What Do We Mean When We Talk about "Safe Space"? A Philosophical Exploration of a Contentious Metaphor in Education

by

Bhuvinder Singh Vaid (he, him, his)

M.A. (Education), Simon Fraser University, 2008

B.A. (English Literature), The University of British Columbia, 2002

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Declaration of Committee

Name:	**Bhuvinder Singh Vaid**	
Degree:	**Doctor of Philosophy**	
Thesis title:	**What Do We Mean When We Talk about "Safe Space"? A Philosophical Exploration of a Contentious Metaphor in Education**	
Committee:	**Chair:**	**Lannie Kanevsky** Associate Professor, Education
		Kevin O'Neill Supervisor Associate Professor, Education
		Mark Fettes Committee Member Associate Professor, Education
		Sean Zwagerman Examiner Associate Professor, English, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
		Trevor Norris External Examiner Associate Professor, Department of Educational Studies Brock University

Unceded Territory Acknowledgement

This work represents a journey that took place on the unceded territory (legally, socially, and spiritually) of countless Indigenous nations, bands, groups, and peoples throughout what is today known as Canada and the United States.

Most of this work's writing took place on the unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples including the Stó:lō, Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səl̓ilwətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), as well as the Syilx (Okanagan), x̱à'isla (Haisla) and Ts'msyen (Tsimshian) peoples.

This work is part of my attempt to recognize my responsibility as a teacher to understand the central role my chosen field of education played in the forced assimilation and cultural genocide of these Indigenous peoples. This is a recognition of history necessary for any teacher who wants to equitably serve the educational needs of others in a diverse community. It is my hope that I can bring this recognition to the learning relationships I form with my students and the readers of this work, so that we can continue the work of reconciliation needed to heal our shared community.

Abstract

Educators have described their classes and institutions as “safe spaces” with increasing frequency and certainty since the 1990s. However, philosophers of education such as Eamon Callan, Cris Mayo, and Sigal Ben-Porath have found “safe space” to be conceptually and pedagogically lacking when interpreted from intersectional positionalities operating within the hegemonic white, masculine, and consumerist discourses permeating a modern educational system that strives for greater equity, diversity, and inclusion.

This work operationalizes “safe space” by recognizing it as what linguists Max Black, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, and philosopher Paul Ricoeur would term a conceptual metaphor, which structures thinking about education. Critical pedagogues such as Michael Apple, Raymond Callahan, Paulo Freire, Ivan Illich, Herbert Kliebard, and Peter McLaren have argued how this type of structured thinking can influence pedagogical practices; but to date, no in-depth philosophical analysis of “safe space” exists in the literature. Interrogating modern debates about the nature of “space” inherited from Isaac Newton (who viewed it as an absolute container filled with independent subjects/objects), and Gottfried Leibniz (who viewed space as an infinite set of relations between subjects/objects), the implications for any educationally worthwhile understanding and practice of “safety” or “safe space” are shown to be suspect due to the Newtonian inheritances.

Ultimately, I posit that “safe space” is unavoidably Newtonian – assumed to be capable of formulation *a priori* such that students are entitled to a guarantee that a class space will be safe in some sense that can be unambiguously stated, irrespective of who is taking the class, what the class is about, and what is going on in the world. This *a priori* safe space is then one that institutions feel responsible for guaranteeing, teachers feel responsible for creating and maintaining, with students feeling no responsibility other than reaping its benefits. Linking this work’s conceptual analysis of the Leibnizian inheritances to “space”

and “safety” (understood as infinitely relational) to that of critical pedagogues such as bell hooks, I argue for a more philosophically grounded and educationally worthwhile understanding of “safe space”.

Keywords: Safe Space; Philosophy of Education; Paul Ricoeur; Isaac Newton; Gottfried Leibniz, bell hooks; Conceptual Metaphor; Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

Dedication

Seeds can put down roots... whether they flower or not.

Acknowledgements

As any reader of this work will soon discover, using words to describe metaphoric concepts and abstract experiences has its limitations. In fact, words alone are not enough to fully honour the complex relationships that contribute to a work such as this thesis. Therefore, the immense sense of gratitude I owe to the people named in these Acknowledgements, for their countless hours of generosity toward me, cannot be captured by these words alone.

One way to consider this sense of gratitude within the complexities of these relationships is to search for and locate it in the thesis: every idea, citation, example, consideration, and implication in this work was developed in relationship with these people. However, as a reader, considering who helped Bhuvinder with a specific point, sentence, paragraph, section, or chapter is a useless exercise as it is impossible to disentangle all the relationships from all the learning that contributed to this work. Instead, consider how the ideas presented in this thesis could enable new possibilities for the relationships in your life. Ask yourself, “how could I be generous to others with whom I enter into [learning] relationships?”

Locating this act of generosity in a particular relationship is often a necessity to better understand the source of one’s gratitude. This thesis represents my countless relationships with others as we strived to understand what is meant by safe space. A hallmark of almost all these relationships was an unconditional generosity toward the topic and toward my attempt to explain it to others through this thesis.

First, I would like to acknowledge my gratitude for the generosity extended to me through familial relationships. Without Kuldip, Mohinder, Kuljeet, Moninder, Negin, Ashlee, Dawn and Jamie, fear of failure and not completing this thesis at times overwhelmed my forward progress. Each, in their own way, offered a simple yet generous reminder that their love and support was not contingent upon success.

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work, offering me countless hours of mentorship and quiet support, while advocating forcibly on my behalf to others. Mark Fettes was always generous with his patience. Slowly, he taught me how to systematically share my thinking, through organization and clarity of writing, so my audience could determine itself their next steps for the explanation about safe space offered in this work.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my gratitude for the generosity my partner Robyn Hill has taught me to extend to myself. Before we met, I had little patience for my own shortcomings and this would result in no thought, no idea, and no writing, ever being good enough to continue the methodical work needed to finish this thesis. Through her generosity toward my shortcomings, some real and many perceived, she taught me how to be gentler with myself. With this gentler view toward myself and my thinking, I found that for the first time in my life I had a partner with whom to build ideas with together. This thesis is therefore our ideas, our citations, our examples, our considerations, and our implications. I am truly grateful for all that she has shared with and taught me, and I know that these words, any words, will never do justice to this generosity. Thank you.

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Glossary

Anthropomorphism	The attribution of human characteristics or behaviours to non-humans (i.e., animals, objects, etc.).
a priori	Knowledge or reasoning which is known to be true through theoretical deduction rather than through concrete observation or experience in the world.
Archetype	The unintended and/or concealed structure of thinking a metaphor imparts.
Conceptual domain	The range of experience and knowledge evoked by a particular linguistic term or expression.
Conceptual metaphor	A metaphor considered as a mapping between conceptual domains.
Entailment relationships	Implications based upon the connection made between two subjects, objects, or experiences in a metaphor.
Essentialism	In education, the view that certain ideas or practices are foundational to all further understanding.
Ethereal	Ideal or seemingly too perfect.
Gestalt	An organized whole that is perceived as more than the sum of its parts.
Hermeneutic	A theory and method for the study of interpretation.
Intersectionality	The overlapping nature of social categorizations such as race, class, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity as they apply to an individual or group.
Metaphysics	Consideration of existence beyond the physical, tangible world and its experience.
Metonymy	Figure of speech in which a thing or concept is referred to by the name of something closely associated with that thing or concept.
Microaggression	An indirect, subtle, and often unintentional reproduction of a repressive social or cultural norm.
Mimesis	The ability of art or literature to represent or imitate the real world.
Nominalism	A philosophical view which denies the existence of both universalities and abstract objects.

Ontology	Considering the nature of being, reality, and possibility.
Paradigmatic	A typical or canonical example of something.
Polysemy	From Greek, the ability of a word or phrase to have multiple meanings.
Positionality	The social or political context that creates your identity in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, etc.
Semiotic	Any activity, conduct, or process that involves signs, where a sign is defined as anything that communicates a meaning that is not the sign itself to the sign's interpreter.
Semantic	Meaning derived in language and its logic.
Sign	Anything the communicates a meaning not pertaining to itself.
Source domain	Conceptual domain on which a metaphor draws to illuminate another conceptual domain.
Target domain	The conceptual domain illuminated by a metaphor that draws on a better understood source domain.
Transpose	To exchange locations or meaning.
Utilitarian	Something that is useful or functional.

Chapter 1.

Why are discussions about my classroom as a “safe space” so difficult?

1.1. Locating the difficulty

Before graduate school I had never worked as a teacher. The first time I stood in front of a classroom full of my undergraduate students, I drew upon one ability that had aided me through my own learning experience: mimicking my teachers. This ability had been a godsend when my elementary school special education teacher, Mrs. J., had recognized the many difficulties I faced: speaking no English when I began kindergarten; a severe speech impediment when asked to speak English; and confusion when asked to read or write due to dyslexia.

When Mrs. J. tried to explain these difficulties to my parents, they grew defensive and replied there was nothing wrong with their son. They told Mrs. J. that I had to simply work harder. At home, not seeing immediate progress, a pervasive shame was directed toward me. My parents would constantly say to my younger brothers: don’t be like him. Near the end of grade 1, fearing that I might need to be held back a year, Mrs. J. sat down with my mother and explained that there was nothing wrong, or broken, with her son. Instead, she explained that I simply needed to learn in a different way, and once successful, I could excel in my studies.

For the next three years, I spent two half-days every week with Mrs. J. doing speech drills and practicing reading strategies that corrected for the dyslexia. Through this experience, I learnt how to mimic Mrs. J. She showed me how I was supposed to speak with my teachers and classmates, and how to read and understand new ideas. I mimicked everything she showed me, and eventually, began to mimic my other teachers. My confidence grew as I went from the student always silent and afraid to share, to being the first to raise my

hand and always with something to say or add to the discussion. The compliments from my teachers ranged from telling me how well-spoken I was to their belief that I would one day join the teaching ranks because I already spoke as they did.

However, not everyone in these classes was able to mimic the teacher as well as I. My indigenous classmates, as well as others from visible minorities, were rarely called upon by our teachers, and when called upon were unwilling to speak up in class. Kind words of encouragement and praise, to which I had grown accustomed, were rarely directed to these classmates. Gradually, I stopped noticing the different way I was treated compared to other racialized children.

My mimicry ability had allowed me to belong with the teacher and the white students in my classes. So, on my first day as a teacher in front of a class of my undergraduate students, I mimicked how my teachers had acted and spoken. Most significantly for the present work, I repeated a phrase that I had heard over and over again: this is a safe space for us to learn together. This declaration — that my classroom would be a safe space for my students — was something I repeated in subsequent semesters to fellow teachers, new students, and in writing so often that I would have been hard pressed to describe my classroom any other way.

In my mind there existed a direct relationship between safe space and positive learning outcomes. However, I could not clearly elaborate what exactly this relationship looked like or how it functioned. Though I sensed it was an important correlation worth considering in educational theory, I could not explain to others in any definitive way what “safe space” meant. As I continued to awkwardly define the qualities of my class as a “safe space”, I quickly discovered that no matter my wording, others would leap to conclusions about what I was describing. These misunderstandings were my first indication that perhaps the

meaning imparted by the phrase “safe space” was more complex than it first appeared.

As I considered what “safe space” could mean more deeply, further questions kept arising: what exactly does it mean to describe the complex set of teaching and learning relationships in a classroom as a safe space? Does this “space” exist in an absolute sense, or is it in flux? Is safe space a place, a relationship, or a state? Is it an intention *for* practice? Is it a specific set of pedagogical practices?

Central to this inquiry was something more basic: what did I mean by “educational space”, and in what ways might this concept of “space” be important for student learning? I held the belief, in part from my experiences as a student, that the physical design of some classrooms made teaching and learning more difficult. If the physical design lacked specific affordances, for instance moveable seating to allow for student-student interaction, or if it included a lectern that tethered the teacher to a specific part of the room, it imposed limits on meaningful pedagogical relationships. But could the opposite also be true? Would an educational space designed in a particular way make teaching and learning easier?

This was the genesis of what eventually became my master’s thesis (Vaid, 2008) about a specific educational space that had always fascinated me: Simon

Fraser University's Convocation Mall.

Figure 1.1-1: Convocation Mall as viewed from the Academic Quadrangle (RestfulC401, 2012)

I spent months pouring over any source which would aid me in better understanding this space. I reviewed articles and personal journals in the University's official archives that described how the mall had been envisioned by its original architects and designers, Arthur Erickson and George Massey (Macdonald, 1962; Shrum, 1986; Stainsby, 1964):

> …the campus heart – "The Mall" flanked by the library and the bookstore on one side, the auditorium, playhouse, exhibition area, cafeteria on the other side. The Mall, furnished with notice boards, speaker's lectern, benches, etc. is open to the air but covered as a "galleria" with a weather fast translucent roof. This is the meeting place of the university, the point of arrival from the bus stop, the place for rallies, and in spring and fall, the termination of the convocation procession from the Academic Quad (Erickson & Massey,1963, p. 2).

Exploring further, I reviewed how the design had been received by other architects (Rogatnick, 1968), educational experts, historians, and the community

after completion (Johnston, 2005). There were not-so-subtle allusions to ancient Greek and Roman forums and squares, imbuing it with a sense of tradition. It was also seen as a transition between the realm of theory, represented by the library which abutted it, and the pedagogical practices embodied by the Academic Quadrangle which housed the classrooms of the University. Finally, the utilization of the space by students embodied a sense of creativity and community during the early years of the University (Johnston, 2005). My research was confirming my belief that just as poorly designed spaces may negatively influence learning, thoughtfully designed spaces like Convocation Mall could positively influence the learning experiences of students.

Yet the story turned out to be more complex. In my master's thesis I explored how the Mall came to be understood as a site of resistance to the conservative politics of the University administration (Johnston, 2005), how this influenced teaching and learning relationships throughout the curriculum (Camley, 1999; Rossi, 2003), and eventually, how the University began to rewrite this history for public relations and institutional branding purposes. Early hints of this process appear in a 1993 address by the then University president:

> …most of the students did not take part in the demonstrations [during the University's first 10 years of operation between 1965-1975] unless they needed some distraction, particularly at mid-terms…All but a couple of hundred students were interested in getting an education and the life of the university went on without too much disruption…Many of the protesters were from off campus and not SFU students…It may be said that the younger brothers and sisters of the ardent protesters thought that their siblings had not accomplished a great deal, and had delayed their completion of their university studies to no great purpose or gain… (Wilson,1993, ¶8).

Convocation Mall, if not the entire university, had lost the contested meaning and practices it had once held as an intentional site of dialogue and resistance to something with clear boundaries that demarcated legitimate versus illegitimate learning practices (Wilson, 1993; Camley, 1999; Rossi, 2003; Johnston, 2005). The physical space, of course, had not changed much over time, but something had shifted in how people, including myself, perceived and

therefore discussed the mall. The initial hypothesis during my master's thesis evolved into the realization that a greater understanding of a space like Convocation Mall may clarify the intentionality of my practices as a teacher or as a student that I brought into the space of my classroom.

As a teaching assistant and sessional instructor, I therefore arranged my course syllabi to reflect the contested meaning and historicity of our shared built environment:

> The space of our class is a part of a long history here at the University of questioning, challenging, and growing as individuals and as a community. Perhaps the most well-known space on campus is the Convocation Mall, the covered space beside the library, where in the early years of the University students would meet to share and discuss their experiences and challenges on an almost daily basis. I wish to promote a similar type of space for our classroom, *where you can feel safe* to share your experiences and challenges with what we are learning and know that you will be supported as we work together to understand and overcome these challenges [Emphasis added by author].

When I shared this statement with others, I noticed two patterns in the interpretation and feedback they offered. First, they might describe past spaces or environments in which they had felt safe while learning. Second, they might describe past relationships with others that had made them feel safe while learning. These seemingly divergent interpretations bothered me because of the apparent lack of a unifying concept that could account for both. The simplicity of the words "safe" and "space" were not translating into any shared understanding. My effort to clarify what was meant by "space" had not made the notion of "safe space" any clearer for my students or myself. I began to recognize that this murky understanding surrounding the phrase "safe space" was evidence of a more nuanced interconnectedness between the physical and relational spheres of education. The language of "space" was operating to link these domains in a way I didn't fully understand. And this observation led me to wonder whether work on the function of language and its philosophy might shed light on my

perplexities regarding “safe space”. As observed by the British philosopher of language J.L. Austin:

> …words are our tools, and, as a minimum, we should use clean tools: we should know what we mean and what we do not, and we must forearm ourselves against the traps that language sets us (Austin, Urmson, & Warnock, 1979, pp. 181-182).

As a teacher, I had implicitly understood words’ utilitarian nature. I needed to pick my words carefully, especially when working with students in a linguistically diverse class. However, Austin’s reference to the “traps that language sets us” led me to reflect on the linguistic choices I was making in my teaching. I began to recognize that when I worked with students who spoke English as an additional language, I tried to use words that (in my eyes) held no metaphoric meaning. As I learnt more about the philosophy of language (cf. Austin, 1975; 1979; Heidegger, 1982; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Ricoeur, 1975), this strategy of choosing my words carefully to avoid problematic metaphors was quickly undermined, as most words have metaphors buried within their etymology. All language was revealing itself to be metaphoric *in some way.* The solution, then, was not to avoid metaphors like “safe space”, but understand how they were impacting differing understanding by students’, teachers, and higher education administrators.

In my explorations, I encountered a 1998 article by Robert Boostrom that brought the relevance of metaphor to discussions of safe space in education into sharp relief. Boostrom argued that “safe space”, which began as a metaphor used to talk *about* education, had begun to be mistaken as a way to *practice* education. Drawing upon his experiences with colleagues as they spoke about their educational spaces (namely their classrooms) as safe spaces, Boostrom observed how disparate educators used the phrase as “a way of talking about teaching” (p. 397), and that it reflected “how teachers see themselves, their students, and their work” (p. 397). Boostrom’s observation helped me understand that the use of this safe space metaphor did not refer to a specific “way of doing

teaching" (p. 397), but rather served as a tool for sharing experiences of teaching. However, as Boostrom noted:

> [O]ne of the problems with metaphors is that because it is through them that we are able to see, we rarely look closely at them … This is hazardous not so much because they obscure our efforts to communicate with those outside the business [of education], but rather because they successfully communicate ideas we have never intended (p. 397).

It dawned on me that the metaphor of safe space was functioning in exactly this way in my conversations with colleagues and students. Not only was the metaphor much more complex than it had appeared, but this nuance was often not acknowledged by how I or others used it. As Boostrom observed, a metaphor might be successful at communicating ideas about the experience of an educational relationship and simultaneously evoking associations that many do not intend when they refer to the "safe space of my class". I recognized that by first understanding how a metaphor could evoke these unintended associations, I could interrogate what resulted from a reference to the "safe space of my class" and then consider how students, teachers, and administrators could arrive at radically different interpretations of safe space.

This then became the focus of my thesis work. As I delved deeper into the literature, however, I was reminded by my committee that a study of this literature alone would not offer me the practice-oriented clarity I desired. Instead, I must constantly strive to develop links between this theoretical literature and the practice of teaching that drove my interest. The problematic metaphor of safe space might benefit from an exclusively conceptual or philosophical analysis, but the analysis carried out for my thesis would have to be philosophy in the service of education.

1.2. Organization of this work

To interrogate what meaning the safe space metaphor is communicating (both intended and otherwise) about a modern education system addressing

ideals of being inclusive to a vast diversity, it is first necessary to consider how metaphors function in language. Chapter 2 of this work will offer a deeper and more thorough analysis of some of the different types of problems that metaphors can create when utilized in the context of education. The analysis first explores one of the most pervasive and problematic metaphors in modern educational discourse, namely, the "school as factory" (Apple, 1979; Bentley, 1998; Callahan, 1962; Egan, 1988; Freire, 1970/2000; Rist, 1973). Language that denotes capitalist business and efficiency has resulted in words like organization, production, efficiency, outcomes, and accountability being applied to both business and educational institutions alike. This process of interpreting school through its metaphoric equation to a factory was quite fruitful as it offered insights, understandings, and similarities between the two that allowed for deeper analysis. However, the nature of metaphoric language is also problematic because our ability to understand the primary subject of the "school" became unduly tied to the attributes of the secondary subject of the "factory". Our independent understanding of the factory, the secondary subject, could then come to dominate, through what philosopher of language Max Black called "entailment relationships" (1962). Our ability to make sense of the primary subject was thereby intertwined with the many unintended associations of the secondary.

To better understand how these ideas are imparted from the secondary subject onto the primary subject, I will review the function of the substitution, comparison, and interaction theories of metaphor (Richard, 1936; Beardsley, 1962; Black, 1962; Ricoeur, 1975; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). I will show that neither the substitution nor comparison theory is capable of accounting for the vast array of unintended ideas that are being imparted with the use of the safe space metaphor in education (Chemerinsky & Gillman, 2017; Deresiewicz, 2017; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015; 2018; Weigel, 2016; Whittington, 2018). In contrast, the interaction theory of metaphor developed by Black (1962) begins the exploration, but it is only with the writing of Paul Ricoeur and his interactive theory of metaphor (1975) that we arrive at a more thorough appreciation of the complexity

of how metaphors function in language. I will therefore explore Ricoeur's theory of metaphor in detail, to explain how a metaphor imparts meaning at the level of its use as a word, its use within a statement or sentence, and its use within a discourse. This will allow me in turn to review the influence of Ricoeur's approach on the subsequent study of the relationship between language and thinking in the field of cognitive linguistics (Johnson, 1993; Gibbs, 1994; Grady, 1997; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Winter, 2001; Davidson, 1978; Searle, 1979; Rorty, 1989; Butler, 1990; Turner, 1996; Steen, 1999; Fauconnier & Turner, 1994; Fauconnier, 1997; Grady et al., 1999; Coulson & Oakley, 2000; Fauconnier & Turner, 2002).

The work of the cognitive linguists on conceptual metaphors deepened Ricoeur's insights into how a metaphor can structure the thinking about a subject (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; 1999; Grady, 1997; Johnson, 2008). I will therefore draw on this work to disentangle meanings imparted by the safe space metaphor within an educational context, and to analyze how the metaphor structures our thinking about what is possible or impossible, legitimate or illegitimate, relevant or irrelevant.

Chapter 3 of this work will therefore conduct a systematic mapping of what is meant by metaphorical references to the "safe space" of a class. Drawing on the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980; 1999), this mapping will reveal the conceptual function of the safe space metaphor. The first step in this mapping is distinguishing between the spatial and physical experience that constitutes the source domain for a conceptual metaphor, along with the intangible relational experience that constitutes the target domain (Grady, 1997; Johnson, 1981; 2008). I will use this approach to identify the range of meanings activated by the concepts of "safe" and "space". The second step undertaken in this mapping is the consideration of how "safe" and "space" interact within the conceptual metaphor that addresses the experience of "my class". Therefore, two distinct mappings become necessary in this chapter, first for the metaphor "my class as an experience of space" and then "my class as an experience of safety", which are blended in the latter part of the chapter to develop a deeper

understanding of what the “safe space of my class” metaphor intentionally and unintentionally imparts.

During the respective mappings for space and safety, firstly at the level of the word’s meaning, secondly at the level of the statement, and thirdly at the level of discourse, possible sources for unintended meanings transmitted by the metaphor are located within past philosophical debates (Johnson, 1981) about the nature of both space and safety. Centrally, I draw on the philosophical debates about the nature of “space” originating in competing theories posited by Isaac Newton, about an absolute understanding of space (Alexander, 1956; Casey, 2013; DiSalle, 2002; Einstein & Jammer, 1969; Hall, 1992; Hatfield, 2006; Jammer, 1969; Shapiro, 2002), and by Gottfried Leibniz about a relational understanding of space (Aiton, 1985; Bobro, 2005; Greene, 2005; Hawking, 2010; Perkins, 2007; Vailati, 1997). My argument will be that two distinct and competing understandings of space are present in the ways this conceptual metaphor is deployed and interpreted in contemporary educational discourse. Furthermore, I will draw on the philosophical and educational debates about the nature of “safety”, specifically those concerned with the necessity for some discomfort and the relative lack of safety during the learning process (Boler, 1999; Dewey, 1895; English & Stengel, 2010; Fisher, 2006; James, 1884; 1983; Mayo, 2016). These attitudes towards safety interact with competing understandings of space in radically different ways.

This mapping of the conceptual “safe space of my class” metaphor offers a useful lens through which to consider current debates about free speech, free expression, and educational discourses that have prioritized equity, diversity, and inclusion. Depending on the context, the safe space metaphor may evoke a container which keeps out all experiences that are unsafe, or a fluid medium of exchange co-constituted by the countless potentially uncomfortable relationships between those in the class. At the level of discourse, this leads conversations to focus either on how to guarantee safety while learning regardless of the people, ideas, pedagogy, or context taking part in the educational space, or how to

create and maintain meaningful educational relationships that can account for the inevitability of discomfort in the diversity of the modern classroom.

1.3. Safe space as metaphor in the practices of educational institutions, teachers, and students

These two radically different meanings for what the safe space metaphor means in modern education are internalized and expressed by higher education institutions, teachers, and students in a myriad of ways. Chapter 4 of this work therefore explores how these different positions in current educational discourse contribute to an understanding of safe space in education that is to some extent incoherent or at cross-purposes with itself. Drawing upon three examples from my own experience as a student and teacher at various institutions of higher education in British Columbia, I illustrate how very different practices may be prompted or informed by the two competing meanings of safe space. On the one hand, some institutions and some students may pursue or demand a guarantee for educational spaces free of anything “unsafe”, but which limit the kinds of educational work that can be done. At the same time teachers may utilize a relational understanding that entails the necessary presence of risk and uncertainty through their reciprocal relationship with students. The teacher’s understanding is then not an absolute guarantee of safety, but rather an emphasis on pedagogical practices meant to minimize the harm the risks and uncertainties pose to the most vulnerable students who would experience them most acutely. I will illustrate these pedagogical practices meant to minimize harm by revisiting the work of bell hooks (1994) who offers an extremely mature discussion of what these difficult and nuanced teachable moments can look like as inclusive classroom pedagogy.

The concluding Chapter 5 of this work then considers how we might go about reconciling these different meanings for the safe space metaphor and the differing practices they entail on the part of the institution and the teacher. Specifically, how can a teacher’s distinctly relational understanding align with

pedagogical priorities at an institution that has differing priorities? To accomplish this, I will consider how the discourse of safe space operates at the societal and national level to meet specific civic priorities. By considering the purpose of institutions of higher education to deliver not only individualistic or consumerist outcomes (Norris, 2020) but also contribute to the formation of an educated and civically engaged citizenry (Waldron, 2012), I argue that foregrounding a relational understanding of safe space can enable institutions to appeal to the reality of a diverse society and an economy that is more in tune with current societal needs. That is, through a deeper understanding of the complex safe space metaphor in education, colleges and universities can articulate a clearer justification of policies and practices designed to foster relational educational experiences premised on the practices of inclusion.

Chapter 2.

Why is safe space a problematic metaphor when discussing education?

The purpose of Chapter 2 is to explore how metaphors function in educational discussions, and moreover, how this can be problematic in any discussion of the safe space metaphor. My motivation for exploring how metaphors function is to better understand and then explain why so many discussions of classrooms as safe spaces can lead to divergent understandings of what is implied by that phrase, and how this is then compounded when an educator considers the pedagogical practices required for the fulfillment of promises regarding safety. This chapter therefore develops an argument for approaching any discussion about safe educational space with careful attention to how metaphors have traditionally operated and been understood in education, and how they contribute to this specific discourse.

The key work considered in this chapter is French philosopher Paul Ricoeur's *The Rule of Metaphor: Multidisciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language* (1975). I shall distinguish between pre-Ricoeur theories of how metaphors function (the substitution theory, the comparison theory, and the interactive theory), and post-Ricoeur theories that build on his account of interaction operating at multiple levels. This post-Ricoeur interactive theory of metaphor is central to modern day cognitive and linguistic research into the functioning of metaphor, which I will then draw on in subsequent chapters to develop a deeper and more meaningful understanding of what safe space can mean in education.

2.1. Metaphors in educational discussions

My personal understanding of safe space and the issues highlighted were not unique in the middle of the last decade in higher education. Uncertainty

played out across discourses grappling with what was meant by a safe space in education (Ben-Porath, 2016; Callan, 2016; Harris, 2016; Mayo, 2016; Roth, 2019), documenting some of its unexpected consequences (Friedersdorf, 2015; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015; 2018; Shulevitz, 2015; Stone, 2016; Whittington, 2018), or articulating full-throated critiques that argued that safe space was placing restrictions on academic freedom and free speech (Chemerinsky & Gillman, 2017; Deresiewicz, 2017; Weigel, 2016).

North American educators were charged with determining what a safe space, whether theirs or their institution's, looked like in practice. A vivid example of these struggles, illustrating a divide between the intentions of educators and the expectations of students, played out at Yale University in 2015 over an unlikely issue: Halloween costumes (Callan, 2016; Friedersdorf, 2015; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2018). In October 2015, a group of at least thirteen administrators at Yale University sent out an email to the student body suggesting to students that they carefully consider their choice of Halloween costumes that month to not offend fellow students. Friedersdorf (2015), as well as Lukianoff and Haidt (2018), points out that these types of communications from administrators at colleges and universities have become the norm across North America in the past decade. In this case, several students in one of Yale's undergraduate residences, Silliman College, were uncomfortable about what they understood to be administration telling them what they were permitted to wear. These students approached the faculty members that lived amongst them at Silliman College as residence heads. Two of these faculty members, Erika Christakis and her husband Nicholas Christakis, listened to the discomfort of their students, and after considering their concerns, Erika sent out an email to the residents of Silliman College "inviting the community to think about the controversy through an intellectual lens that few if any had considered" (FIRE, 2015).

As a lecturer in early childhood education, Erika Christakis drew upon her academic and professional experience to indicate that she, like others, was uncomfortable telling college students what to wear at Halloween. Moreover, she

posited that something important could be lost from the experience of higher education if administrators prohibited and policed anything that might cause offense. She continued:

> American universities were once a safe space not only for maturation but also for a certain regressive, or even transgressive, experience; increasingly, it seems, they have become places of censure and prohibition. And the censure and prohibition come from above, not from yourselves! Are we all okay with this transfer of power? Have we lost faith in young people's capacity—in your capacity to exercise self-censure, through social norming, and also in your capacity to ignore or reject things that trouble you? … Nicholas says, if you don't like a costume someone is wearing, look away, or tell them you are offended. Talk to each other (FIRE, 2015).

How this email was received by some students, and the ensuing maelstrom, offers a clear example of the divide between educator intentions and some students' expectations of what a safe space can and should mean. Rather than taking offense with the initial communication regarding Halloween costumes from the administration, some students were enraged by Erika's email suggesting that they consider instances of costumes causing them discomfort through an intellectual lens and use the opportunity to engage in a deeper dialogue. Petitions demanding an apology and retraction from Erika Christakis were posted online, which quickly gathered signatures from Yale students (Friedersdorf, 2015). She began receiving communications from students claiming she had failed in her responsibility to create and maintain a safe space for her student residents, and therefore should resign from her role (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2018). A public meeting was organized to discuss the issue and Nicholas Christakis attended in his role as a residence head, as well as a colleague and partner to his wife:

> Watching footage of that meeting, a fundamental disagreement is revealed between professor and undergrads. Christakis believes that he has an obligation to listen to the views of the students, to reflect upon them, and to either respond that he is persuaded or to articulate why he has a different view. Put another way, he believes that one respects students by engaging them in earnest dialogue. But many of the students believe that his responsibility is to hear their demands

> for an apology and to issue it. They see anything short of a confession of wrongdoing as unacceptable. In their view, one respects students by validating their subjective feelings (Friedersdorf, 2015).

As educators, both Erika and Nicholas Christakis felt that it was their role to engage the students in earnest dialogue. For many of the students in attendance at that meeting, they felt that his role was to understand their subjective experience and feelings, and then prioritize his care for those feelings before any intellectual pursuit. One poignant exchange between a student and Nicholas Christakis makes this difference clear:

> "In your position as master [residence head]," one student says, "it is your job to create a place of comfort and home for the students who live in Silliman. You have not done that. By sending out that email, that goes against your position as master. Do you understand that?!"
>
> "No," he said, "I don't agree with that."
>
> The student explodes, "Then why the fuck did you accept the position?! Who the fuck hired you?! You should step down! If that is what you think about being a master, you should step down! It is not about creating an intellectual space! It is not! Do you understand that? It's about creating a home here. You are not doing that!" (Friedersdorf, 2015)

In this case, the student felt it was the residence head's job to create a place of comfort and home for all students, without much consideration of the advisor's duty as an educator to promote an intellectual space within that home. For the student, this intellectual space and this home space were at odds. For both Christakis', a safe space was a way to talk about the culture of earnest dialogue with their students, and to promote that culture. For both Christakis', a safe space was something to be relationally developed through ongoing dialogue. But for some students, a safe space implied the existence of a particular physical and social space in which they would be protected from anything that might cause them discomfort or harm. Within the boundary of that space, they expected certain acts, thoughts, etc., to be prohibited and censored to ensure their personal sense of safety. Exploring this divide between the

relational safe space of educators, and the absolute and bounded safe space demanded by some students, is a primary motivation for my work.

As noted earlier, this disconnect between the intentions of educators and the expectations of students was observed by Robert Boostrom in 1998. Specifically, he recognized that references to safe space in education were metaphoric in nature, and that like many other metaphors used to discuss education in the past (Beavis & Thomas, 1996; Freeman, 1996; Grady, Fisher & Fraser, 1996; Ormell, 1996; Parker, 1995; Stefkovich & Guba, 1995), they were likely to be misconstrued as implying a specific way to educate. I found similar observations in other writing about the historical role of metaphors in education (Callahan, 1962; Deffenbacher, 2011; Freire, 1970/2000; Illich, 1971; Kliebard, 1986; 1992; McEwan, 1996; Miller, 1976; O'Neill, 2019; Ortony, 1975; 1976; Rist, 1973; Schutz, 2010; Selden, 1975; Thomas, 2006). These metaphors allowed educators to recognize and consider educational issues in a new way (Boostrom, 1998). However, these metaphors also communicated unintended meanings, perhaps accounting for some of the differences in understanding between educators and students. How and why metaphors do both things – that is, both enlighten and confuse us – is the subject of the rest of this chapter.

2.2. Substitution, comparison, and interaction theories of metaphor

In his unfinished text *On truth and lie in an extra-moral sense* (1873) Friedrich Nietzsche raises an objection to the possibility of truth. Specifically, Nietzsche is skeptical about the promise of human beings knowing some absolute truth through language:

> What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms—in short, a sum of human relations which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are; metaphors which are worn out

> and without sensuous power; coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins (Nietzsche, 1873, ¶10).

At the time of Nietzsche's writing, common assumptions about the use of language held that metaphors served two important functions. First, a metaphor filled a gap in language by substituting a pre-existing meaning that was already understood. Take the "eye" of a needle: it is obvious that no seeing eye exists at one end of a needle, but the value of having such a means to describe this hole, this gap, was noted as far back as Aristotle (Shibles, 1971a; 1971b). Second, a metaphor provided a pleasing and colourful attempt to make up for such gaps in language and understanding by comparing the unknown to the known. The utility of metaphor was its ability to provide a way to understand one thing by either substituting or comparing its meaning with another thing that was better understood.

The philosopher of language Max Black in his text *Models and Metaphors* (1962) took up this belief of metaphor as gap filler. In his text, Black critiqued the earlier substitution and comparison theories of metaphor for their inability to account for the complex communication of ideas, and then developed a third "interaction" theory of metaphor that he argued better represented the way in which humans expressed ideas. Like Nietzsche, Black was concerned not simply with the common assumptions about how metaphors functioned, but also how the use of metaphors had the ability to influence the understanding of the unknown that developed through the interaction. To Black, a metaphor did not just fill a gap through substitution or comparison, it created a new understanding through the interaction of the known and the unknown that essentially erased the gap from existence and was therefore in need of further analysis:

> The extended meanings that result, the relations between initially disparate realms created, can neither be antecedently predicted nor subsequently paraphrased in prose. We can comment upon the metaphor, but the metaphor itself neither needs nor invites explanation and paraphrase (1962, p. 237).

If we consider the “eye” of the needle once more, we could say that the hole at the end of a needle is like an eye because it is a space through which light, and other items such as string, can pass. This is an account of metaphor according to the comparison theory, which for Black was a specific type of the substitution theory. However, Black objected to both the substitution and comparison theories, because both are based upon the assumption of objectively existing similarities between objects that the metaphor simply recognizes. He noted that such an understanding of metaphor took no account of its persuasive power, of its ability “after long use [to] seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people” (Nietzsche, 1873, ¶11). Curriculum historian Herbert Kliebard would later sum up Black’s position as follows: “the metaphor creates a similarity rather than alluding to similarities that exist antecedently” (1992, p. 207).

Based upon this observation of a metaphor’s ability to create similarities, Black developed his “interaction theory of metaphor”. In this perspective, a metaphor functions by transferring common aspects or “a system of commonplaces” (1962, p. 237) of one better understood object to a lesser understood object, serving as a type of lens through which, the lesser understood object can become better known. However, this transference results in some features of the better understood object being overstated and others simply being ignored. In this way the very structure of how the lesser understood object comes to be known is shaped by how the better understood object is known. The hole at the end of the needle is perceived both as marking its “head”, but also as the recipient of thread, as the eye marks the head of an animal and receives light and images.

Black’s interaction theory of metaphor was taken up in the writing of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their text *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). Lakoff and Johnson offered an extensive and thoughtful attempt to fully develop Black’s thesis that metaphors structure our thinking about one thing through our thinking about another, calling this metaphorically structured thinking. They argued that this in turn led to activities being similarly structured, which reflexively

shaped the language used to describe the activities. Their discussion of the relationship between the concepts of *argument* and *war* illustrates this point. If we consider the metaphoric statement *argument is war*, we can contend that while there is relevance to this statement, there are many ways in which it is untrue for all accounts of argument. However, Lakoff and Johnson identified a series of common statements about argument that are aligned with this metaphor: for instance, the need to defend, regroup, reorganize one's position in the face of potential opposition; the need to critique, attack, probe the position of the opposition; the desire to win the argument. The point Lakoff and Johnson successfully developed was that the way we structure our thinking about *argument* through the metaphoric statement *argument is war* directly influences how the activity and its description through language are developed in our culture. The war metaphor has become an accepted way to consider, participate in, and describe an argument: "the concept is metaphorically structured, the activity is metaphorically structured, and, consequently, the language is metaphorically structured" (1980, p. 5). In this way the language of metaphor is "not poetic, fanciful, or rhetorical; it is literal" (1980, p. 5), and this literal sense determines the way we conceive of a concept, which in turn determines the way we act.

The utilization of metaphor thus becomes immensely significant. Black referred to metaphors as models, as they encompassed not only the straightforward utterance but also established parameters of understanding. According to Black, many of these models become submerged during and after a metaphor is first conceived so that we are not immediately conscious of them, and they play out in certain key words and ideas. Black referred to these submerged models as archetypes:

> By an archetype I mean a systematic repertoire of ideas by means of which a given thinker describes, by analogical extension, some domain to which those ideas do not immediately and literally apply (1962, p. 241).

This idea of archetype explained the organizing power of a metaphorical concept such as *argument is war*, through a system of organization which, while coherent, was for the most part unconscious and existed primarily at the level of common, ordinary, or uncritical ways of thinking. Lakoff and Johnson elaborated on this idea. For them, the metaphorical concept and its system of organization enable a type of sub-categorization to take place: 1) Argument is War, 2) War is meant to be won, 3) War is won by attack and defense. These sub-categorizations become fluid in thinking and lead to entailment relationships: for example, *arguments should be won* necessarily entails that *I must defend my own position and attack the position of my opponent*. The role of an archetype in everyday thinking can therefore not be ignored, for it serves to organize thoughts and actions through language at an imperceptible level. As Kliebard summarized: "it is not, after all, language that is the symbolic mirror of your thought; rather, language provides us with the conceptual categories by which thought and understanding are ordered" (1992, p. 206). In so doing, language, specifically metaphoric language, provides us with the way we categorically conceive and perceive of the world. This is also true for the theoretical sciences and the detailed models they develop, because the explanation of these models to others inside and outside of their fields invariably requires the use of metaphoric language.

2.3. Problems in education and meaning when metaphor functions through substitution, comparison, or interaction

Education as we know it is crowded with metaphoric concepts that provide useful ways of thinking about everything from school design (Burke & Grosvenor, 2008; O'Neill, 2015; Upitis, 2010;), to curriculum theory and development (Kliebard, 1986; 1992) to assessment (Deffenbacher, 2011). As a rhetorical tool for building an argument it is hard to deny the utility of metaphor in conveying ideas that are highly complex or relatively unknown to a non-expert audience. It therefore becomes the responsibility of the theorist who develops this metaphoric

understanding to utilize it sparingly and, moreover, to acknowledge the limitations and contradictions of metaphor.

This work, however, is not immediately concerned with the use of metaphors in developing ideas, as is common in educational writing, but is instead interested in those instances in which metaphors “after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people” (Nietzsche, 1873, ¶10). This seems to me an apt description of the role of “safe space” in educational discussions, where it is commonly not understood to be operating metaphorically (Callan, 2016; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015; 2018; Roth, 2019). How does this transition to what we might term the “everyday” understanding of a topic take place?

For Nietzsche this ingrained quality of metaphorical thinking was a natural result of the use of language. He understood language to be metaphorical in its relationship to thought in the first place, so that relationships developed metaphorically between different words in the language were a natural consequence of this primary metaphor. As language was understood as the normal and only way to explain thoughts and ideas, it invariably led to many instances in which metaphoric language was conveniently forgotten to be metaphoric at all.

This points to a significant limitation of human understanding. When a metaphor is no longer immediately recognized as a metaphor, but instead as the default way to think about a concept (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), the ability to critically interrogate understanding in the face of change and hardship is severely curtailed. Often distilled down to a basic saying, many metaphors have become so ingrained in the structure of everyday language, activity and thinking that they now seem ordinary and normal. Yet as we have seen, these conceptual metaphors operate to either substitute well-known meaning onto a lesser known, to compare (and substitute) the characteristics of the familiar with those of the less familiar or orchestrate an interaction between the common and lesser-known

ideas. In these cases, archetypes and entailment relationships shape and restrict our thinking.

An example will illustrate how this works. One conceptual metaphor that took hold of the American public at the turn of the twentieth century, and has yet to be dislodged, is that of the need for greater efficiency in all aspects of life. Businesses had thrived in the United States in the post-Civil War period through new technologies and workplace methods. This had led to a rapid industrialization and urbanization of much of the country by the turn of the twentieth century. Where up to the end of the nineteenth century America could be considered a primarily agrarian society, with most of its population living outside major centres, the onset of the twentieth century marked the beginning of a more industrial and technological society with much of the American population now living in urban centers (Pickstone, 2000). With this demographic shift, precipitated by the rapid economic development of the post-Civil War era, issues such as developing a large-scale public education system became more pronounced to meet the constantly growing demand for an educated workforce. Moving from the schoolhouse (that had tended to the needs of a farmer society) to an efficient urban public system to meet the needs of most Americans would require reform of the concept of education on an industrial scale.

While the motivations and implementation of this reform varied across regions, states and cities (Thomas, 2006), it is possible to consider this reform movement first from a macro level, at the grand scale of how education was conceived in America as a whole. This in turn allows for a more nuanced consideration of the structure of the school and the development of curriculum. Raymond Callahan takes on this project in his seminal work *Education and the Cult of Efficiency* (1962). Callahan offers a social and cultural analysis with special attention paid to the language of efficiency that influenced the formation of the standardized schooling system now common across North America. His approach, beginning with systemic considerations and then eventually narrowing

to the classroom level, makes the daunting task of understanding this process of social, institutional and ideological change much more manageable.

Callahan's work illustrates how these reforms were enabled and mediated by the substitution, comparison, and interactive function of metaphor (i.e., Black's 'archetypes'). Following his strategy, I will first address the macro-level considerations, i.e., how comparisons of size, scale, and scope at the turn of the twentieth century enabled a business-orientated understanding of education to be metaphorically substituted for the traditional liberal understanding. Second, I will turn to an analysis of the goals of these reforms, and how they interacted to enable and structure a particular organization of the work done by teachers and administrators in schools that was to last throughout the twentieth century and into the present time.

First, as the macro-level requirement for an education system to serve a large and diverse population grew more pressing in the late nineteenth century, educational administrators and governmental policy makers considered how to re-form an existing system that served a relatively small population into something that could meet the needs of urban populations. Little government infrastructure had previously existed that could serve as a model for how this new behemoth of education could be implemented. However, due to the sheer size of the patchwork of educational systems in some cities and states, it was equated with large businesses and industries. One of the results of this comparison, based upon the size and scale of education to the industries of America, was that the educational administrator began to be thought of as, and substituted with, business administrator:

> …which made the organizational and administrative aspects of the educational work seem – on a superficial basis, at least – comparable to those aspects of large industry which, it was claimed, were being handled so efficiently by businessmen. In these huge systems there was no question but that the administrative detail work was considerable (Callahan, 1962, p. 149).

Where education sought a model to provide guidance on how to structure such a vast school system, there existed a need to substitute the concept of the schoolhouse with that of the “school” as a large, complex network of interconnected units.

Similarities with business structures such as the scale of urban education and the administrative needs it would require were championed, while questions pertaining to the nature and purpose of education were conveniently put aside to be dealt with in the future, if at all. Most striking about this move to equate education to business due to their relative size, was that “education”, in any real sense, was not easily delineated as a concept. It existed in many forms, both as physical structures and curricular formats ranging from the one-room schoolhouse which students attended only during the day, to privately funded boarding schools, to religious or moral education to vocational training. This is an important consideration, because education was not neatly identifiable due to its vast scope and differing executions across America, whereas business was a generally identifiable and clearly delineated concept. The claim was made that this clear and bounded concept could be substituted for the nature of education at that time.

This move to delineate education as a clear concept represented an important way in which metaphorical concepts are established: through the equation and comparison of two fully formed concepts that could be considered as objects with their own substance.

> Understanding our experiences in terms of objects and substances allows us to pick out parts of our experience and treat them as discrete entities or substances of uniform kind (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 25).

Claiming that the vastly varying experiences of education could be grouped together in their entirety allowed for the comparison to business to be more palatable. If we could classify slices of our experiences in terms of complete objects and substances, it allowed us to treat them as discrete entities

or substances, and most importantly, to fathom, reason and consider them in some meaningful way. This experience with physical objects, for Lakoff and Johnson:

> provides the basis for metonymy. Metonymic concepts emerge from correlations [comparisons] in our experience between two physical entities or between a physical entity and something metaphorically conceptualized as a physical entity (1980, p. 59).

Through the metonymic pairing “school is like a large industrial business due its large scale”, an underlying concept of “efficiency” emerges. Large organizations such as school systems need to be organized efficiently, because that is how large industrial businesses are organized to maximize productivity and profit. The emergence of the metonymic concept of efficiency is important to any reading of Callahan; it gives concrete form to the “rage to order” (to borrow an idea from Max Weber) that his text described, that is, the drive towards an increasingly ordered way of life as representative of a modern, urban, industrial existence.

This underlying metaphorical relation of school and business enabled and legitimized a far-reaching reorganization of the work of education.

Gareth Morgan’s text *Images of Organization* (2006) elaborates on several metaphoric examples of the organization of education and the school: *machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political systems, psychic prisons,* and *instruments of domination*. As Callahan documents in detail, images drawn from the business world have the greatest resonance with how schools have been conceived and actually run in the past century. This was not a necessary conceptualization, but rather was the result of metaphor interacting with, and thereby being tied to, the values and beliefs of dominant discourses and language practices. The subcategorization of aspects of the school as a business allowed for the structuring of discourse around education with an embedded orientational metaphor: a spatial understanding of the dominant values of the culture (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The orientation is to growth, conceived of as movement

forwards and upwards: feeling happy is better than feeling sad, going up is better than going down, and more material success is preferable to less material success (wealth). With respect to each of the metonymic emergent concepts that have arisen in education in the last century, such as efficiency, accountability (i.e., report cards), standardization (i.e., curriculum), and choice and consumerism (i.e., school vouchers), more is always desirable.

When we apply the framework developed by Lakoff and Johnson to the development and representation of dominant values in American capitalist culture at the turn of the twentieth century, we discover a narrative that is all too familiar in present day educational theory. Success as material success (wealth), is perhaps the most dominant value present in educational texts such as the McGuffey Readers. We are led to believe that success must be understood as a product. Therefore schools, in their metaphorical conception, need to maximize the possibility of success – and the most prolific example of maximizing productivity and success in America at the time was industrial businesses. As business success was defined as material and financial success, schools needed to be efficiently managed, and the organizations of spaces in which work was undertaken needed to be as efficient as possible.

Given this metaphoric structuring and orientation, it is then no wonder that the ideas of scientific management to promote efficiency championed by Frederick Taylor (1911/1967) have remained a part of educational discourse for over a century. These mechanisms of scientific management developed by Taylor were: intensive study of a particular job and its movements, what he called a time and motion study; standardization, determining the optimal movements to do the job and then training others in these specific movements; assignment of definite tasks, giving individuals a particular amount of work to accomplish in a given time; and a functional foreman who supervised specific aspects of the work, which meant he also taught and supervised what he was expert in (Callahan, 1962).

The perceived need to standardize and supervise ‘definite tasks’ which could be completed and assessed in a given time was the most telling aspect of the organization of education over a century ago. “Outcomes-based” education dramatically altered the nature of the work undertaken by teachers and students (Apple, 2004; Smyth & Dow, 1998). The metaphoric conception of the school as business was not simply a substitution of business principles into education, nor was it a straightforward comparison (the similarities between the two were tenuous at the onset of the metaphor). Instead, a much more complex interaction between education and business was initiated when the two were brought together metaphorically. It is this understanding of metaphor as a dynamic factor in cultural and social development that I wish to highlight, because it is germane to the discussion of safe space taken up in the following chapters.

This century-long history of shared structure brought about through metaphor, along with the emergence of educational theories that it both shaped and was shaped by, is difficult to untangle without a robust understanding of how metaphor functions at more than just the level of the word, or the level of the sentence, or at the level of discourse. Many of the proponents of these theories championing increased efficiency, accountability, standardization, and choice have simply forgotten their metaphorical origin, or worse yet, outright deny this genesis and hence relieve themselves of any responsibility to respond to critique. In this situation there are striking similarities to Nietzsche’s argument about the fleeting nature of truth and its indebtedness to metaphor:

> In the natural sciences, some (but certainly not all) would claim that this metaphorical make-believe will eventually be abandoned as model or theory becomes more like a hypothetical-deductive system, but, even if this were the case, this should not blind us to the theory’s metaphorical origins (Kliebard, 1992, pp. 208-209).

There are thus strong grounds for considering the education system, with its curricular theories and desired educational outcomes, as a theoretical model that has forgotten it is a metaphor. Enabled by the substitution, comparison, and interactive function of metaphor, the education system operates at many levels of

meaning, from the word, the statement, and at the level of educational discourse. Much of what we now know as education is owed in no small part to a particular mechanistic metaphor that at first compared, then substituted, and finally simply *was* the school as an efficient business. Metaphors become problematic by being taken literally, not only substituting one object by another, but by also being forgotten as functioning metaphorically.

When a metaphor is taken literally, it names one thing by substituting another, to which we initially resist. However, this resistance slowly dissipates as we accept the make-believe – we suspend our literal objection at the promise of some greater insight. In the acceptance of this promise, the thing becomes what it had pretended to be and "our willing sense of make-believe is converted into a literal prison" (Kliebard, 1992, p. 209). It is at this moment, in the acceptance of the metaphor's promise, that it troubles our deeper understanding because of the mistaken belief that the metaphor functions in an easy to discern way of substituting meaning, comparing meaning, or interacting to develop meaning. This relatively simplistic understanding of function was found wanting by the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur because he came to understand that nothing, not even metaphors, functioned in isolation. It is therefore to Ricoeur's theory of metaphor I now turn, to put my forthcoming analysis of safe space on a more secure footing.

2.4. Paul Ricoeur's theory of metaphor

Paul Ricoeur's *The Rule of Metaphor* (1975) accepted the inevitability of metaphor in language. Ricoeur's was a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, hermeneutic approach, with its focus first on symbolic forms, and then on symbolic structures. For Ricoeur a metaphor did not simply function to substitute or compare meaning at the level of the words in the metaphor, nor simply through the interaction of possible meanings at the level of a sentence, or within an existing discourse. Instead, Ricoeur proposed that metaphor functioned at all these levels in a continuous dialectical manner. This meant a metaphor could not

be analyzed in isolation; one needed to consider the word, the sentence, and the discourse, and the interactions between them, to derive its true meaning.

Ricoeur had been developing this understanding of how words function within language, and specifically metaphor, since his 1967 essay “Structure, Word, Event” when he posited that metaphor captured the cumulative meaning of a word:

> Now this process of the transfer of meaning – of metaphor – supposes that the word is a cumulative entity, capable of acquiring new dimensions of meaning without losing the old ones. It is this cumulative, metaphorical process which is projected over the surface of the system as polysemy (1967, p 93).

Ricoeur’s process of inquiry was therefore to locate where the metaphorical process was occurring, and he surmised that a metaphor operated at the level of the word, the level of the sentence, and at the level of discourse. However, none of these levels was elevated above the others. Additionally, Ricoeur argued that “epistemological specificity” must be clarified (1972, p. 165): simply, what knowledge did a metaphor create? In keeping with his grounding in hermeneutics, he also suggested that it was necessary to think of metaphor as a work in miniature, as any exploration of metaphor “contributes to the interpretation itself of the work as a whole” (1972, p. 175).

Ricoeur began his exploration by considering Metaphor as a Word. He points to the definition of metaphor offered by Aristotle:

> Metaphor is the application of one thing of the name belonging to another. We may apply (a) the name of a genus to one of its species, or (b) the name of a species to its genus, or (c) the name of one species to another of the same genus, or (d) the transfer may be based on a preposition (*Poetics*, 1457b, 67).

In his analysis of Aristotle’s definition (1975, pp. 16-19), Ricoeur argued that not only was the noun affected, but that there was “a movement” which involved a type of borrowing that he called “a transposition”. The proper meaning is then changed, as the borrowed meaning is transposed to the proper meaning. This

process then occurs in reverse, back to the borrowed meaning, causing it to change. As Ricoeur points out, underlying this idea is a theory of derivation that makes it possible to find the origin of substitution, which he calls the act of borrowing.

Ricoeur felt that it was a mistake for Aristotle to focus almost exclusively on the word in his definition of metaphor. Ricoeur began by asking his reader to focus on both terms in the relationship, as the act of borrowing affected both terms. Secondly, he drew attention to how the characteristics of one term could not be completely transposed onto the other term, but instead led to a deviation from the expected logical order of the first term resulting in an invention (1975, pp. 21-22). This reordering was not simply a superficial act of having the second term resemble the first, but was instead a redescription of reality (1975, p. 22). This analysis of Aristotle's definition of metaphor as presented in the *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* allowed Ricoeur to locate Aristotle's metaphorical process as taking place at the level of the verb, in the action *between* the two terms, the nouns (1975, p. 42).

Ricoeur argued that a reinterpretation of Aristotle was possible by closely analyzing the description of mimesis (the representation of the real world in art and literature) in *Rhetoric* (1975, p. 42):

> Metaphor, it relates, makes one see things because it represents things as in a state of activity (*Rhetoric,* 1411b, 24-25).

This has profound implications for any analysis of metaphor. It suggests, for example, that safe space is active space and not a static and discrete zone, requiring ongoing maintenance and development. Both the notion of an educational space itself, and its relative degree of safety, are creative *achievements* rather than mere observable features of the world.

This shift in focus from only the word to the relationships between words, from rhetoric to semantics, and from semantics to hermeneutics pointed directly

to the need to consider other levels of meaning, in particular the way metaphors operate at the sentence level:

> Rhetoric terminates in classifications and taxonomy, to the extent that it focuses on the figures of deviation, or tropes, in which the meaning of a word departs from its lexically codified usage, and as such fails to explain how meaning is produced. 'The semantic and the rhetorical viewpoints do not begin to be differentiated until metaphor is transferred into the framework of the sentence and is treated not as a case of deviant denomination, but as a case of impertinent predication,' a displacement of the metaphorical process from the word to the sentence (1975, p. 4).

Thus, according to Ricoeur, "a theory of the metaphorical statement will be a theory of the production of metaphorical meaning" (1975, p 65). He believed that structural linguistics that defined language as a "system of signs" characterized it in just one of its aspects and not in its totality (1975, p. 69), asserting that semiotics operated at the level of the sign (word), while semantics operated at the level of the sentence (1975, p. 70-76). This "disjunctive conception of the relationship between semiotics and semantics" (1975, p. 75) allowed Ricoeur to move beyond Aristotle's and more traditional theories of substitution, and instead connect to the interaction theories of metaphor developed by I.A. Richards (1936), Max Black (1962), and Monroe C. Beardsley (1962).

Ricoeur pointed out that Richards' work, specifically his new definition of rhetoric and utilizing metaphor at an ontological level, shifted focus from metaphor at the level of the word and instead to the level of metaphorical statement. Richards' theory of metaphor required that language be understood by its contextual arrangement, meaning that words were only meaningful through their relationship to other parts of the discourse (1975, pp. 77-78). Ricoeur pointed out that for Richards:

> metaphor results from the 'contextual theory of meaning'; …metaphor holds together within one simple meaning two different missing parts of different contexts of this meaning. Thus, we are not dealing any longer with a simple transfer of words, but with a

> commerce between thoughts, that is, a transaction between contexts (1975, p. 80).

The importance of this observation cannot be understated. Whereas traditional theories of metaphor had focused on the "vehicle" of the metaphor, I.e., the word, Ricoeur followed Richards in emphasizing the participation of the "tenor", the original underlying idea, in the entire operation of the metaphor (1975, p. 80). The implication was that metaphor involves the whole world of our perceptions:

> Our world…is a projected world, shot through with characters lent to it from our own life…the exchange between the meanings of words which we study in explicit verbal metaphors are superimposed upon a perceived world which itself is a product of earlier or unwitting metaphor (Richards, 1936, pp. 108-109).

Ricoeur inferred that metaphorical meaning is produced through a two-way interaction. First, through the metaphoric use of language our understanding of one thing was explicitly superimposed onto something else to create meaning, but that something else, which was a product of countless previous metaphors, also acted on this created meaning in more subtle and implicit ways. This was the transaction between contexts that, as Ricoeur acknowledged, had earlier been highlighted by Max Black (1962).

As noted in the previous chapter, Black had first summarized and then dismissed both the substitution theory and the comparison theory of metaphor. According to Black, the substitution theory of metaphor held "that a metaphorical expression is used in place of some equivalent literal expression" (1962, p. 37). The comparison theory of metaphor could be understood in terms of analogy and similarity, where the reader noted the similar "ground" of the analogy, then could consider the frame of reference or wider context. Black argued that neither of these theories could account for the new organization of thought the metaphor created:

> …[a] metaphorical statement is not a substitute for a formal comparison or any other kind of literal statement but has its own distinctive capacities and achievements (1962, p. 37).

Or, as Mark Johnson would later summarize Black's objection to the comparison theory:

> The projection of one system onto another is a distinctive intellectual operation not reducible to any mere comparison of objects to mark their similarities (1981, p. 28).

There are seven features of Black's interaction view of metaphor (1962, pp. 44-45), which Ricoeur accepted and further adapted into the following general attributes (1975):

1. A metaphorical statement in the interaction view of metaphor has two separate subjects, a "principal" subject and a "subsidiary one".

2. These subjects are best understood as "systems of things" rather than an individual "thing".

3. The metaphor works by applying to the principal subject a system of "associated implications" characteristic of the subsidiary subject.

4. These implications usually consist of "commonplaces" about the subsidiary subject, but may in some appropriate situations, consist of deviant implications established ad hoc by the writer.

5. The metaphor selects, emphasizes, suppresses, and organizes features of the principal subject by implying statements about it that normally apply to the subsidiary subject.

6. This involves shifts in meaning of words belonging to the same family or system as the metaphorical expression, and some of these shifts may be metaphorical transfers.

Mark Johnson, whose ideas about metaphor can be seen to be derived from Ricoeur's writing, explains that according to the interactive theory, a metaphor is created by using:

> one entire system of commonplaces (e.g., that of wolf) to 'filter' or organize our conception of some other system (e.g., that of man).

> The ‘interaction’ is a screening of one system of commonplaces by another to generate a new conceptual organization of, a new perspective on, some object (1981, p. 28).

In addition to the contributions of Richards and Black, Ricoeur’s theory of metaphor required a consideration of literary theory. Ricoeur found the theory of Monroe C. Beardsley (1962) quite useful as it ascribed a degree of inventiveness to the metaphorical statement (1975, p. 96). For Beardsley, the two things juxtaposed in a metaphor constituted a “logical opposition” that allowed a new meaning to emerge, because the order of connotation, what would normally be invoked by the word or “vehicle” of the metaphor, is disrupted (1962, pp. 105-122). This amounted to acknowledging the predicative quality of the metaphorical statement, a key aspect of Ricoeur’s theory. Beardsley’s work helped Ricoeur distinguish between metaphor and metonymy, and to position his theory of metaphor rooted in interaction as preferrable to previous theories of comparison and substitution:

> This twofold approximation enriches our concept of metaphorical processes: definition, naming, synonym, circumlocution, and paraphrase are metalinguistic operations through which I designate elements of my code by means of equivalent elements within the same code. Even code-changing operations depend upon equivalence of terms from one code to another. All these operations are related profoundly to the capacity of words to receive additional, displaced, and associated meanings on the basis of their resembling the fundamental meaning… (1975, pp. 177-178).

As Ricoeur worked from the level of the word (semiotics) to the level of the sentence/statement (semantics), his argument eventually brought him to consider the level of discourse, because of what he described as a metaphor’s ability to “redescribe reality” (1975, p. 231). This was based upon his analysis of how, at the sentence/statement level, the initial idea “acts on” the secondary idea in a predicative manner to redescribe it in a new way, creating a new meaning, that cannot be accounted for at either the level of word or statement. This predicative act at the level of the statement creates a new reality at the level of discourse. “Whereas the sign points back only to other signs immanent within a

system, discourse is about things. Sign differs from sign, discourse refers to the world" (1975, p. 216).

Within his theory of metaphor, this referentiality to the world is especially important because it allows for both the creation of new meaning and the corrosion of the former, ostensibly literal meaning. This innovation is the key for Ricoeur because it is a type of transference between realms, domains of meaning heretofore treated as separate:

> Now metaphor typically involves a change not merely of range but also of realm. A label along with others constituting a schema is in effect detached from the home realm of that schema and applied for the sorting and organizing of an alien realm. Partly, by thus carrying with it a reorientation of a whole network of labels does a metaphor give clues for its own development and elaboration (1975, p. 72).

The process of transferring these labels from the original realm to the new realm is not simply a relabeling that leaves old organizations unchanged. Instead, this can result in novel and important reorganizations that are subsequently incorporated back into the home realm. This dialectical labelling and reincorporation of the new possibilities led Ricoeur to write that "metaphor permeates all discourse" (1975, p. 80), and is integral to our symbolic systems that continually "make" and "remake" the world.

The obvious problem with such symbolic systems (often referred to as models in the literature) is that they can be taken as accurate representations of reality itself. Ricoeur and his colleagues all accepted the benefit of utilizing models and metaphors, such as when Black wrote:

> A memorable metaphor has the power to bring two disparate domains in cognitive and emotional relation by using language directly appropriate to the one as a lens for seeing the other; the implications, suggestions, and supporting values entwined with the literal use of the metaphorical expression enables us to see a new subject matter in a new way (1962, pp. 236-237).

However, even as far back as the early 1960s theorists such as Douglas Berggren were wary that a "given metaphor or its allegorical extension may be

transformed into myth" (1963, pp. 465-472). Ricoeur called this confusing "the make-believe" that "something is the case" (1975, p. 255) with the actual claim that that is indeed the case. He emphasized this caution by drawing upon the writing of Australian philosopher Colin Turbayne:

> The one is to use a disguise or mask for illustrative or explanatory purposes; the other is to mistake the mask for the face…Both thus involve the crossing of different sorts. But while the former is to present the facts of one sort as if they belong to another, the latter is to claim that they actually belong. While the former adds nothing obvious to the actual process, the latter involves the addition of features that are the products of speculation or invention instead of discovery (Turbayne, 1970, pp. 3-4).

Yet who pays attention to the cautions of philosophers? As we shall see, mistaking "the mask for the face" is one of the hallmarks of the misunderstandings that haunt debates over "safe space" to the present day.

2.5. Ricoeur's theory of metaphor and interaction at multiple levels to develop meaning

Ricoeur's theory of metaphor opened new ground for theorists of metaphor in the 1970s and 1980s. Linguistic, cognitive, and philosophical theorists all explored the intricacies of the transition from a unique focus on the word (semiotics) or the statement (semantics) toward the interactions between word, statement and discourse. This work was most notably and influentially taken up by the linguist George Lakoff and the philosopher Mark Johnson in their book *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). Echoing Ricoeur's view that the meaning of a metaphor could not be reduced to some simplified "building blocks of meaning" (1980, p. 69), Lakoff and Johnson argued for an experiential gestalt, for metaphor as rooted in an organizing form and pattern which should be considered as "a cluster of other components" (1980, p. 69). These clusters then form a gestalt that "human beings find more basic than the parts" (1980, pp. 69-70).

Lakoff and Johnson's description of gestalts worked to further develop and build on the interaction theory of metaphor posited by Ricoeur. Specifically, Lakoff and Johnson claimed that "human thought processes are largely metaphorical" and that the "human conceptual system is metaphorically structured and defined" (1980, p. 6). Leaving behind the theory of substitution and comparison, Lakoff and Johnson claimed that metaphors created new connections through their interactions by offering "a partial understanding of one kind of experience in terms of another kind of experience…" (1980, p. 154). It was here where their work most strongly aligned with Ricoeur's focus on the interaction at the level of discourse and the meaning which developed:

> Metaphors may create realities for us, especially social realities. A metaphor may thus guide future action. Such action will, of course, fit the metaphor. This will, in turn, reinforce the power of the metaphor to make experience coherent. In this sense metaphors can be self-fulfilling prophecies (1980, p. 156).

One particularly telling example of this was Lakoff and Johnson's discussion of the 1970s energy crisis in the United States, using the vocabulary of an armed conflict, which served to develop a metaphorical network that simultaneously explained the problems in terms of conflict, while constructing conflict-orientated solutions. Reality through this metaphorical network was thereby redescribed in a discursive fashion that determined the nature and scope of possible responses.

These new insights into the influence of metaphor on thought and action through interaction at the level of discourse influenced several branches of inquiry following the publication of Ricoeur (1975) and subsequently Lakoff and Johnson (1980). These inquiries were philosophic (Johnson, 1993; Gibbs, 1994; Grady, 1997; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Winter, 2001; etc.), linguistic (Davidson, 1978; Searle, 1979; Rorty, 1989; Butler, 1990; Turner, 1996; Steen, 1999; etc.), and cognitive, focused on metaphoric networks of thought which blended to derive new meanings and understanding (Fauconnier & Turner, 1994; Fauconnier, 1997; Grady et al., 1999; Coulson & Oakley, 2000; Fauconnier &

Turner, 2002; etc.). Operating generally within the dialectical interaction theory of metaphor developed by Ricoeur, these inquiries have confirmed the ubiquity of metaphorical thinking and its capacity for generating both innovation and stasis. As Ricoeur put it:

> …the 'place' of metaphor, its most intimate and ultimate abode, is neither the name nor the sentence, nor even discourse, but the copula of the verb to be. The metaphorical 'is' at once signifies both 'is not' and 'is like' (1975, p. 7).

This simultaneous focus on what is and is not, what is possible and impossible, what is present and absent, interacts in such a way as to develop new meaning and understanding. This has been particularly evident in work in cognitive linguistics, which at the same time has called attention to the ways in which metaphors can simultaneously limit or imprison our thinking. The next section of this chapter will discuss how the interaction theory of metaphor, as developed by the cognitive linguistic branch of inquiry, can be applied to an analysis of safe space at the level of the words "safe" and "space", at the level of sentence/statement of safe space, and at the level of discourse from and within which safe space derives its meaning. This will prepare the ground for the analysis that follows in Chapter 3.

2.6. Safe space as a conceptual metaphor in education

Perhaps the best way to demonstrate how a cognitive-linguistic analysis of metaphor works in practice is to consider how Lakoff and Johnson took up the philosophical question of causality. Concepts of causality have been a staple of philosophic discourse since the time of Aristotle, yet as Johnson forcefully argued, for most of that time:

> the idea that metaphor lies at the heart of human conceptualization and reasoning has been rejected... One could even make a crude distinction between two types of philosophy – objectivist/literalist philosophies that see metaphor as a dispensable linguistic appurtenance and those that see philosophies as creative elaboration of basic conceptual metaphors… If our most

> fundamental abstract concepts – such as those for causation, events, will, thought, reason, knowledge, mind, justice, and rights – are irreducibly metaphoric, then philosophy must consist in the analysis, criticism, and elaboration of the metaphorical concepts out of which philosophies are made (2008, p. 39).

Ricoeur's theory of metaphor and its elaboration by cognitive linguistics in the 1980s and 1990s provided new tools for this kind of analysis. Johnson soon found his attention drawn to the key role played by metaphors in discussions of causation:

> I was struck by how philosophers referred to 'causes' as if they were objective forces or entities and as if there existed basically one kind of natural causation (as revealed in expressions such as 'X caused Y' and 'The cause of Y is X'). In an attempt to explain human actions, many philosophers also spoke of 'agent causality,' in order to carve out a space for human 'willing,' but in physical nature, natural causes ruled the day. So, there seemed to be at least one type of cause (i.e., physical) but not more than two types (adding agent causation to physical causation), and both conceptions were thought to be literal, not metaphorical. Causes were alleged to be literal entities or forces in the world (2008, p. 40).

For Lakoff and Johnson, the first step in analysis was to consider how people generally conceptualized their experiences. Applying Ricoeur's theory to the language of causality, they noted that causal relationships typically "involved an understanding of change of state as (metaphorical) motion from one location to another: "They called this the "Location Event-Structure Metaphor" (Johnson, 2008, pp. 40-41). As with other conceptual metaphors, a better understood source domain – in this case an individual's experience and description of the space around them – was utilized to metaphorically explain a much less perceptible target domain, in this case the temporal. Explanations and descriptions of this temporal target domain would therefore utilize language and concepts drawn from the perception and experience of objects in the spatial source domain.

Applying this idea consistently to sentence- and discourse-level meaning involving changes of state led to the following "mapping" for the location event-structure metaphor (Johnson, 2008, p. 41):

Table 2.6-1: Location Event-Structure metaphor

Source Domain [Motion in Space]		**Target Domain [Events]**
Location in space	→	States
Movement from one location to another	→	Changes of states
Physical forces	→	Causes
Forced movement	→	Causation
Self-propelled movements	→	Actions
Destinations	→	Purposes
Paths to destinations	→	Means to ends
Impediments to motion	→	Difficulties

As predicted by Ricoeur's theory the overarching discourse of the Location Event-Structure metaphor permeates the entire system for conceptualizing and communicating about causality. This system includes an array of complex "submappings" (Grady, 1997, quoted in Johnson, 2008) which organize how various aspects of the target domain can be thought and talked about.

This application of Ricoeur's theory of metaphor offers a useful model on how to better understand the social and pedagogical issues that arise when safe space is used to describe "my class". At first glance safe space seems a simple and straightforward metaphor, free of the philosophical complexities of causality and similar fundamental concepts. However, any meaningful understanding in education cannot ignore the larger educational themes of equity, diversity, and inclusion, within which safe space discourse is located. Moreover, Ricoeur's philosophical theory highlights the reality that, to understand the operations of metaphor in the claim "My Class is a Safe Space", the entire system and its complex submappings would need to be analyzed. Simply, the metaphor

functions to transfer rules and expectations from the source domain(s) of which most educators and student are unaware.

Therefore, in the next two chapters of this work, the concept of safe space will be analyzed using the mapping approach exemplified here for the Location Event-Structure metaphor, with explicit consideration of the levels of word, sentence and discourse. In chapter 3, an in-depth history of our everyday understandings of both “space” and “safe” will be undertaken. This will be followed by an analysis in which this lost history will be used to develop a mapping for “space”, then “safe[ty]”, and finally safe space, and thereby provide insight into the conceptual structuring they impart to an understanding of “my class as a safe space”.

In Chapter 4 I will show how this kind of mapping can also be used to develop a more pedagogically meaningful conception for safe space. This expanded meaning of safe space will be situated within the discourse of modern education’s longstanding issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion, to put forward tangible suggestions to educators of what a pedagogy of safe space can look like in practice.

Chapter 3.

How can we consider safe space at Ricoeur's level of the word, and at the level of the sentence (statement)?

The purpose of this chapter is to begin to apply Ricoeur's theory of metaphor (1975) to our understanding of safe space, as it functions dialectically at three levels: the word, the statement, and discourse. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980; 1999) point out, many important concepts operate as conceptual metaphors that structure our thinking about a subject. This occurs when a source domain, an experience with which an individual has a familiarity, is utilized to make sense of a target domain, an experience with which this individual has less familiarity. The result is the metaphorical structuring of the experience in the target domain through the explanation, language, and possibilities afforded by the source domain.

In the case of the "safe space of my class", this metaphorical structuring of the experience of "my classroom" takes place through an individual's understanding of safe space. As has been discussed earlier and will be elaborated upon in this chapter, safe space lacks one precise and uniform meaning. This results in metaphorically structuring the experience in a class in what can best be considered a haphazard fashion. For some that call for a safe space, this means a defined, absolute, bounded environment that is exclusionary of discomfort or harm; and this can result in the structuring of an experience that is lacking in almost all educational value. It is therefore necessary to develop a definition of safe space that utilizes a rigorous philosophical framework to draw out the relational nature of meaningful education.

Drawing upon Ricoeur's theory of metaphor and Lakoff and Johnson's mapping technique for conceptual metaphors, I will therefore undertake the development of a more precise definition for safe space. This process will be

done incrementally throughout this chapter's analyses at the level of the word and the level of statement. The resulting mapping of "the safe space of my class" will then be analyzed within the discourses of educational examples in the next chapter to develop further improvements.

3.1. Mapping the conceptual metaphor for safe space and "my class"

In the location event-structure metaphor described by Lakoff and Johnson (1999), they explain how we come to think of events (target domain) through the way we think of space (source domain). This is because the experiential nature of both the source and target are not the same; we can experience space by being within a space or walking through a space; we cannot really experience time in anything resembling the experience of space. Instead, we can describe our experience of time *using* our experience of space: time moves and passes us like an object; time has spatial and directional planes such as the past and the future; time can be a means to arrive at a specific destination or goal.

Table 3.1-1: Location Event-Structure metaphor

Source Domain [Motion in Space]		**Target Domain [Events]**
Location in space	→	States
Movement from one location to another	→	Changes of states
Physical forces	→	Causes
Forced movement	→	Causation
Self-propelled movements	→	Actions
Destinations	→	Purposes
Paths to destinations	→	Means to ends
Impediments to motion	→	Difficulties

We conceive of time as moving through space, akin to walking across a room, or a grain of sand falling through an hourglass. This allows an individual to extend inferences that are true regarding the motion in space, to how we

perceive, structure, and make sense of temporal events. Lakoff and Johnson's mapping of this location-event conceptual metaphor aids us in understanding how a less understood target domain can *become* known. However, the intricate array of submappings that exist in this location-event metaphor reveal that the amount of structuring and meaning being imparted from the source domain to the target domain is not a single word, or a simple statement, but instead a conglomeration of meaning and inferences that are discursively constructed by the interaction.

In this work's analysis of safe space, it is therefore necessary to undertake a similar mapping. However, this mapping of safe space needs to first consider how "safe" and "space", as distinct experiences and thus distinct source domains, interact on the experience of "my class" as the target domain. Therefore, two distinct mappings need to take place before considering "the experience of safe space" and its metaphoric structuring of "my class". First, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999) explained, the physical experience of space is foremost for most individuals, therefore the order of analysis begins with a deeper understanding of what is meant by the experience of space as a primary domain:

Table 3.1-2: Space of My Class conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		Target Domain [My Class]

This is then followed by the experience of safe[ty] as a primary domain:

Table 3.1-3: Safety of My Class conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safety]		Target Domain [My Class]

Finally, there is the need to consider what exactly the invocation of "my class" means. This is because the invocation of my class (as distinct from all

other places) represents a specific space within which something educationally worthwhile takes place. This is what distinguishes my class from another space such as a bakery: the shared educational intention. The space of my class is therefore a way to discuss what emerges from the intention shared by the members therein. Depending on who the participants may be, this could be the teaching and learning of ideas, the mastery of content, or simply the passing of the course.

At any given time, the teacher can utilize their position within the class to help establish a singular intention for a specific topic of discussion, which is then shared by all members of the class. What draws all these intentions together is not the work to be undertaken to achieve the end goal, but instead, how the space of my class influences the communication that takes place, which in turn enables any work toward that goal. Space, as well as safety, is very much functioning to develop rules and expectations for dialogue, permissible topics for discussion, and the preferential tone to be experienced in my class. The result is the need for the previous mappings to be more specific, mapping the experience of space and the experience of safety to the target domain of the experience of the communicative context in my class:

Table 3.1-4: Space of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		**Target Domain** [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]

Table 3.1-5: Safety of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safety]		**Target Domain** [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]

With this more specific understanding of what is meant by invoking my class, we are now ready to consider the deeper meaning of space and safe respectively, and the array of submappings they enable within the conceptual metaphor of “my class is a safe space”.

3.2. Space at the level of the word

In this and the following sections, I will delve into the history of the word *space*. My purpose in doing so is to better understand what is meant by the experience of space so we can develop a mapping, which includes important submappings, to the communicative context in my class. The overall purpose of this section is to explore and develop a more thorough understanding and definition for the concept of space, that can then provide a route to enable a more precise discussion about safe space.

A consideration of the nature of space is in fact a consideration of the nature of reality; and therefore, what is possible and expected (legitimate and relevant, vs illegitimate and irrelevant) in a space such as my class. It is then reasonable to state that what we understand about the nature of space will affect how we speak about and conceptualize the space of my class. This understanding will then contain many submappings that can influence how we talk and think about what is real and possible in a space, or for the purposes of this work, what is real and possible in the safe space of a classroom. These assumptions about the nature of reality lead to what humans consider real, and therefore knowable, which leads in turn to specific lived practices and experiences of this knowledge.

Perhaps the reason why there is a belief that educators can *do, create, or perform* safe space in their classes is partially due to an incomplete understanding of what space really means. Simply put, we can do something finite with relative confidence: if we follow the steps, it will be achieved. However, when something is infinite and not easily defined, it becomes much more difficult

to do anything with the same levels of confidence in achieving a desired result. This is one of the reasons noted earlier that as an educator I had become fascinated with what the nature of space might represent.

An understanding of space as absolute, finite, bounded, and exclusionary may offer a sense of confidence in the achievement of safety for all students, but results in an experience of my class bereft of almost all educational merit. An understanding of space as relational, infinite, temporary, and inclusionary can, in contrast to absolute safety for all students, offer a sense of uncertainty and risk which can lead to a co-constituted experience of my class that is educationally worthwhile. By more deeply understanding this nature of space, we reconsider how we talk about or think about the space of my class. This understanding transmits unintended ideas and meaning, submappings, that influence how we communicate what is possible or real (legitimate and relevant versus illegitimate and irrelevant) in that space.

These unintended ideas and meanings result in an understanding requiring an in-depth analysis of the modern history of how the word space has been described, and what in turn this meant for any ensuing discussion about the experience of communication in my class. As my exploration of space is guided by my education and training in the Anglo-European tradition of philosophy, I will focus on the modern history of how the word space first developed, explicitly located in a philosophical exchange between the ideas of Isaac Newton (1642-1726) and Gottfried Wilhelm (von) Leibniz (1646-1716).

This exchange took place through a series of five letters and their replies between Leibniz and Samuel Clarke (1645-1729), whose work in theology and metaphysics was greatly influenced by Newton. The correspondences were written in 1715-1716, and first published in 1717 in what became known as the *Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence* (Alexander, 1956). For philosophers of the first half of the eighteenth century, the *Correspondence* explicitly located a central question about the nature of reality, and all ensuing knowledge that was derived

from its nature: was space (and hence the universe) infinite, or bounded by a finite and absolute boundary?

The *Correspondence* and its debate over the nature of space and reality pitted a relational understanding of an infinite space (as defended by Leibniz), against an absolute understanding of a finite space as argued for by Clarke. The relational understanding of infinite space that Leibniz attempted to defend had been the relatively stable understanding of space since Judeo-Christian influences had infused the existence of God into any understanding of the nature of space. The absolute understanding of finite space that Clarke advocated for was based upon the work of Newton, which in turn had been strongly influenced by the reintroduction of a Greek "atomist" understanding of space by Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655) to the European discussion (Casey, 2013). Gassendi's reintroduction of atomism to the philosophers of the seventeenth century would contribute to upending the relational understanding of an infinite space which had held sway for almost two millennia, and usher in a modern Newtonian absolute understanding of a finite space that remains dominant to this day.

Before commencing with an in-depth analysis of the debate central to the *Correspondence*, it is necessary to explain how Greek atomism influenced the understanding of space in both its time, and again in the seventeenth century.

Greek atomism put forward a metaphor of space as being a large void populated occasionally by objects (DiSalle, 2002; Shapiro, 2002), much like a large container, or jug. In the areas of the void displaced by what filled the jug (say wine) there existed matter which was made up of tiny indivisible atoms. Depending on the configuration of these atoms, different matter and objects were possible. This understanding would therefore map as follows:

Table 3.2-1: Space-location of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		**Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]**
Location	→	**Distinguished by a shared educational intention in/at a specific location**

It is important to note that for these ancient Greek atomists, the presence of occasional objects within the void was what distinguished it from all other voids. In this way, the atomist view of space could be considered as space being nothingness, with only the objects within it establishing any experience of space. Another way to think about this is that the direct experience of space does not take place, but instead this experience is perceived by some type of interaction with objects within/at that space, which is then demarcated as a location within some greater space.

A useful example to consider is how you perceive the space of your home. We experience a specific room not by the room's dimensions or some other ethereal sense, but instead by our encounter and interaction with specific objects and signs. When an object or sign is expected and relevant to a particular location, like a toilet, we can recognize that we are in the location of the bathroom. Therefore, the location of the room is recognizable by what is within it, and this in turn helps to establish a boundary around that location that reinforces what is a legitimate *and relevant* versus illegitimate *and irrelevant* object or sign for that location. The establishment of this boundary is not necessarily a specific and well-defined line, but instead more of a *fuzzy* and opaque sense of a boundary. This fuzzy boundary is in part established by the relevance of the encountered object or sign to that location, and hence has an almost gradient-like quality where the sense of the boundary is gradually established or gradually diminished based upon one's relationship to the object or sign being considered.

For instance, encountering a toilet immediately beside a refrigerator, while perhaps fulfilling a utilitarian design ethic, would be considered by most to be inappropriate and irrelevant objects to encounter for a kitchen and for a bathroom. This gradient-like quality of the fuzzy boundary will be revisited and expanded in the later discussion of safety at the level of the word, but this understanding of boundary maps as follows:

Table 3.2-2: Space-location-boundary of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		**Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]**
Location	→	**Distinguished by a shared educational intention in/at a specific location**
Bounded/boundary	→	**Establishes what is legitimate and relevant, versus illegitimate and irrelevant**

Many early atomists, such as Democritus and Parmenides (DiSalle, 2002) struggled to reconcile two competing interpretations of the container of space. The first interpretation was of this container being an unbounded, infinite space which included and permeated all atoms, and the void where atoms did not exist. The second interpretation was of a finite and measurable space which included all the cumulative distances of the void, the spaces between atoms, and the spaces between objects (Jammer, 1969).

It is important to note that in this second interpretation, the cumulative distances of the void between individual *topos* (places), as developed in Aristotle's *Physics,* are finite in the sense that they could be totaled (Aristotle, 1961, 4:211a). However, the finite order of magnitude for this sum of all distances, may very well approach infinity due to the impossibility of the human mind ever fathoming it. We then arrive at two atomist views of space. First, of a

space that includes everything, both matter and non-matter, and the “void,” which extends to infinity without possibility of a boundary or an outside. Second, of a space which consists of everything between matter in a bounded container of a universe, which is infinite in the sense that a sum of all these distances between matter, and even the sheer size of the container, are mathematically unfathomable. Therefore, for the atomist, space was infinite in one of two practical senses: either it extended to infinity, or it was an impossibility to measure every relative distance within it.

The Greek mathematician Euclid would develop a system for expressing these two Atomist views of space, which would later be described by Rene Descartes (1596-1650) in what is now called the Cartesian coordinate system. Euclid offered an explanation which Descartes later used to develop a two-dimensional space, the plane as described by the x- horizontal and y- vertical axes, and for a three-dimensional space, as described by the z- depth axis.

This three-dimensional abstraction of the experience of space would later come to be known as the three dimensions of Euclidean geometry. This abstraction allowed for two radical ways of thinking about the atomist views of space that would split theoretical discussions of the nature of space for the next two millennia. First, as the abstractions of these x, y, and z axes of Euclidean space extended to infinity, this never-ending view of space meant that the only meaningful description of objects and bodies was in relation to each other within a specific location. This would become known as the Relational view of space. Second, with this abstraction it was *possible* to locate a boundary of the abstractions of the x, y, and z axes described by Euclidean space, allowing for a finite view of a bounded space *within* which were a near infinite number of unique *topos* with objects and bodies. This would become known as the Absolute view of space.

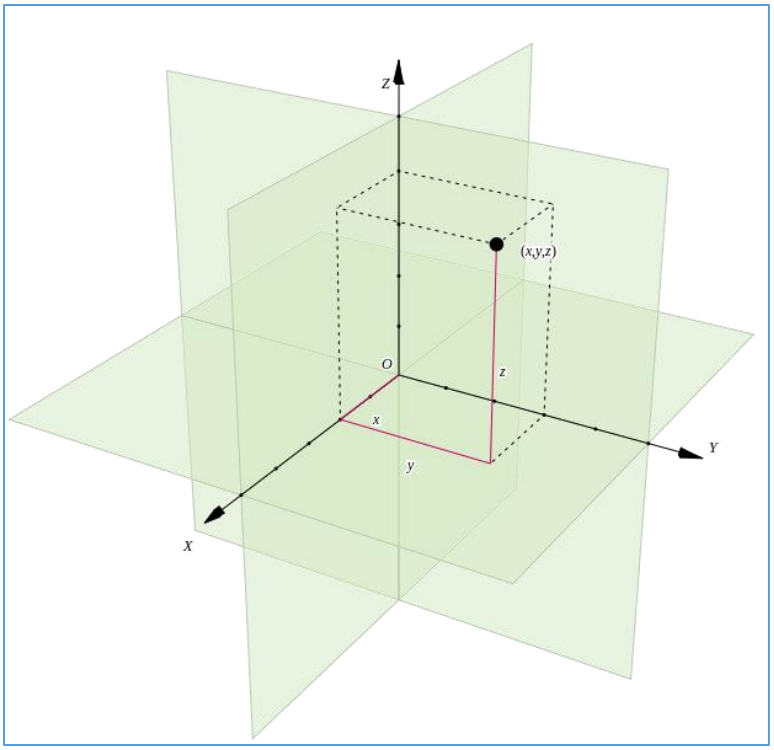

Figure 3.2-1: Descartes description of Euclidean geometric space (Stolfi, 2009)

These Relational and Absolute views of space would eventually be infused with Judeo-Christian assumptions regarding the existence of God (Alexander, 1956; Jammer, 1969). Christian theologians, between the fall of the Roman Empire and near the end of the Middle Ages in the fifteenth century, worked to characterize space as an extension of an all-powerful, omnipotent God (Perkins, 2007). As God was all powerful and had dominion over all of creation, this creation, when considered along its x, y, and z axes, must necessarily be infinite and without boundary to acknowledge the omnipotence of God. This resulted in the relational view of an infinite space establishing itself as the dominant view during this period. Further, as all of creation was permeated by the power of God – God's "substance" as it came to be called (Descartes, 1985) – it became no longer plausible to defend the existence of indivisible atoms in an atomist relational view of space (Greene, 2005). Rightly or wrongly, the relational view of infinite space would, from this point forward, always invoke a necessary

sense of interconnectedness between everything in this space, due to the presence of God.

Another way to think about this relational view of space is that again, there is no direct experience of space, but instead this experience is perceived by interactions with objects. The objects are expected at specific locations, but should they be encountered in an unexpected location, the inference that must be made is that there is some reason for their current location that is relevant. In the example of how you perceive the space of your home, if the home was a micro-home, less than 300 sq feet, our expectations as to the legitimate and relevant (versus illegitimate and irrelevant) location of specific objects and signs need to be revisited to gain greater insight into the intentions of the original designer. (For example, the toilet and refrigerator may be in proximity because of the intention to build a micro-home, hence having these fixtures in proximity was a relevant use of the limited square footage.) This understanding would therefore map as follows:

Table 3.2-3: Relational Space-location-boundary-movement-positionality of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Shared location	→	Distinguished by a shared educational intention in/at a specific location
Boundless, but with temporary, possibly fuzzy boundaries	→	Establishes what is legitimate and relevant, versus illegitimate and irrelevant
Possibility for [divine] movement	→	Discussions of legitimate and relevant, vs illegitimate and irrelevant, are based upon exploration of intention
Positionality is relative to intention	→	Different pedagogies and strategies that engender worthwhile explanation of the connection between intention and legitimacy

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries witnessed Europe transition from the end of the Middle Ages to the Renaissance and brought with it challenges to the God-infused relational view of infinite space. One of the most influential challenges came from Gassendi, who reintroduced his contemporaries to the atomist absolute view of space (Casey, 2013). Gassendi's implicit challenge to God's immanence throughout a relational view of space drew in part upon new scientific discoveries in physics, regarding how physical phenomena could be more reasonably explained in an absolute view of space (Jammer, 1969). One direct result of Gassendi reintroducing Renaissance thinkers to the atomist absolute view of space was for others to respond in defense of the relational view of space, if not also a defense of the necessity of God.

This defense of the relational view of space would be taken up by, amongst others, Rene Descartes (1596-1650), Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), and

Leibniz (1646-1716). Practicing metaphysics in defense of the relational view of space, each developed far-reaching works that supported specific interests. Descartes developed a metaphysical defense that would serve the interest of the emerging science:

> Some years ago, I was struck by the large number of falsehoods that I had accepted as true in my childhood, and by the highly doubtful nature of the whole edifice that I had subsequently based on them. I realized that it was necessary, once in the course of my life, to demolish everything completely and start again right from the foundations if I wanted to establish anything at all in the sciences that was stable and likely to last (1984, VII: 17).

Spinoza developed a metaphysical defense that would serve the interest of ethics. However, Leibniz, perhaps the most eclectic of these three, went so far as to develop a metaphysical defense of the relational view of space that established its own ontological order (Moore, 2012). Therefore, Leibniz's relational view of space will be considered more fully, for he alone was not motivated in reconciling this view of space with the scientific, or cultural, discoveries of the time as had become fashionable and self-fulfilling through the scientific method (Perkins, 2007; Vailati, 1997). Instead, Leibniz offered a defense of the relational view of space by presenting one of the most mature interpretations of what this view of a relational, infinite universe would look like at the ontological level (metaphysical – physical), the epistemological level (how knowledge was derived), and the potential practice of the everyday (Leibniz, 1973e; 1996).

Despite the defenses taken up by Descartes and Spinoza, the scientific evidence supporting the claim of an absolute view of space continued to mount through the seventeenth century, encouraged most notably by the work of Newton (Alexander, 1956; Hall, 1992; Perkins, 2007). Underpinning this continuing debate was the role of God in the universe proposed by the relational versus absolute views of space. Whereas the relational view claimed an "all powerful and invisible" (Greene, 2005, p. 7) interconnectedness between objects and bodies in the universe, the absolute view claimed the independence of all

objects and bodies in the universe. At the end of the seventeenth century few thinkers were willing to publicly support the claim that God was unnecessary in either view of space (Hall, 1992) due to the persistence and leading role of the Christian church in almost all public discourses.

This necessity to account for God was also true when Newton, an atomist who posited an absolute space as a potentially empty container (DiSalle, 2002; Shapiro, 2002) accounted for the presence of God. He did this by allowing space to be filled by “spiritual substance” as well as material substance, but he was careful to add that such spiritual stuff “can be no obstacle to the motion of matter; no more than if nothing were in its way” (Hall, 1992, p. 27). Absolute space, Newton declared, is the “sensorium of God” (Hall, 1992, p. 29), but a space where God exerted no inherent influence. This marked the beginning of what would later be known as the Death of God in philosophical, metaphysical, and academic pursuits (Hall, 1992). This understanding would therefore map as follows:

Table 3.2-4: Absolute Space-location-boundary-movement-positionality of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Location	→	Container that is distinguished by there being something in/at a specific location
Bounded/boundary	→	Establishes what is legitimate and relevant in/at a specific location. Everything beyond the boundary is considered illegitimate and irrelevant
Possibility for movement	→	Discussions are focused on something being present (static), or being in movement
Positionality is established by distance to the bounded/boundary	→	Different pedagogies and strategies that engender a recognition of the boundary to legitimate and relevant, or illegitimate and irrelevant, discussion and ideas

In formulating his laws of motion which mathematically described how humans perceive the movement of objects, Newton required a reference point from which to make his observations. If this reference point were static and unchanging, his laws of motion would make perfect sense. If this reference point could only be determined by its potentially shifting and changing relationship to other objects, Newton's "equations describing motion would prove meaningless" (Greene, 2005, p. 9). Newton, therefore, "with a few brief sentences in his *Principia Mathematica*" (Greene, 2005, p. 27) declared the necessity for an absolute view of space (Hall, 1992). The result was the creation of a self-fulfilling tautology for what would become known as Newtonian, or Classical physics. His laws of motion successfully accounted for almost all humans could conceive of

scientifically regarding motion at the beginning of the eighteenth century. In a very real sense, Newton erected a permanent and static boundary around his absolute space that was fathomable, where none had existed up to that point, to explain the relationships of objects within that space.

In the competing (finite and infinite) views of space, the implications for the nature of reality were profound. If space, and thereby the universe, was *infinite* in size and scope, any consideration of the evolving relationships between bodies or objects required an acceptance of the inherent *uncertainty* in what was considered legitimate knowledge derived in this space. If space, and thereby the universe, was *finite* in size and scope, it became possible to consider individual bodies or objects *with respect to* the universe *itself* and *without consideration* of the influence of other proximate objects. In this way, the finite sense of space offered a sense of certainty in what was legitimate and relevant versus illegitimate and irrelevant knowledge derived in this space.

Were absolute knowledge and certainty possible? Or was only relative knowledge possible, with its necessary uncertainty? At their most general, the competing finite and infinite views of space can result in radically differing understandings of what is meant by a safe space. If space is infinite, the submapping of infinite size, scope, and variations can lead to entailment relationships (Black, 1962; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999) which provide safe space with a meaning that must be relational. Put another way, in an infinite universe safe space would exist and be created only by the relationships of individuals and their relative positionality to each other. Further, once this safe space was created it would require an ongoing and constantly shifting communicative context to maintain it. On the other hand, if space is finite, the submapping of finite size, location, and certainty can lead to entailment relationships which provide safe space a meaning that must be absolute.

If the universe were truly finite, safe space would exist as specific locations, and have clear boundaries regarding where it begins and ends. The

boundaries would allow for the prohibition and policing of specific, static practices inside the safe space, and it would be finite in the sense that there would only be so much safety to go around.

At its very core, this debate between the Leibnizian and the Newtonian understandings of space speak to the very nature of the experience of space, and importantly for the present work, the experience of safe space. If the finite Newtonian understanding of space were to be accepted, it would mean that empty space existed, with independent objects occasionally being encountered within it. Newtonian space is akin to a container *for* objects. The laws and rules that then govern this container are entirely spatial, set apart from and above the objects. In a very real sense, these laws and rules do not consider the objects over which they act.

However, if the Leibnizian understanding of space is to be retained (or for this work, recovered), it would mean that space exists as the relationship *between* objects. Leibnizian space is akin to a container made up *of* objects. Therefore, any laws and rules in Leibnizian space are informed by the interconnectedness of the objects themselves. An example of relevance for this work would be the experience of a safe space by twelve people in a class due to their current relationship and configuration of the communicative context of the class. With the arrival of a thirteenth person, every existing relationship and configuration of what is accepted as legitimate and relevant to the communicative context of the class would need to shift to account for the possibility afforded this new person as a member. Though this shift may be difficult to perceive, the experience of safe space will feel subtly different to the participants in the newly enlarged class.

How we have come to our modern understandings of space and safe space is influenced by inheritances from this debate and its outcome – the primacy of the Newtonian understanding. To a lesser degree, our modern understandings of space and safe space are influenced by the remnants of the

Leibnizian understanding in our relationships and practices of safe space. It is therefore worthwhile to delve into the debate over finite versus infinite space, and how its outcome influenced our modern conceptualization of space (and in turn, safe space).

The debate regarding the universe and thereby reality's true nature, as either an absolute Newtonian space, or a relational Leibnizian space, can result in very different expectations about the certainty of knowledge. As discussed above, the Newtonian understanding of space exists as several objects and their distances within a void. These objects exist as independent of the space and independent from each other; there is no connection between the space and the discrete objects. Therefore, this Newtonian space can be governed by (universal) rules and laws within a boundary, set above and independent of the objects.

Again, the Leibnizian understanding of space is a space full of relations between objects. In this way, the space itself *is* the objects and their relationships to each other, and as will be discussed in the next section of this work, each object is a node amongst and a part of the many relationally connected objects in the space. This understanding results in a space which cannot be governed by general rules nor laws that are set above the objects. Moreover, general rules and laws are an impossibility because the objects and the space itself derive a co-constituted meaning from the multiplicity of relationships. Therefore, any attempt to govern, rule, or control the space requires the integration of relative relationships, which are temporary at best due to the ever-changing positionality of the objects. Hence, infinite space demands continual revaluation of positionality and relationships.

3.3. Space at the level of the statement

In this section I will consider the word "space" as used at the level of the statement, in terms of absolute or Newtonian space, versus relational or Leibnizian space. During the debate over the certitude of reality and knowledge

which played out in metaphysical debates as an issue of transcendence, the question presents itself: could human beings make sense of infinite, or only finite things (Kant, 1998)? For philosophers of the first half of the eighteenth century, this debate was ever present, and was first explicitly located in a 1717 publication which became known as the *Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence*. It consisted of the exchange of five letters in 1715-1716 written by Leibniz to Clarke, and Clarke's five subsequent replies.

The *Correspondence* represented the last phase of a controversy stretching back to 1705 between Newton, who was influential to Clarke's notable works in theology and metaphysics in England, and Leibniz. The original point at issue in this controversy was whether Newton or Leibniz had first created calculus, and thus which of the two had plagiarized the other's work. However, the controversy eventually expanded this dispute to other aspects of what would become known as Newtonian (or Classical) physics and its implications for theological and metaphysical thought (Alexander, 1956; Vailati, 1997). For many of their contemporaries, the *Correspondence* was eagerly read as the final showdown between the objectiveness of mathematics and science that posited the existence of absolute space, and the uncertainty of metaphysics and theology that argued for relational space (Aiton, 1985; Hatfield, 2006).

For the present work, the most pertinent outcome from the debate in the *Correspondence* is the task of clarifying what is meant when an educator claims the space of their class fosters the discussion and development of knowledge. Is this knowledge legitimated and established as relevant through the multitude of communicative relationships within the class, or by an authority (the teacher) who maintains and reinforces the boundary of legitimate and relevant communication permissible within a class?

Before addressing how the controversy over absolute versus relational views of space presented in the *Correspondence* was "settled" a half century later by Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), it is necessary to have a more complete

understanding of just what exactly is meant by a relational view of space; for the possibilities it affords are quite different than the simplicity of an absolute view of space. It is these possibilities of the relational view of space that will be retrieved through this work, and developed into a more educationally meaningful understanding of the experience of safe space.

To better understand what is meant by space being infinite, and in turn relational, we need to begin our discussion with Descartes, whose "metaphysics of space was set against the doctrines of ancient atomists, as revived and promoted by Pierre Gassendi" (Moore, 2012, p. 63). Atomism argued that matter existed as small, indivisible particles or "atoms". These atoms were distributed through a space conceived as an empty container. Where there were no atoms, there was a vacuum of empty space.

For a devout Christian who adhered to a belief of an all-powerful God, the idea that there existed parts of God's domain empty of his presence, in the form of his atoms or his matter, seemed antithetical to the very essence of God. Descartes therefore proposed a system where the essence of matter was space in three dimensions, where there was no distinction between space and this essence of matter. Utilizing the established Euclidean geometry of the time, he abstracted three x-, y-, and z- axes which extended to infinity, requiring a coordinate system to locate objects in this space. Hence, only the relational positioning of bodies to other bodies in this space was possible.

Descartes equated this space with the essence of matter. This essence was not *in* the space, but rather its own space that was required for there to then be empty space. This essence of matter which Descartes promoted as the "substance" of God, ensured God's will and power in all of reality. All of reality, and thereby all of space, was therefore an extension of God. Through such a conception of space, Descartes ensured an interconnectedness between all objects and bodies. Furthermore, because God was infinite, without a beginning nor an end, an inside nor an outside, only the relational view of space could be

possible. This understanding of space was developed in the previous section of this work, and maps as follows:

Table 3.3-1: Relational Space-location-boundary-movement-positionality of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Shared location	→	Distinguished by a shared educational intention in/at a specific location
Boundless, but with temporary, possibly fuzzy boundaries	→	Establishes what is legitimate and relevant, versus illegitimate and irrelevant
Possibility for [divine] movement	→	Discussions of legitimate vs illegitimate are based upon exploration of intention
Positionality is relative to intention	→	Different pedagogies and strategies that engender worthwhile explanation of the connection between intention and legitimacy

A generation after Descartes, Leibniz took up the defense of the relational view of space. Due to the increasing adoption of the absolute view of space and the corresponding science to support it, Leibniz began his defense of the relational view with a simultaneous attack on what he considered the illogic of the absolute view. He put forward two seemingly straightforward required principles for thinking about the nature of space, the universe, reality, and the practice of metaphysics. Leibniz considered these necessary principles as *a priori*. An *a priori* truth is essentially something that is known to be true "absolutely independent of all experience and even of all impressions of the senses" (Kant, 1998, B2-3), which meant for Leibniz a universal truth derived from theoretical deduction, and not derived from experiences in the world.

The first *a priori* principle Leibniz put forth was called *the principle of sufficient reason*: "*there is nothing without a reason*" (Leibniz, 1973b, p. 172); "nothing unintelligible happens" (Leibniz, 1996, p. 381). The second *a priori* principle he called the *principle of contradiction*: "nothing can at the same time be and not be, but everything is or is not" (Leibniz, 1973a, p. 9). For Leibniz, these two *a priori* principles represented a kind of boundary in any attempt to make sense of things through the practice of metaphysics and philosophy. The principle of sufficient reason established how things should work within this boundary, as there was consistency, and more important, everything had a reason for being.

The principle of contradiction pointed out that sense could not be made of things beyond this boundary, as there was no consistency outside the boundary. These *a priori* principles of sufficient reason and contradiction were applied to a consideration of the nature of space being infinite or finite. If space and the universe were infinite, the principle of contradiction ensured that all rules, laws of nature, etc., were consistent throughout this universe in an ongoing and never-ending manner. Therefore, if a boundary were established for some reason, it would reasonably be located at the very edge of this consistency, which in an infinite universe, is unfathomable. The result would be that the principle of sufficient reason, that everything happens for some reason, is fulfilled. If space and the universe were finite, the principle of contradiction would require that all rules, laws of nature, etc., within the boundaries of this universe to be consistent, and everything beyond the boundary to not be consistent and therefore unintelligible.

The result of this line of thinking for a finite universe would be that the principle of sufficient reason could not be fulfilled, because the inconsistent and unintelligible beyond the boundary could not be ascribed as happening for some reason. These two *a priori* principles and their application to the debate over the nature of space therefore cast suspicion on the absolute view and formed the basis of Leibniz's self-fulfilling tautology for an infinite, relational view of space.

One important implication of Leibniz's *a priori* principles was the recognition that boundaries, wherever they existed in relational space, were erected for some intended purpose and that the discussion of legitimate and relevant versus illegitimate and irrelevant, needed to align to that specific purpose. This consideration of boundaries when they are encountered can have educational implications. As an example, in a class trying to learn about the benefits of teaching from a critical pedagogy perspective, questions about its utility during this discussion would not be dismissed as illegitimate or irrelevant. So long as the discussion within the communicative context aligned (in some way) to the intended purpose which served as the temporary boundary, it would be a legitimate avenue for further discussion. This understanding would therefore map as follows:

Table 3.3-2: Relational Space-location-boundary-movement-positionality of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		**Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]**
Shared location	→	**Distinguished by a shared educational intention in/at a specific location**
Boundless, but with temporary, possibly fuzzy boundaries	→	**Established based upon some recognized shared educational intention**
Possibility for movement	→	**Discussions of legitimate and relevant, vs illegitimate and irrelevant, communication are based upon exploration and connection to intention**
Positionality is relative to intention	→	**Different pedagogies and strategies that engender worthwhile explanation of the connection between intention and legitimacy**

In the infinite, relational view of space, Leibniz also insisted on necessity of the presence of God. Specifically, God was responsible for all “that is contingently the case”, with “what is contingently the case” being “what is the case in this possible world but not in others” (Moore, 2012, p. 69). Essentially, God would establish, on each possible Earth-world in the infinite expanse of the universe, differing versions of possible relationships between all objects or bodies, with each Earth-world being the most ideal representation of those differences. As a universe stretching to infinity had to have a reason for being, and as God was infinitely powerful, he could consider every possible combination of every possible version of every possible relationship on this Earth, and every other possible Earth, simultaneously somewhere in the infinity of the universe:

> God knows through his wisdom, chooses through his goodness, and produces through his power (Leibniz, 1973c, §55).

I will posit that to a modern reader, this notion of possible worlds where every combination of relationship may or may not exist, will seem odd. Very few individuals have deeply considered the implications of what infinity, and an infinite space, can mean to an understanding of reality, unless of course you are an admirer of the Marvel Cinematic Universe or other comic books and their concept of the multiverse. However, to someone such as Leibniz, ensconced in the reality of an infinite, relational view of space and of an all-powerful God, these thoughts would have seemed ordinary. Leibniz did recognize the problematic nature of his claim of our present Earth being the best of all possible worlds, because at its most shallow, it could not account for all that was not ideal in this world: evil, suffering, and pain.

To address the seeming imperfections of our present Earth, Leibniz established an entire metaphysical system called *theodicy* to account for why God would plausibly allow for evil to exist, and to explain the function it would serve (Leibniz, 2005; Plantinga, 1974). Moreover, he pointed out that what was for the best on one world was dependent upon the conditions of the existing relationships *on that world*, which did not exist in the same fashion on any other

world (Leibniz, 1989). Simply put, each world could only be said to be the best with respect to *itself* and its own unique conditions.

In his system of an infinite, relational view of space, Leibniz noted that there existed individual substances, which he called *Monads*, which were parts of the entirety of the world. These monads were mind-like, and conscious of the world around them. Further, each monad represented the world in some specific way (Leibniz, 1973c), from some position as it were. Monads were not material things because they lacked any spatial characteristics, much like a mind as opposed to a brain. Where a brain has a specific physical place at any specific time, the human mind, like a monad, was something aspatial and atemporal.

All monads existed thanks to the existence of a singular, perfect, central monad which was a full and perfect representation of the world due to its being representative of God. This central monad was necessary for all other dependent monads to exist, because this central monad existed in the substance of these dependent monads and their specific, and differently positioned, representations of the world. Across and through all the possible worlds of Leibniz's metaphysical system, the central monad existed, surrounded with a differing combination of these dependent monads. With the infinite number of these dependent monads existing, or even not existing, in infinite combinations, these possible worlds became infinite by necessity.

The implication of Leibniz's infinite relational view of space and his monad-oriented theory of knowledge is that it introduces a necessary evaluative component to the mapping. Specifically, with each monad being a representation of the world in some specific way (Leibniz, 1973c) which did not exist in that fashion anywhere else, the conditions that brought about that specific monad representation needed to be considered and evaluated by an individual.

If through this evaluation the representation of the current situation in the world was found wanting, the conditions that brought about the situation could be addressed. This evaluation of the current situation can also have educational

implications. As an example, this evaluative component can engender a necessary continual reflection in the experience of safe space, on the appropriateness of communicative strategies being utilized in a current situation. This understanding would therefore map as follows:

Table 3.3-3: Relational Space-location-boundary-movement-positionality-evaluation of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		**Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]**
Shared location	→	**Distinguished by a shared educational intention in/at a specific location**
Boundless, but with temporary, possibly fuzzy boundaries	→	**Established based upon some recognized shared educational intention**
Possibility for movement	→	**Discussions of legitimate and relevant, vs illegitimate and irrelevant, communication are based upon exploration and connection to intention**
Positionality is relative to intention	→	**Different pedagogies and strategies that engender worthwhile explanation of the connection between intention and legitimacy**
Recognition and evaluation of positionality and possibility	→	**Continual attempts to reflect on the possible connections between current communication and intention, leading to repositioning or revision**

In developing his vision of an infinite array of monads interacting with a central monad on each of the possible worlds, with each possible world being the best representation with respect to its own conditions, Leibniz closed his conceptual and ontological loop. As he only ascribed value to two *a priori*

principles, sufficient reason and contradiction, a process of reasonable analysis always led to the conditions being present, and then to the determination of the possible truth in that world for those conditions. In this way Leibniz established a self-fulfilling tautology for an infinite, relational view of space which was breathtaking in its scope and depth.

However, much of his development of the relational view of space took place during the almost continual stream of macroscopic scientific discoveries which elevated Newton's absolute view of space. These discoveries included Copernicus' heliocentric model of the earth not being the center of the Universe and his subsequent astronomical observations, Kepler's laws of planetary motion, Galileo's scientific objections to the position of the earth in the Universe, and microscopic scientific discoveries such as Snell's law of light refraction, Hooke's discovery of the cell, and Newton's observations of the makeup of the light spectrum. Together, these scientific discovers began to paint a picture of reality in stark contrast to Leibniz's possible worlds of monads and the relational view of space. While Leibniz recognized the value of these scientific discoveries, he was struck by the hubris of these thinkers who claimed they were on the verge of offering a comprehensive explanation for the complexity of the universe:

> We have knowledge of a tiny part of that eternity which stretches out immeasurably… And yet out of so little experience we rashly make judgements about the immeasurable and the eternal… Look at the most lovely picture, and then cover it up, leaving uncovered only a tiny scrap of it. What else will you see there, even if you look as closely as possible, and the more so as you look from nearer and nearer at hand, but a kind of confused medley of colours, without selection, without art! And yet when you remove the covering, and look upon the whole picture from the proper place, you will see that what previously seemed to you to have been aimlessly smeared on the canvas was in fact accomplished with the highest art by the author of the work… [Similarly, the] great composers frequently mingle discords with harmonious chords so that the listener may be stimulated and pricked as it were, and become, in a way, anxious about the outcome; presently when all is restored to order he feels so much more content (Leibniz, 1973f, p. 142).

Newton was one thinker for whom Leibniz had disdain (Aiton, 1985; Alexander, 1956; Perkins, 2007; Vailati, 1997). With Newton's atomist reassertion of space being an absolute container in its nature, Leibniz dedicated the last years of his life attempting to refute the possibility of this absolute view of space. Newton contended that space was independent from everything within it (Perkins, 2007). Leibniz contended that space was simply a way of describing the relation between one object and another object (Vailati, 1997). Newton argued that space was absolute, finite, and consistent, while Leibniz countered that space was relational, infinite, and consistent in some unknown manner, and perhaps always unknowable to human beings (Aiton, 1985; Alexander, 1956). Newton's implicit implication was that God was not all powerful because his domain had an end, a boundary. Leibniz's explicit implication was that God must be all powerful to account for the infinite nature of his domain. This understanding of Newtonian absolute space would therefore map as follows:

Table 3.3-4: Absolute Space-location-boundary-movement-positionality of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Location	→	Container that is distinguished by there being something in/at a specific location
Bounded/boundary	→	Establishes what is legitimate and relevant in/at a specific location. Everything beyond the boundary is considered illegitimate and irrelevant
Possibility for movement	→	Discussions are focused on something being present (static), or being in movement
Positionality is established by distance to the bounded/boundary	→	Different pedagogies and strategies that engender a recognition of the boundary to legitimate or illegitimate discussion and ideas

These assertions and counter-assertions would play out in the *Correspondence* between Leibniz and Clarke, writing in defense of Newton's metaphysical implications (Alexander, 1956). This debate of space's metaphysics and ontology, as absolute versus relational, would be read by their contemporaries as a confrontation between the uncertain reality of metaphysics and theology, and the objective reality of mathematics and science. This debate would influence ensuing work in European philosophy for almost half a century through to Kant.

Probably the most famous and influential philosophical exchange of the eighteenth century (Aiton, 1985), the *Correspondence* would have a far-reaching effect once it was settled that Newtonian physics explained the universe in closer

alignment to what humans perceived. The *Correspondence* influenced an epistemological order based upon objective, empirical measures that would remain relatively stable until the beginning of the twentieth century. However, to say that this debate was settled with the publication of the *Correspondence* would be to ignore and diminish the half century of intellectual struggle which took place at the beginning of the eighteenth century. One of the most influential philosophers of this period, David Hume (1711–1776), offered a concise account of the problems with past attempts to make sense of space, and in turn provided a framework for almost all subsequent work in metaphysics to the beginning of the twentieth century.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Descartes had proposed that there was no distinction between space and matter, and that the universe was shot through with the essence of matter, as an extension of the “substance” of God. Descartes had originally noted the existence of three kinds of substance: one Divine substance, one extended substance, and an infinite number of created thinking substances.

Metaphysical philosophers of the seventeenth century like Leibniz had extended these ideas of substance in their own various works, so that by the eighteenth century, Hume was forced to refer to “that unintelligible chimera of substance” as philosophers no longer had any clear idea of what Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and others arguing for a relational view of space meant when they wrote of “substance” (Hume, 2000, I.i.§7). Hume’s objection to “substance” was extended to other non-perceivable nor observable metaphysical concepts. Moore (2012) notes that Hume would come to consider these poor examples of metaphysics because thoughts, ideas, and concepts appeared to be created to serve whatever purpose the author had in their mind. Hume therefore challenged contemporary philosophers to align their practice of metaphysics with what was physically real and observable through physics or one of its subsidiary knowledges. Further:

> Hume introduced a kind of self-confidence into metaphysics which … would never thereafter go away. Sense itself, in the most general attempt to make sense of things, was to become a principal focus of attention. There would be a concern with the scope and limits of sense-making which, by the twentieth century, was to become almost obsessive. … such self-consciousness brought with it then, and has continued to bring with it ever since, a crisis of self-confidence in the very practice of metaphysics (Moore, 2012, pp. 87-88).

This allowed Hume to begin molding the practice of questioning the nature of space and reality into what he felt was good metaphysics. Good metaphysics would limit the scope of inquiry to what the self, the human being, was conscious of. If the self could sense it through hearing, touch, smell, taste, sight, etc., only then could metaphysics lead to making sense of this "sensed" thing. In this way, Hume addressed the issue of transcendence in metaphysics by firmly establishing a boundary around what was immanent and existent. Hume's metaphysics would be bound to what the human being was able to perceive through their senses. This was an example of Hume's empiricism, the "view that all *sense-making* derives from sense experience" (Moore, 2012, p. 88).

Hume moved quickly from this finite claim about the limit of what a human could sense *of* space and *in* space, to an epistemology of knowledge derived from this sense-experience. For Hume, a real-world sense-experience would lead to an impression, while a memory of a sense-experience could lead to a unique and imaginative idea of the original impression. The strength of how these impressions and ideas came together would then form understanding and knowledge of the experienced world. Hume was adamant that all attempts to make sense of things had to come from our experience of those things in the world, and that more complex understanding was derived from simple ideas:

> …our thoughts or ideas, however compounded or sublime, … always … resolve themselves into such simple ideas as were copied from a precedent [impression] (Hume, 1975, p. 19).

Hume was therefore able to generalize this empiricist metaphysics, with which he took direct aim at the metaphysical claims put forward by past advocates of the relational view of space:

> When we entertain … any suspicion that a philosophical term is employed without meaning or idea …, we need but enquire, from what impression is that supposed idea derived? And if it be impossible to assign any, this will serve to confirm our suspicion (1975, p. 22).

The result of thus limiting the scope of metaphysics and discussions about the nature of space was profound. In the context of the present work, the implication would be that the impression of space would be that which we had sensed, perhaps observed, in our experiences interacting in an environment. This would mean that space or safe space would be little more than a container within which we could act. These acts could then be sensed or observed to increase or decrease safety, of which there was a finite amount, compared to the others in the container. Further, Hume's assertion that "impression leads to idea" would necessarily cancel out substance as "nothing but a collection of simple ideas, that are united by the imagination" (2000, p. 16), "infinity" as an impossibility for the human mind to fathom (2000, I.ii.§1), and perhaps even:

> the idea of God, as meaning an infinitely intelligent, wise, and good Being, arises from reflecting on the operations of our own mind, and augmenting, without limit, those qualities of goodness and wisdom (1975, p. 19).

In his ontological and epistemological system, Hume explicitly coupled metaphysics to his contemporary physics and sciences (Hume, 2000), limiting knowledge to what could be derived through science and its various sense-*experiences*:

> It seems to me, that the only objects of the abstract sciences are quantity and number, and that all attempts to extend this more perfect species of knowledge beyond these bounds are mere sophistry and illusion (1975, p. 163).

Hume's objections to metaphysics and denouncement of the relational infinite view of space contributed to an understanding of space that required the need to sense, perceive, or observe something in any experience of space. This understanding would therefore contribute to our map as follows:

Table 3.3-5: Absolute Perceived Space-location-boundary-movement-positionality of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		**Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]**
Location	→	**Container that is distinguished by there being something in/at a specific location**
Bounded/boundary with limited perceivable possibilities within	→	**Establishes what is legitimate and relevant in/at a specific location as only what is observable through direct experience. Everything beyond the boundary, in-direct or inferred experience, is considered illegitimate and irrelevant**
Possibility for movement	→	**Discussions are focused on something being observed as present (static), or being in movement due to some observable reason**
Positionality is established by distance to and perception of the bounded/boundary	→	**Different pedagogies and strategies that engender a recognition of the importance of the boundary to legitimate or illegitimate discussion and ideas**

When Kant approached the discussion of a human's ability to comprehend the nature of space, he was careful to acknowledge the work upon which he was building:

> I freely admit that the remembrance of David Hume was the very thing that many years ago first interrupted my dogmatic slumber and gave completely different direction of my research in the field of speculative philosophy (2002, 4:260).

Kant's work is especially useful to the consideration of what safe space can mean in the educational context. This is because Kant approached the exchange in the *Correspondence* at a point when the debate about the nature of space remained unsettled. On one side of this debate was the atomist absolute space whose understanding Hume had narrowed to what humans could sense, perceive, or observe directly. On the other side was the relational infinite space whose understanding Leibniz had posited was limited only by what humans could fathom. There were aspects of Kant's taking up the *Correspondence* which were striking because of the apparent lack of consistency amongst his purpose and those of the arguments he drew upon.

First, Newton's interest (as defended by Clarke) had lain in the physics of motion, which had compelled him to posit "absolute" space to ensure that his calculus worked. Second, Leibniz's objection to absolute space and his promotion of relational space was based in part on the implications of a non-omnipotent God in a finite, absolute universe, as well as his desire to promote his mathematical proof, and his calculus in support of relational space. Third, Clarke's support of Newton was in part intended to reconcile motion in an absolute and finite universe with the possibility of an infinite, omnipotent God. Therefore, Kant took up what was both a theological and mathematical debate, not just a metaphysical debate about the nature and meaning of space. Kant eventually arrived at a theory of space being purely an *a priori* intuition of the mind. This *a priori* state Kant argued to be necessary to see the world and its objects, which supported the purpose of developing his own theory of cognition.

Much like Hume, Kant wanted to distinguish between good and bad metaphysics, but was concerned by the need to establish "some principled way of distinguishing between that which is to be rejected and what is to be saved" (2002, 4:255ff). To arrive at this differentiation, Kant struggled to make sense of

and then explain the nature of space. In his early work of 1755, Kant explained the physics and metaphysics of space by adopting a relational view of space in the Leibnizian sense (Kant, 1992a).

Kant changed his mind in 1768 when he advocated for an “absolute and original space” in the Newtonian sense (1992b, 2:383). Kant pivoted once more in 1770 when he rejected both the Leibniz relational view and the “English” view of space as an “*absolute* and boundless *receptacle* of possible things” (1992c, 2:403). Rather, Kant concluded that space, in any meaningful sense, was a “subjective and ideal” way *how* human beings perceive their *sense-experiences* of the things in the world:

> Space is not something objective and real, nor is it a substance, nor an accident, nor a relation, it is, rather, subjective and ideal; it issues from the mind in accordance with a stable law as a scheme, so to speak, for coordinating everything which is sensed externally (1992c, 2:403).

Kant intended to establish what would become known as “the transcendental ideality of space, which meant that it was not only dependent upon human perception” but was also an a priori “universal representation” (Hatfield, 2006, p. 76). This *a priori* universal representation of space would not be dependent upon the senses but would instead consider the general understanding of space to be a type of “built in” ordering and structuring system to our sense experiences.

Kant developed a theory of space’s ontology which sought to resolve, once and for all, the debate between absolute and relational views of space. He did this by positing that space and time were dependent upon the mind for their existence. By arguing that the representation of space was an intuition of the mind rather than a general concept, Kant sought to counter the metaphysical and epistemological implications of Descartes and Leibniz’s relational view, and the implications of Newton’s absolute view, to put forward his own claim of space as an intuition distinct from other concepts (Hatfield, 2006). The following passage

from Kant begins to offer what he meant by the structure of space as intuition, utilizing a series of questions that juxtapose his and Leibniz's perspectives:

> What, now, are space and time? Are they actual beings? Are they mere determinations or else relations of things, but nonetheless of a sort that would in themselves belong to such things if they were not being intuited; or are they such that they inhere only in the form of intuition, *and hence in the subjective constitution of our mind*, in the absence of which these predicates could not be ascribed to anything whatsoever (1998, A23/B37-38, *emphasis mine*)?

With striking force and clarity, Kant could acknowledge past views of space, dismiss them, and establish his own. From his reference to Newton's "actual beings", Descartes' "determinations" of God's will, and Leibniz's "relations of things", he was able to begin arguing that space existed "in the subjective constitution of our mind" in what he called transcendentally ideal.

This transcendentally ideal subjective constitution of our mind was premised upon four arguments (Kant, 1998, A23-25/B38-40) to explain the ideal nature of the "representation of space", a type of intuition which was necessary to perceive and then structure meaning of the world and its objects. In establishing space as a necessary *a priori* intuition, Kant's argument could be understood as an attack on the relational view of space as unable to be experienced void of any objects to perceive. His result was an *a priori* representation of space as intuition, both non-empirical and non-relational.

The purpose of Kant's interest in establishing space as an *a priori* intuition was to forward his theory of cognition, namely how human beings thought about and understood the world. As the debate over the nature of space had endured between two distinct camps, the absolute and relational views, it was necessary for Kant to offer a resolution to the debate before continuing his own work on cognition. This ontological claim of the nature of space as an *a priori* intuition allowed him to posit an epistemological theory which still permeates our thinking about thinking today, and which has limited the thinking of most individuals about the nature of space to all but the most superficial of considerations.

Kant's ontological claim of the nature of space was necessary for his theory of cognition explaining how human beings thought about and came to understand the world. To Kant, human beings were given an *a priori* understanding of space by its affect upon them, and this affect was "sensory". However, this understanding of space did not mean that space acted upon an individual, but instead was constituted in how the individual came to see the world of objects beyond the self. We are given this *a priori* understanding only because human beings are capable of reception, a concurrent process of structuring and ordering to what we are experiencing, which allows us to understand the experience. Knowledge accrued from experience was referred to by Kant as synthetic *a priori* knowledge, for it was not purely conceptual, but also contained the sensory process of reception influenced by the nature of space intuition.

This radical idea of how we understood the world beyond ourselves became known as *transcendental* and was best captured in Kant's analogy of 'native spectacles' with which every individual was born (Moore, 2012). These lenses, which are a necessity to see and hence cannot be taken off, are how he explained the possibility of synthetic *a priori* knowledge leading in part to the knowledge of a reality independent of the individual (Kant, 2002, 4:297-302). The idealism was not due to what we knew of the outside world, but instead *how* we knew and perceived it:

> all objects of experience possible for us… are nothing but appearances, … which, as they are represented, … have outside our thoughts no existence grounded in itself (1998, A490-491/B518-519).

These spectacles can be understood metaphorically as follows: 1) I am born and I have eyes capable of receiving input through a pair of spectacles I cannot take off; 2) I have 20/20 vision with the spectacles as a baby, but I do not yet know I have 20/20 vision because I have had no sense experiences of the objects in the world; 3) As I take in more sense experiences of the objects in the world through my spectacles, I come to perceive and understand I have 20/20 vision due to my

ability to make sense of the sense experiences of objects I am receiving; 4) From this point forward, I know how things are *supposed* to look, thanks to what I perceive through my spectacles; 5) I never really see the objects in the world, but instead perceive and understand these objects through the lens of how I know they are supposed to look, through the spectacles. In this way, Kant's spectacles can be understood as functioning like an interactive metaphor as developed by Black (1962) and Ricoeur (1975), that systematically orders the world that we perceive thanks to the intended ideas imparted by the metaphor. However, in this understanding the lesser understood ideas of the mapping also give meaning to the world we are perceiving, though this meaning and understanding is liable to be incomplete, unintelligible, or even wrong.

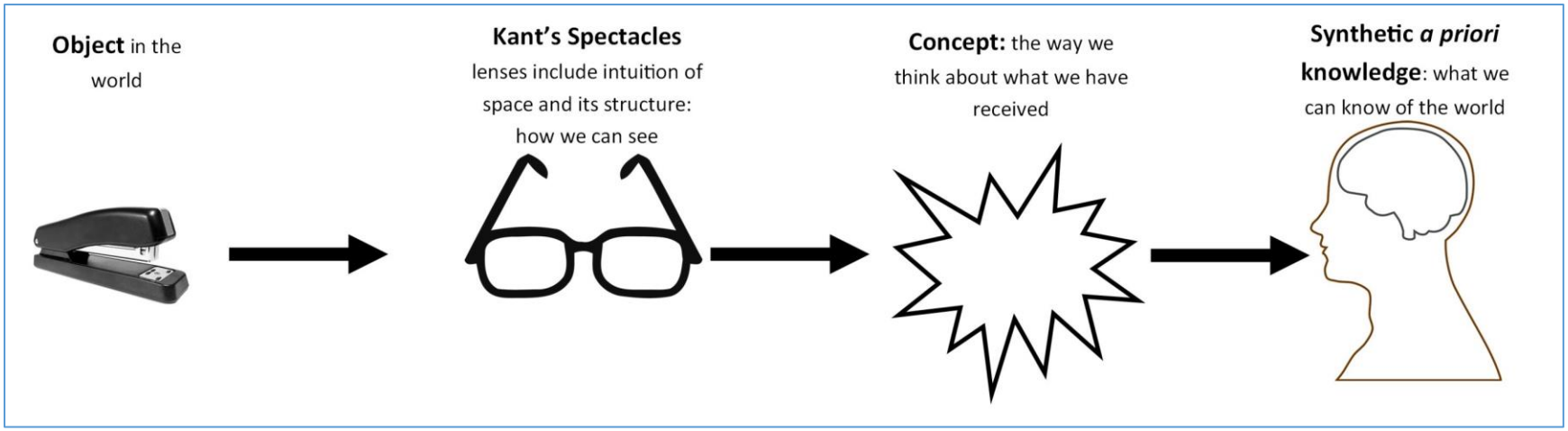

Figure 3.3-1: Author's approximation of Kant's analogy of the spectacles

Where Hume's epistemological theory of knowledge started with a sense experience, distinguishing only between the direct experience and the memory of a direct experience, Kant offered a theory which was much more nuanced. For Kant, meaningful and accurate knowledge of the world was gained through synthetic *a priori* knowledge which combined intuition with concept. Our intuitions about the nature of space and its resultant ordering of our sense experiences of objects in the world, were a passive product of our receptivity. Our understanding of concepts was an active product of the way we think about what we are perceiving about the object.

For Kant, much like Hume, this structure of space was necessarily finite and observable because it had to affect our senses, even though space as an abstract concept could be "an infinite given magnitude" (1998, B39). Kant was thereby able to describe the scope of what he considered good metaphysics, and then develop its boundaries and limits by claiming that any synthetic *a priori* knowledge decoupled from intuition was invariably poor metaphysics.

Thinking about thinking becomes akin to what Kant said about good philosophy, which: "Consists precisely in knowing its bounds" (1998, A727/B755). The ontological claim about the nature of space was embedded in his analogous spectacles. Hence any meaning and understanding of the world derived through these spectacles, Kant's epistemology, were necessarily imbued with this claim of the finite nature of space. This resulted in the necessary role of perception in the establishment, and evaluation of worthwhile knowledge. Kant's contribution to the understanding of space therefore results in the following mapping:

Table 3.3-6: Perception-Space-location-boundary-movement-positionality of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Location	→	Container that is distinguished by there being something in/at a specific location
Bounded/boundary with limited perceivable possibilities within	→	Establishes what is legitimate and relevant in/at a specific location as only what is observable through direct experience. Everything beyond the boundary, in-direct or inferred experience, is considered illegitimate and irrelevant
Possibility for movement	→	Discussions are focused on something being observed as present (static), or being in movement due to some observable reason
Positionality is established by distance to, perception, and comprehension of the bounded/boundary	→	Different pedagogies and strategies that engender a recognition of the importance of the boundary to legitimate or illegitimate discussion and ideas

The central role of perception established by Kant more than two hundred years ago contributed to an empiricist-oriented experience of the communicative context in education. The maintenance of the boundary between what was and was not perceivable (and therefore legitimate and relevant versus illegitimate and irrelevant knowledge) through vigorous debate and censure has been a common characteristic of education from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first (Barrow & Woods, 2006). The elegance of Kant's claims about the nature of space was

that it could be said to represent all that the human eye was capable of directly perceiving.

For nearly 2000 years, the science and mathematics of what was directly perceivable had led to the longevity of Euclidean geometry, in which Kant's claims about the nature and geometry of space were firmly enmeshed. However, "the single most important event for the evaluation of Kant's theory of space was the discovery of non-Euclidean geometries in the nineteenth century and the subsequent conclusion that physical space-time is non-Euclidean in the twentieth" (Hatfield, 2006, p. 88). The theories of Albert Einstein are one such example of the implications of non-Euclidean geometries (Einstein, 2000; Greene, 2005; Hawking, 1998; 2005; Jammer, 1969). These discoveries dispelled Kant's claims about the nature of space with respect to all that the human eye was *incapable* of directly perceiving. The distinction between what humans were capable of directly perceiving versus what scientific instrumentation and reasoning were now capable of indirectly revealing created an opportunity to update Kant's theory of space, and the mapping of space being developed in this chapter.

3.4. Considering space at the level of the word and statement

In this section I will reconcile the two distinct experiences of space discussed above to the mappings regarding the communicative context of my class developed so far in this chapter, by updating both mappings based upon modern theories regarding the nature of space made available through the discovery of non-Euclidean geometry, Relativistic and Quantum physics, and the possibilities they engender. By the end of this section, we will have developed a mapping of the experience of space that will then be complementary of the mapping of the experience of safety developed later in this chapter.

Kant was not proposing something new in his original claims about space being not a distinction between absolute and relational space, but instead "the

subjective constitution of our mind" (1998, A23/B37-38). Rather, he was making important revisions to existing theory reflecting the current, late eighteenth-century scientific understanding of the universe. Today, we can work within Kant's theory to reflect the current (early twenty-first century) understanding of the universe, and evaluate the implications to the mapping I have been developing through the inclusion of an evaluative component:

Table 3.4-1: Perception-Space-location-boundary-movement-positionality-evaluation of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Location	→	Container that is distinguished by there being something in/at a specific location
Bounded/boundary with limited perceivable possibilities within	→	Establishes what is legitimate and relevant in/at a specific location as only what is observable through direct experience. Everything beyond the boundary, in-direct or inferred experience, is considered illegitimate and irrelevant
Possibility for movement	→	Discussions are focused on something being observed as present (static), or being in movement due to some observable reason
Positionality is established by distance to, perception, and comprehension of the bounded/boundary	→	Different pedagogies and strategies that engender a recognition of the importance of the boundary to legitimate or illegitimate discussion and ideas
Recognition and evaluation of positionality and possibility through current understanding	→	Change based upon reflection on other possible connections between current communication and intention

This update to the mapping allows for an understanding that what our senses are capable of directly perceiving is but at the very edge, or rather the very beginning, of the possibilities for space, knowledge, and the practices of which we are capable.

When Hume's empiricist project explicitly coupled metaphysics and the nature of space to the science of the eighteenth century, he unintentionally established the grounds for decoupling one from the other and empowering the relational view of space. Kant had refined Hume's theory of how humans made sense of things in a reality governed by Euclidean geometry and the assumptions of a finite absolute view of space.

The beauty of Kant's analogy of the spectacles was that it could deny the possibility of all other theories of reality. This is arguably one of the reasons that accounts for its longevity in modern thought. Kant established this utility by systematically dismissing the idea of thinking about things absent the spectacles, which he called an "empty'" understanding of objects and concepts (1998, A51/B75).

Furthermore, Kant pointed out that any *a priori* concept which was extended or decoupled "beyond our sensible intuition does not get us anywhere" (1998, B148) because "our sensible and empirical intuition alone can provide them with sense and significance" (1998, B149). Kant based his theory of space as an *a priori* intuition partly upon the science of the eighteenth century. However, the validation of non-Euclidean geometry in the nineteenth century, and the ensuing assumptions of Einstein's relativistic physics and quantum physics would seemingly invalidate *parts of* Kant's theory of how humans made sense of things beyond their ability to directly perceive. However, rather than reject the mapping for the experience of space developed up to this point, I am confident that large portions of it can be retained:

> because the deviation between classical and relativistic reality is manifest only under extreme conditions, Newtonian physics still provides an approximation that proves extremely accurate and useful in many circumstances. But utility and reality are very different standards (Greene, 2005, p. 10).

Therefore, the mapping of the experience of space to the experience of the communicative context of a class, as developed so far in this chapter, is still

useful because it can account for what human beings are in fact able to directly perceive of reality through their own senses and reason. In the theoretical discussions of Relativistic and Quantum physics the current mapping may not be acceptable as 100% accurate, but in the practical discussions of a classroom engaged in learning, the mapping is representative of what can be witnessed and inferred to be taking place.

Hidden beyond these finite perceptions that can be witnessed, according to Relativistic and Quantum physics, is a reality of infinite possible complexity which is imperceptible to a human being's senses without scientific instrumentation. Relativistic and Quantum physics have provided scientific methods for the indirect perception of aspects of this infinite reality, but for most human beings this infinite reality exists merely at the level of underdeveloped abstraction.

Part of the reason for this underdeveloped abstraction may be because human beings are comfortable with the certainty represented in what is finite. Something which is finite, however, is necessarily a part of some larger finite thing in any view of space due to the human mind's limit of what it can comprehend. At a certain point, this Russian "Matryoshka" doll understanding of what is finite gives way to a doll which is too large to fathom, becoming essentially infinite. At this point of transition from what is finitely fathomable to what is finitely unfathomable, or infinite, certainty is lost. In a similar fashion, Relativist and Quantum physics understood the empiricism of Newtonian physics as being simply the tip of any possible understanding (Einstein, 2000; Greene, 2005; Hawking, 1998; 2005; Jammer, 1969).

Where Relativistic physics sought understanding in the immensity of the universe, Quantum physics sought understanding in the minuteness of the universe. In this way infinity was understood as extending metaphorically, from empiric direct perception in both directions to the microscopic and the macroscopic.

The relational view of space, as developed by the metaphysics of Leibniz, also extended from the imperceptible microscopic, the monad, to the unfathomable macroscopic, possible worlds (Bobro, 2005; 2014). It is then no wonder that twentieth and twenty-first century physics have embraced the language of Leibniz's relational view of space (Aiton, 1985; Greene, 2012) to describe the nature of reality they were discovering (Bobro, 2005). Moreover, some of their discoveries at the quantum, sub-atomic level manifested many of the characteristics and relationships described in Leibniz's metaphysical account of monads.

A useful example of these conceptual and linguistic similarities can be found in "quantum entanglement theory" and how reality works at the sub-atomic level of quantum physics. This theory posits that there are particles smaller than atoms, and in turn, these participles have even smaller parts, and so on. However, according to this theory, each participle and its smaller parts exist in a specific position in relation to all other parts of the particle and the other particles around it, and *simultaneously does not exist* in that specific position (Hawking, 2010; Greene, 2012).

Much like a monad, each particle potentially has a perfect representation of the universe in it, if it were to combine with other particles to infinity; but due to the uncertainty of the relative position of all its parts from all its other parts and other particles around it, the particles offer a representation of the universe *from a certain point of view*. Like monads, the individual particles and their parts are not indivisible because they are determined by their relationships to an inseparable whole, described as *superposition* (Hawking, 2010). Similarly, a monad is not indivisible as its relationships to the central monad and the other existing monads, describe how knowledge of the world is derived (Leibniz, 1973c).

The implication of quantum entanglement theory to the scope of legitimate knowledge can be understood in an example of modern computing. Today

almost all computers are run using microchips that contain binary switches represented in computer language as off or on, 0 or 1. This means that only one bit of information, 0 or 1, can be encoded at any one time on any one switch. There exists a finite amount of information which can exist and be processed at any one time due to the size of a microchip and its finite number of switches (1 gigabit = 1,000,000,000 bits = 1,000,000,000 switches). Current research in quantum computing seeks to develop a type of microchip which has switches that can be encoded with a 0 or 1, and every value in between (Hawking, 2010). Depending on the size of this quantum microchip there would be a near infinite amount of information that could exist and be processed at any one time.

In a similar fashion, the Newtonian absolute and finite view of space, developed in the metaphysics of Hume and Kant, exists in a metaphoric 0 or 1 binary, permeated with distinctions between seen OR unseen, present OR absent, sensed OR un-sensed, and (most important to our mapping), legitimate OR illegitimate, relevant OR irrelevant based upon our ability to perceive it. The relational view of space as developed in the metaphysics of Leibniz rejects this binary, permeated instead with the implications of seen AND unseen, present AND absent, sensed AND un-sensed, legitimate AND illegitimate, and relevant AND irrelevant.

This relational view of space can therefore have radical implications for an understanding of safe space. My class cannot simply be called a safe space OR not because of the multitude of possibilities between these two binaries. My class might be considered a safe space for myself (as teacher) and for some students, AND at the same time being considered unsafe for other students in the class. At this practical level of educational consideration, safe space necessitates this relational understanding.

Similarly, knowledge according to Leibniz, like superposition being a description of an inseparable whole of particles and their parts, cannot be distilled to discrete, independent facts or truths that are legitimated once and for

all time. Instead, knowledge is always necessarily dependent for its meaning on the multitude of relationships it has with other knowledges. The knowledge represented by this web of relationships between a monad and all other monads, including the perfect central monad, is a factor for this first monad's relative position and needs to be taken into consideration. First, the monad has a full perfect monad within it, but due to the relative position of all the other parts in this monad, *all this monad can do is represent this perfect central monad from a specific point of view*. Leibniz referred to this feature of monads as their being "windowless" (1973c, §7) because he believed that each monad was unique and complete, and therefore could not be altered from the outside. Second, because each monad has a full perfect monad within it, it also has all other unique monads within it. Leibniz referred to this feature of a monad as "mirroring" the entire world (1973c, §56).

Due to the relative position of its parts to the whole of a monad, and its mirroring every other monad, it has within itself the necessary "map" to adjust its meaning to something closer to, or farther from, the perfect accurate representation of the world. It can do this because monads are "mind, or mind-like", so it can adjust its relative position of its parts, and itself, to the full and accurate representation of the world of the perfect monad. What this means is that each monad can be distinguished from all others, due to it representing "the whole universe in its own way and from a certain point of view" (1973d, pp. 122-123). This point of view of the monad is then clearer the closer it is to the subject matter of its neighbouring monads, or the more detailed account of the subject matter it represents within.

However, just because a point of view of the monad is not clear (due to its relative distance from the subject matter of its neighbouring monads), does not invalidate its contribution to the knowledge and understanding of the whole. As an example of the experience in the communicative context in my class, a student's contribution to a class discussion on Covid-19 vaccine efficacy could take the form of an unclear statement about being allergic to peanut butter.

Rather than dismiss, invalidate, and deem the contribution irrelevant, the least a teacher or classmate could do is attempt to reposition their own point of view to understand the relevant connection (however tenuous) that the student may have been trying to make between their contribution and the discussion at hand. This attempt to reposition one's own point of view to understand an alternative or unclear point of view can then guide the response to the initially unclear contribution in a way that seeks to legitimate the student's contribution as relevant.

While the attempt of this 'repositioning' may be impossible to achieve all the time, it still represents the best possible action that can be taken. As I pointed out earlier in this chapter, Leibniz's metaphysics noted that this current world is the best possible world with respect to the current conditions upon it. However, "we must not be misled by the imagery of possible worlds. Possible worlds are not like foreign countries where they do things differently" (Moore, 2012, p. 82). It is then not an issue of relativism or perception with different actions meaning the same thing. Instead, the conditions on each world are indeed different, resulting in the need to evaluate and reflect on what is reasonably the best based upon these differing conditions.

The implication of this discussion of possible worlds is that an individual making the attempt to 'reposition' is not a choice, but the natural order of things representing the reality of this as the best possible world. Making the attempt to reposition, successful or not, is then the thing to do in all situations of this reality. Making the attempt, like Leibniz's metaphysics, is intrinsically important *in and of itself*. Leibniz described this intrinsic importance as follows:

> The nature of the monad is representative, and consequently nothing can limit it to representing a part of things only, although it is true that its representation is confused as regards the detail of the whole universe and can only be distinct as regards a small part of things; that is to say as regards those which are either the nearest or the largest in relation to each of the monads.… In a confusing way [all monads] go towards the infinite, towards the whole; but they are limited and distinguished from one another by the degrees of their

> distinct perceptions…. [A] soul can read in itself only what is distinctly represented there; it is unable to develop all at once all the things that are folded within it, for they stretch to infinity (1973c, §§60-61).

The beauty of Leibniz's relational view of infinite space is that it can jar us from what we consider normal and legitimate, from what we consider best, and force us to evaluate and reflect on why we may not always make the best possible attempt. The practice of making the attempt to understand where others are coming from and accepting their contributions as belonging *in some way*, is the best possible action to take to achieve a communicative context that maximizes the opportunity to fulfill an ongoing educationally valuable goal, and to raise the consciousness of all the educational community's members. The result of this updated modern understanding of space is therefore mapped:

Table 3.4-2: Space of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Shared Location	→	Distinguished by a shared educational intention in/at a specific location
Boundless, but with temporary, possibly fuzzy boundary, that distinguishes location from all other locations	→	Establishes what is legitimate and relevant communication in/at a specific location upon connection to shared educational intention
Possibility for movement	→	Legitimate and illegitimate communication are open to discussion linked to shared educational intention and relevance
Positionality is relative but not limited to what is currently established as legitimate	→	Different pedagogies and strategies that engender a recognition of legitimate and relevant communication, and an openness to expand this recognition
Recognition and evaluation of positionality, possibility, and boundary	→	Change and revision arising from making a continuous genuine attempt to seek connection between the current communication and the shared educational intention

3.5. Safe at the level of the word

Having developed a richer understanding of the history and meaning of space so far in this chapter, and how this understanding influences our mapping to the communicative context of my class, it is now necessary to delve into the meaning of the word "safe" and the experience of safety. The purpose of this exploration of the word safety is to better understand what is meant by the

experience of safety so we can develop a mapping, which includes important submappings, to the communicative context in my class. This mapping begins as follows:

Table 3.5-1: Safety of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safety]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]

The following sections explore and develop a more thorough understanding of and definition for the concept of safety, at the level of the word, and then at the level of the statement, that can then provide a route to a more precise discussion about safe space as a conceptual metaphor. My motivation for exploring this question is to understand and explain why a clearer definition of what is meant by "safety" can allow for a more precise and educationally useful discussion of safe space.

Like the previous discussion of the experience, meaning, and mapping of space to my class, any consideration of the experience of safety is premised upon either having it or not having it. However, this state of having or not having safety takes place in a context that can be considered spatially. The result is that the experience of safety takes place in a specific location that is bounded: safety is experienced within the boundary that represents the presence of some criteria which is considered safe, while outside that boundary is considered unsafe due to the absence of this criteria. The simplest example of this could be an individual's personal subjective experience of safety taking place within their own body and mind, with the body serving as the location and the limit of how far this sense of safety is extended by the mind, the boundedness of the safe location. However, the establishment of the boundary between safe and unsafe is not a specific and well-defined line, but instead fuzzy and opaque. The fuzzy boundary of safety is in part implicit in its understanding as a condition, characteristic, or

quality of some other space. It is therefore reasonable to consider safety as having a gradient-like condition, where the sense of having safety within the boundary is easily recognizable, but gradually diminishes as we pass through this fuzzy boundary, until safety is no longer present or assured.

The gradient-like quality of the sense and experience of safety through the fuzzy boundary can be considered as analogous to a sensation such as warmth. The experience of warmth exists, for most individuals, somewhere between hot and cold. My experience of warmth is qualitatively different from that of my elderly father due the circulation issues he faces from his diabetes. Moreover, my experience of warmth exists on a gradient because I know when I am feeling it, but there is a fuzzy boundary represented by its diminishing, until it is simply absent from my experience.

The gradient-like quality of warmth, the gradual and almost imperceptible transition from being present to being absent, is implicitly a recognition of the infinite experience available from one threshold of the boundary to its other. Our implicit recognition of the infinite experiences experienced as gradients of safety are akin to the gradient of a relational and infinite space. Whereas a Newtonian absolute space establishes binary opposites, present OR absent, safe OR unsafe, the Leibnizian relational space better represents the true experience of safety and its gradient-like nature.

As an example, we could consider a young child in her parent's loving arms experiencing a sense of safety. If the parent placed the child on the ground and walked 5 feet away, there may be an ensuing decrease in the feeling of safety on the part of the child. Next, if the parent walked another 25 feet away, there most likely would be another decrease in the experience of safety on the part of the child, as well as on the part of the parent now no longer in a position to immediately aid in the maintenance of this safety. The experience of safety can then range from a relational understanding to an absolute understanding. The further the parent moves away, the less safe the child may feel. However,

the child's actual physical safety has not really changed in any absolute sense, as the parent is still close enough to close the gap should the child encounter danger. This understanding would therefore map as follows:

Table 3.5-2: Safety-location-boundary of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safety]		**Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]**
Location	→	**Distinguished by there being something included/excluded within the specific location**
Temporary, possibly fuzzy boundedness/boundary	→	**Fuzzy boundary denotes the gradient-like experience of safety. Inclusion within denotes safety / Exclusion denotes a lack of safety**

Many of the existing conceptions of the experience of safety do not recognize the importance of its fuzzy, gradient-like nature (Boler, 1999; Callan, 2016; Dewey, 1895; English & Stengel, 2010; Fisher, 2006; James, 1983; Mayo, 2001; Ramsey, 2009). Instead, this elastic state of safety, through the metaphor of safe space, is forced to give up its Leibnizian, elastic, and relational nature, and instead adopt a more Newtonian, bounded, and absolute status. Part of the work contributed by the mapping in this chapter of the relational experience of space, is the making of the boundary for both space and safety fuzzier.

This contribution is accomplished through an understanding that safety is also co-constituted by the people in a space. Therefore, questions about legitimate and illegitimate communicative action need necessarily to consider the relevance of these actions to the shared intention of these people in the space of a class. A teacher may set clear boundaries for the communicative context of a

class, in what they consider a relational act; but this act can be imbued with the inheritance of Newtonian space.

These acts, rules, or laws that govern a pedagogical space to establish safety may well legitimate or render illegitimate specific communicative actions; but they do so without any acknowledgement of or contribution from the objects in that space: that is, the students and their intentions for that safe space. In this way, the teacher's pedagogical desire is to nurture possibility in the class, but what is possible is determined by themselves. Alternatively, a teacher influenced by a Leibnizian understanding of space may set boundaries for the communicative context of the class knowing full well that it is a provisional move to establish temporary rules to achieve some shared thoughts, intention or purpose. These Leibnizian temporary boundaries, and the rules they empower, exist to create opportunity, and further new actions amongst the students. In this way, the teacher's pedagogical desire is to nurture possibility *from the relationships* in the class.

It is important to reinforce that it is the submapping of boundedness and the boundary that is established for both space and safety, that make these two concepts congruent and able to become a more complex conceptual metaphor. As previously discussed, the boundedness of space allows for the determination of what is considered legitimate and illegitimate communication. The boundedness of safety also allows for a similar determination, exercised in the experience of the communicative context in my class through inclusionary and exclusionary practices. The binary understanding of safety and safe space lead to misunderstanding when it forces safe space to be thought about as either legitimate (hence it makes us feel safe), or as illegitimate, making us feel unsafe. Instead, like the previous analysis of space at the level of the word and the level of the statement, safety needs to also be framed as legitimate and relevant toward some purpose or intention, or illegitimate and irrelevant toward that purpose or intention.

The fuzzy boundary of safety and the exercise of exclusionary and inclusionary practices can be understood to have as a primary purpose the physical integrity of the human body, and as a secondary purpose, the emotional wellbeing derived from this physical integrity. This distinction between physical integrity and emotional wellbeing, and their relationship to learning has been discussed by educational philosophers for some time (Boler, 1999; Dewey, 1895; English & Stengel, 2010; James, 1983; Mayo, 2001). Further, sociopolitical analyses of safety from a fear of physical or emotional harm have focused on how calls for safety in education can in fact be demands for the removal of differences and challenges from the experience of students (Boler, 1999; Fisher, 2006; Ramsey, 2009).

The seeming interchangeability of a physical safety and an emotional safety employed in discussions of education (Barrett, 2010; Boostrom, 1998; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2018) is a source of misunderstanding that needs to be addressed for the mapping of this chapter. At its most basic, a conflation takes place in discussions of safety: a temporary bounded location free of physical pain is conflated with a temporary bounded location free of the risk of emotional pain. The logic of how these two are connected causally from the boundedness of the location, which comes first, must therefore be established for this mapping.

Examples of what safety can and should mean in education abound. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile, or On Education* (1762) explains how encounters with pain, and the ensuing fear, uncertainty and risk of reoccurrences of this pain contribute to growth. This understanding would therefore contribute to our mapping as follows:

Table 3.5-3: Safety-location-boundary-pain-fear of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safety]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Location	→	Distinguished by there being something included/excluded within the specific location
Temporary, possibly fuzzy boundedness/boundary	→	Fuzzy boundary denotes the gradient-like experience of safety. Inclusion within denotes safety / Exclusion denotes a lack of safety
Integrity of the physical body through the exclusion of pain and the fear of pain	→	The integrity of the physical body is maintained through the inclusion of legitimate and relevant communicative acts
Integrity of the physical body and emotional mind through the exclusion of fear, risk, and uncertainty	→	The integrity of the emotional mind and thinking is maintained due to the exclusion of illegitimate and irrelevant communicative acts that may induce an experience of fear, risk, or uncertainty

However, if the fear of the unknown, encourages habits that impede growth and learning, the educator needs to make changes to the environment. English and Stengel point out that within "Rousseau's examples is the notion that a static environment is the friend of fear because it gives the child a sense of comfort and tranquility, yet in reality it makes him increasingly vulnerable to and more frightened of any type of change in circumstances" (2010, p. 527). This line of thinking suggests that some action needs to be actively taken to remove the normalcy associated with the fear of change from the static, *status quo* environment.

In the late nineteenth century, William James claimed that fear was not felt and then expressed, but instead expressed physically and then felt emotionally (James, 1884). For James:

> …what we take to be emotional expression – physiological and behavioural – comes first and the emotion of fear is born when the bodily changes we associate with fear – racing pulse, pounding heart, and the like, and even flight, fight, and paralysis – come to consciousness (English & Stengel, 2010, p. 522).

In their work exploring whether fear prompts or impedes learning, English and Stengel point out that safe spaces are "not only [safe] from extrinsic sources of fear such as bullying, but also from intrinsic sources such as a learner's social insecurity" (English & Stengel, 2010, p. 523). The primacy given to the integrity of the physical body would therefore support our mapping. If the exclusion of pain in the communicative context of my class is then understood as the maintenance of the integrity of the physical body, we can understand that actions such as fire and earthquake drills, alarms on exterior doors, hall monitors, prohibitions on physical contact between students and with the teacher, and even active-shooter drills, all contribute to a sense of safety for some, and potentially an heightened sense of risk for others. However, the exclusion of fear, uncertainty, and the sense of risk from the communicative context of my class is something that needs further clarification.

John Dewey understood fear as a relational construct, which he explored through the discomfort and resistance faced by students in some learning experiences. English and Stengel analyze this relationship between fear and discomfort in Dewey's writing, and point out that he developed a description of learning that required a certain degree of discomfort:

> Discomfort can also dissolve into fear in ways that undercut possibilities for learning. So the educator who provokes affect must guard against the possibility that fear becomes the learner's habitual response (English & Stengel, 2010, p. 529).

Similarly, English and Stengel show how for Paulo Freire:

> fear is neither positive nor negative; it is an appropriate and predictable response to difficulty. But for this self-proclaimed progressive educator, fear becomes negative if one fails to face (and conquer) it and is thereby immobilized by it. This paralyzing potential of fear prevents one from dealing with what is difficult and thus stops growth and learning (English & Stengel, 2010, p. 536).

In both these descriptions of the role fear plays during the discomfort of learning, fear is recognized as reasonable and relevant during the experience of the communicative context of a class. The role of the educator is then to exclude illegitimate and irrelevant communicative actions that may increase a student's fear, uncertainty, or sense of risk to a level which impedes the ability to think and learn. However, there is another, more important role for the educator to undertake through the active inclusion of communicative actions that decrease or minimize a student's fear, uncertainty, or sense of risk to a level that allows them to resume their thinking and learning. This understanding would therefore contribute to our mapping as follows:

Table 3.5-4: Safety-location-boundary-pain-fear of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safety]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Location	→	Distinguished by there being something included/excluded within the specific location
Temporary, possibly fuzzy boundedness/boundary	→	Fuzzy boundary denotes the gradient-like experience of safety. Inclusion within denotes safety / Exclusion denotes a lack of safety
Integrity of the physical body through the exclusion of pain and the fear of pain	→	The integrity of the physical body is maintained through the inclusion of legitimate and relevant communicative acts
Integrity of the physical body and emotional mind through the exclusion of fear, risk, and uncertainty	→	The integrity of the emotional mind and thinking are established through the exclusion of illegitimate and irrelevant communicative actions that may induce a paralyzing fear, risk, or a sense of uncertainty, that impede thinking and learning. Established through the inclusion of communicative pedagogical actions that limit, but do not exclude, fear, risk, or uncertainty, as impediments to thinking and learning

Safety can therefore influence the target domain of the communicative context in my class by the setting of boundaries for legitimate and educationally relevant interactions that exclude pain, the fear of pain, and to a lesser degree, the risk and uncertainty of potential pain in ways that disable learning. This

mapping of the experience of safety to the experience of the communicative context of my class therefore offers rules and expectations for what should be legitimately excluded (physical pain), but also establishes rules and expectations for the inclusion of some experiences, and the exclusion of others such as fear, uncertainty, and risk. This is a daunting task for any educator, made more difficult by increasingly diverse student bodies and their respective relative positionalities to the function of fear, risk, and uncertainty in their own prior learning experiences. This understanding would therefore map as follows:

Table 3.5-5: Safety-location-boundary-pain-positionality-fear of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safety]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Shared location	→	Distinguished by there being something included/excluded within the specific location
Temporary, possibly fuzzy boundedness/boundary	→	Fuzzy boundary denotes the gradient-like experience of safety. Inclusion within denotes safety / Exclusion denotes a lack of safety
Integrity of the physical body through the exclusion of pain and the fear of pain	→	The integrity of the physical body is established through legitimate and relevant communicative acts
Relative Positionality of fear, uncertainty, risk	→	The integrity of the emotional mind and thinking are established through the exclusion of what the teacher or student body consider extreme, illegitimate, or irrelevant, communicative actions. Established through the inclusion of communicative pedagogical actions that potentially limit, for some students, fear, uncertainty, or a sense of risk, as impediments to thinking and learning.

A deeper discussion of inclusion and exclusion for the submapping of fear, uncertainty, and risk is of most practical pedagogical importance. Whereas the integrity of the physical body through the exclusion of physical pain is generally easy to justify pedagogically, it is what is excluded that is of importance to this discussion about learning in my class. Something could be topically relevant to

my class, but should it cause a fear that may impede learning for some/all students, its inclusion should either be supplemented with further support, or consideration should be given for its exclusion.

Should something be topically relevant but *potentially* a source for emotional uncertainty or risk to a student, I would argue that this is not itself sufficient grounds for its exclusion. Instead, the teacher should consider what support, supplement, or revision can be offered to minimize the chance of the emotional uncertainty or risk impeding the student's learning. The next section of this work will therefore explore the positionality of fear, uncertainty, and risk, and how it both problematizes and offers a path forward for the mapping in this chapter.

3.6. Safe at the level of the statement

The distinction between a physical safety and an emotional safety becomes pronounced at the level of the statement. The general acceptance of a metaphor's promise (in this case a certain type, degree, and amount of safety needed to learn without impediment) is also the source of misunderstanding and conflict. This can be found in historic and current discussions of safety in different types of spaces. One history of how individuals have talked about safety in North American spaces can be traced back to the experience of groups which faced social repression in the 1960's. In her book *Mapping Gay L.A.: The Intersection of Place and Politics*, Moira Kenney (2001) traces the first discussions of these safe spaces back to the gay and lesbian bars of Los Angeles in the mid-1960s, and then to the ensuing women's movement of the 1970s.

As Kenney notes, gay and lesbian bars were not considered "safe" as in free of risk, as anti-sodomy and homosexuality laws ensured that the constant threat of a police raid was always present on their physical bodies. Instead, these bars were considered "safe" because they offered a physical place temporarily free of this pain, and temporarily free of debilitating fear, risk, and uncertainty that

enabled patrons to form a community and resist the many social, moral, and intellectual norms that repressed these groups. By the 1970's and the discussion of safe spaces in the American women's movement, safety "began to mean distance from men and patriarchal thought" (Harris, 2015, ¶5), and the active exclusion of the source of physical pain and the ensuing emotional fear was utilized to maintain a physical safety and foster a degree of emotional safety. The maintenance of physical safety through the exclusion of the source of pain (men) and source of fear (patriarchal thought) thereby allowed for a degree of emotional safety, freedom from the uncertainty and risk resulting from the pain and fear, to develop:

> …consciousness raising groups … safe space … in the women's movement, was a means rather than an end and not only a physical space but a space created by the coming together of women searching for community (Kenney, 2001, p. 24).

The goal of consciousness raising groups was to gain further knowledge and understanding through the sharing of ideas in the relative safety of these spaces, and thereby be better prepared to address the specific social, moral, or intellectual repression they faced beyond the safe space. For those familiar with the aims of a liberal education, in which students gain knowledge and understanding through the sharing of ideas and the discussion of their thinking to be better prepared for future challenges, the history of safe space developed by Kenney will feel familiar. However, the understanding derived from this history of safety in space would undergo another half century of nuanced theoretical development, resulting in parts becoming invisible and forgotten, leading to misunderstandings by educators and students alike.

To understand the mapping that occurs in the meaning and usage of "safe" within a statement like "safe space", it is necessary to briefly summarize this 40-plus years of theoretical development of safety in certain educationally worthwhile spaces. Three important developments took place which drastically altered the meaning of safety in these specific spaces due to the

acknowledgement of the relative positionality of physical safety and emotional safety.

First, activist groups beyond the initial lesbian, gay, bisexual, and women adopters of the term safe space began to use it more frequently to describe their own communities, because this term represented an admirable ready-made (prefigurative) model to emulate (Boggs, 1977).

Second, many of the activists from these original groups who used safe space to organize in the 1960s and 1970s, entered the academy and began to write about their resistance in more theoretical ways:

> Theory, in addition to and in the context of activism, has helped shape the development of “safe space”. In the wake of their defeat in the 60s, many left-wing organizers retreated to the academy, particularly the humanities and social sciences, where they developed increasingly nuanced political schematics based on their experience. Perhaps they could work out on paper where exactly they went wrong (Harris, 2015, ¶8).

One of the most important theoretical contributions during this period was that even as groups raised their own consciousness through their commitment to safety in a space, the social, moral, and intellectual norms they aimed to confront beyond that safety, were nonetheless present within their safe spaces “in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations” (Foucault, 1978, p. 94).

This meant that no matter how diligently groups may try to promote safety to raise the consciousness of their members, they could not provide complete and absolute safety to their members on the inside, or from the outside. The repressive social, moral, and intellectual norms played out in the infinite relationships between the subjective feelings and experiences of members inside the group, and these could therefore never be entirely prohibited or policed. Further, the safe space did not exist completely independent of the ever-present repressive norms in the world just beyond it, so again, it was not possible to be entirely safe from those strictures the group hoped to resist. In fact, some of the “mobile relations” of communication, the ongoing changes and subsequent

repositioning of individual perspectives within the group, would reproduce the very repression the safe space's shared intention was attempting to combat.

Third, the theoretical recognition that a safe space could not allow its members to be entirely immune to the repressive norms they hoped to confront:

> …had profound practical implications: it would no longer be enough to support the right organization or hold the right positions, we are also responsible for the ways in which we reproduce existing power relations at their most micro levels (Harris, 2015, ¶9).

The reproduction of existing power relations was in fact the very same meant to be confronted, so these confrontations turned inward into the safe spaces themselves. No matter how diligently the members of a safe space may try to confront these repressive power relations, this inevitable pivot inward and the confrontations this wrought, served to undermine the understanding of safe space being for all its members. Safety therefore operated in a similar fashion, to exclude illegitimate communication on the grounds of ensuring physical safety. Unfortunately, exclusion invariably became entangled with the impossibility of excluding uncertainty and risk that could result in fear of this pain. At first, these confrontations were primarily theoretical accountings of the multiplicity of challenges faced by any individual seeking a safe space. Simply put, no matter the shared cause of any group in a safe space, each member had their own identity that intersected with other characteristics not shared by every member of the group (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 1990), so the risk of being marginalized or underrepresented because of one's unique intersectional identity was just as much a possibility inside a safe space as beyond it.

Therefore, the theoretical development of safe space resulted in the acknowledgement that a completely safe space for every member of a group was an impossibility due to their intersectional positionality. The safety offered in a space could at best be relative, and by degrees determined by an individual's similarities (more safety) or differences (less safety) to the other members. This meant that the relative positionality of an individual's safety had to be evaluated

through their homogeneity to all others in that space. The practical considerations of this theoretical development of the meaning of safety in a space are daunting for those wishing to foster that safety, because no amount of accommodation, diversity, inclusion, or the policing of any number of microaggressions could fully ensure everyone's sense of emotional safety in that space. This understanding would therefore map as follows:

Table 3.6-1: Relative Safety-location-boundary-pain-positionality-fear of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safety]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Shared location	→	Distinguished by there being something included/excluded within the specific location
Temporary, possibly fuzzy boundedness/boundary	→	Fuzzy boundary denotes the gradient-like experience of safety. Inclusion within denotes safety / Exclusion denotes a lack of safety
Integrity of the physical body through the exclusion of pain and the fear of pain	→	The integrity of the physical body is established through legitimate and relevant communicative acts
Positionality of the physical body to fear, risk, and uncertainty	→	The integrity of the emotional mind and thinking are established through exclusion. The scope of what is considered extreme, illegitimate, and irrelevant communicative actions that impede learning are constructs of one's relative positionality. Possible to establish through the inclusion of communicative pedagogical actions that potentially limit, for some students of similar relative positionality, fear, risk, or a sense of uncertainty, as impediments to thinking and learning

Despite the discoveries of activists in the 1960s and 1970s regarding the practice of safe space, talking about or trying to practice safety in educational

settings such as classrooms endured. In 1998 when Boostrom offered his observations about the problematic ways in which educators were confusing their talk about fostering safe space with the practicing of safe space being a specific way to teach, he did so within the framework of the theoretical and practical developments of the mapping outlined above. As he considered four specific academic articles discussing safe space in educational settings, ranging from K-12 to higher education, he noted:

> Understood as the avoidance of stress, the 'safe space' metaphor drains from classroom life every impulse toward critical reflection. It's one thing to say that students should not be laughed at for posing a question or for offering a wrong answer. It's another to say that students must never be conscious of their ignorance. It's one thing to say that students should not be belittled for a personal preference or harassed because of an unpopular opinion. It's another to say that students must never be asked why their preferences and opinions are different from those of others. It's one thing to say that students should be capable of self-revelation. It's another to say that they must always like what they see revealed (1998, p. 406).

Boostrom observes that the safe space metaphor muted the necessary critical reflection needed to gain greater understanding and consciousness, through the entanglement of emotional safety with physical. In the name of minimizing fear, risk, uncertainty and discomfort, an educational safe space was produced that lacked all educational value. The classroom could be considered safe because it protected students from all risk of physical and emotional harm derived from the difficulty of learning new things, but then became meaningless (Kenney, 2001) within the project of education.

This tension between this conflated understanding of safe space and the educational goal of critical reflection has persisted as greater numbers of educators and institutions have utilized safe space to describe the teaching and learning experiences they offer to students. The incident surrounding the Yale University Halloween costumes discussed earlier in this work is just one example of the tensions and misunderstandings created by these promises of safety in educational spaces (cf. Barret, 2010; Mayo, 2010; Stengel, 2010; Turner &

Braine, 2015). While some educators may see safe space as an intention to strive for, a means to learning and greater understanding, many students see it as a promise to respect and protect them from anything that they perceive as risky, uncomfortable, and therefore emotionally unsafe.

The fear of the risk and discomfort necessary to learn is in part due to a misunderstanding of how risk functions in complex situations. Lukianoff and Haidt (2018) draw out this misunderstanding in their discussion of how fragility and antifragility (Taleb, 2012):

> …explains how systems and people…like the immune system, grow *stronger* in response. Taleb asks us to distinguish three kinds of things. Some, like china teacups, are *fragile*: they break easily and cannot heal themselves, so you must handle them gently and keep them away from toddlers. Other things are *resilient*: they can withstand shocks…But Taleb asks us to look beyond the overused word "resilience" and recognize that some things are *antifragile*. Many of the important systems in our economy and political life are like our immune systems: they require stressors and challenges in order to learn, adapt, and grow. Systems that are antifragile become rigid, weak, and inefficient when nothing challenges them or pushes them to respond vigorously (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2018, pp. 22-23).

The risk to a fragile object such as a teacup is not the same as the risk to a complex system which can recover from its encounter with fear, risk, or uncertainty, and carry on or potentially grow from the experience. Students are not fragile objects, but instead complex systems of thoughts, beliefs, and experiences, each with their own relative positionality. An encounter with emotional unsafety is therefore not a terminal affliction, but rather a temporary experience which can potentially be mitigated by their own, their classmates', or their teacher's attempts through pedagogical actions.

This is not to say that risk is experienced in the same way by all students, but rather to emphasize that the first pedagogical move does not always have to be to remove a threat when it is perceived. An example is bans on peanuts that have proliferated across North American school systems, to manage the real risk to a select minority of students with nut allergies. These policies of exclusionary

action, which entail barring a risk from all students, have resulted in the primacy of exclusionary thinking. This has been a determent to inclusionary communicative practices that could allow students to manage and utilize risk to boost their own immunity to peanut allergens (cf. “hygiene hypothesis”), to say nothing for their learning.

The necessity for risk and uncertainty, central to an understanding of learning (Dewey, 1895; English & Stengel, 2010), became conflated with an uncontrolled and unmitigated sense of fear, risk and uncertainty due to the recognition of the relative positionality of individuals. But what this conflation ignored was that educators had already been continually evaluating the relative emotional safety of their students as an impediment to learning, and thus making the attempt to control, mitigate, and limit this experience of fear and risk through their pedagogical and communicative decisions with students. This recognition therefore contributes to the mapping as follows:

Table 3.6-2: Safety of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safety]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Shared location	→	Distinguished by there being something included/excluded within the specific location
Temporary, possibly fuzzy boundedness/boundary	→	Fuzzy boundary denotes the gradient-like experience of safety. Inclusion within denotes safety / Exclusion denotes a lack of safety
Integrity of the physical body through the exclusion of pain and the fear of pain	→	The integrity of the physical body is established through legitimate and relevant communicative acts
Positionality of the physical body to fear, risk, and uncertainty	→	The integrity of the emotional mind and thinking are established through inclusion of communicative pedagogical actions that potentially limit, for some students of similar relative positionality, fear, risk, or a sense of uncertainty, as impediments to thinking and learning
Evaluation of relative positionality	→	Communicative pedagogical actions are open to reflection, revision, or possible exclusion arising from the need to establish the temporary integrity of the emotional mind, relatively free from impediments to thinking and learning

As has already been discussed in relation to the gradient-like nature of the experience of safety, it is important to consider how the experience of safety is

relatively elastic due to the positionality of the child or student, and their relationality to others. No matter how elastic and relational this experience of safety may be, a teacher in a position of power, authority, and responsibility for learning often feels it is their responsibility to set boundaries for their students. In this way, the Newtonian inheritances of a space above and independent of the objects within it are acted out in what are usually rules of exclusion or prohibition meant to police the actions of students. Instead, a teacher can draw upon a relational understanding of a space to develop rules that foster the relationality and positionality of students to create their own safe space.

3.7. Blending safe at the level of the word and statement, with the space of my class

Having completed mappings for both the experience of safety and the experience of space to the communicative context of my class, we are now able to blend the two mappings to establish a new understanding of the experience of safe space to the experience of the communicative context of my class. It is important to once again note that it is the boundedness of both concepts, safety and space, that establishes the congruence necessary for this blending to take place. However, it is necessary to consider how this blending is to occur because it is not as simple as adding both mappings together. Instead, it is essential to recognize that the primary experience is space, and therefore the experience of safety imbues the space with aspects of its submappings. It is therefore useful to first review the two mappings before commencing this blending:

Table 3.7-1: Space of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Shared Location	→	Distinguished by a shared educational intention in/at a specific location
Boundless, but with temporary, possibly fuzzy boundary, that distinguishes location from all other locations	→	Establishes what is legitimate and relevant communication in/at a specific location upon connection to educational intention
Possibility for movement	→	Legitimate and illegitimate communication are open to discussion linked to educational intention and relevance
Positionality is relative but not limited to what is currently established as legitimate	→	Different pedagogies and strategies that engender a recognition of legitimate and relevant communication, and an openness to expand this recognition
Recognition and evaluation of positionality, possibility, and boundary	→	Change and revision arising from making a continuous genuine attempt to seek connection between the current communication and the shared educational intention

Table 3.7-2: Safety of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safety]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Shared Location	→	Distinguished by there being something included/excluded within the specific location
Temporary, possibly fuzzy boundedness/boundary	→	Fuzzy boundary denotes the gradient-like experience of safety. Inclusion within denotes safety / Exclusion denotes a lack of safety
Integrity of the physical body through the exclusion of pain and the fear of pain	→	The integrity of the physical body is established through legitimate and relevant communicative acts
Positionality of the physical body to fear, risk, and uncertainty	→	The integrity of the emotional mind and thinking are established through inclusion of communicative pedagogical actions that potentially limit, for some students of similar relative positionality, fear, risk, or a sense of uncertainty, as impediments to thinking and learning
Evaluation of relative positionality	→	Communicative pedagogical actions are open to reflection, revision, or possible exclusion arising from the need to establish the temporary integrity of the emotional mind, relatively free from impediments to thinking and learning

Working through the existing submappings of space and safety, we can begin to see how safety imbues space with new meaning and expectations. I will

work through each of these submappings separately, before concluding with a blended mapping for the experience of safe space to the experience of the communicative context of my class.

3.7.1. Location

Table 3.7-3: Safety-location of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safety]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Shared Location	→	Distinguished by there being something included/excluded within the specific location

Table 3.7-4: Space-location of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Shared Location	→	Distinguished by a shared educational intention in/at a specific location

Table 3.7-5: Safety-location blending with Space-location for Safe Space of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safe Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Shared Location	→	Distinguished by a shared educational intention in/at a specific place

3.7.2. Boundedness / Boundary

Table 3.7-6: Safety-boundary of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safety]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Temporary, possibly fuzzy boundedness/boundary	→	Fuzzy boundary denotes the gradient-like experience of safety. Inclusion within denotes safety / Exclusion denotes a lack of safety

Table 3.7-7: Space-boundary of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Boundless, but with temporary, possibly fuzzy boundary, that distinguishes location from all other locations	→	Establishes what is legitimate and relevant communication in/at a specific location upon connection to educational intention

Table 3.7-8: Safety-boundary blending with Space-boundary for Safe Space of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safe Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Temporary, possibly fuzzy boundary that distinguishes the experience of the location from all other locations	→	Establishes legitimate and relevant communication for a shared educational intention

3.7.3. Possibility for movement / Free of Pain

Table 3.7-9: Safety-pain of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safety]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Integrity of the physical body through the exclusion of pain and the fear of pain	→	The integrity of the physical body is established through legitimate and relevant communicative acts

Table 3.7-10: Space-movement of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Possibility for movement	→	Legitimate and illegitimate communication are open to discussion linked to educational intention and relevance

Table 3.7-11: Safety-pain blending with Space-movement for Safe Space of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safe Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Possibility for movement	→	Learning and change is considered as a gradient-like understanding between legitimate and relevant, and illegitimate and irrelevant communication
Integrity of the physical body free from pain or the fear of pain	→	Actions and communications are judged as legitimate and relevant based upon the maintenance or the reinforcement of the right to ongoing membership

3.7.4. Positionality

Table 3.7-12: Safety-positionality of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safety]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Positionality of the physical body to fear, risk, and uncertainty	→	The integrity of the emotional mind and thinking are established through inclusion of communicative pedagogical actions that potentially limit, for some students of similar relative positionality, fear, risk, or a sense of uncertainty, as impediments to thinking and learning

Table 3.7-13: Space-positionality of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Positionality is relative but not limited to what is currently established as legitimate	→	Different pedagogies and strategies that engender a recognition of legitimate and relevant communication, and an openness to expand this recognition

Table 3.7-14: Safety-positionality blending with Space- positionality for Safe Space of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safe Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Positionality of the physical body to fear, risk, and uncertainty	→	Specific positionalities influence the experiences of fear, risk, and uncertainty from communication in a gradient-like fashion. The stronger these experiences the greater the potential impediments to thinking and learning

3.7.5. Evaluation

Table 3.7-15: Safety-evaluation of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safety]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Evaluation of relative positionality	→	Communicative pedagogical actions are open to reflection, revision, or possible exclusion arising from the need to establish the temporary integrity of the emotional mind, relatively free from impediments to thinking and learning

Table 3.7-16: Space-evaluation of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Recognition and evaluation of positionality, possibility, and boundary	→	Change and revision arising from making a continuous genuine attempt to seek connection between the current communication and the shared educational intention

Table 3.7-17: Safety-evaluation blending with Space-evaluation for Safe Space of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safe Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Recognition and evaluation of relative positionalities	→	Make the attempt (reflection, reposition, or revision) to understand the experience and contribution of others engaged in the same shared educational intention

3.8. Safe space at the level of educational discourse

In this chapter, I have worked to develop submappings for safety and space, at the level of the word and the level of statement, to develop a fuller understanding of what is meant by an experience of safe space in the communicative context of my class. First, through an exploration of the history of two competing understandings of space (finite and infinite), I developed a mapping for a modern day understanding of the experience of space in education. Second, through an analysis of the meaning of safety in education, I was able to develop a mapping for an understanding of safety that disentangled the concepts of pain, fear, risk, and uncertainty in the context of education. Finally, the two mappings were blended with the experience of safety influencing the experience of space, to develop a fuller understanding of the conceptual metaphor "the safe space of my class". This blended mapping for the safe space of my class results in the following:

Table 3.8-1: The Safe Space of My Class's Communicative Context conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safe Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Shared Location	→	Distinguished by a shared educational intention in/at a specific place
Temporary, possibly fuzzy boundary that distinguishes the experience of the location from all other locations	→	Establishes legitimate and relevant communication for a shared educational intention
Possibility for movement	→	Learning and change is considered as a gradient-like understanding between legitimate and relevant, and illegitimate and irrelevant communication
Integrity of the physical body free from pain or the fear of pain	→	Actions and communications are judged as legitimate and relevant based upon the maintenance or the reinforcement of the right to ongoing membership
Positionality of the physical body to fear, risk, and uncertainty	→	Specific positionalities influence the experiences of fear, risk, and uncertainty from communication in a gradient-like fashion. The stronger these experiences the greater the potential impediments to thinking and learning
Recognition and evaluation of relative positionalities	→	Make the attempt (reflection, reposition, or revision) to understand the experience and contribution of others engaged in the same shared educational intention

With this mapping of the safe space of my class, we can now turn our attention to what safe space means at the level of the statement in educational discourse, to determine if this structure needs further revision. When this mapping is revised, it will be utilized in the next chapter to consider the meaning of safe space at the level of educational discourse and practice.

In 2016, the philosopher of education Eamonn Callan revisited safe space, accounting for the many challenges being encountered in higher education based on the growing gulf between educators and students. Callan also discussed the growing gulf between educators and those hostile to safe spaces for what they understood as its anti-educational ends. Callan situated his discussion within the theoretical development of safe space since the 1970s when he wrote:

> …institutions must be remade to include or become "safe spaces" for those outside if old patterns of exclusion and domination are to be eradicated, or so at least it is now commonly claimed (2016, p. 64).

By recognizing that a safe space was not immune from the repressive social, moral, and intellectual norms it hoped to confront, Callan acknowledged that higher education had traditionally been exclusionary to many individuals; so the worthwhile educational aim of a safe space could be to allow those traditionally excluded to take part. However, he also acknowledged the practical concerns of trying to develop a safe space in higher education because:

> …education worth having will encourage open-mindedness. To that extent, it must often take on an agonistic spirit as settling beliefs and values are subject to critique that some students will find distressing or exhilarating, or both at the same time (2016, p. 65).

As Callan explored this tension between educators and students, he introduced two useful ways to consider the intentions of educators in a safe space and the expectations of students for safety. Callan noted that one way in which educators attempted to practice safety in their classrooms was the promotion of "dignity space" in which individuals are civil to each other:

> A fully realized dignity safe environment would confer a distinctively valuable aspect of human flourishing: the self-respect of someone confident that others will respect them as an equal. But the best way to get there is most unlikely to be one that forgoes all words that wound. … Offending others is the price one pays for disagreeing with them in the world we have made, and it would be a preposterous conception of equal dignity whose realization required that we expunge all offense (2016, p. 68).

In Callan's view, the practice of safety as a dignity [safe] space took place when all members of the group respected the right of everyone to be seen as equal. In this view, no one was deemed inferior or unworthy of being a member of the safe space, and moreover, this was accepted as a minimal threshold for participation with the group. This minimal threshold thereby removed the fear of being physically removed from the class should disagreement or conflict of ideas occur. Invariably, this was an act of trust practiced by all members of the safe space because it was:

> a threshold condition that will ordinarily be taken for granted when people are secure in the knowledge that others can be relied on to treat them as equals, even when disagreement or conflict arises (2016, p. 68).

This minimal guarantee of safety was thereby able to remove, or at least limit, some of the risk and uncertainty of not belonging and the ensuing emotional insecurity that could hinder learning. Callan's view of dignity space can therefore be seen to align to the mapping developed in this chapter, specifically the submapping for the possibility to learn and change without the fear of pain.

Dignity space can be understood as representing specific communicative action that legitimates all members of a class by acknowledging their collective shared intention, and thereby maintaining the integrity of their physical bodies within that space. The practice of safe space as a dignity space creates entailment relationships that can then promote characteristics like participation and engagement to encourage deeper learning (Ben-Porath, 2016) at the submapping for the positionality of knowledge, fear, risk and uncertainty. Understood this way, the practice of safe space as dignity space shares

remarkable similarities to the understanding of safe space from the 1960s and 1970s described earlier in this chapter.

However, Callan also notes that dignity space can be misunderstood by students when they are focusing on their subjective experience and feelings of being disrespected or humiliated by its practice:

> As a bald empirical matter, a student who gets something less than A+ in my class might sincerely feel that I have thereby humiliated them. But that could not license the inference that I denied anyone the dignity safety they rightly expect in my classroom. So even if indignation and distress induced by another's conduct are often passed off as humiliation, that is not necessarily so in any sense that holds moral interest (2016, p. 67).

While not holding moral interest to a philosopher of education, this sense and feeling of humiliation (consequences of emotional uncertainty and risk), can lead students to conflate "dignity safety" with their desire for an "intellectual safety" free from critique or challenge to their pre-existing beliefs or self-concept. A safe space as a place for intellectual safety creates entailment relationships that can discourage learning by promoting characteristics such as smugness, indifference, and lack of effort by students (Ben-Porath, 2016). Intellectual safety may, this way, serve as an impediment to thinking and learning. Therefore, this intellectual safety represents a mistaken understanding of the mapping for safe space.

Moreover, the conflation of dignity safety with intellectual safety can lead students (and some educators) to make demands for the prohibition and policing of relationships amongst participants which represent microaggressions of the unwanted repressive social, moral, and intellectual norms that they expect safe space to be free from. Microaggressions, when persistent, can progressively lead to or be evidence of a lack of respect toward an individual's right to membership in the group. Callan points out when microaggressions are continual, "the aggregate evidence is such that humiliation is clearly evident" (2016, p. 68) and

can warrant the need for further discussion by the group, and perhaps their active policing by members.

However, these microaggressions which are representative of the repressive social, moral, and intellectual norms found beyond the safe space (Callan, 2016; Foucault, 1978; Harris, 2015), need to be recognized as ever present. Therefore, I believe that a singular instance should be seen as an opportunity for an inclusive dialogue and discussion of these norms, not an immediate cause for censure or expulsion from the safe space.

Safe space in education operates in a similar manner to the realities highlighted by Callan, Foucault, and Harris: a class can never be entirely free from the repressive social, moral, and intellectual norms found beyond the educational setting (nor should it). My discussion of the theoretical development of safe space since the 1960s shows that it is in fact neither simple nor clear. I would argue that a truly safe space in education is a practical impossibility both for educators that strive for it, and for the students that demand it. Part of the reason for this impossibility results from a confusion between safe space as a communicative means to an educationally worthwhile end, and safe space as an educationally worthwhile end lacking any clear shared educational intention toward learning.

As Callan writes, students, educators and administrators face challenges due to the lack of clarity regarding what is meant by a safe space. This lack of clarity has resulted in many unintended ideas being transmitted through the usage of the metaphor amongst those in higher education. Callan notes these unintended ideas (which I have developed in this work as submappings), which need further consideration through a more philosophically grounded definition of safe space. Specifically, while pointing out that practicing safe space as a dignity space is perhaps the most reasonable intention for educators to adopt, Callan notes two submappings which have created difficulties, and which I have endeavoured to address in this work's mapping of the safe space of my class.

The first problematic submapping is an individual's subjective experience of dignity in a safe space (their relative positionality). Callan's example of a student feeling humiliated (their emotional response) when receiving a poor grade can result in students understanding safe space as needing to promote an intellectual safety which serves no educational value. Second, the mistaken demand for absolute intellectual safety results in the prohibition and policing of any intentional or accidental microaggression that a student may interpret as questioning their right to membership with the group in that safe space. The necessary uncertainty and risk of learning becomes conflated with or deemed equivalent to physical safety, resulting in calls for exclusion.

This second submapping is particularly problematic because it runs entirely counter to the theoretical development of safe space, which suggests that a safe space is not immune to the repressive norms beyond it, as these norms are present in the infinite relationships amongst members within and beyond the safe space. Further, prohibiting all practices causing discomfort in a safe space, rather than considering them moments for developing deeper understanding, does not fulfil any useful end when these same practices are encountered again beyond that safe space. As a second-generation Canadian and a person of colour whose first language was not English, who is writing this work about safe space in English, it does not escape my notice, nor my own discomfort, that the repressive norms of colonialism in India and Canada are present in the stylistic choices and narrative voice that I have utilized in this writing. These repressive norms are omnipresent and impossible to fully exclude from a safe space. Moreover, any educationally worthwhile understanding of safe space, to say nothing of its practical educational application, must account for and contend with these norms in the safe space of the classroom. This attempt to address the norms when they are encountered in the safe space of my class, is what demonstrates that my class is indeed a safe space.

The mistaken belief that a practice of safe space means the exclusionary policing of its members may, in turn, encourage the mistaken belief that any

practice of safe space is a zero-sum endeavor; because the promotion of one individual's safety means the demotion of someone else's safety. As Callan explains:

> We understand space, or rather spaces, as including or not including; as inclusionary or exclusionary: hence adding more "safety" means taking away something else (2016, p. 70).

This mistaken zero-sum belief is often couched in the arguments that safe space places undue limits on academic freedom or free speech (Ben-Porath, 2016; 2017; 2018; Callan, 2016; Chemerinsky & Gillman, 2017; Deresiewicz, 2017; Harris, 2015; Mayo, 2016; Weigel, 2016). However, the submapping present in many of these arguments is that in the space of higher education or the greater community, academic freedom or free speech are finite, so there is only so much to go around (i.e., zero-sum).

This zero-sum submapping is not one that comes from an understanding of safety, but instead where that safety is metaphorically located, or as part of, space. This is an understanding of space, specifically safe space, which I have addressed through this work's mapping of Leibnizian relational and Newtonian absolute space in the safe space of my class. As space is relational and infinite, it means that a safe space represents a never-ending condition that can be constantly worked toward but never truly achieved, serving as a means toward some other worthwhile yet infinite educational end, such as the raising of consciousness. In exploring the philosophical meaning of space and safety, developing a more complete definition for safe space at the level of the word, at the level of the statement, and now beginning this consideration at the level of some educational discourses, the mapping presented in this section of the work is useful for dispelling misunderstandings about the safe space of my or someone else's class.

In the next chapter, I will offer fellow educators a greater appreciation of how safe space functions at the level of educational discourse and practice. This will entail a deeper exploration of the distinction between those that experience

safety (the students), those responsible for establishing it (the teachers), and the educational institutions that feel responsible for guaranteeing the safety of both. That discussion will explore how each of these positionalities (student, teacher and institution) mistakenly operate under quite different understandings of safe space, imbued with a Newtonian inheritance. A great irony is that students demand safety, but often do not understand they are also responsible for co-constituting it. Teachers may believe that they alone establish safety to enable learning for their students. Educational institutions may behave as if safety is something that can be established in advance of the teacher-student learning relationship, and can somehow be maintained irrespective of the uncomfortable feelings that occur during the experience of learning. I therefore will offer educators an understanding of a Leibnizian-influenced safe space that is co-constituted by students, the teacher, and the institution. I will then discuss pedagogical possibilities and practices related to the mapping's elements of positionality and evaluation, which educators can pursue in their own classrooms.

Chapter 4.

What can we learn when considering safe space at the level of current educational discourses?

The purpose of this chapter is to consider safe space as developed through its mapping in the previous chapter of this work, at the level of practice that is situated in current educational discourses around safe space, and equity, diversity, and inclusion in higher education. This discussion will utilize three examples from my own practice as a teacher in the Canadian higher education system, which have all served to motivate and hone the philosophical interrogation of safe space undertaken in this writing.

In the conclusion of the last chapter, two challenges were identified which contribute to misunderstandings of safe space in education. These two challenges are the competing Newtonian and Leibnizian inheritances regarding our conception of space that result in two fundamentally different views of safe space in education, and how the differing positionalities of students, teachers, and institutions can result in differing expectations for the purpose, creation, and maintenance of safe space. The three examples that follow are therefore exemplary of current educational discourses around safe space. They are shared to better interrogate how the two challenges just mentioned can be addressed, to gain an understanding of safe space that is more useful for educational practice.

4.1. The conceptual metaphor: Safe Space of My Class

When I began this work, I was curious to understand what exactly was being imparted with my promise to students that our class would be a safe space. I began with the recognition that the “safe space of my class” was a metaphoric description of my intentions for the teaching and learning I wanted for my classroom. For me, safe space represented intentions metaphorically, and was reminiscent of a quote from Peter Strawson (1919-2006) which I had

encountered during a discussion of the educational utility of philosophy and metaphysics during my first semester of doctoral studies:

> Descriptive metaphysics is content to describe the actual structure of our thought about the world, revisionary metaphysics is concerned to produce a better structure (1959, p. 9).

In the text *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics* (1959), Strawson noted that human beings make sense of the world utilizing their own body's senses, which are then compared to other persons, spaces, times, and causation to derive understanding. The result of this comparison is the ability to derive meaning, reference, comparison, and truth from our senses. Broadly speaking, Strawson referred to the work of Aristotle and Kant as descriptive metaphysics (I would position Newton here as well), because their philosophy was often marked by its attempt to describe the meaning of a sense experience.

Alternatively, Strawson described the work of Descartes and Leibniz as revisionary metaphysics because their philosophy was characterized by attempts to revise the existing meanings given to sense experience by reconsidering the nature of the initial experiences. Revisionary metaphysics is a general categorization which draws upon the motivation for philosophical inquiry, to describe an existing situation or to offer revisions for change. I considered the safe space of my class functioning to create possibilities to influence positive change and learning for my students. Moreover, the now-central discourse of equity, diversity, and inclusion in modern education can also be understood for the revisionary possibilities it aims to engender. These discussions acknowledge there is no singular conception of equity in education, especially with the diversity of identity and experience represented by current student bodies. Instead, equity represents an unrealized ideal that is educationally and socially worthwhile.

The revisionary possibilities envisioned by contemporary discourse around safe space offered me the motivation to engage in a thorough interrogation of how metaphor functions in common language and thinking (Richards, 1936; Beardsley, 1962; Black, 1962), which led in turn to an exploration of how we

could consider and understand the experience of safe space at the level of the word, at the level of the statement, and preliminarily, at the level of educational discourse. Drawing upon Paul Ricoeur's interactive theory of metaphor (1975) and subsequent work by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980; 1999) to map how conceptual metaphors function in language, I undertook an analysis of the respective histories of the words "safe" and "space" that contribute to the statement "safe space of my class".

Since safety can be understood as a quality or description of some other state, I began with an exploration of the modern understanding of space at the level of the word (Ricoeur, 1975), how this first influenced the experience of space, and how this contributed to a metaphorical understanding of the experience of the communicative context in a class.

I explained how this modern understanding of space at the level of the word was drawn from competing theories of space first explicitly located in a 1717 debate (Alexander, 1956) between the ideas of Newton, which described space as absolute and independent from the objects within it, and the ideas of Leibniz, which described space as infinite, and wholly constituted by the relationships between objects.

Through this philosophical debate, I began to map (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; 1999; Johnson, 2008) the experience of space to the experience of the communicative context of my class, and in so doing was able to explain how our modern understanding of space at the level of the word embodies inheritances from Newtonian space. However, when considering space at the level of the statement, I argued that it embodied relational inheritances from Leibnizian space – most notably in the practices between subjects/objects that co-constituted the space of a class.

The result of this inquiry into the history of the word space was a modern understanding of the experience of space, which includes a blending of inheritances from both Newtonian and Leibnizian theories. This understanding

was then blended with the results of a further inquiry into the experience of safety. Together the results of the two inquiries were mapped to the communicative context of my class, at the level of the word and at the level of the statement “safe space”. I explained how the modern understanding of safety does not exist in absolutes (present or absent) in a space, but instead has a gradient-like or fuzzy quality that permits a near-infinite range of experience between extremes of safety and danger.

The experience of safety is, according to this understanding, relationally interpreted based upon an individual’s positionality within the communicative context of a class. Through the mapping of this experience of safety, it became clear that safe space embodies relational inheritances from Leibnizian space. However, a source of conflict and misunderstanding during the use of the term “safe” at the level of the statement arose from the substitution of Newtonian inheritances into its meaning. Such substitutions seek to establish invariant rules or policies, above and independent from the safety (or lack of it) experienced by individuals. Through a careful mapping of what was meant by the experience of safe space to the experience of the communicative context of my class at the level of the statement, I argued that “safe space” embodied relational inheritances from Leibnizian space in the practices and relationships between individuals who co-constituted the safety of the class space. This analysis resulted in the following mapping:

Table 4.1-1: The Safe Space of My Class conceptual metaphor

Source Domain [Experience of Safe Space]		Target Domain [Experience of the Communicative Context in My Class]
Shared Location	→	Distinguished by a shared educational intention in/at a specific place
Temporary, possibly fuzzy boundary that distinguishes the experience of the location from all other locations	→	Establishes legitimate and relevant communication for a shared educational intention
Possibility for movement	→	Learning and change is considered as a gradient-like understanding between legitimate and relevant, and illegitimate and irrelevant communication
Integrity of the physical body free from pain or the fear of pain	→	Actions and communications are judged as legitimate and relevant based upon the maintenance or the reinforcement of the right to ongoing membership
Positionality of the physical body to fear, risk, and uncertainty	→	Specific positionalities influence the experiences of fear, risk, and uncertainty from communication in a gradient-like fashion. The stronger these experiences the greater the potential impediments to thinking and learning
Recognition and evaluation of relative positionalities	→	Make the attempt (reflection, reposition, or revision) to understand the experience and contribution of others engaged in the same shared educational intention.

Central to this mapping was a relational and interconnected view of space and safety that draws heavily from Leibniz's writing about how monads derive

knowledge, which I extended into an educational setting with understanding being co-constituted by everyone participating in a space. If one accepts that all knowledge is relational, then instead of judging contributions to classroom discourse as relevant or irrelevant, we shift instead to embracing a mode of thinking where I and my students would have to consider how others' claims to knowledge are *potentially* relevant to the current discussion. Attempting to consider the potential relevance of the others' contributions would represent a type of epistemic generosity and humility (Hill, 2020; Levinas, 2006; Derrida, 2000; Butler, 2005; 2006), by acknowledging that there could potentially be more than one type of legitimate and valid knowledge.

The commitment to epistemic generosity and humility would not imply that I must immediately (or for that matter, ever) accept others' claims to knowledge. Rather, it means that while in the safe space of the classroom I would practice the generosity to *make an attempt* to reflect on how another person's knowledge *could* be deemed relevant to the current discussion. If this reflection then led to a possible action, I would be obliged to make a reasonable attempt to reposition myself and my thinking, to move toward a version of the knowledge asserted by others. However, this reflection could also result in a determination that no reasonable course of action is required to substantiate or incorporate this knowledge.

Rejecting a student's claims to relevant knowledge would be acceptable so long as I had made an honest attempt to understand the knowledge claimed. The novelty of this way of practicing safe space is that it involves an ongoing reflective process that can awaken us from what we have accepted as normal, and what we have considered as legitimate versus illegitimate knowledge. The primary differences introduced by the Leibnizian inheritances (compared to Newtonian inheritances) would be the necessity of constantly reflecting on the current conditions of the class space as they relate to my current positionality, and then repositioning my thinking and communication to influence the best possible conditions for learning.

Having considered safe space at the level of the word, at the level of statement, and what it could mean in educational practice, I began an examination of the educational discourse within which the term is utilized (Ricoeur, 1975; Callan, 2016). It is here, at the level of educational discourse, where the clashing inheritances from Newtonian space and Leibnizian space are the most problematic. This is because these inheritances contribute to fundamentally different views of safe space in education.

First, the Newtonian inheritances contribute to an understanding of safe space in education that establishes rules or policies that precede, and are independent from, the experience of the individuals within the space. These Newtonian inheritances establish an absolute space that is "bounded" not so much by any physical limits (since I could hold my class outside on a beautiful day and still have it be "my classroom"), but instead by the thinking that rules, policies, and laws can be cultivated at a level that is independent of, and seemingly encompassing of, the subjects, objects and contexts that embody and create possibilities for learning in my classroom.

The result of these Newtonian inheritances is that some come to believe safe space to be capable of formulation *a priori*: that students are entitled to a class space safe in some unambiguous sense, irrespective of who is taking the class, what the class is about, and what is going on in the world outside the classroom. This *a priori* safe space becomes something that institutions feel responsible for guaranteeing, and teachers are made to feel responsible for creating and maintaining, with students feeling little responsibility other than reaping its benefits.

Second, this Newtonian *a priori* understanding of safe space is then interpreted by the relative positionality of institutions, teachers, and students in very different ways. For institutions of higher education, *a priori* understanding of safe space can be revealed in the educational discourses about the use and

operation of language on college and university campuses (Behrent, 2019; Ben-Porath, 2016; 2017; 2018).

For students, this *a priori* understanding of safe space is shown in the discourses of students feeling betrayed when the promises for a safe space (which they may feel little responsibility for establishing themselves), are not fulfilled by their teachers or the institution (cf. the Yale Halloween costume example). Finally, for the teachers, this *a priori* understanding of safe space is understood as being unrealistic in anything other than the most superficial sense, and instead located in the educational discourses focused on equitable, diverse, and inclusive pedagogical practices.

The remainder of this chapter will take up a discussion of three examples from my own educational practice that can be seen to be representative of how the mistaken Newtonian inheritance of an *a priori* understanding of safe space can be encountered in the classroom, and how it can result in very different expectations for that safe space based upon the Leibnizian understanding of relative positionality.

4.2. Practicing safe space: Institutions and Students

Six months before commencing my doctoral studies I experienced a severe concussion, which compounded the series of mild to severe concussions that I had suffered through my teens and twenties. The lingering effect of this last concussion was that I had to learn how to cope with a new reality of cognitive and emotional disabilities while undertaking my initial coursework, learning to teach for the first time, working full-time evenings to pay bills, and managing the complex healthcare needs of my elderly parents. This is all to say that I was quite busy and very forgetful, and I sometimes shared ideas out loud that I had not yet completely thought through.

During one such instance in a doctoral-level educational theory seminar, I was discussing Martin Heidegger's work regarding how language shapes

thinking. A fellow student suggested that I was engaged in nothing more than a type of intellectual masturbation rather than the important work of considering the effect of these ideas on classroom practice.

Having it pointed out that I was perhaps overly engaged in ethereal considerations while my peers were interested in discussing implementation in their respective practices was nothing new for me. However, my fellow student's choice of language, perhaps due to its vulgar nature or its undertones questioning the relevance of my contributions to the class discussion, silenced my participation. As I looked to the teacher of the seminar for any sign of support, I encountered a blank face which I interpreted as indifference to my discomfort. I stayed silent for the remainder of that seminar and the following.

One benefit of my cognitive and emotional disabilities (stemming from the concussions) was a very short memory; I quickly forgot about this experience in the seminar, and instead was overwhelmed by the myriad other issues and responsibilities I was attempting to juggle. Throughout it all, I found my teaching (first as a teaching assistant and then as an instructor) a place of solace. Teaching allowed me to be entirely present for my students, and momentarily ignore my other concerns. It was calming, almost relaxing, because I felt I was in control of my classroom and providing a safe educational space within which my students could thrive. I began work at other regional universities and colleges, and slowly, my teaching became how I coped with my world.

During this period of the mid-2010s, educational discourse related to higher education began to focus on the question of how to be more inclusive of an increasingly diverse student body that consisted of growing numbers of historically under- or un-represented identities (Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005; Ahmed, 2007; Henry, James, Li, Kobayashi, Smith, Ramos, & Enakshi, 2017; Hunt, 2018), while simultaneously trying to balance a desire to maintain open and free expression of ideas and speech (Chemerinsky & Gillman, 2017;

Deresiewicz, 2017; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015; 2018; Weigel, 2016; Whittington, 2018).

This desire to be more inclusive while maintaining open dialogue for all students resulted in many institutions of higher education strongly encouraging, and even mandating instructors to prominently add text or a statement to our course syllabi indicating our commitment to inclusion and free expression in the teaching and learning of the safe space of our classrooms (Armstrong, 2011; Branch, Stein, Huynh, & Lazzara, 2018; Carnegie Mellon University, 2019; Fuentes, Zelaya, & Madsen, 2021). At the time nothing seemed contradictory about these two intentions, which I readily included on my course syllabi and spoke about during class.

Then one afternoon in the summer of 2015, I found a student I will call Jo-Ann sitting outside my office waiting to speak with me. In the spring and summer semesters of 2015 I was teaching several undergraduate education courses when I happened to have Jo-Ann as a student for two consecutive semesters. Jo-Ann was a remarkable woman who would, in 2018, become a high school teacher. But in 2015, she had been several years away from school, was working part-time outside of school hours, and considering what she wanted to focus on in her third and fourth years of study.

Jo-Ann was a curious and insightful student, always wanting to learn more about others and why they believed what they did. She pushed her fellow students to share their thinking through positive reinforcement and an openness to understand where they were coming from. With her participation, class discussions were always lively and fruitful, something many other students communicated in their assignments. Then, early in our second semester of classes together, Jo-Ann went quiet. I might call on her during class discussions to share her thoughts, but without that prompt, she seemed to retreat inside herself. I repeatedly invited her to meet me during my office hours to discuss her thoughts, and on several occasions even asked if there was something wrong

which I could help resolve. Finally, near the end of the semester I came across Jo-Ann waiting for me before my office hours. She asked if she could have a meeting, and I invited her in.

As we talked over the next half hour, she explained why she had gone quiet in class, and I was both surprised and shocked to learn it was because of me. She produced our course syllabi, which included a revised version of my statement about the inclusive, educationally safe space I hoped to foster with the class on behalf of the institution in which we were members. She had highlighted and circled portions. She looked it over once again for herself, then handed it to me and said:

> …you did not protect me during our class discussion early in the semester when several students were criticizing my opinion; you promised a safe space for all your students, but when I felt uncomfortable, under attack, and unsafe in our class, you did nothing (Jo-Ann, personal communication, July 2015).

I felt a knot of recognition throughout my body after Jo-Ann shared her sentiment, and it never really went away after that meeting. I explained that our classroom was a safe space for teaching and learning, but that did not necessarily mean that all discomfort, which may be a necessary catalyst for learning, could or even should be removed from the class. Moreover, I explained that it is not the teacher's responsibility to protect students from intellectual discomfort, but rather to prepare students for encounters with this type of discomfort after they have left the relative safety of the classroom. As we spoke, I empathized with the profound sense of confusion, betrayal, and disappointment that Jo-Ann shared with me, because these were all feelings that I had experienced myself as a student during my doctoral studies and countless times prior.

This example from my own practice serves to emphasize how the *a priori* understanding of safe space can lead to impediments for student learning. Additionally, the positionality of the student, the teacher, and the institution all

contribute to differing interpretations of what safe space can and should mean. In the ensuing discussion, I will consider how this *a priori* understanding is influenced by differing educational discourses, and how in turn the positionality of the institution compared to the positionality of students can lead to radically different expectations for the practice of a safe space. Consideration of the positionality of the teacher will be taken up in the subsequent examples and discussion in this chapter.

4.2.1. *A priori* safe space in the practice of Institutions and Students

When we consider the similarity of Jo-Ann's experience in the previous example and my own previous experiences, we can recognize that our presence and membership within the class, and in turn our participation in its discussions, was being questioned through the statements of other students. From the positionality of the student in the example, a promise or guarantee about their educational experience being safe and free from any perceived harm had been made by the institution, and now it fell upon the teacher to maintain this safe space. This safety, it was understood, could be accomplished by the active monitoring and policing of language such as microaggressions.

Microaggressions entered the lexicon of educational discourse in the mid-2010s as a description of actions or language which convey specific cultural, social, or political repressive norms (Foucault, 1978; Harris, 2015; Freeman & Weekes Schroer; 2020). Work by intersectional scholars (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 1990) and those interested in meaning and discourse (Ricoeur, 1975; Foucault, 1978; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) have noted that all communication, no matter where its takes place, invariably reproduces these repressive norms.

Often, as is the case with microaggressions, the reproductions of repression are indirect, subtle, unintentional, and often perceptible to only a select group who have been historically marginalized (Ahmed, 2012; Galanes, 2017; Nittle; 2018; Torino, Rivera, Capodilupo, Nadal, & Wing Sue, 2018). However, the *a priori* understanding of safe space as a guarantee to safety has

resulted in attempts to locate and prohibit the reproduction of these repressive norms, most often in the form of policing specific speech and expressions.

Opponents of these attempts at the policing of microaggressions, such as University of Toronto psychology professor Jordan Peterson, claim that such policing often takes the form of institutional language policies, teachers' classroom practices relating to legitimate and illegitimate language, or students policing the language use of their peers, their teachers, and even the institution (Marcoccia, 2018). Peterson and others argue that the belief that it is possible and necessary to inhibit the reproduction of repression that is indirect, subtle, and most often unintentional on the part of the speaker is incredibly problematic, because it in no way can account for the countless positionalities of those taking part in a classroom, which will change with each new semester. I will discuss why this might be the case.

First, the reproduction of repression may very well represent an individual invoking their dominance and privilege over others (Ahmed, 2012). In such situations, it can be pedagogically worthwhile for the teacher to question the source of this historical and structural dominance and privilege, as represented by the microaggression, using it as a teachable moment that can foster greater reflection. In this way, the primary motivation of the teacher toward the microaggression is pedagogical, and any attempt to address it will take place within the educational relationship with students. However, should the teacher adopt the institution's primarily administrative motivation with regard to the microaggression, the active policing of it without the care to distinguish the individual speaker from the idea, and without the care to address the historical and structural power reproduced with the idea, can result in one individual feeling ostracized and all others in attendance understanding only that there are strict rules regarding safety from ideas that need to be diligently enforced.

Second, the policing of microaggressions cannot account for the multitude of positionalities present and absent in the classroom. Not all students may be

affected by the microaggression in the same way, as the repressive norm this specific speech or expression represents functions within a specific cultural, social, or political discourse. With the diversity of current student bodies, some speech or expression in the classroom will undoubtedly repress some past, current, or future student. Hence, the policing of microaggressions at the institutional level or the class level runs into the practical problem of how to establish under what conditions this reproduction of some repressive norm warrants prohibition.

Considered simply, how many individuals need to feel repressed for the institution or teacher to act? How repressed do they need to feel? Moreover, do these individuals even have to be present in the class or the institution (i.e., someone somewhere is being repressed) to warrant action? Therefore, when we consider how microaggressions are prohibited and actively policed in some safe spaces in higher education, we have a vivid example of how the *a priori* understanding of space can lead to a false sense of what is possible to guarantee vis a vis safety.

Microaggressions are understood to be statements or actions that are representative of some repressive social, moral, or intellectual norm. They are a part of these repressive norms, but they are not the whole of these norms. Therefore, the prohibiting and policing of microaggressions, which are but a component of the whole, does not bring clarity to considering the repressive nature of the norms. Without the pedagogical opportunity to reflect on the microaggression as a part of a repressive whole, an individual cannot develop any meaningful way to mitigate their own reproduction of the repressive norm, address future instances in which they will encounter similar microaggressions, or address the larger issue of the repressive norms in life outside their schooling.

An example of this policing of potentially offensive language can be found in the many critiques of safe space in education, made on the grounds of its curtailment of academic freedom or free speech (Chemerinsky & Gillman, 2017;

Deresiewicz, 2017; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015; 2018; Weigel, 2016; Whittington, 2018). Almost all these critiques utilize language to convey the idea of safety, academic freedom, or free speech as finite, scarce commodities. There is only so much safety to go around, it is implied; should the safe space offer traditionally marginalized student groups greater safety, it entails that those student groups in the traditional majority must give up or be stripped of some of their safety, and in turn, their right to free speech and expression. The invitation these critiques offer is to promote a type of virtuous disdain for the forced metaphoric redistribution of safety through classroom policing.

However, utilizing the language of scarcity to describe freedom, speech, or safety obscures several problematic implications of an *a priori* understanding of safe space. First, this *a priori* understanding results not so much in the scarcity of a finite or absolute amount of safety or freedom, but instead an inability to recognize that any experience of freedom or safety is co-constituted in a Leibnizian sense.

Freedom and safety are not binarily present or absent, but instead contingent on a vast array of relationships. The language of scarcity can therefore obscure the experience of freedom and safety being relationally co-constituted and in constant flux. This results in a scarcity of educational possibility, not of freedom, speech, or safety. A Newtonian *a priori* understanding establishes a singular bounded space which must be uniform throughout. If we consider free society as the bounded space, then this necessitates all places in society being free, which results in the necessity for all communication in society being free, regardless the context or purpose.

This free bounded space is not able to acknowledge and denote a space within itself that serves some other intention, such as learning. A pedagogical free space would have to operate differently to communicatively enact its intentions, but it cannot exist within the free society's space under a Newtonian *a priori* understanding. This *a priori* understanding results in the dichotomous belief

that there is either individual freedom or pedagogical purpose, rather than the necessary tension and trade-off between the Newtonian and Leibnizian understandings that is continually re-evaluated.

A close analysis of almost all the previously cited critiques of safe space allows for an important conclusion: the institutional and primarily administrative *a priori* understanding of safe space as a guarantee to safety is at cross purposes with a teacher's Leibnizian-influenced understanding of safe space as learning characterized by the experience of discomfort from the unsettling of students' previous understanding. Attempts by an institution to administratively guarantee safety for all members of the community can therefore result in the curtailment of the pedagogical possibilities and practices required for transformational learning to take place. This *a priori* Newtonian-influenced understanding of safe space is an administratively constructed space.

The administrative space is Newtonian in the sense that it is set above, independent, and indifferent to the objects within it: the teachers, students, and their learning relationships. The result is a theoretical space devoid of the recognition of multiple positionalities and the pedagogical possibilities their acknowledgement can enable for transformative learning. In this very limited and pedagogical sense, the language of scarcity offered by the critiques of safe space can focus attention on the implications from the problematic *a priori* understanding of safe space utilized administratively by institutions.

Critiques which focus upon the problematic *a priori* understanding of safe space and the discursive critiques it has spawned, resulted in many institutions of higher education responding in two interesting ways.

First, some institutions have reaffirmed their commitment to free expression and speech in their teaching and learning, most notably with the development of the Chicago Principles in 2014 by the University of Chicago (Ben-Porath, 2016; 2018), and their subsequent adoption by colleges and universities across North America (Ben-Porath, 2017). Appointed by both the

president and the provost in July 2014, the Committee on Freedom of Expression was tasked with articulating the institution's historical commitment to debate as expressed by its past presidents:

> '…in light of recent events nationwide that have tested institutional commitments to free and open discourse'. The Committee's charge was to draft a statement 'articulating the University's overarching commitment to free, robust, and uninhibited debate and deliberation among all members of the University's community' (Stone, Bertrand, Olinto, Siegler, Strauss, Warren, & Woodward, 2014, ¶1).

Exemplary of a specific and singular positionality, those who could ascend to leadership in a prominent institution of higher education, the report offers examples of an *a priori* understanding of a safe space for learning that does not acknowledge and therefore cannot account for the modern diversity of positionalities present in higher education. Instead, the Committee's report assumes that all teachers and learners *can* experience teaching and learning with a similar sense of safety, fear, risk and uncertainty, and can therefore contribute as equals to all debates or discussions. The Committee's report outlined that the institution's:

> fundamental commitment is to the principle that debate or deliberation may not be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most members of the University community to be offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong-headed (2014, ¶10).

Once submitted and accepted by the president of the University of Chicago, this public commitment came to be known as the Chicago Principles. However, this reaffirmation of free expression and speech was established through an extremely legalistic and formal framework. The framework is buttressed by rules and policies which cannot account for the intricacies of the relationships between teachers and students during learning:

> They fail to recognize that higher education institutions must address the current tensions brewing under the heading of 'free speech' – brought on by students, faculty members and outside forces – by reconsidering, and possibly shifting, a host of practices in

> classrooms, dorms, clubs, and administrations in ways that would differ across campuses. Those tensions cannot simply be resolved by endorsing a one-size-fits-all statement" (Ben-Porath, 2018, ¶4).

Ben-Porath points out that the development of safe space through rules and policies that establish the protection for all speech:

> …comes at the expense of the reasonable demands from people on campuses who argue that free speech that protects the expression of biased views creates an unequal burden that they are made to carry…[and] if an institutional endorsement of the principles is the end of the conversation about free speech, it undermines the ability of that college or university to fulfill its teaching mission (Ben-Porath, 2018, ¶10).

The intended meaning for safe space in a class setting as an inclusive practice to promote learning was thereby stripped of these educational considerations. Instead, from the viewpoint of those who argued for the inclusion of any and all ideas or thinking, no matter their relevance, plausibility, or lack of logical consistency, "safe space", "microaggressions" and "trigger warnings" were simply a new lexicon for limiting expression and speech.

The second way in which many institutions have responded to critiques of safe space was by affirming principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion as core commitments within their institutional mandates (Government of Canada, 2019). Such commitments recognize the need for greater inclusion of those historically excluded populations, and the growing diversity of positionality within institutions of higher learning stemming from the changing demographics of multicultural societies. For many of these increasingly diverse students and their professors, who represented or wanted to teach about historically excluded or silenced positionalities, it was more important to continue growing these inclusive and diverse practices than to maintain the absolute need for free speech that had historically privileged one positionality to the detriment of all others.

The understanding that institutions of higher education have a responsibility to foster inclusivity and acceptance of others in a shared and diverse society for all (Waldron, 2012) has resulted in the acknowledgement that

some speech, specifically of ideas that denigrate or inhibit the learning of some members of the community, are not relevant or necessary in the learning space. Instead, learning to see society as not just existing for oneself and one's own ideas allows for a shared experience of learning where we must attempt to make room for others' ideas.

A diversity of positionality and opinion had always existed in traditional debates of free expression and free speech in higher education. However, diversity had previously been considered an afterthought, if it was considered at all. An example of this from my own experience during my bachelor's degree in English Literature was the inclusion at the end of the semester of topics such as Feminist, Postcolonial, Marxist, or LGBTQ+ perspectives. When time permitted, the professor could turn their attention to these important topics; but they were always presented as alternatives to the central and primary way to understand the topic: an addendum to be considered only after understanding from the unmarked default male, heterosexual, Anglo-Saxon, white, colonial-settler positionality was first achieved.

For those who see safe space as a curtailment of the safety of some at the expense of others (a la Newton), there is a lack of critical consideration (some less generous accounts might refer to this as a lack of care or empathy) of the power and effect of a student's actions on their classmates. Here there is an understanding of free expression and free speech being set apart and above the subjects and objects in the space of a class. Thus, expression and speech are not seen as an interconnected relationship between the individuals in a class (a la Leibniz), but instead as rules that govern the boundaries of any permissible relationship between these individuals. What is relevant between these individuals for the purposes of a shared intention, in the form of what can and cannot be said, is not a primary consideration.

4.2.2. Considering positionality for Institutions versus Students

When we consider the positionality of the institution and students in the previous example, we can better see how the *a priori* understanding of safe space and the Leibnizian relationships within can result in radically different expectations.

I have argued that institutions of higher education actively endorse and encourage both students and teachers to take a static, Newtonian view of safe space that exists before, during, and after any educational relationships and communication that may take place in a class. The institution and its officials feel not only a right, but an administrative responsibility to guarantee this safe space for both teachers and students. Yet at the same time the institution is not present in the classroom, nor is it one of the interlocutors in classroom discourse. Only its mandates are being heard there. Generally speaking, institutions appear deaf to the realities of learning requiring some risk on the part of students and teachers, and their educational experience is considered within the guaranteed Newtonian safe space. The institution is indifferent to the evolving intentions of the educational discourse in that space.

The students who hold a static, Newtonian view of safe space enter an educational experience disregarding how they might co-constitute the safe space themselves. Instead, students are given to believe it is the responsibility of the institution (and by extension, the teacher in the classroom as its representative) to maintain the guarantee of a safe space. The students' lack of responsibility toward the creation and maintenance of a safe space is central to this Newtonian view, because the space is assumed to operate independent of the teacher's and the students' shared educational intention and their communicative relationships.

For both Jo-Ann and I, our positionalities had little bearing on maintaining the teacher's guarantee that the class was a safe space. It was not our responsibility to consider the ideas of classmates and to make the attempt to understand how their comments could be relevant to our own. Instead, we

believed it was the responsibility of the teacher and institution to moderate and curate all discussions, or to police and prohibit certain discussions that may threaten the relative safety of some students.

4.3. Practicing safe space: Institutions and Teachers

Since 2018 I have been working as an instructor in an English department at a small for-profit college in British Columbia, Canada. Relying in part on my undergraduate degree in English Literature, as well as my teaching of undergraduate academic literacy and writing courses primarily to international students speaking and writing English as an Additional Language, this experience has been both challenging and rewarding. I have grown as a teacher from the many unique challenges that I have encountered in my teaching. I have also drawn upon my graduate background in educational theory and my work on this thesis to begin voicing my concerns during department and college-wide discussions about the appropriateness of the texts that comprise our course required readings.

During our meetings, our department head has continually reminded teachers to practice care with the texts we choose to include on our required reading lists. Part of the department head's motivation for driving this discussion is the awareness of how quickly a student's (or their parent's) critique of the inclusion of a specific author, reading or idea they find objectionable can become magnified through social media, and result in a public relations nightmare for the college's administration.

Without the contextual benefit of the pedagogical reasons for the inclusion of what might be considered objectionable material on our course reading lists, the implicit message to the teachers in the department is to affirm a commitment to a safe space for all students. This is accomplished by pre-emptively censoring your reading material to minimize unwanted critique, before the institution unilaterally mandates the banning of specific authors, readings, or ideas.

This example from my own practice serves to emphasize how the *a priori* understanding of safe space can lead to instances of a teacher's pedagogical decisions being scrutinized by an institution concerned with appearing committed to maintaining a safe space for all students. Additionally, the positionality of the student (and perhaps their parent), the teacher, and the institution all contribute to differing interpretations of what safe space can and should mean when it relates to the discomfort that some materials and ideas may elicit. In the following discussion, I will consider how this *a priori* understanding is influenced by differing educational discourses, and how in turn the positionality of the institution compared to the positionality of the teacher can lead to radically different expectations for the practice of a safe space.

4.3.1. *A priori* safe space in the practice of Institutions and Teachers

There is nothing new about the need to continually revise reading lists and other resources in curriculum, especially when trying to reflect personal interests and positionality as well as evolving cultural and societal beliefs or attitudes. Such revisions are a common reality for teachers of English in higher education, perhaps more so than those in other fields of study due to literature's status as being representative of certain historic cultural beliefs and attitudes (Eagleton, 1990; Fish, 1980; Foucault, 1978; Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000).

The choice of what to keep and what to revise in the curriculum is influenced by what scholars in the field of study and the teacher believe to be educationally worthwhile. These judgements often result in the utilization of resources that are historically relevant to learning about a specific topic, but no longer representative of current beliefs and attitudes (Faust, 2020). As an example, many teachers including myself have been working through curricular revisions in our treatment of the writings of American author William Faulkner (1905-1988) in our introductory fiction courses. Considering William Faulkner's problematic public statements and literary contributions, Faust wrote:

> We are in a time when authors' reputations are overturned, their works removed from reading lists, their achievements devalued because of their blindness on questions we now see with different eyes (2020, p. 81).

At the heart of this discourse is a practical, pedagogical issue that teachers have traditionally tried to manage within the educational context of the class: How can we teach about people or their ideas, when we know they represent beliefs and attitudes that are no longer representative of current culture or society? Whereas teachers had until recently considered curriculum revisions primarily a question of pedagogy (cf. Levinas, 1989; Chinnery, 2010), more recently efforts to balance the shared educational intention of a group with the experience of students' discomfort while learning has resulted in instances of specific authors, texts, or ideas being unilaterally banned at the institutional level in the name of an *a priori* understanding of safe space held by those institutions.

Institutions have often been responding to larger societal discourses identifying individuals or ideas as problematic, and then focusing greater attention on how they should be considered to better represent the multiple positionalities of a diverse society (cf. #MeToo movement, Black Lives Matter, Canada's recognition of its historical treatment of its Indigenous population, etc.). One specific practice which has gained attention, and some might argue notoriety (Cohen, 2021), is what has been labelled by its detractors as "cancel culture" (Gerstmann, 2021; Henderson, 2020; Italie, 2020). Drawing on the vast reach of social media and moral outrage toward some problematic beliefs, activists have pushed businesses and institutions to "cancel" their existing relationships with controversial individuals or ideas, to deprive them of a platform (Edwardson, 2021; Kurjata, 2021; McInnes, 2021).

For institutions of higher education seeking to mitigate negative social media attention which could then translate into negative news media attention, the need to protect their institutional reputations and brands have resulted in unilateral bans on specific authors, texts, ideas, or controversial guest speakers (Behrent, 2019). Seeking to guarantee and maintain an *a priori* safe space for all

members of their community, I would argue that institutions have placed the absolute safety of all students ahead of the pedagogical necessity for intellectual risk and uncertainty.

In many cases, rather than engaging with the difficult and nuanced distinctions between physical, emotional, and intellectual safety as might be undertaken by a teacher in their classroom practice, institutions err on the side of caution to guarantee the safety of all. The result is the barring of a problematic learning resource and the possible removal of worthwhile teachable moments for teachers and students.

An understanding of what these difficult and nuanced teachable moments can look like in the classroom practices of teachers can be found in the educational discourse of critical pedagogy (Apple, 2004; Fish, 1980; Freire, 1970/2000; Giroux, 1993; Illich, 1971; Kliebard, 1986; 1992; Massey, 1994; McLaren, 2016; Razack, 2002; Rist, 1973; Roth, 2019). One example, while not explicitly a text about safe space, is bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1994). hooks offers a mature discussion of what these difficult and nuanced teachable moments can look like as inclusive classroom pedagogy in increasingly diverse higher education classrooms.

At the heart of hooks' writing about inclusive pedagogy to tackle difficult and problematic ideas, is the acknowledgement of her own positionality and how this has contributed to her understanding. Specifically, hooks writes about her own experiences as a college English instructor from her positionality as a woman of colour in America, to describe the pedagogical practices she has utilized to develop her classrooms as safe spaces. Her writing offers an extremely rich, nuanced, and well-developed understanding of what safe space can look like when implemented by teachers *and* students. As a college English instructor developing my own understanding of safe space that acknowledges my own positionality, as well as those of my diverse students, I will draw upon hooks' writing to consider the pedagogical practices of the "safe space of my class".

Aspects of hooks' writing describing the act of teaching and its pedagogical practices as transgressions of boundaries align with the mapping I conducted earlier in this work. Drawing upon her own experiences of education as a black child in the segregated schooling system of the United States in the mid-twentieth century, she understood education as a relational experience during her segregated education alongside others of the same relative positionality. Alternatively, the move toward integration (desegregation) and greater diversity in schools had the contradictory result of changing her educational experience to an absolute one:

> School changed utterly with racial integration. Gone was the messianic zeal to transform our minds and beings that had characterized teachers and their pedagogical practices in our all-black school. Knowledge was suddenly about information only. It had no relation to how one lived, behaved. It was no longer connected to antiracist struggle. Bussed to white schools, we soon learned that obedience, and not a zealous will to learn, was what was expected of us. Too much eagerness to learn could easily be seen as a threat to white authority (1994, p. 3).

Drawing out hooks' interpretation of education, it is plausible to consider her relational understanding of education as the practice of freedom, and her absolute understanding of education as merely the reinforcement of domination in the form of obedience to authority (1994, p. 4).

hooks' experience took place within the boundaries of being a black student in desegrated schools which viewed her not as a full member, but instead as an interloper. Her past experiences had been marked by an excitement for learning and the possibility of transgressing the boundaries placed around her relative positionality as a black person in America, while the experience in the desegregated and diverse schools was one marked by an acknowledgement and obedience to these same boundaries. hooks therefore adopted a relational view for the potential practices she could employ in her own undergraduate classroom:

> *Excitement* in higher education was viewed as potentially disruptive of the atmosphere of seriousness assumed to be essential to the learning process. To enter classroom settings in college and universities with the will to share the desire to encourage excitement, was to transgress. Not only did it require movement beyond accepted boundaries, but excitement could not be generated without a full recognition of the fact that there could never be an absolute set agenda governing teaching practices (1994, p. 7).

For hooks, this excitement could be utilized for "expanding beyond boundaries" (1994, p. 10). This meant that the absolute boundary could be pushed, stretched, or expanded; or more relationally, this boundary could be recognized as being arbitrarily erected, temporary, and potentially fuzzy:

> Expanding beyond boundaries, it has made it possible for me to imagine and enact pedagogical practices that engage directly both the concern for interrogating biases in curricula that reinscribe systems of domination (such as racism and sexism) while simultaneously providing new ways to teach diverse groups of students (1994, p. 10).

This understanding allowed for the possibilities of growth and change, which could engender similarities to her own experience in racially segregated schools where her teachers had encouraged a "devotion to learning, to a life of the mind, [as] a counter-hegemonic act, a fundamental way to resist every strategy of white racist colonization" (hooks, 1994, p. 2). However, for hooks this possibility for change in a diverse classroom would not be isolated to students due to the shared relational experience, but instead provided teachers a similar and sometimes frightening possibility:

> …many teachers are disturbed by the political implications of a multicultural education because they fear losing control in a classroom where there is no one way to approach a subject – only multiple ways and multiple references (1994, pp. 35-36).

Further, hooks recognized how every student could experience risk and uncertainty, what she called school as "the place of ecstasy-pleasure and danger" (1994, p. 3) through the possibility of being moved and altered by learning. There was an inherent discomfort associated with learning for hooks,

and she found it fruitful to share her own discomfort as a guide, and invite students to do the same, to connect the experience of discomfort to a greater phenomenon:

> there can be, and usually is, some degree of pain involved in giving up old ways of thinking and knowing and learning new approaches. I respect that pain. And I include recognition of it now when I teach, that is to say, I teach about shifting paradigms and talk about the discomfort it can cause (1994, pp. 42-43).

Finally, the recognition and evaluation of relative positionalities and excitement for each other's ideas was for hooks how the teacher and students could *make the attempt* to reposition their existing thinking:

> As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence. Since the vast majority of students learn through conservative, traditional educational practices and concern themselves only with the presence of the professor, any radical pedagogy must insist that everyone's presence is acknowledged. That insistence cannot be simply stated. It has to be demonstrated through pedagogical practices. There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes. These contributions are resources. Used constructively they enhance the capacity of any class to create an open learning community. (1994, p. 8).

Within the discourse of critical pedagogy in education, which strives to confront difficult and problematic ideas in modern culture, hooks' writing can be appreciated for the pedagogical possibilities she shares from her own classroom as a safe space that nonetheless encompasses exciting possibilities for intellectual risk, uncertainty, and the ensuing discomfort. Rather than excising problematic learning resources as done by institutions guided by an *a priori* understanding of safe space, hooks offers us a view of how the discomfort at the heart of teaching and learning can be central to a rich, Leibnizian-influenced practice of safe space. In the next sections, I will continue to explore hooks' writing for further examples of what these practices of safe space can look like in the classroom.

4.3.2. Considering positionality for Institutions versus Teachers

In the previous example, we can better see how the *a priori* understanding of safe space by the institution and the Leibnizian relationships at the heart of the teacher's practice can result in radically different expectations.

The institution, for the sake of its reputation and brand (and the resulting financial implications to its operating budget), responds to negative attention arising out of problematic learning resources with a static, Newtonian view of safe space as either present or absent.

This view does not consider the necessity of the educational relationship between the teacher and students as they negotiate the discomfort arising from the study of a learning resource – instead, discomfort, risk, fear, and any possibility for any type of pain must be avoided to serve the administrative need of protecting its brand. The institution and its officials cannot engage in the subtle and nuanced pedagogical distinction between physical, emotional, and intellectual pain, because this distinction is rooted in the relative positionality of teachers and students who change every semester. This is a relative positionality that the institution is incapable of acknowledging due to the *a priori* understanding of safe space allowing no consideration of the near infinite gradient of perception between the presence and absence of safety.

In contrast to the institution, the teacher who is engaged in an educational relationship with students as they negotiate the discomfort inherent in learning that challenges them, cannot deny the necessary risk-taking needed for growth. The teacher can and should engage with problematic learning resources in a way that does not threaten the physical safety of students and does not *adversely* affect the emotional safety of students, but which can utilize this temporary emotional risk and discomfort to foment intellectual change. In this understanding of safe space, the teacher's responsibility is then not to *protect* the safety of students, but instead to *manage* this relative safety by deliberately interspersing

risk and uncertainty to allow meaningful learning to be co-constituted by the class.

4.4. Practicing safe space: Students and Teachers

While teaching a senior level curriculum theory and practice course to a mix of undergraduate students and pre-service teachers in the mid-2010s, I made the decision to dedicate considerable time, readings, discussion, and course work to the history of Canadian education and the residential school system. The residential school system was established in the 1880s and continued into the 1990s, and it served the express purpose of severing Canada's indigenous children from the history, languages and traditional knowledge of their own communities. It instead educated these children in the dominant historical narrative: the heterosexual male Anglo-Saxon settler-colonist having brought European enlightenment to the first peoples of North America (Razack, 2002). As a second generation Canadian, a person of colour and a teacher, I did not shy away from the tension that I was a product of this historical narrative, while concurrently holding contempt for its singular positionality.

Rather than claiming expertise over this history, I emphasized that I would be learning about parts of this history alongside the students and doing my best to make sense of the conflict and emotions which might arise. The goal would be to learn more about this history and support each other so that we could begin to recognize how education was equally about the positionality of institutions, teachers, and students as it was about ideas.

After 4-5 weeks and several lengthy discussions in class (as well as during my office hours), several of my students approached me to express their disapproval with the focus of the course. Some felt that as non-Indigenous students they had no reasonable way to access this history. Others argued that they did not see how this history was relevant to their own experiences and intentions to become teachers. Still others argued that they were not responsible

for the atrocities and crimes of past Canadian generations against the Indigenous populations, and they were growing weary of being made to feel guilty for their whiteness and/or privilege.

This example from my own practice emphasizes how the *a priori* understanding of safe space can lead to instances of misunderstanding and conflict between the teacher's intentions to discuss difficult yet relevant subject matter in a respectful manner, and students' expectations that the safe space of their learning experience will not be fraught with intellectual or even emotional discomfort. Moreover, the teacher's intentions need to be borne out in their practices to ensure that the students' discomfort in encountering difficult ideas does not inhibit their learning. In the ensuing discussion, I will consider how this *a priori* understanding is influenced by differing educational discourses, and how in turn the positionality of the teacher compared to the positionality of students can lead to the need to develop and engage inclusive pedagogical practices. Some suggestions for these inclusive pedagogical practices to decrease students' discomfort will be discussed in the conclusion of this chapter.

4.4.1. *A priori* safe space in the practice of Students and Teachers

Part of my motivation for organizing my course in the way I described above was to better reflect the attention higher education had begun to place on the historical disenfranchisement of Canada's Indigenous populations. Institutions of higher education had begun the development and incorporation of equity, diversity, and inclusion principles into their core educational mandates at about the same time as the formation of *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)* in 2008, its subsequent public testimony (2008-2015), and then its final reports (TRC, 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2015e; 2015f; 2015g; 2015h; 2015i; 2016a; 2016b).

During this period, consideration of the experiences of populations historically underrepresented and marginalized in society based on race, gender, and sexuality took on more importance within institutions of higher education in

North America, as they strove to be more inclusive of the experiences and identities of an increasingly diverse society (Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005; Ahmed, 2007; Henry, James, Li, Kobayashi, Smith, Ramos, & Enakshi, 2017; Hunt, 2018). Within the Canadian context, this movement incorporated the necessity for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples through a greater understanding of the historical and ongoing experience of the Indigenous population.

Reconciliation would not necessarily be easy for everyone involved, especially for those that considered the existing education system as politically and ideologically neutral, and representative of all diverse positionalities in society. As bell hooks wrote about her own experiences with colleagues, the initial excitement by many teachers to acknowledge diversity in their practices was quickly muted by the recognition that "the education most of us had received and were given was not and is never politically neutral" (1994, p. 30).

In fact, scholars of critical pedagogy have argued for some time that education had traditionally been a form of oppression by a dominant positionality over all others (Apple, 2004; Freire, 1970/2000; Giroux, 1993; Illich, 1971; McLaren, 2016). Even the use of everyday language can be seen in this light. In her discussion about language, free speech, and the link between language and domination, hooks reminisces about a poem she read from Adrienne Rich with the words "*This is the oppressor's language yet I need it to talk to you*" (1994, p. 168).

All language is an act of power, privilege, and domination, no matter the speaker, context, or content; and as hooks notes:

> it is not the English language that hurts me, but what the oppressors do with it, how they shape it to become a territory that limits and defines, how they make it a weapon that can shame, humiliate, colonize (1994, p. 168).

This is a recognition not lost on me as I type these ideas in the words of a language that I did not understand until I began school at the age of six.

However, a recognition of the dominant positionality espoused through education would require teachers and students to confront their own privilege as members of that positionality, and potentially experience discomfort for the benefits they have reaped from it. This is an incredibly uncomfortable experience for most that have never truly considered their own indebtedness to dominant, and in this case, oppressive positionalities (McIntosh, 1989). hooks described how many teachers:

> found that as they tried to respect 'cultural diversity' they had to confront the limitations of their training and knowledge, as well as a possible loss of 'authority'. Indeed, exposing certain truths and biases in the classroom often created chaos and confusion. The idea that the classroom should always be a 'safe', harmonious place was challenged. It was hard for individuals to fully grasp the idea that recognition of difference might also require of us a willingness to see the classroom change, to allow for shifts in relations between students. A lot of people panicked. What they saw happening was not the comforting 'melting pot' idea of cultural diversity, the rainbow coalition where we would all be grouped together in our difference, everyone wearing the same have-a-nice-day smile. This was the stuff of colonizing fantasy, a perversion of the progressive vision of cultural diversity" (1994, pp. 30-31).

The necessary shifts in relationships between teacher and students, and the teacher's recognition that the safe space they had fostered up to that point allowed for only their singular positionality, was too much for some of the teachers hooks taught. Students who retreated to the critique of cultural diversity in the classroom as a form of overbearing political correctness claimed that an attack on intellectual freedom and safe space was underway. This was an *a priori* understanding of safe space that could not acknowledge the fantasy of a singular positionality *not* being representative of the whole, because that would undermine its self-fulfilling tautology.

Peter McLaren offers an insightful critique of this fantasy:

> Diversity that somehow constitutes itself as a harmonious ensemble of benign cultural spheres is a conservative and liberal model of multiculturalism that, in my mind, deserves to be jettisoned because,

> when we try to make culture an undisturbed space of harmony and agreement where social relations exist within cultural forms of uninterrupted accord, we subscribe to a form of social amnesia in which we forget that all knowledge is forged in histories that are played out in the field of social antagonism (Steinberg, 2006, p. 151).

The necessary unsettling of the *a priori* understanding of safe space, as representative of only the teacher's positional safety, is therefore at the center of the educational discourse of the previous example. Perhaps the most profound unsettling of the male, heterosexual, Anglo-Saxon, white, colonial-settler narrative history of Canadian (cf. Razack, 2002) safe space has been taking place since the work of *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (TRC). With the publication of its final report and indexes, and the adoption by provincial education ministries, college and university administrations, and K-12 school boards across the country of the TRC's calls to action, new priorities, policies, and a reconsideration of the positionalities represented in curricula have accelerated.

This educational discourse can be marked by several conflicts between the intentions of the teacher and those of students, as they first struggle with the limitations of an *a priori* understanding of safe space, and then their differing expectations for the Leibnizian-influenced educational relationships in the class.

One such conflict which can occur due to this *a priori* understanding is the lack of consideration for the positionality of students by the teacher. Many teachers do not recognize that their claim of safe space is only a guarantee and maintenance of their *own* specific positionality being considered safe:

> In much of my writing about pedagogy, particularly in classroom settings with great diversity, I have talked about the need to examine critically the way we as teachers conceptualize what the space for learning should be like. Many professors have conveyed to me their feeling that the classroom should be a "safe" place; that usually translates to mean that the professor lectures to a group of quiet students who respond only when they are called on (hooks, 1994, p. 39).

Moreover, some teachers may react with hostility when students expect that their own positionalities, their experiences of fear, risk, and uncertainty, are legitimate and relevant to class discussions:

> Within professorial circles, individuals often complain bitterly that students want classes to be 'encounter groups'. While it is utterly unreasonable for students to expect classrooms to be therapy sessions, it is appropriate for them to hope that the knowledge received in these settings will enrich and enhance them (1994, p. 19).

The very nature of the *a priori* understanding of safe space therefore results in any positionality other than the teacher's being considered illegitimate and irrelevant. Additionally, the expectations by those in these diverse classrooms (both teachers and students) that multiple positionalities can be acknowledged simultaneously is an impossibility within this definition of safe space. Students:

> rightfully expect that my colleagues and I will not offer them information without addressing the connection between what they are learning and their overall life experiences (1994, p 19).

These students expect teachers to explore in class the relationality between what they are learning and their life experiences, and this is an impossibility due to the *a priori* understanding of safe space.

A second conflict that can emerge on the part of teachers and students, is a misunderstanding that a specific positionality must be present inside the classroom for it to warrant attention. This misunderstanding often arises from a conflation of silence with absence, resulting in the belief that there are some topics, ideas, or positionalities outside the boundary of the classroom which are illegitimate or irrelevant to the current shared learning by the group.

This type of oppositional insider-versus-outsider-thinking constructs an unfortunate binary that can lead to arguments about the essentialism of ideas. The ideas representative of the positionality of the teacher are considered essential perhaps for no better reason than they may be on the test, while all

other ideas are disregarded. The previous example, in which some students questioned the relevance of learning about the history of the residential school system, can be understood to be asking how knowledge of this history would contribute to their pedagogical practices as in-service teachers. At the time, I most likely offered an insufficient or incomplete response to this question that would have allowed the students to make connections between what they were learning, their overall life experiences, and their expectations for future classroom practice.

Finally, within this discourse of educational essentialism that emerges from the *a priori* understanding of safe space, is the misunderstanding that what is currently considered essential learning may be replaced by what was previously absent. This understanding of safe space does not account for change, movement, or revision of ideas due to these ideas being either present or absent. The result is the mistaken belief that existing ideas will be replaced, silenced, or made absent, resulting in the false dichotomy between essentialism and diversity.

Students, especially some pre-service teachers, want the essential knowledge, the nuts-and-bolts practices to begin their teaching careers, and can mistakenly see discussions of diversity and the positionality of ideas as taking time away from honing these practices. hooks pointed out that desires for increased diversity of knowledge in the curriculum have often been muted by these critiques of essentialism, that there are certain subjects and knowledge that are necessary *first*, before other ideas can be entertained. Part of the challenge created by increasingly diverse student bodies, which are more representative of the experiences of marginalized students, is that they create an unsafe space for white students and teachers. This is sometimes done by raising questions about what is deemed essential, or by asking for more consideration of historic and traditional politics of exclusion:

> a critique of essentialism that challenges only marginalized groups to interrogate their use of identity politics or an essentialist standpoint

> as a means of exerting coercive power leaves unquestioned the critical practice of other groups who employ the same strategies in different ways and whose exclusionary behavior may be firmly buttressed by institutionalized structures of domination that do not critique or check it (hooks, 1994, pp. 82-83).

Finally, the mistaken conflation of silence with absence can lead to conflict between the expectations of students and the teacher for Leibnizian-influenced educational relationships. The teacher's decision to discuss positionalities and ideas previously absent from the curriculum does not mean they are being introduced from outside the experience of the students. Often, these positionalities and ideas have been present all along, but have been silenced due to some students feeling unsafe to share them. Therefore, there are no insider nor outsider positionalities, but rather those that speak because they share the positional safety of the teacher and others in the class, and those that stay silent because they do not share this safety.

hooks notes that we do not have to question the experience of the silent from an insider-versus-outsider perspective. Rather, silent students do not have to bring oppositional ideas to the class because they were always present, despite the lack of notice from other students (1994, pp. 83-84). Mentioning these ideas out loud, through a teacher's curricular choices or by a student's contribution to discussion, makes the diverse experiences and ideas of these students more visible by temporarily waylaying insiders with the uncomfortable recognition that they never noticed this absence from what they considered complete understanding.

4.4.2. Considering positionality for Students versus Teachers

When we consider the positionality of the teachers and students in the previous example, we can better see the *a priori* understanding of safe space influencing the thinking of both, and how the Leibnizian relationships at the heart of classroom practice can result in radically different expectations.

The teacher can be slow to recognize that the safe space of the class they maintain is primarily in service to their own positionality as the bearer of specific knowledge. The pervasive effects of a static Newtonian view of safe space can result in the teacher adopting an insider-outsider dichotomy, in which they take those experiences and ideas which represent their singular positionality to be intrinsic to defining and valuing the space of their class. This is a sentiment that can more readily be shared by those students who recognize themselves as part of this singular positionality, whether through prior experience or future pedagogical purpose. However, should the teacher adopt a Leibnizian relational understanding of the safe space for the class, they will recognize a need to explain their philosophy, strategy, and intent to connect ideas to students' experience and practice. Such explanation not only helps foster a shared relational understanding of safe space, but also provides a necessary recourse to the Newtonian view, because students often subscribe to the *a priori* understanding of safe space that is guaranteed, maintained, and provided to them wholly by others.

4.5. Leibnizian relational safe space and inclusive pedagogy

The adoption of this Leibnizian relational understanding of safe space and the inclusive pedagogical practices that can then be enacted in the classroom will be discussed in the final chapter of this work. What is important to note is that these practices, while initially modelled by a teacher, require students to take an active responsibility for their ongoing use in the creation and maintenance of a safe space for the entire class.

Chapter 5.

How can a richer understanding of safe space inform our practice in educational spaces to ensure equity, diversity, and inclusion?

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the understanding of safe space developed throughout this work, and then weigh its implications for both educational discourse and practice. In Chapter 4, I considered three examples from my own practice as a teacher that were illustrative of current discourses about safe space. Through the analysis of these examples, it became clear that positionality, and its negotiation of pedagogical relationships, was central to any meaningful attempt to realize safe space in the educational practices of an institution, a teacher, or students. In this final chapter I will begin the work of considering how this Leibnizian relational safe space in education can be expanded to considerations of a modern and diverse society.

5.1. Safe space, EDI, and our educational spaces

The discussion in the last chapter included several problematic implications arising from the common *a priori* understanding of safe space. In this final chapter, I am especially concerned with addressing the institutional (and primarily administrative) *a priori* understanding of safe space in higher education, often framed as a guarantee of students' safety in every sense. Influenced by a desire to protect their reputation and brands from negative market forces, institutions of higher education wield their commitment to safe space as a response to increasingly consumerist and individualistic demands by students for an educational experience that is supposedly devoid of the potential emotional risk, uncertainty, and discomfort necessary for learning.

This administrative understanding can lead to the institution, and some students, being at cross purposes with a teacher who draws on a Leibnizian-

influenced conception of safe space to co-constitute relatively safe learning relationships which are open to the experience of discomfort. The institution's administrative attempt to guarantee safety for all members of its learning community, without any requirement of these members to transform themselves through uncomfortable learning, curtails pedagogical practices required for transformational learning to take place. Therefore, at the level of the institution, clarification is required to develop a richer understanding of safe space and to ensure its alignment with priorities such as equity, diversity, and inclusion in the classroom.

One avenue toward this end is to consider the responsibility of institutions of higher education to the modern liberal democratic societies of which they are a part; and therefore, what exactly is at stake should they fail to fulfill this responsibility. In his critiques of the intersection between consumerism and education, Canadian philosopher of education Trevor Norris writes:

> Since their founding, perhaps the most important task of schools was to help make political citizens and create a sense of shared civic identity. New research into the impact of consumerism reveals that one consequence of consumerism is that people begin to think of themselves as consumers first and foremost, more so than they think of themselves as having a civic identity or being members of a political community. Consumerism provokes intense identification and preoccupation with brands and their symbolic meaning (2020, p. 879).

I would argue that the institution's administrative *a priori* understanding of safe space, expressed through written declarations and guarantees, responds more to consumerist and economically driven motivations (i.e., public relations, corporate branding, marketing, and the maintenance of its ongoing financial stability) than it does to the non-commercial interests of an increasingly diverse society. The public interests of twenty-first century societies, increasingly marked by a vast array of identities and by shifting visions of democracy and sustainability, are less defined by a narrow economic rationality. Instead, a different *kind* of civic identity is called for, in which consumerism itself is

redefined based on shared civic and ecological values that reflect this increasing diversity.

Norris notes that since the 1960s and early 1970s, the motivations of students entering higher education have gradually shifted away from “broad-based and publicly oriented aims towards individualistic and economic aims” (2020, p. 881). One example of this shift at Simon Fraser University could be the relative lack of communal gatherings or protests in Convocation Mall since their heyday in the 1960s and early 1970s. Concomitant to this “profound shift away from values of community and public mindedness towards competition, materialism and disconnection” (2020, p. 881) have been dramatic increases in economic inequality (Stiglitz, 2012), individualistic consumerism (Barber, 1984; Norris, 2011), political partisanship (Mansbridge & Latura, 2016), and intellectual tribalism (Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Dixon, 2016; Mohajer, 2015), that have all contributed to the increased strains on societal cohesion.

The reduced investment in higher education by provincial governments during this period has also served as a none-too-subtle message that higher education is not a public good, but rather a private good that students should pay for themselves. This individualistic and economic understanding of higher education, mixing with official laws and policies mandating multiculturalism, equity, and diversity, has interacted with the *a priori* understanding of safe space, resulting in an invitation to students to bring your culture, beliefs, and biases, but to feel free to stay exactly who you were at the outset of your educational experience. Therefore, the contestation of this consumerist mindset within the institutions requires, among other measures, the rethinking of safe space discourses to foster transformational learning in service of an educated citizenry capable of continuously co-constituting an inclusive, shared civic identity.

In this sense, the *a priori* Newtonian safe space supports the institutional and ideological goal of producing graduates capable of economic success, which may then trickle down through society, while quietly abandoning any more

ambitious goal of contributing to the public good. This understanding of safe space also produces graduates who are not likely to be educated citizens “aware of the history of [their] country – or aware of the different cultures within it” (Norris, 2020, p. 880) so they can engage with the difficult questions of reconciling, renegotiating, revising, and practicing a renewed shared civic identity that encompasses the true diversity in society. This is what is truly at stake when institutions of higher education uncritically adopt the Newtonian interpretation of safe space as a guarantee of comfort.

Therefore, at the level of the institution, it is necessary for the *a priori* safe space to be replaced with an alternative discourse grounded in the relational and co-constituted safe space influenced by Leibnizian inheritances. Could this Leibnizian safe space be wielded and propagated through the institutional mechanisms of public relations, corporate branding, marketing, and the maintenance of ongoing financial stability, by promising students the educational opportunity to learn *from* the diverse positionalities in a modern society? The result could then be a shared experience of teaching and learning full of intellectual risk, discomfort, and transformational change – exactly what is required of an educated citizenry with a shared civic identity.

Much of our present educational discourse pertaining to equity, diversity, and inclusion in higher education can be understood to reflect the Leibnizian “safe space of my class” mapped earlier in this work (Table 4.1-1). That mapping developed safe space as a shared location with a temporary (possibly fuzzy) boundary that allows for the possibility for modification in understanding through learning. This learning is marked by the guarantee of a stable membership in a teaching and learning relationship. Further, recognizing through language and evaluating the influence of specific positionalities on the experience of fear, risk, and discomfort in the educational relationship become central to this learning.

As discussed in the Chapter 4, bell hooks’ (1994) inclusive pedagogy is exemplary of elements in this earlier mapping, and the understanding of safe

space that it revealed. Therefore, for the discourses of equity, diversity, and inclusion to be wielded by institutions of higher education as educational opportunities to learn *from* the diverse positionalities in a society, and to better serve the needs of that society into the future, special attention must be paid to the potential relationship between language and positionality.

In the introduction to his 2012 book *The Harm of Hate Speech*, Jeremy Waldron succinctly describes what is at stake in modern liberal democratic societies when the necessary care is not paid to the relationship between language and positionality as societies strive to become more inclusive. While Waldron is specifically responding to those that argue for an absolutist understanding of free speech in society, the similarity to this work's discussion of the *a priori* Newtonian-influenced "safe space of my class" is clear. Waldron describes the absolutist position in which those who believe they can and should say whatever they wish, no matter the pain, fear, risk or uncertainty it may cause to others, and:

> …those who are targeted should just learn to live with it…they should learn to live their lives, conduct their business, and raise their children in the atmosphere that this sort of speech gives rise to (2012, pp. 3-4).

For Waldron, there are two specific threats this approach to speech can produce. First, he describes inclusiveness as a shared public good that is created by the formation of any society, and as a necessity to ensure the ongoing sustainability of that society. Hate speech, or speech that may cause pain, fear, risk, or uncertainty then:

> …undermines this public good, or it makes the task of sustaining it much more difficult that it would otherwise be. It does this not only by intimating discrimination and violence, but by reawakening living nightmares of what this society was like – or what other societies have been like – in the past. In doing so, it creates something like an environmental threat to social peace, a sort of slow-acting poison, accumulating here and there, word by word, so that eventually it becomes harder and less natural for even the good-hearted

> members of society to play their part in maintaining this public good (2012, p. 4).

The second threat is to the traditionally vulnerable minorities and positionalities meant to benefit most from inclusiveness, when their equal membership and good standing within the society, or what Waldron calls their *dignity,* is undermined and called into question by hate speech. This happens because inclusiveness is meant to benefit all members of a society, but for those

> minorities who in the recent past have been hated or despised by others within the society [inclusiveness offers a dual meaning as] a confirmation of their membership: they, too, are members of society in good standing; they have what it takes to interact on a straightforward basis with others around here, in public, on the streets, in the shops, in business, and to be treated – along with everyone else – as proper objects of society's protection and concern (2012, p. 5).

Therefore, as the institution draws on societal discourses of equity, diversity, and inclusion to inform its understanding of a Leibnizian relational safe space, special attention needs to be paid by institutions, teachers, and students to the relationship between speech (more broadly, language) and positionality during teaching and learning. Safe space in this sense is a space meant to help develop an educated citizenry capable of navigating uncomfortable discussions about meaningful inclusion in a diverse society. Given this educational purpose, discourses that advocate for a practice of cancellation, prohibition, censure, or erasure of problematic language or positionalities (rather than the necessary recognition, analysis and evaluation required to disrupt their intended or unintended reproduction) can be seen as counterproductive. As an educated citizen, the student will (eventually) need to engage with differing positionalities and views to co-constitute a civic identity that recognizes diversity and works toward equitable inclusion for all members of society.

5.2. Safe space as pedagogy and practice

Institutions and teachers can together draw on societal discourses of equity, diversity, and inclusion to inform pedagogical practices within Leibnizian safe space. From the Leibnizian-influenced understanding of “the safe space of my class” mapped earlier in this work (Table 4.1-1), both the institution and educators can consider as a minimum threshold condition the guarantee not of total safety in every sense, but of every student’s right to membership in the class without fear or risk of this status being jeopardized during the learning relationships formed with others (Callan, 2016; Waldron, 2012).

Such a guarantee allows the institution to retain legal safeguards meant to protect the physical security and safety of all members of the learning community, as well as policies protecting against the use of hate speech amongst members that may be permissible in society at large. These protections are often situated in codes of teacher ethics and responsibilities (Schroeder, 2017; Marcoccia, 2018; Flaherty, 2020), as well as student conduct, integrity, and discipline policies (Chamlee-Wright, 2018; Cox, 1995; Ma, 1995). Simultaneously, language, ideas, or positionalities deemed to be problematic can be considered by the teacher and students from the perspective of the pedagogical value their evaluation may provide to the shared educational intention of the class. Ideas that may be uncomfortable for some (including the teacher) can still be recognized as having pedagogical potential.

hooks (1994) describes classroom practices she has crafted to afford students greater understanding of how differing positionalities can influence the experiences of fear, risk, uncertainty, and discomfort incurred through communication during learning. These practices foster the ability of students to reflect on the experience and understanding of others, and potentially reposition or revise their own experience and understanding during future learning. Together, hooks’ inclusive classroom pedagogy and its practices should be understood not only for their contribution to a student’s future learning, but also

for their ability to expand students' capabilities to positively contribute as educated citizens to a society's evolving civic identity.

Not only teachers, but also those responsible for professional and curriculum development should consider hooks' inclusive pedagogy as a starting point in developing supports for diverse student bodies. Below I will discuss specific classroom practices described by hooks, which serve as exemplars of and guideposts toward an inclusive safe space, while avoiding misleading Newtonian absolutes.

5.2.1. Explaining one's philosophy, strategy, and intent

hooks worked in her own practice to move beyond her own need for immediate affirmation from students. She did not judge her success as a teacher by whether students had definitively achieved or concluded some outcome. Instead, she focused on students' ongoing experience, something which would be meaningful years later after leaving the classroom. She learned to make this explicit through explaining not only the philosophy or theory behind her teaching to her students, but also the strategy she was undertaking to fulfill this intent. She writes:

> In the transformed classroom there is often a much greater need to explain philosophy, strategy, intent than in the 'norm' setting. I have found through the years that many of my students who bitch endlessly while they are taking my classes contact me at a later date to talk about how much that experience meant to them, how much they learned. In my professorial role I had to surrender my need for immediate affirmation of successful teaching (even through some reward is immediate) and accept that students may not appreciate the value of a certain standpoint or process straightaway. The exciting aspect of creating a classroom community where there is respect for individual voices is that there is infinitely more feedback because students do feel free to talk-and talk back. And, yes, often this feedback is critical. Moving away from the need for immediate affirmation was crucial to my growth as a teacher (1994, p. 42).

This description of hooks' classroom practice is illustrative of a relational Leibnizian understanding of personal and social (or civic) space. While

pedagogical work is being done within the safe space of the class, it serves as preparation for ongoing learning in the spaces students move through in their subsequent lives.

In her classroom practice, hooks seeks to contextualize the philosophical and theoretical knowledge at hand, thus cultivating the shared educational intention of herself and all her students ("Shared Location", Table 4.1-1). This shared educational intention is what temporarily binds all the students into a single class, but also contributes to the educated citizens that the institution and teacher are helping the students to become ("Temporary, possibly fuzzy boundary that distinguishes the experience of the location from all other locations", Table 4.1-1). This learning and change are spread along a gradient, as throughout the class the students should become better able to understand how each current discussion topic contributes to their learning, and how it can continue to contribute to their potential futures ("Possibility for movement" & "Integrity of the physical body", Table 4.1-1).

The opportunity for students to recognize the connection between the teacher's philosophy and the strategy she is utilizing to fulfill a specific educational intention can allow them to evaluate her positionality in the connection she is striving to develop ("Positionality of the physical body to fear, risk, and uncertainty", Table 4.1-1). The positionality of the teacher can then be compared to the student's own, as well as to that of other students, allowing them to make the attempt to reflect on these comparisons and potentially reposition or revise their own understanding ("Recognition and evaluation of relative positionalities", Table 4.1-1).

5.2.2. Sharing a confessional narrative to demonstrate the positionality of learning

For hooks, learning is inherently associated with intellectual or emotional pain, fear, risk, or discomfort. She found it fruitful as a narrative guide to share her own fear and discomfort with her students, as well as to recognize their fear

and discomfort. This sharing was an invitation for students to connect their experience to the greater phenomenon of gaining knowledge and understanding. She writes:

> Students taught me…that it is necessary to practice compassion in these new learning settings. I have not forgotten the day a student came to class and told me: 'We take your class. We learn to look at the world from a critical standpoint, one that considers race, sex, and class. And we can't enjoy life anymore'. Looking out over the class, across race, sexual preference, and ethnicity, I saw students nodding their heads. And I saw for the first time that there can be, and usually is, some degree to pain involved in giving up old ways of thinking and knowing and learning new approaches. I respect that pain. And I include recognition of it now when I teach, that is to say, I teach about shifting paradigms and talk about the discomfort it can cause. White students learning to think more critically about questions of race and racism may go home for the holidays and suddenly see their parents in a different light. They may recognize nonprogressive thinking, racism, and so on, and it may hurt them that new ways of knowing may create estrangement where there was none. Often when students return from breaks, I ask them to share with us how ideas that they have learned or worked on in the classroom impacted on their experience outside. This gives them both the opportunity to know that difficult experiences may be common and practice at integrating theory and practice: ways of knowing with habits of being. We practice interrogating habits of being as well as ideas. Through this process we build community (1994, pp. 42-43).

hooks utilized this recognition of the shared experience during learning to establish a threshold condition for membership in class: the necessity for students to read to one another. At least once each semester, no matter the size of the class, hooks required everyone (including herself) to write an autobiographical example about the subject being discussed, and how they may have experienced some type of intellectual or emotional pain or uncertainty, while trying to better understand the subject. Each member of the class was then required to read their example to at least one other member of the class. She writes:

> It helps create a communal awareness of the diversity of our experiences and provides a limited sense of the experiences that

> may inform how we think and what we say. Since this exercise makes the classroom a space where experience is valued, not negated or deemed meaningless, students seem less inclined to make the telling of experience that site where they compete for voice, if indeed such a competition is taking place. In our classroom, students do not usually feel the need to compete because the concept of a privileged voice of authority is deconstructed by our critical practice (1994, p. 84).

hooks established the threshold condition for membership in her class as the shared intention of writing an autobiographical example, and then reading (and listening) to one another ("Shared Location" & "Temporary, possibly fuzzy boundary", Table 4.1-1). The autobiographical writing then focused on the subject being discussed and how a student may have possibly experienced some type of intellectual or emotional pain, or uncertainty, while trying to understand the subject ("Possibility for movement", Table 4.1-1). hooks established and reinforced every student's membership in the class through the shared practice of physically reading their example to at least one other member of the class ("Integrity of the physical body", Table 4.1-1).

This sharing could be understood as each student reinforcing their right to membership in the class, and concurrently each listening student recognizing the right of others to the same membership. The reading then demonstrated how varied positionalities could influence learning, even for those not as fluent or capable with English (i.e., non-native speakers of English could read in their first language, speech-impaired students could use other methods to communicate), by utilizing the narrative contributions of students reading to each other ("Positionality of the physical body to fear, risk, and uncertainty", Table 4.1-1).

For the students listening to the autobiographical reader, they recognized varied positionalities in the presentation of these narratives, allowing those witnessing students to better understand how positionality could influence learning in sometimes drastically different ways ("Positionality of the physical body to fear, risk, and uncertainty", Table 4.1-1).

This practice allowed marginalized students, whose positionalities and knowledge are often silenced in typical classrooms, an opportunity for inclusion and recognition by at least one other student listening to their experience. The positionality of the reader and their experience could then be compared to the listening student's own, as well as to that of other students who might feel more comfortable and willing to share with the class after this practice. This experience allowed students to then reflect on these comparisons, and potentially reposition or revise their own understanding ("Recognition and evaluation of relative positionalities", Table 4.1-1).

5.2.3. Recognizing that the acknowledgment of positionality is not dependent upon presence in the classroom

According to hooks, the teacher's actions in class can be deemed to be tokenism if it appears that the only reason a particular positionality is being discussed is because it is present in the classroom. This might suggest, for instance, that certain students' experience has provided them with access to expert knowledge about that positionality. As hooks notes, experience does not *alone* make one an expert, nor should the experience of positionality be accepted as uniquely privileged knowledge in a classroom (1994, pp. 43-44). Instead, within a relational, Leibnizian setting knowledge is generated through dialogue *among* and *across* positionalities.

Only with an unbiased, inclusive perspective in which the members of a given social group do not need to be present for their perspective to be acknowledged can a Leibnizian safe space for ideas truly exist. Issues related to gender, sexuality, race, etc., should not be included merely on the grounds that they are representative of students within the class. Instead, these ideas should be included because they represent real and important positionalities of people in society, whose experiences have traditionally been silenced or absent, and therefore not acknowledged as a vital part of the society's shared civic identity.

While teaching the senior level curriculum theory and practice course that I offered as an example of my own practice in the previous chapter, my decision to dedicate considerable time and course work to the history of Canadian education and the residential school system was not due to there being an Indigenous student in the class, nor any specific expectations within the institution to cover this material. In fact, the reality of the cultural genocide perpetrated by the residential school system on the Indigenous people of Canada, and the benefits of wealth and privilege afforded to non-Indigenous Canadians from this crime, were largely ignored in the practices of many teachers until quite recently. I reasoned that the only way that any teacher (myself included) could learn how to present others with such a difficult and unsettling history was by taking it up, along with their own fear and discomfort, within a relational, Leibnizian safe space affording dialogue *among* and *across* differing positionalities.

hooks established the pedagogical intention by the teacher for careful consideration of who the students in a class and society at-large *may* be before the first meeting of the semester ("Shared Location", Table 4.1-1). Moreover, hooks committed to distinguish any experience *from* a specific positionality, with that *about* a specific positionality, to ensure that no student could claim their firsthand experience as a direct route to expert understanding. She did this in part to ensure that all students recognized the difference between the value of experience and the value of expertise, and that experience does not always denote expertise. In so doing, hooks establishes the necessity for all students to move beyond their own experience (or lack thereof), and toward an understanding more representative of the positionality at a social or cultural level ("Temporary, possibly fuzzy boundary", Table 4.1-1).

The possibility for change and growth through this learning is then twofold. For those students with access to firsthand experience of the specific positionality through their own lived experience, their reflection on the value of experience versus the value of expertise can necessitate a change from

understanding their experience as representative of the positionality, to instead understanding their experience as only a part of that positionality. Students without this embodied experience can at least begin to consider positionalities that may have been absent from their thinking (“Possibility for movement”, Table 4.1-1). With no single individual being objectified as a singular source of knowledge, those with access to the specific positionality through their own lived experience do not have to feel their ongoing membership as being contingent upon their willingness to share. At the same time, students lacking firsthand experience of the positionality can engage with others free from the sense that they have no place in the class (“Integrity of the physical body”, Table 4.1-1).

The voice of experience masquerading as equivalent to expertise is tempered through this practice; namely, students with experience silencing those without. All students are afforded the opportunity to consider how specific positionalities contribute to an understanding of the shared educational goal of the class. Through dialogue *among*, *across* and *about* differing positionalities, students can better understand how fear, risk and uncertainty can contribute to understanding about the topic in the classroom, and then at the societal level (“Positionality of the physical body to fear, risk, and uncertainty”, Table 4.1-1). If during the attempt to revise their understanding through dialogue *among* and *across* positionalities they can recognize some of these positionalities in their fellow students, they will have learned how to see more inclusively as an educated citizen that can contribute to a more diverse understanding of civic identity in society (“Recognition and evaluation of relative positionalities”, Table 4.1-1).

5.3. Why this matters for educational practice and future scholarship

With contemporary dialogue about safe space politicized between conservatives and progressives, this work has focused greater attention on a contentious educational concept. For many years, teachers have referred to their

classrooms metaphorically as safe spaces for student learning. However, all metaphors simultaneously reveal and conceal, and I became concerned by what the metaphor of safe space concealed. This concealment, while initially an asset offering imaginative possibilities of meaning, can also be pernicious in debates about the nature and purpose of education in modern society. In these educational discourses about safe space and education, specifically as education strives to contribute to a greater recognition of issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion in society, the lack of clarity around all that the metaphor of safe space conceals has served to influence radically different interpretations of meaningful educational practices.

With the recognition in Chapter 1 that safe space is a potentially problematic metaphor in discussions of education, I began to clarify how this metaphor functions. In Chapter 2, I explored several theories of how metaphors function through comparison, substitution, or interaction to derive new meaning and understanding of lesser-known ideas or experiences. Chapter 2 and its in-depth analysis of Paul Ricoeur's interactive theory of metaphor suggested the reasons why safe space is such a contentious educational concept. Safe space is a conceptual metaphor that conceals contradictory philosophies regarding the concept of space, and thereby is incapable of accounting for how Newtonian (and Kantian) cosmology is enmeshed in Western modernity.

Chapter 3 mapped the multiple concealed and competing meanings of safe space represented at the level of the distinct words "space" and "safety", at the level of the combined statement "the safe space of my class", and at the level of educational discourse infused with modern societal considerations of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The resulting mapping offers a comprehensive understanding meant to lend clarity to discussions of safe space in education. However, during the consideration of this mapping within the context of educational discourses in Chapter 4, it became clear that positionality was central to any meaningful attempt to operationalize safe space into practice by an institution, a teacher, or by students.

It has become clear throughout this work that there are two starkly differing and competing understandings of safe space in education. The first understanding of safe space is a Newtonian *a priori* safe space, which is assumed to operate in an absolute fashion to guarantee safety with no concern for the pedagogical necessity of risk and uncertainty that are associated with learning. This *a priori* understanding is assumed to operate independent of the educational relationships it purports to enable or safeguard. The second understanding of safe space is a Leibnizian, relational safe space, which is structured by educational relationships among those who co-constitute knowledge and understanding through their practices. Only this Leibnizian understanding of safe space serves an education pursuing greater equity, diversity, and inclusion within society at large.

In the final chapter of this work, I began the process of considering how this Leibnizian, relational safe space in education could be extended to connect with broader societal considerations served by higher education. Recognizing the importance of education to provide an educated citizenry responsible for the long-term sustainability of a society, I drew on Waldron's (2012) understanding of how safe space can be operationalized at the national or societal level. In his writing, Waldron offers insight on what this operationalization of safe space could look like:

> We are diverse in our ethnicity, our race, our appearance, and our religions. And we are embarked on a grand experiment of living and working together despite these sorts of differences. Each group must accept that the society is not *just* for them; but it *is* for them too, along with all of the others. And each person, each member of each group, should be able to go about his or her business, with the assurance that there will be no need to face hostility, violence, discrimination, or exclusion by others. When this assurance is conveyed effectively, it is hardly noticeable; it is something on which everyone can rely, like the cleanness of the air they breathe or the quality of the water they drink from a fountain. This sense of security in the space we all inhabit is a public good, and in a good society it is something that we all contribute to and help sustain in an instinctive and almost unnoticeable way (Waldron, 2012, p. 4).

The actual practices of safe space that contribute to this public good of inclusiveness are currently undertheorized in educational discourse. Four pressing questions regarding this connection between the safe space of education and the public good of inclusiveness in society therefore require further attention:

1. How does the conceptual metaphor of safe space map to modern society? How can this metaphor be operationalized in the recognition of diversity and the practices of inclusiveness required for the continuous renewal of shared civic identity amidst difference?

2. How can the competing Newtonian *a priori* and the Leibnizian relational understandings of safe space in education be related to sociological theories about the nature of modern society and citizenship? Might the competing Newtonian and Leibnizian understandings be consistent with the theory of solid and liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000)?

3. What are the practices of learning required to see society as not just for oneself, but for others as well? How do these practices help to constitute safe space? What are the primary hindrances to the creation and maintenance of such spaces?

4. How can institutions of higher education utilize a Leibnizian relational safe space to steer the public away from the belief in a narrow, individualistic and consumerist economic good derived from education? How can this different *kind* of public economic good, marked by the embrace of the shared civic values of equity, diversity, inclusion, and ecological sustainability be fostered in the practices of education and society at large?

The politicized dialogue about safe space in education amongst conservatives and progressives has led many to talk past or outright dismiss the other side. The concerns raised by conservatives about what safe space *could* mean, as well as the laudable intentions by progressives regarding what the

practice of safe space *could* contribute, are both worthy of further engagement on the part of educational theorists and practitioners. The consequences are potentially dire if we continue to dismiss safe space as a benign concept or figure of speech. If education is unable to confer on future citizenry the public good of inclusiveness so they can co-develop cohesive civic values and identities, currently smoldering social issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion have the potential to uncontrollably ignite and further imperil the long-term sustainability of our society.

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