Haidarian urges an approach to decolonization as a process that does not dismiss or oppose in entirety the colonial past and the neo-colonial present of the people, instead to build upon and evolve from those realities.[6] To see decolonization as simply a reaction to colonization and therefore denounce the effects and consequences of it in favor of trying to return to the precolonial glory of social, cultural, and political processes of the erstwhile colonized territories creates a disconnect with the lived realities of the people. This understanding of decolonization, therefore, becomes particularly useful when we are trying gauge a method of knowledge and artistic mobilization for a territory and people who continue their existence within a neo-/colonial reality in the present-day, such as Kashmir.

DECOLONIZING ESSENCE OF RESEARCH-CREATION

Research-creation fosters creativity in the way knowledge is created and perceived—through different collaborative and participatory methods. The struggles of having this creativity

acknowledged as research and knowledge itself have been extensive within academic frameworks. Legitimizing different forms of creativity and creations as knowledge and knowledge systems has been the at the forefront of the battle between research-creation scholars and practitioners and university administrations. Far from being over, the fight needs to be expanded into revolutionizing and revitalizing the methods of knowledge dissemination themselves and incorporating creative forms of knowledge mobilization as research-creation. Glen Lowry acknowledges the potential of creative practice in research to pave the path towards decolonizing education that encompasses understanding of knowledge systems and cultural products as already established within Indigenous communities.[7] Paul Agu Igwe et al. summarize what decolonization could mean within research practices,

> "Decolonizing emphasizes inclusivity, consulting, shared responsibility and making knowledge creation more diverse and representative of different cultures, languages, identities and histories."[8]

This requires acknowledging and understanding the networks of coloniality present within the neoliberal university model and how it engages and supports the historical colonial legacy of knowledge creation and its dissemination. This legacy has facilitated the corporatized outlook towards knowledge creation and structurally is designed to support neo-colonial occupations (of land and education systems). Erin Manning explores the ways in which art is conceptualized for the purposes of research-creation; it requires reorientation in what we consider art to be in the first place. The emphasis needs to be on the thought and the process—which will illuminate the path through which we understand art.

> "Research- creation is not about objects. It is a mode of activity that is at its most interesting when it is constitutive of new processes [...] New processes will likely create new forms of knowledge that may have no means of evaluation within current disciplinary models."[9]

This displaces the emphasis from outcome-based research and art-creation towards the journey of its production.

There is a fundamental aspect of creativity that guerilla technique (in any field) beckons. As Glenda Amayo Caldwell et al. describe it,

> "Guerilla activism uses unexpected, unconventional approaches in tandem with interactivity to produce unique and thought-provoking outcomes, usually with a political agenda in mind. These techniques of guerilla activism have been adapted to many different domains including marketing, communication, gardening, craftivism, theatre, poetry, and art."[10]

Guerilla techniques or tactics urge the mind to utilize the resources present around oneself and transform the lack and shortcomings into strength towards a common goal. An example of a guerilla intellectual and social activist movement is the Guerilla Girls Movement—a rebellion by women in New York City since 1985 against the lack of representation of women and artists of colour within art exhibitions, museums, and galleries.[11] This movement had to devise its own framework for rebellion. By subverting the language used by their oppressors (through statistics and bold graphics) they created their own language for communicating the discrimination, educating the public of the process through which the discrimination was taking place and who it was benefitting, and creatively engaging and recruiting more people within their fold. The methods used here were designed to shock and evoke the community it was targeted towards—within which lies the recipe for its success.

Guerilla technique rests upon the idea of a group of people—depending upon the community of people inspired by a common cause—to work towards its fulfilment and upliftment. This, therefore, views knowledge mobilization as a community affair rather than an individual responsibility—a practice prevalent in many cultures of the Global South and Indigenous communities. There cannot be an institutionalized framework for such mobilization as it runs the risk of bulldozing pre-existing ways of community-based knowledge mobilization. Instead, it needs to adapt and learn based on the context

within which it is required and emerging. We need to embrace pedagogy and processes of knowledge mobilization as a living entity that can transform, adapt, and grow based on how it is nurtured and in what circumstances it is built to thrive. Rigidity with respect to defining and confining the parameters of such knowledge mobilization does disservice to what research-creation creates. Especially in neo-colonized territories with political violence, having any kind of set framework for such mobilization and pedagogical practices runs the risk similar to making guerilla warfare tactics into a framework—both depend on novelty and creativity for sustenance against a formalized and institutionalized framework of the intellectual (and physical) violence of the occupying state. Therefore, it is imperative that we focus on creativity in the process of knowledge dissemination and mobilization along with the creation of knowledge within research-creation.

UNDERSTANDING NEO-/COLONIALISM IN KASHMIR

During the British colonization of the Indian subcontinent, Kashmir was never under the direct rule of either the East India Company or later the British Crown. Instead, the British had formed several alliances with local smaller kingdoms, one of whom—the Dogras—ruled Kashmir on their behalf. The annexation of Kashmir by the Dogras was preceded by the first Anglo-Sikh War (1845-1846), a coup, and finally a transaction between Gulab Singh and the British known as the Amritsar Treaty of 1846.[12] In this treaty, the erstwhile governor of the Sikh Empire paid 75,000 nanakshahi rupees for the territory now known as Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, and Baltistan.[13] In order to pay for the cost of the territory that East India company made the Dogra ruler pay; the people of Kashmir were taxed heavily, to the point that many scholars[14] at the time[15] and now[16] consider Kashmiris as having been sold by the British into slavery to the Dogra ruler. What followed was a systematic exclusion of Kashmiri Muslims from the services and employment within the state, with most being tied down to heavily taxed agricultural practices. It proliferated the system of bonded and un-

paid forced labour known in Kashmir as *Begari*.[17] Under *Begari*, Kashmiris were forced into manual labour which was either bonded or unpaid,[18] and the agricultural produce in some places was to be handed over in its entirety to the Crown (under the threat of treason).[19] This created a systemic economic disparity between the landowning class and the rest of the Kashmiri people, the majority of whom were forced into abject poverty.[20],[21]

With Dogras in power, the British could indirectly control Kashmir for resources, fetishized leisure in its scenic beauty,[22] and critical access to Afghanistan for the Great Game[23] (coined by Rudyard Kipling, the term was used for the imperialist struggles between the British and the Russian empires over Central Asia, specifically focused on Afghanistan). This indirect form of control exercised in Kashmir would become emblematic of how present-day global powers extend their neo-colonial control over the territory. While the British continued their colonial control over India, their missionary activities travelled to Kashmir. The narrativization of typecasting indigenous people as primitive and savage was followed in Kashmir as well, as is evident through the British ethnographic, anthropological, and photographic work conducted in Kashmir.[24],[25] The "corrective" measure was introduced in the form of missionary educational institutions that refused to acknowledge ancient and long-held traditions of education amongst the Kashmiris and forbade the use of Kashmiri language in classrooms. These educational institutions (that still stand in Kashmir today continuing the restriction on students to speak in Kashmiri) form the initiation of erasure of traditional Kashmiri pedagogy and language.

Despite the independence of the Indian subcontinent from the British rule in 1947, the colonial occupation of Kashmir never ended. It was handed from the British-Dogra alliance to the Indian state. As the subcontinent was partitioned between India and Pakistan in 1947, Kashmir was a politically volatile and complicated issue with both countries claiming the territory for themselves. It resulted in the first Indo-Pak War of 1947.[26] It was because of this war that the territory of Kashmir was divided between the two countries, now known

as Pakistan-administered Kashmir and Indian-occupied Kashmir. Upon the United Nations intervention in 1948, both countries signed a peace accord, in which it was agreed that the question of Kashmir's political future would be decided through a referendum/plebiscite which would ask the Kashmiri population to choose between three options: integration with India or with Pakistan or staying independent.[27] This is the cornerstone of Kashmir's struggle for freedom because India never conducted the plebiscite in the region and has been illegally occupying the territory since then. Indian state has continued to chip away at the autonomy of Kashmir, with the recent assault on the political autonomy of Kashmir occurring through the unilateral revocation of Article 370 in 2019 that had safeguarded the semi-autonomous status of Kashmir within the Indian constitution.

The occupation of Kashmir is rooted in neocolonialism and neoliberalism. Just as indirectly controlling Kashmir was pivotal for the British Empire to keep a check on the expansion of the Soviet empire in Central Asia in the 19th century, so is the current occupation of Kashmir by India crucial for the Western powers in order to keep a check on the expansion of Chinese influence in the region.[28,29] The occupation of Kashmir is accompanied by efforts to rewrite the history and destroy the archives of Kashmiri people. One of the ways the integration of Kashmir is coerced and forced is through the narratives of *development*—reminiscent of the colonial adage of "civilizing the primitive people." It is achieved through extensive control over educational institutions and manipulation of media industries to fit the narrative of the occupying state.

Controlling forms and content of education in Kashmir is an extension of Indian colonial occupation of Kashmiris. In recent years, under the Narendra Modi government, the push for annexation of Kashmir has been masked under the narrative of *development*. It is important to understand the nuances of the term *development* when used with respect to colonized territories. Social, economic, and pedagogical changes and *development* are often used for advancing neoliberal capitalist goals entrenched in neocolonial control of occupied territories.[30] Within such a complex structure of control, *devel-*

opment serves not the people but the neoliberal and neocolonial interests of the occupiers. The propaganda of *development* is peddled through an elaborate control on media representation of the colonized people as is seen being exercised by the Indian state in Kashmir.[31],[32] Therefore, my focus on media pedagogy within Kashmir is to understand how it can become a tool for decolonization within a territory that continues to be colonized. This will help redefine the idea of *development* to mean advancement of the movement for freedom and community upliftment. While decolonization as a moment of governance and political transfer of power is yet to be achieved for Kashmir, my research focusses on decolonization as a social and pedagogical process that can sustain resistance—intellectually, artistically, and politically. The suggested method of decolonization of media pedagogy and practices is proposed to go alongside the state inflicted and continued colonization of media industries and educational institutions in Kashmir.

TOWARDS GUERILLA PEDAGOGY

> *"The master's tools will never dismantle master's house."*
> *(Audre Lorde)*[33]

Lisa Weems identifies two important tasks when approaching guerilla pedagogy. First is the apparent unconditionality on specific spaces being designated for education, which views these spaces as the *only* spaces for educational purposes.[34] Her call for displacing the fixity of physical geography with respect to education comes from Gayatri Spivak's[35] idea of the "need to re-territorialize the academy," whereby there is intensive requirement to reckon what constitutes as knowledge production itself and where this knowledge is produced. The second task in understanding guerilla pedagogy is acknowledging the "histories of hurt" that educational spaces have supported. Weems encourages us to make explicit the political and ethical complexities present within pedagogy that often stay implicit. The networked and continued coloniality within education is one such complexity that demands to be faced directly.

Therefore, there is a sense of psychological and physical geography associated with pedagogy which the guerilla technique attempts to dismantle. This is particularly crucial in spaces of political conflict and neocolonized territories where the educational spaces would be harbouring and exacerbating the histories of hurt, and culture of restrictions. Neocolonial occupation in Kashmir comes with the erasure of native languages, cultures, and histories of the occupied people. The network of oppression has continued from the British colonization of the Indian subcontinent who built and ran several missionary schools in the territory, the control of which was handed down to the Indian dioceses after India's independence from the British monarchy in 1947. The colonizing powers switched hands, but the methods of suppression and erasure have continued. Therefore, educational institutions have a long history of being embroiled with the colonial powers, creating a hierarchy of knowledge whereby the knowledge and language of the colonizer are seen as more valuable within the curriculum, and the other forms of learning as lesser. This, however, is not a regressive call for dissolution of classroom learning and educational institutions but a constructive appeal to build upon existing structures so they may serve the people they are designed for, in ways they need it. And if the existing structures cannot be built upon, then a different foundation should be envisioned.

Pedagogy is performance. Therefore, the anti-establishment tendencies of guerilla pedagogy demand that there be a re-evaluation of the performance of power that pedagogues seem to exhibit over the idea of knowledge creation and its dissemination. It also beckons to revaluate the pre-conceived requirements of subservience of the receivers of the knowledge. My focus here is on the educational spaces in South Asia where the cultural emphasis on the hierarchy of power between the teacher and the student is almost unsurmountable. Culturally, the role of the teacher is seen as sacred and is embedded with religious and social significance, transforming the position of the pedagogue in acute hierarchy with respect to the student. Therefore, breaking down the performance of pedagogy is a crucial primary step towards breaking down of power structures facilitated by

such educational apparatus. It is important to acknowledge the aspects of our own social and cultural fabric that do not serve us, but instead function in ways that promote social and economic exclusions, based on class, caste, religion, etcetera. As Weems suggests, guerilla pedagogy does not want the performativity of pedagogy to be eliminated, but transformed in ways that supports the people it is designed for. Here the performance of pedagogy is constantly evolving, it changes from one day to the next, and is fundamentally fluid in composition, taking upon itself several affective and seemingly familial roles to mobilize knowledge. Building upon this analysis, I suggest that this fluidity of performance is required on both sides—from the pedagogues and the students—further allowing us to create an extensive network of agile educational practices.

By centring the bodies and identities of the people in these educational networks, we can remap what resistance can look like through transformed pedagogical practices. Resistance is not simply of the powers placed outside of the colonized bodies and communities, but resistance is also of our inner practices that create further fissures within the community and unequal distribution of power and resources amongst ourselves. One of the ways we can transform resistance and pedagogical practices is through exploring the idea of intimacy within the community and colonized people. The power of intimacy with respect to the colonized bodies was primarily theorized by Lisa Lowe,[36] whereby the colonization of the four continents was achieved through the manipulation of intimacies of the colonized people. She undertakes this analysis through three tangents: the forced intimacies of the bodies of the slave labourers forced into migration from Asia and Africa, the forced sexual and domestic labour of the colonized bodies as well as the regulation of their own intimacy with each other, and finally through the analysis of the distinctions created amongst the colonized people in order to prevent intimacy amongst them beyond racial and ethnic boundaries. This idea of intimacy has been complicated in the neo-colonial occupation of Kashmir by the Indian state as well. Through the counter-insurgency tactic of breaking down the freedom movement in Kashmir, India has created what Mohammad Junaid[37] has theorized as the

complicating of the discourse of loyalty amongst the Kashmiri people. The recruitment of Kashmiris into the folds of *Ikhwanis* (counterinsurgent militia) and *mukbirs* (informants) by the Indian state, has led to complicating the intimacy within the community. It has problematized the building of a foundation of solidarity and resistance. It is the direct context within which I propose the utility of guerilla pedagogy as a form of creating and mobilizing knowledge in Kashmir. Through the combination of the creativity that research-creation supports and the flexibility that guerilla pedagogy provides, I see a framework through which the knowledge and histories produced in a neocolonized territory can be preserved, as well as new skills and information can be disseminated amongst the people. This is why I see building a fluid framework for guerilla pedagogy in neocolonized territories as research-creation itself, as well as a method of knowledge mobilization for research-creation projects that can stand to benefit the people of neocolonized spaces.

Evaluating knowledge mobilization *as* research-creation itself has the ability to prioritize the affective dimension of pedagogy—both in teaching and in learning, which has been described as a "pedagogy of discomfort" by Megan Boler.[38] It allows for broadening the imagination of what constitutes pedagogical work, and particularly incorporates the decolonial ways of teaching, learning, and understanding. The emotional response is intertwined with the ethical process within the pedagogy of discomfort that gives primacy to the humanity and sentimentality within the teachers and the students. When coupled with the unpredictability and the perpetual danger of existing and living within a conflict zone, the research-creation pedagogy cannot be restricted to a formula, system, or even a plan. It must transform and evolve with the changing situation. Whether it is an affective change or the unpredictability of a volatile political process, guerilla pedagogy repels a systematic approach to knowledge and art itself. It supports and responds to a deeply creative process of knowledge dissemination which can be provided by research-creation into pedagogy itself.

Guerilla pedagogy views knowledge within a culturally specific context as a living, breathing entity that transforms and evolves as the circumstances around it undergo a change. It resists fixity and codification, and turns into a form that grows based on the needs of the people it has to serve. It complements the changes that can occur at political or social levels, transforming the content and composition to better suit its learners in the context they are embodying at that moment. It requires knowing the subjects of your knowledge mobilization, and not simply to regurgitate an institutional form of that knowledge as a one-size-fits-all. It is a call for allowing flexibility within your pedagogy to complement the ever-changing nature of politics in a neocolonized and conflict-based territory.

The resistance to fixity is also encouraged in how we perform our roles as pedagogues and learners, for there might be an immediate need for the learners to transform into pedagogues for a different group. It begs to revaluate the fixity in the role of the pedagogue, where we have to open up to the possibility of the receivers of this knowledge becoming as immediate pedagogues of the skills and knowledge thereafter—resulting in a domino effect of knowledge creation and dissemination through the masses. Therefore, guerilla pedagogy can function in smaller groups of students or artists with a teacher—learning and evaluating artistic and knowledge skills that are further transferred amongst the people—outside of institutional boundaries and restrictions. At its essence, this emphasizes a non-hierarchical pedagogical practice.

GUERILLA PEDAGOGY AS RESEARCH-CREATION IN KASHMIR

A fixed safe space is a luxury that is extremely rare in a neocolonized territory, especially with the onslaught of an expanded surveillance infrastructure (digital and offline). Therefore, a culturally embedded and politically resistive knowledge, when in need of mobilization, cannot be fixed into a space where the people meet physically or virtually. This is also a way of acknowledging the diversity in the ways people exist and thrive in a culture—and acknowledging the transferring of knowledge in spaces of

being as a community as a valid form of learning. For example, people congregating at the threshold of the bread shop (*kandurwan*) in Kashmir in the morning after the *fajr* prayers is a space where day-to-day news and information are exchanged. This also becomes the space in the slow hours of the afternoon to discuss politics and social issues at length with the community members. With the ubiquitous presence of these shops throughout every part of the landscape of Kashmir, they are the breathing and thriving cultural, political, and social centres of their community and locality. Having flexibility in the perception of space for pedagogical practices allow for acknowledgment and utilization of existing spaces of congregation and exchange of learning for the purpose of knowledge mobilization. This pedagogy has to imbue flexibility in the space where it is practiced—to fit the needs of the people with whom it is practiced. Therefore, resistance to fixity is required towards its composition, in the roles of the pedagogue and the receiver, and space within and through which it is mobilized. Through such resistance in pedagogy, what is fundamentally resisted is the inherent sense of coercion that is emblematic of Western pedagogical practices.[39] Instead the focus is on the affective, cultural, and spiritual well-being of the people involved in such a practice.

Another example of agile and culturally embedded pedagogical practice is the centuries-old religious pedagogy in Kashmir in the form of Sufi shrines, mosques, and *madrasas*. Although the hierarchical role within educators' and students' relationships is reinforced in such scenarios, the affective form of education is best understood in how these spaces used to operate to impart spiritual and religious education in the territory. In my conversation with a local in Baramulla, while explaining how their tutor taught them the significance of different prayers, he recounted an incident where the tutor brought homecooked *halwa* (a dessert) to the mosque for his students and taught them to memorize the prayer recited before and after finishing the meal. The same tutor had to teach his students recitations for climbing a hill and coming down from it, and took the students on a hike to a nearby hill whilst repeating the prayers alongside them. Within the colonial reality, these educational spaces existed as a form

of after-school activity for children in Kashmir, but previously used to be the only form of institutionalized educational for people. The education, therefore, was experienced as an embedded and affective process for both the educator and the students, in the language and framework familiar to the people. However, as suggested by Tavernaro-Haidarian, decolonization of education should not mean having to renounce the present reality altered by the impact of colonization but finding a way to build upon it. Therefore, we need to find effective strategies to combine culturally embedded forms of education with the avenues available to the people. This is not a call for dismantling or discrediting the institutionalized education in Kashmir, but for finding ways in which the resources and infrastructure can be utilized to sustain the people and support a community-centred idea of development.

By being conscious of the culture within which the knowledge is mobilized, it allows for the practice to evolve in forms which respect the already socially established ways of functioning. This then moves away from the colonial tendency within pedagogy of "educating the primitive," a model introduced through the institutionalized framework of early missionaries (as has already been done in Kashmir), and instead building upon the already established forms of knowledge mobilization that have been part of the society for centuries and generations. This also acknowledges the value of the knowledge that has already been imparted and exchanged through such methods, such as the intergenerational knowledge of childbirth and caring for post-partum mothers, effective forms of resolving familial disputes, and horticultural practices. The need for decolonization is not simply for the methods but for the content as well—which practices and repositories are considered to be valid forms of knowledge and learning, and where that knowledge is exchanged. This idea has been effectively theorized in the works concerned with "culturally sustaining pedagogy" (CSP), which views state-sanctioned and institutionalized pedagogy as functioning on an "assimilationist project" simultaneously destroying the "languages, literacies, cultures, and histories" of the people it is aimed towards.[40] CSP therefore is focussed on

sustaining and preserving communities and cultures rather than assimilating and disintegrating them.

Pedagogical decolonization in Kashmir has to be approached in the same way as guerilla warfare. Guerilla pedagogy in Kashmir then is a form of political resistance against neocolonial occupation by the Indian state. It is a form of creative dissemination of skills and knowledge within a landscape of intensive surveillance which requires decentralized control for the safety of the participants involved, and it requires iterative forms of mobilization in smaller groups to create a domino effect of distribution (of both artworks and knowledge). It fundamentally requires breaking down our understanding of industry-based artwork or institutionalized education in order to dissipate boundaries that are set in both fields. These boundaries and practices function to exclude several marginalized groups and populations from having fair access to either and to propagate the colonial occupation. Guerilla pedagogy as research-creation itself was a forced experimentation through my confrontation with the transformed political and social landscape in Kashmir. I embarked upon my fieldwork in Summer 2023—visiting Kashmir after the revocation of Article 370 from the Indian constitution in 2019.[41] Post-2019, the political landscape had seen a rapid shift because of the expanded nature of surveillance (digital and interpersonal/informants) deployed by the Indian state against the Kashmiri people. The revocation of Article 370[42] meant that Kashmiri people are no longer stewards of their land.[43] Therefore, the state surveillance directed at identifying any dissent amongst the Kashmiri people could translate to loss of life, livelihood, and land. Under this context, institutionalized education (which was already biased and skewed towards forwarding the agenda of the occupying Indian state) became further inaccessible in preserving Kashmiri history, culture, and resistance. This is the context that I was unaware of when I visited to conduct the fieldwork in the summer of 2023. The plan was to teach the upcoming filmmakers and film students methods of creating low-resolution films and artwork[44] that could be disseminated over the low internet bandwidth of 2G (in the eventuality that the Indian state shuts down or restricts

internet in the region as a form of communication/dissent suppression[45]) and also would require less technical cost.

However, under expanded surveillance infrastructure, it became increasingly difficult to teach methods of art-creation to people that could sustain and support their resistance. The time was instead focussed on designing ways to communicate and gather the people interested in these skills without jeopardizing their (or my) safety, and then equipping them with skills and software that could be communicated and taught by them to other groups of people they find within their network. It had to develop and proliferate in a guerilla activist fashion, as this is the only way epistemological and artistic resistance can be sustained in a neocolonized territory. At the end of the fieldwork, after analyzing the data and fieldnotes, I was able to ascertain that the primary intention of the project—which was teaching several students and upcoming artists technicalities of alternative documentary filmmaking and low-resolution filmmaking—was achieved, although not in the numbers I was hoping. The transformations that kept changing the project, and the security and surveillance hurdles that kept minimizing my capability for interacting with the people in Kashmir, were compensated with developing a teaching methodology which would work in the form of a domino effect, whereby the information and skills I had managed to pass to small groups of students and artists in Kashmir, I would hope would be transferred further by them to their own smaller groups of artists that they know. Since the project was not designed to deal with these hurdles and was not conceived to focus on transforming the curriculum or method of dissemination, there wasn't a concrete system of reciprocal channels of communication established with the students in order to gauge the reach of the skills imparted to them in the initial stage. Therefore, this research is a re-evaluation of the fieldwork within a context that was not its initial purpose, but which became its reality on the ground. Building upon Manning's understanding of research-creation which views the process in itself as valuable, I view guerilla pedagogy in Kashmir, therefore, both as an object (of art) as well as a method of artistic and pedagogical dissemination.

CONCLUSION

Research-creation needs to break loose from the circular trajectory of creating knowledge within academia and art galleries and disseminating said knowledge within the same restrictive confines. This essay views research-creation as a fertile avenue for conducting guerilla pedagogy within contexts such as that of Kashmir, and revolutionizing not just what we consider research (which it has been doing since its inception) but also how we mobilize it. We can then possibly see (as an example) the development curriculum of guerilla pedagogy as research-creation and its execution as its dissemination/knowledge mobilization. In this way, the process of dissemination is built into the framework of research-creation itself. The act of creation is not seen as the formal conclusion of the research-creation project—not the end but a means to an end. Research-creation can therefore facilitate the processes of guerilla pedagogy, creatively evolving it for different political and epistemological circumstances—catering it to the audience and students who require it the most in the way they need it the most. It can respond to the call, articulated by Weems, that "our task is to engage the world's subaltern in places where they speak, unheard."[46]

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