Article

Developing Disobedience: A Decolonial Childist Perspective on School Strikes for Climate Justice

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Abstract

What do the school strikes for climate teach (adults)? Beyond being apt responses to democratic exclusions, children's and young people's strikes also have educative potential (including for adults) through counterweighing formal education, as the authors previously argued. This paper continues to explore the educational import of children and young people's climate contentions as part of a more explicit decolonial agenda. In a first step, the paper sketches the altered conditions under which children stage school strikes/occupations and highlights increasing global connections drawn also by strikes in the North. Next, departing from a reading of Socrates's canonical defense of obedience to the law, it offers a reading of the political economy and developmentalism of neoliberal, Anthropocene schooling as part of a modern *oikos* that depends on children's work in their roles as "pupils." Finally, children's and young people's activism is approached as resistance to colonially shaped epistemic injustice.

Keywords

school strikes for climate, misopedy, civil disobedience, epistemic injustice, decolonial childism

> [W]hat fault do you find with us and the state, that you are trying to destroy us? [. . .W]hen you were born and nurtured and educated, could you say to begin with that you were not our offspring and our slave, you yourself and your ancestors? (Plato, Crito, ca. 360 B.C.E./1966, 50d-e)

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Following the recent wave of young people's activism, we performed a childist reading of the "school strikes for climate" by emphasizing the educational potential for adults in privileged contexts (Biswas & Mattheis, 2022). Reading the school strikes in the tradition(s) of civil disobedience and supplementing those vindications that highlighted their political/democratic urgency, our central claim was that the school strikes have educative potential because they serve as a counterweight to formal education in overheated times. We highlighted that young people can contribute to the political education of adults (Biswas & Mattheis, 2022). In this paper, our guiding question remains: How should adults respond to school strikes for children's climate-related civil disobedience in the educational system? But now, we also emphasize its necessary follow-up: How can we relate childist analyses of children and youth's educational climate activism to decolonial agendas, especially in privileged contexts?

We uphold the notion of school strikes as politically motivated defiance of school attendance, with relevant connections (and demarcations) from more traditional adult "labor" strikes. But we reaccentuate our previous stance, for one, by relating to the updated situation young activists face. The school strike movement underwent important changes, faced with limitations to the uptake of demands and the feasibility of tactics of mass mobilization during the COVID-19 pandemic. Far from running out of steam, however, school strikers have increasingly emphasized global organization and solidarity and reconfigured the notions of generation and temporality they appeal to. Perhaps most important, engagements with the intersections of coloniality, adultism, and climate injustice have become increasingly indispensable, expanding on what Greta Thunberg, Luisa Neubauer, and Angela Valenzuela wrote in 2019: "The climate crisis is not just about the environment. It is a crisis of human rights, of justice, and of political will. Colonial, racist, and patriarchal systems of oppression have created and fueled it" (Thunberg et al., 2019, para. 12). Similarly, for the first time, the international climate scientists' community acknowledges the historical and ongoing significance of colonialism for the climate crisis with high confidence (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Sixth Assessment Report, 2022, p. 12). Rather than stopping at recognitions of the unequal inheritance of the intergenerational costs of the climate crisis, we need to increasingly foreground the colonial and racist dimensions pertaining to misopedy[1] by engaging the coloniality of schools, laws, and childhood. Our premise is that the "figure of the child" is central to colonialism (Rollo, 2018a).

We nonetheless focus on privileged countries in our earlier as well as current work because we theorize from the contexts where we are located. In addition to an acknowledgment of the situatedness of our perspectives, this restriction also coheres with a methodological premise of our project, namely that coloniality is not only to be addressed in the (formally liberated) colony but indeed in the colonial metropolis or "mother- or fatherland." Here, childhood and education represent crucial sites for decolonial efforts: the legacies of colonialism are denied or upheld in school curricula, often nothing less than a bulwark against anti- and decolonial agendas. Still now, local patterns of relating between adults and children are rendered global benchmarks for ranking degrees of "civilization." While we do not make generalizing empirical claims about Germany and Norway, our contribution might be theoretically useful for empirical studies in these or similar contexts.

Reviews of empirical research on young people's climate activism since 2018 have recognized the significance of our earlier childist methodological approach for observers of young people's climate activism (Neas et al., 2022, p. 10). While conceptions of childist perspectives vary, there is a consensus that childist perspectives imply challenging and transforming adultist norms (Biswas et al., 2023). Decolonial childism specifically addresses how a "European" type of generational relation became globally hegemonic as part of the colonial extension of racial capitalism. As part of a broader agenda of material change and reparation in the wake of and against colonial legacies, childist efforts particularly address the confluences of adult-centric domination and coloniality in the family and at school, the global stratification of childhoods, and the imperial mobilization of the "figure of the child." They also consider the epistemological loss connected to colonial ways of conceiving education. Childist perspectives may also resonate in the work of Lam and Trott (2024) who have made similar observations about the significance of addressing adultism in intergenerational climate research for decolonial research practices.

Focusing on the notions of development and disobedience, the theses we put forward in this paper are the following: (a) Children's and young people's activism at/around school still serves as an important counterweight to formal education, but we need to revisit it given the need to address decoloniality in white privileged contexts, (b) The decolonial (and) childist demand for adults to *let* children *teach* and *learn from* them, needs to be tied to analyses of intergenerational epistemic injustice.

To ground these claims, we first expand our childist notion of school strikes, before delineating what we take to be the updated conditions of contemporary troubles and activist tactics. This leads us to a consideration of the coloniality of schooling and childhood, which necessitates a discussion of developmentalism. Picking up on the concept of post-Anthropocene pedagogies, we then focus on young people and children's strikes as a way of resisting intergenerational epistemic injustice).

Overall, we contribute to emerging literature at the intersections of coloniality, misopedy, development, and Anthropocene destruction as well as responsible pedagogy, transgenerational activism, and prefiguration. The required recognition here, in theory and practice, goes beyond seeing the role that child and youth activism has played in putting climate justice on the global political agenda. It concerns the very structure of childhood in a contemporary overheated world, its institutionalized spatio-temporality in an adultist political landscape (cf. Snir, 2023), as well as in economy and ecology in their shared etymological sense of *oikos* which is "simultaneously about place, resources and the community that dwells in that place by sustaining the resources at hand" (Biswas, 2023, p. 3). Childism as an intergenerational scholarly and social intervention then intimately concerns deeply interdependent structures of adulthood too—not least in the schooling sector.

Strikingly Educational: Revisiting and Assessing the New Landscapes of Activism

When thinking and writing together about children's climate activism from 2019 to 2020, we witnessed "hard adultist opposition on the one hand and the unstoppable

momentum of the school strikes for climate on the other" (Biswas & Mattheis, 2022, p. 150). Despite continued polemic dismissals of children's climate activism and the perseverance and new coalitioning of Fridays for Future (FFF) activists, neither of these observations still holds in the same way. Although as we and others pointed out (Gorman, 2021; Hunger & Hutter, 2021; Soler i Martí et al., 2020), activists found creative engagements with it, the endurant COVID-19 crisis significantly hampered activists' strategy of mass mobilization, and no rally has returned to pre-COVID precocious sizes. The invasion of Ukraine and concomitant global inflation also necessitated new political analytics and alliances. On a representative political level, further climate conferences and commitments came and went, entailing significant labor on all scales of organization, care, and advocacy, but hardly any substantive changes. The COP27 conference in Egypt concluded with an agreement to establish a loss and damage fund for vulnerable nations, mostly in the South, but no substantive move to change the fossil-fueled capitalist economic systems that have been perpetuating loss and damage and serving interests of the privileged. This fuels the misopedic changes that are already harshly affecting children who are among the most vulnerable in the so-called Anthropocene (cf. Malone, 2018). If activists previously seemed unstoppable (and indeed re-en-chanted the counter-globalization protests' "another world is possible"), their ride appeared to have reached significant roadblocks.

Still, in the contexts in which we are writing, intersectional solidarities seem to have found new entryways. In Norway, the Grandparents Action for Climate has been emerging as a strong political support for the young. Even now-famous Greta Thunberg visited the country's capital Oslo to join the protests for human rights of the Indigenous Sami community in wind turbines controversy of the Fosen region, denouncing the turbine plans as "green colonialism" (Undheim et al, 2023). In Germany, the penalization by schools and other authorities, such as parents, which activists had to face waned somewhat. Scorn and derision—long the preferred response of politicians (cf. Meade, 2020)—was increasingly traded for a rhetoric of enclosure of the school strikes, with increasing reductions of the complexity of the movement to the pop-culturalized heroine figure of Thunberg and with the German head of state expressing nostalgia for the oh-so-tame school strikes in light of the "strategic errors" of their supposed alternative, the Climate Gluers [Klimakleber] (cf. Agence France-Presse, 2022).

Strategy is indeed a keyword, as are errors of interpretation. Regardless of what precisely one makes of the often problematically apocalyptic Public Relations of new groups such as, in the German context, "Letzte Generation" [Last Generation] or how one assesses the shifting attitudes of FFF to these, school strikes were never meant as a polite knock on politicians' doors. From the outset, strikers demanded *systemic change*, through a child-led[2] and education-based strike. That this systemic question also links to economic realities and labor struggles has only been reinforced by strategies reflecting shifting political economic realities, such as the first joint organization with labor unions in the German version of the March 2023 global strike.

More generally, school strikes appear intimately connected to labor strikes. After all, children's schoolwork is a defining part of the modern Western economy (Qvortrup, 2001) as it plays out in contemporary capitalism. We elaborate on this in the next

section. And like feminist strikes, including on care work, with their internationalist socialist history, school strikes thematize the connections between productive and reproductive spheres (especially visible in the ensuing worries about parents' labor participation or loss of preparation for the labor market, as well as birth strikes; see Arnold-Baker, 2022; Brown, 2019). Still, analogies and disanalogies to labor strikes need to be considered in concrete cases, with attention to dimensions such as legal consequences and rights, alliances and unionization, the economic positions from which people strike, and the temporal duration of the strike. Children's and youth's economic and political positionality of striking, and the impressive impact on adultist structures despite their marginalization, appear indispensable for theorizing (climate) strikes. In any case, such intimacies reach far beyond FFF in the history of school strikes. To name only one formative situation, the Birmingham protests from 1963 also began accelerating with a school strike after specific boycott actions targeting enterprises did not show the intended effect (Levinson, 2012).

Thus, the strategy of school striking was never one with a docile and tame history nor has it been a stable and uniform one. Furthermore, nor are the lines between school strikes and other forms of youth and children's climate activism clear, as testified by synergies between school strikes and anticapitalist direct action against fossil infrastructure, for example, "Anti Kohle Kidz" and the "Lützerath Lebt!" organizing in the German context. Moreover, even strategies focusing on the sites of education have evolved. At the time of writing this article, under the banner of "End Fossil Occupy,"[3] high school students (as well as university students) in German-speaking countries are moving from strategies of boycotting schools to claiming and occupying these institutions. This reveals that some school strikes (e.g., in Hong Kong) aim to paralyze institutions. In doing so, they align themselves with demands for debt cuts for the South.

Another connected aspect of the new alliances and strategies emerging in the activist landscape is important: children and youth have become wary of attempts at co-opting their activism or of corporate and political "youth-washing." Increasingly recognizing and framing themselves as part of larger climate movements, young activists have also–partially—decentered the figure of the (ideal white) child both as coming to the rescue of adults and as the sole ground why our world needs rescue. Activists seem to have become more reflective of the way geopolitical agendas play out in and through childhoods (cf. Burman, 2022) and how children become repositories for adult fantasies (Lakind & Adsit-Morris, 2018). Their links to movements of various sizes cohere with (and can perhaps light the way for) a shift within adult-led childhood studies to focus on socio-economic structures or questions of political economy (Spyrou, 2017).

These historic-political-economic dimensions are connected to the geopolitics of coloniality. Hardly the first to do so, movements of the Global North, such as those in Germany, have increasingly attended to the colonial legacies and foregrounded the necessity to analyze them in approaching climate justice. Our earlier work (Biswas & Mattheis 2022) admittedly did little to counter tendencies of the stifling heroization of young girl activists (Taft, 2020). Intersectional considerations are arguably only entered as an afterthought. But with child and youth activists everywhere, we must

foreground how climate injustices and generational configurations at large are complexly interwoven with colonial normativities and temporalities. The call to adults to *let* children *teach* them (Biswas, 2021a) does not beget simple voluntarism. We hold on to the lessons-through-inversions that school strikes and school occupations provide and behold the urgency of mutual teaching and transgenerational learning. We now call to further tie these imperatives to the material-economic realities of accumulation and development that undergird current conditions and young people's educational resistance.

Schooling: Developing Obedient Human Capital

> [W]hat fault do you find with us and the state, that you are trying to destroy us? In the first place, did we not bring you forth? Is it not through us that your father married your mother and begat you? Now tell us, have you any fault to find with those of us who are the laws of marriage? [. . .] Or with those that have to do with the nurture of the child after he is born and with his education which you, like others, received? Did those of us who are assigned to these matters not give good directions when we told your father to educate you in music and gymnastics? [. . .W]hen you were born and nurtured and educated, could you say to begin with that you were not our offspring [ἔκγονος; ékgonos] and our slave [δοῦλος; doûlos], you yourself and your ancestors? (Plato, 360 B.C.E./1966, 50d-e)

The Adult-Centric Voice of the Law

In a classic reflection on civil disobedience, Socrates subjects himself, extraordinarily, to a Socratic interrogation, staging "the laws" (νόμοι; nómoi) as his interlocutors (Plato, 360 B.C.E./1966, 50a). The laws' core argument—aiming to persuade hypothetically resistant Socrates to stay in prison rather than take the opportunity at flight arranged by his friend Crito—consists in a (fragile) analogy of the child's deference to their father (πατέρα; patéra) or master (δίκαιον; díkaion) with the citizen's duty vis-à-vis themselves, the laws. In both cases, while there is no equality in the rapport of authority, retaliation or destruction (as resistance is framed here), would not be "right," even "if we undertake to destroy you" (51a). In the end, Socrates will admit that he cannot hear outside the frame of the law.

From ancient slavery-based polis discussions about disobedience, figures of education, child, and parental authority have continued to surface, while continuously metamorphosing. Decolonizing minds requires, then, to listen beyond the laws and their tireless monologues clothed as dialogues, their naturalization of subordination and rule-following, and the supposed gifts of supposedly equal formal education. Decolonization implies questioning dangerous presentism and grappling with the erasure of racialized histories, displacements, and transplantations. It requires questioning the expulsions of groups from past, present, *and* future; expulsions facing diverse childhoods in complex ways. Such contentions can be advanced by attempting to break the ground of Western philosophy's conviction to obey, derived from the continuous mirror-play between citizenship/education, child/adult, and history/present. Taking its cues from those who disobey scholarly authority, decolonial childism

questions how generational, educational, and legal authority intersect to serve the institutional materializations of developmentalism.

Apart from the lessons provided by children, we are learning this from adult scholars critical of adult-centrism. Toby Rollo (2018a) alerts us to the *longue durée* of what he calls misopedy: the structural debasement and exploitation of those positioned as children, entailing that despite and through the sentimentalization of the early phase of life, this period was constructed as a site of naturalized violence. Rollo's travels through ancient Greek/Roman legislation to modern empire-building strike us as somewhat rushed and his claims about how misopedy underlies all other patterns of domination trouble at least one of us. Nevertheless, his account—complete with its sensitivities to political economy and the centrality of child labor throughout phases of European industrialization—convincingly points to the ways the child as sub-human other was not a category of salvation but rather worked in homology with the dehumanization and systematic overexploitation of *pais* in its double sense of slave and child.

When Rollo (2018b) suggests that "the degraded figure of the child provides the internal structure and logic of the colonial conception" (p. 63), he builds on insights from anticolonial/decolonial thinker Frantz Fanon's attention to the metaphor of the "mother country," or the way that colonialism sought to yield the unconscious representation of itself as "a mother who unceasingly restrains her fundamentally perverse offspring" (Fanon, 1961, p. 211). This is somewhat related to how the laws ensnared Socrates's perverse wish to flee. Rollo's childist contribution to intersectional and decolonial theorizations advances a theoretical diagnosis of how adult authority over children is a central motif in the cultural history of Western imperatives of obedience.

This intersectional lacuna becomes key for a decolonial childist analysis of how Western colonial schooling has been a key economic institution in organizing children's schoolwork and capitalist colonialism. While schooling in Bombay, Berlin, and Stavanger are not colonial institutions in the same way, they share premises of structuring the *oikos* through an age-segregated logic of taking children out of intergenerational community life and organizing them neatly in (literally) classes to keep a fossil-fueled economy running. Going on school strike as an act of civil disobedience and asking "Why go to school when there is no future" expands the analytical understanding of "class" from a childist lens that adult-centric feminist and Marxist views alone fall short of recognizing.

Tracing the Capitalocene in Children's Work

Decolonialization within the context of intergenerational climate justice calls for a recognition of children's contributions to industrial economic growth which does not stop with the introduction of mass schooling. Particularly, there is the continued coloniality of institutionalizing children within adult-centric logics of an increasingly overheated industrial and imperial economy. We illustrate this exploitative logic with the counter-intuitive example of Norway, which continues to be highly rated on human development index and the Programme for International Student Assement (PISA) rankings of children's academic performance (Campbell, 2021).

In line with Rollo's focus on the centrality of children's labor for the emergence of capitalism, Djupedal (2022) explains that there has been a consistent increase in compulsory schooling hours for children since the 1990s. The increase in time spent at school does not correspond with a decrease in homework to free up for other personal and social needs children might want to give their time to. The increase in schooling hours has implications for the scope of intergenerational social life understood in relation to the growth of the modern knowledge industry and industrial economy. School, then, not only serves as an institution for teaching children certain subjects on rigid time-tabled routines but also a place where children could be when their parents are at the workplace—in turn, a pillar for the modern Western *oikos*. A reasonable tradeoff here could be that schools hold space for organically fulfilling other needs, and the roles of those adults whose working hours are dedicated to schools (like teachers), could be organized beyond teaching school subjects. As children grow older, they could help with younger children, eventually sharing various tasks and responsibilities with adults. Instead, even though schools in Norway today take on different roles in children's lives than before, to a very large extent there is more of the same: teaching where children sit indoors on chairs and work toward developing skills that can be documented. It is not very different in other national contexts making it possible to run highly upscaled, standardized, global testing and documentation operations like PISA.

Children's long schooling time and their consequent contribution to the system are directly connected to adult-centered markets also by generating jobs for adults in other professional roles in the education, medical, technology, social welfare, and legal sectors, to name a few. If one takes feminist interventions to broaden the understanding of labor to include emotional labor (Stulikova & Dawson, 2022), it becomes evident that schooling requires emotional labor on part of children too as they adapt to the increasing demands of capitalist economies. García-Sánchez (2018) similarly explains how children's care work is often either overlooked or pathologized on three grounds: firstly, dominant Western constructions of children as beings in need of care and unable to provide care; secondly, the social and scholarly tendency to view children's care work as inappropriate or pathological; and thirdly, a more general devaluing of care work regardless of chronological age.

Recognizing schooling as a dominant way of organizing children's work, implies recognizing that the physical/intellectual/emotional labor demanded of children at school varies intersectionally. Still, it also bears considering how schooling time is a way of organizing children's work and constitutes labor for *all* children in their role as pupils that is, as default addressees of pedagogy in an adultist economy that thrives off resources by endangering the human rights of not only present but future generations too (Biswas, 2023). With this too, one of the central questions of the school strikes for climate, beckons decolonial childist interventions into contemporary capitalism: why go to school when there is no future?

Lessons of Developmentalism

Current globalized modes of education as schooling—deeply responsible for and, by large, failing to offer remedies to present-historical urgencies—can only be analyzed if one considers the intersections of colonialism/racism with conceptions of childhood

and development. Homologies between colonial empire-making and the positioning of children come to the fore. After all, transfers between supposedly disparate logics drive the history of developmentalism. For one, Erica Burman describes the "slippages in development policies between child, individual, national, and international development, between different levels, subjects and agencies of development" (Burman, 2019b, p. 13). Such slippages are far from metaphorical. As Claudia Castañeda outlines in an analysis of the consolidation of developmentalism in the 19th century, "the question of development (and its failure) was embodied in the child" (Castañeda, 2001, p. 385). One specifically important player, still underlying contemporary post-reform educational normativities, in this linking of levels of development, was to become the paradigm that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny.

As Murris and Kohan (2021) put it, "developmentalism is a *recapitulation theory*: child's intellectual development is compared with (recapitulates) the development of the species from 'savage' to 'civilized' [emphasis in original]" (p. 583). If we can't consider developmentalism without recapitulationism, we can also not assess recapitulation theory without attending to the figurations of childhood it is attached to; its import into education and how—for all the ambivalences connected to more child-centered pedagogies—recapitulation "contributed to the ideological hegemony of possible and impossible childhoods, with the white innocence and Black savagery as counterpoints" (Varga, 2018, p. 187). Developmentalist institutionalizations of childhood, then, are characterized by connecting various levels of colonization/development/displacement, in highly varied ways for different children. Nevertheless, to some extent all children who are institutionalized in schools serving adultist economic logics get invariably positioned as "default addressees of pedagogy". In other words, pupils are to be "protected," "taught," and "developed" in a direction that pre-determines trajectories laden with unevenly shared debt and damages for past, present, and future generations.

Specifically, the need for decolonial childism pertains to the temporal regimes childhoods get subjected to. The precise role schools play in the temporal objectification of children or the longer-standing debasement of children (Rollo 2018b) is complex; the school can be regarded "as a mode of subjugation alongside its emancipatory potential" (Burman, 2019a, p. 27). Generally, there is a need for a considerate-dialectical critique of school institutions (cf. e.g., Liebel & Meade, 2023, p. 254)—and specifically one updated to Anthropocene conditions. Whether in its more authoritative or more participatory (neoliberal) forms, schooling (as part of a larger adultist economy) governs and demands obedience through a chrono-logic. It resonates with decolonial childist directions when Murris and Kohan write that "a decolonized approach to educational institutions requires a troubling of the experience of time as it involves the subordination and denigration of children and childhood (*misopedy*)" (Murris & Kohan, 2021, p. 582). On their new materialism-influenced account, this means especially addressing the operations of clockbound time whose problem is not so much linearity per se but the universalization of one situated linear account of time as before-after (also see Biswas, 2021b). Connected to the imposition of straight adult time at schools, children's own views and interests are often systematically discredited in a

model of a unilateral teaching relation. The epistemic injustices that diversely placed children experience link to overarching logics of epistemic oppression; we turn to this in the next section.

To contribute to troubling school time/relations, then, we echo Alexandra Lakind and Chessa Adsit-Morris's call for "a pedagogy of the post-Anthropocene which rejects future orientations that negate children as bearers of their own experience and agents of their own purposes" (Lakind and Adsit-Morris's, 2018, p. 37). Emphasizing Haraway's notion of response-ability (see also Mattheis, 2022) such a pedagogy must stir a middle course of not resorting to an investment in childhood as site of rescue/of "the child who saves" while still offering a reminder "to learn from children" (Lakind & Adsit-Morris, 2018, p. 37)—we engage with what this might entail in the next section.

Decoloniality: Confronting Adultist Epistemic Privilege

Contesting Generational Hegemonies

In approaching decolonial childism, we take seriously Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's reminder that decolonization is not a metaphor, that it has sweeping dimensions and cannot be reduced to the primacy of ideational transformations of symbolic politics of settlers not "having to change much at all" (Tuck and Yang, 2012, p. 10). But following other theorizing on decolonization, including Pryamavada Gopal's reminder how while not a metaphor decolonization does metonymically attach to social justice projects in anticolonial agendas (2021), and recognizing the specificity of the contexts we are writing from—we do not reserve the term to the reappropriation of land specifically. Decolonial politics in different contexts like Norway and Germany can indeed mean specific actions, such as Ketil Fred Hansen's critical intervention in Norwegian academics' questioning the need for decolonizing curricula on grounds of "objectivity in science" and "quality assurance" (Hansen, 2022). And decolonization—while of course materially explosive—also concerns our minds (especially considering that thought is never immaterial—and can contribute to the "full reckoning with the economics of empire" as Gopal, 2021, p. 879, envisions). Here, in our decolonial childist focus, we attend specifically to the ways decolonization requires contesting generational hegemonies in various dimensions (their scientific underpinnings, their institutional manifestations, their subjectivizing force), and how coloniality works across life spans. We do not hereby mean to collapse decolonization with other justice agendas. We merely believe that contesting the generational and connections of generationing and coloniality deserves a firm place in decolonizing projects. Decolonial childism is—as are young activists—wary of premature reconciliation and critical of assumptions regarding maturity.

Considering the ongoing climate disruptions and the ongoing disruption-policing at schools, as well as young people's confrontation of their relegation to the future, we do contend that young people's strikes and occupations bear potential for contesting the temporal obedience that fuels current crises. In the spirit of decoloniality elsewhere, strikers variously refuse "the call to order" (cf. Harney & Moten, 2013). This

order has already become more than fragile; the school strikes supply us with a more than necessary call to dis-order. This is not to claim children unanimously (and who would that even mean?) as subjects of rescue; here the warnings of queer theory against heteronormative governing through the child as well as childhood studies' attention to children's (varied) implications in "fossil-fueled genealogies" (Nxumalo, 2017, p. 559) ring loud. We're also cautious of pitching children as ever creative, generative, disruptive; or as disruption as always agreeable to them. But still, in children and young people's activism, we can recognize moments of resistance to the hegemonic order, especially the epistemic.

Childist Challenges to Epistemic Oppression

Akin to how civil disobedience is recognized even in the liberal tradition as tackling/remedying political injustices—such as undemocratic exclusions—young people's strikes can contribute to tackling epistemic injustices/oppression. Epistemic injustice refers to how a subject is "wronged specifically in her [sic] capacity as a knower" (Fricker, 2007, p. 20; italics omitted). For Fricker such harm occurs in one of two ways: when testimonies get credited due to identity prejudices or when marginalization in the field of knowledge production leads to systematic conceptual gaps. Now, while coining an influential vocabulary, Fricker is surely not the first to note such processes of exclusion; her social hermeneutics here are more indebted to long-standing Black feminist theorizing than she might recognize. Indeed her account has been substantially expanded by theorists drawing attention to how institutional configurations matter (Anderson, 2012); and how in addition to gaps in understanding, resistant epistemes can be marginalized through a dominant group's willful ignorance even where they are accurate (Dotson, 2012); how in addition to having one's testimony discredited, sometimes one will "smother" it (Dotson, 2011, p. 244 ff); or how supposed epistemic excess and meta-insensitivity harms dominant groups too (Medina, 2013).

All these dimensions of the debate on epistemic injustice have significance for generational configurations. And while few and far in-between, there are "thinkers who have begun the conversation about epistemic injustice and children" (Vitale & Miller, 2020, p. 3). Burroughs and Tollefsen (2016) have analyzed the testimonial injustice children experience in forensic contexts, where their testimonies are discredited. Even more important for our present purposes, Murris (2013) and Vitale and Miller (2020) have interrogated generational epistemic injustice in pedagogical contexts as well as youth activist contexts, respectively. Mobilizing two case studies—Philosophy for Children (P4C) in the UK and teacher education in South Africa—Murris highlights how pedagogical situations can be afflicted by epistemic injustices vis-à-vis children of both sorts Fricker describes; and that they are intersectionally complexified (with Black children being particularly affected). What is necessary then, she concludes, is transcending developmentalist child-centered pedagogy concerns and instead developing an ethico-political commitment to taking seriously children's and childhood's epistemic contributions, re-evaluating childness (including one's own former), and "resisting the urge to translate of what I hear into what is familiar" (Murris, 2013, p. 285).

Vitale and Miller mobilize both Fricker's two types of epistemic injustice and Dotson's concepts of contributory injustice and testimonial smothering to show how young activists in the climate and antiracist movement face epistemic injustice, although in quite differing ways dependent on their positionality in racist societies. This also hinders overall knowledge production. For instance, when dismissing young Sunrise activists, "despite her claim, [U.S. Senator Dianne] Feinstein cannot properly 'know what [she's] doing.' If to know something means to know the truth, she becomes further from the truth as she excludes significant viewpoints from her evaluation of the climate crisis" (Vitale & Miller, 2020, p. 4). Murris as well as Vitale and Miller single out the open-ended and genuinely participatory, dialogical model of P4C as an important route toward epistemic justice, both in the pedagogical here and now and for later addresses of activists; Murris consequently calls for relational pedagogies (Murris, 2013).

Relational pedagogies can be approached if we have an awareness of the epistemic oppressions that children constantly face. We would suggest that conventional forms of P4C are not the utopian end of the spectrum here, but only the bottom-line of imaginations of relational pedagogies. We would also urge further questioning the insistence on categories such as rational or mature exchange that continue to span childhood studies interrogations of epistemic injustice. Finally, our earlier call for adults to *let* children *teach* them, we recognize now, needs to be accompanied by an active confrontation of epistemic privilege and prejudices. This surely requires the cultivation of epistemic virtues, such as epistemic modesty, as Fricker suggests; but it also requires confronting the more structural dimensions of epistemic oppression and willful ignorance or exclusion of the conceptualizations by marginalized subjects (Dotson, 2011, 2012), complete with their obstinate generational dimensions.

Their persistence and tenacity are part of the reason why confronting (generational) epistemic injustice, in our understanding, offers pertinent decolonial options.[4] Of course, we particularly have in mind here the disobedience of children and young people themselves evidence on various scales in and out of the formal pedagogical system. But we also see a responsibility of disruption, disobedience, and deviance from school/work/business as usual with adults. This holds for various pedagogical institutions; while writing on the undercommons, Jack Halberstam thinks mainly about universities, we can extend the following disobedient attitude to schools (while of course also keeping structural constraints for teaching faculty in mind): "[W]hen we enter a classroom and we refuse to call it to order, we are allowing study to continue, dissonant study perhaps, disorganized study, but study that precedes our call and will continue after we have left the room" (Halberstam in Harney & Moten, 2013, p. 9). Thus, "finding fault" with laws on the "education which you [some of us], like others, receive[(d)]", is surely part of the resistance against the naturalized interpellation that "when you were born and nurtured and educated" you were "our offspring and our slave, you yourself and your ancestors" (Plato, 360 B.C.E./1966, 50e).

Decolonizing Minds with Childist Recognitions

The intersectional lacuna of adultism and coloniality/racism guides a decolonial childist analysis of the globalized, Western colonial schooling which is a pillar institution in organizing children's (school) work in an age-segregated capitalist economy. Recognizing the structural positioning of childhood as an indispensable part of a knowledge economy in privileged contexts opens the horizon of making theoretical and social sense of the climate justice movement, in counter-intuitive ways which Marxist or feminist critiques cannot do when they stay adult-centered. Some examples we have offered in this article are the recognition of age-segregation-based organization of "classes" in schools or the recognition of children's emotional labor at school as part of their work as pupils. The counter-intuition here particularly applies to how the climate justice movement challenges the way the *oikos* is organized, and to understand adult-centric notions like "class" and "emotional labor" through young people's structural position.

The clock from an adult-centric point of view of the *oikos* does not quite tick the same way as it does from the point of view of past, present, and future generations of children; whose childhood is a key site of coloniality. And whose contribution to realizing adultist colonial dreams, industrialization, and nation-building, be it in factories, mines, or in a knowledge industry on school desks in neatly age-segregated "classes," remains a marginalized subject even in considerations about marginalization.

School bells, shaping childhood temporality, ringing punctually to keep the adult labor market running, obviously do not quite ring with the same intensity and volume in Bombay, Berlin, or Stavanger. Perhaps, with some extra fossil-fueled income, jarring school bells have been replaced by gentle digital reminders on smartphones of teachers whose classrooms might have moved away from blackboards to smartboards. School bells most certainly have not rung in the same way they did for Indigenous Sami children and ethnic Norwegian children under oppressive white supremist processes of Norwegianization, and they cannot possibly ring in the same way for immigrant children today being taught to speak "correct" Norwegian or German to integrate within school systems that will give them "better" future possibilities in their respective white supremist societies. The shared coloniality of modern mass schooling systems, nevertheless, is knitted into the very premise of structuring the *oikos*, economy, and ecology (i.e., how resources are shared), through an age-segregated logic of taking children out of intergenerational community life and organizing them neatly in (literally) classes to keep a fossil-fueled adultist economy running.

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Notes

1. Broadly, the structural devaluation of children, manifesting in naturalized adult domination and children's precarization. Its operations are historically situated and complexly entangled with a sentimentalization of (some) childhoods. We return to this notion in more detail in the section *The Adult-Centric Voice of the Law.*
2. As Snir (2023) rightly points out, adults might in many cases be at the forefront of children's struggles. The case of the school strikes for climate is particularly interesting as many of the original child activists have now become legal adults. This touches upon the debated term "child" in childism and the connected question of whether adults can be childist. We use this "-ism" to refer to an engagement with the socially constructed structure called childhood, an endeavor open to adults, too (which is obviously not to imply the irrelevance of one's positioning with regard to that structure).
3. The rhetoric of occupation has rightly been problematized from the perspective of a politics of decolonization (Tuck & Yang, 2012, pp. 23–28); although it must be said that these critiques have different salience in the context of settler colonial Americas to at least the German context. Furthermore, the Norwegian, and by extension the larger European context with the Indigenous Sami and Kven population, are an example of non-settler colonialism which requires an expanded understanding of decoloniality that includes paying attention to internal, intergenerational colonization.
4. An earlier version of this paper included an exploration of possible connections between children's school strikes and the epistemic disobedience and decolonial options envisioned in the work of Mignolo (2009) which we now omit, not least for reasons of space.

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