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Educate to Liberate:

Black Panther Pedagogy in Ancient Philosophy Class

Abstract:

Huey P. Newton, co-founder of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, taught himself to read, as a teenager, by spending hours with Plato's Republic *and a dictionary. Later, he describes reading the cave allegory in* Republic *7 as "a seminal experience" in his life, "for it had started me thinking and reading and trying to find a way to liberate Black people." Last year, I decided to teach his book* Revolutionary Suicide *in my ancient philosophy class alongside Plato. A few key considerations guided my work: I wanted to make sure that Newton and the Panthers were not reduced to Plato cheerleaders. I also needed to introduce the Black Panther Party and its complex histories without overwhelming the students. In terms of Plato, one goal of the class was to offer examples of what might arise as we viewed* Republic *7 through this lens. Finally, since the Black Panther Party established many schools—often with inspiring results—I worked to both incorporate key elements of Black Panther pedagogy into my class and design assignments that might allow the students to feel challenged by and connected to these stories.*

Huey P. Newton, co-founder of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, writes in *Revolutionary Suicide* that he taught himself to read, as a teenager, by spending hours with Plato's *Republic* and a dictionary.[1] Later, he describes reading the cave allegory in *Republic* 7 as "a seminal experience" in his life, "for it had started me thinking and reading and trying to find a way to liberate Black people."[2] I have been reading, teaching, and writing about Plato for over twenty years, but I just learned those two facts about Newton in the summer of 2020, a summer

of pandemic lockdowns and racial reckoning.[3] Felt a bit like I was told I'd been staring at shadows to be honest. As soon as I heard that story, I started wishing I'd heard it years ago, and I started wondering how I might bring Newton's story into my own Ancient Philosophy classes. This story resonated with my own desire to bring anti-racist work into my teaching and research, and more than that it is a powerful example of the beauty of philosophy.

In the spring I was awarded some funding through a Mellon grant that Seattle University received,[4] and that has given me time to think through some considerations and try bringing *Revolutionary Suicide* into my class in fall 2023. I was thrilled at this opportunity, and it was both challenging and inspiring to learn more about the Black Panther Party (BPP). As I built this unit into the class, a few key considerations were especially on my mind: first, I wanted to make sure that Newton and the Panthers were not reduced to Plato cheerleaders. I also needed to introduce the BPP and its complex histories without overwhelming the students. In terms of Plato, a major goal of the class was to offer some concrete examples of what might arise as we viewed *Republic* 7 through this lens. Finally, and maybe most importantly, since the Black Panther Party established many schools—often with inspiring results—I hoped to incorporate some key elements of Black Panther pedagogy into my own class, and likewise I worked to design some assignments that might allow the students to feel genuinely challenged by and connected to these stories.

1. All Power to the People

Although this discussion of Newton and the Panthers took place in the context of my Honors class on ancient philosophy,[5] my hope was for this unit to exist as more than a charming example of the relevancy of Classical Greek thought. In order to move toward anti-racism, I needed to make sure that I did not diminish Newton's agency or treat Plato as some kind of time-traveling

European savior.[6] Additionally, if Plato's thought does indeed have continued relevance, that is because of the power and energy in the ideas and movements it sparks. In other words, the better story has Plato hanging onto Newton's coattails rather than the other way around.

This framing in terms of Newton rather than Plato is particularly important given my own positionality as a middle-aged, white, male professor teaching a class in which women and people of color outnumber the white and male students.[7] I want my students to see the great value that they and their classmates bring to our discussions, and part of how I hope to accomplish that is by offering a picture of philosophy in which Europe isn't always the paradigm.

One concrete choice I made with these concerns in mind was to start with Newton and then read the cave story after we had spent a week thinking about a few chapters in *Revolutionary Suicide* and a few moments in Black Panther Party history.[8] My hope was that this would make it seem more like we're reading *Republic* 7 because of the Black Panthers. This also shifted the focus and allowed me to offer some perspective and background on the Panthers, since I correctly assumed that most of my students have little familiarity with these histories. Impossible to discuss in the detail it deserved, I told my students about not only the Panthers' famous policing of the police, but also about the "free breakfast for school children" programs and the free medical clinics—including the Carolyn Downs Family Medical Center here in Seattle, "the only one of 13 original Black Panther-founded health care clinics still operating today."[9] Before the students spend too much time reading Newton or Plato, in other words, I wanted them to recognize that these ideas had—and continue to have—a powerful impact on the lives of members of our community.

2. Newton in the Cave

Early in *Revolutionary Suicide*, Newton discusses his love of poetry and offers two brief, distinct interpretations of Shelley's "Ozymandias," which he says "impressed [him] because [he] felt there were different levels of meaning in… [the] rich and complex poem."[10] With that embrace of complexity in mind, the class saw Newton's retelling of the cave allegory in *Republic* 7, and then later we read the original to see what Newton's understanding might point us to in Plato. The goal was not of course to judge Newton's reading, but rather to use it as an invitation to uncover more of the richness and complexity of Plato's text.

The cave story first appears in *Revolutionary Suicide* in the chapter titled "The Brothers on the Block," a chapter in which Newton talks about his time partying, fighting, and talking about philosophy. "Rap sessions like this took place all over, in cars parked in front of the liquor store on Sacramento Street near Ashby in Berkeley, outside places where parties were being held, and sometimes inside."[11] If that sentence is all my students remember I would call this unit a success, since it so perfectly captures the dynamic and exhilarating way that philosophy can show up far beyond the walls of any classroom. Newton continues by turning to Plato:

> I told them about the allegory of the cave from Plato's *Republic*, and they enjoyed it. We called it the story of the cave prisoners. In the cave allegory Plato describes the plight of the prisoners in a cave who receive their impression of the outside world from shadows projected on the wall by the fire at the mouth of the cave. One of the prisoners is freed and gets a view of the outside world—objective reality. He returns to the cave to tell the others that the scenes they observe on the wall are not reality but only a distorted reflection of it. The prisoners tell the liberated man he is crazy, and he cannot convince them. He tried to take one of them outside, but the prisoner is terrified at the thought of

facing something new. When he is dragged outside the cave anyway, he sees the sun and is blinded by it.[12]

After this gloss of the image, Newton comments on its relevance: "The allegory seemed very appropriate to our own situation in society. We, too, were in prison and needed to be liberated in order to distinguish between truth and the falsehoods imposed on us."[13] And of course, just to round things out, in the next paragraph he adds that, "The dudes on the block still thought I was 'out of sight' and sometimes just plain crazy."[14]

As Sowers points out and as I hoped my students would notice, Newton encourages his reader to see him as personifying the 'liberated man' who returns to free other prisoners.[15] This of course calls us immediately to a particular reading of the cave story: rather than focusing on the metaphysical or epistemological stakes implied by phrases like 'objective reality,' Newton is focusing exclusively on the political aspects of the allegory. Sowers here writes that, "Unlike Plato who situates the cave within the context of education, Newton uses his Platonic education to rework the cave into a racial metaphor."[16] Although I agree with Sowers that Plato cannot have imagined the allegory as speaking to racial injustice, I do think it's worth reminding ourselves that there is a clear political context in *Republic* 7, and many scholars see Plato's text as being as much if not more focused on political liberation as on abstract questions about the nature of reality or human knowing.[17] To put all of that another way, and with all due respect to the dudes on the block, Newton's reading of the cave story doesn't strike me as crazy at all.

The cave story wasn't just a fun conversation piece for Newton, but also reflects Newton's focus on liberation through education, through the work of helping members of his community "distinguish between truth and the falsehoods imposed on us."[18] Newton laments, for example, the way that campus activists had not helped "the brothers on the block… gain a better

understanding" of their condition.[19] Again, he criticizes his fellow college students for their lack of understanding and lack of focus on liberation:

> These brothers still believed in making it in the world. They talked about it loud and long, expressing the desire for families, houses, cars, and so forth. Even at that time I did not want those things. I wanted freedom, and possessions meant nonfreedom to me.[20]

In other words, like the freed prisoner in the cave story, Newton believes that he's seeing an objective reality that others cannot perceive.

Indeed, even the Panthers' famous use of firearms to 'police the police' had less to do with actual use of the weapons and more to do with demonstrating to community members that they had the power to stand up for themselves. "In this way, [the community members] would lose their doubts and fears and be able to move against the oppressor."[21] Newton, in other words, both engages with a version of the cave allegory and arguably tells his own story in a way that reveals intriguing parallels to the allegory. The goal of our class discussions, therefore, was to see Newton as a paradigm of an engaged, active interpreter of ancient philosophy.

Above all, though, my hope was that seeing Newton offer this retelling and interpretation of Plato would both enable students to enjoy the freedom to read ancient texts in ways that speak to them and encourage them to critically examine the interpretations we encounter in class discussion and in the scholarly sources they use in their own research.

To gage the impact on the students' experience of working through various interpretations, and also of my choice to ask them to read Newton before Plato, I gave them the option of reflecting on and discussing those experiences. One student commented on the noteworthy context of "when and where [Newton] shares the [cave] story and to whom," referring to Newton's sharing the story with the 'brothers on the block.' We had read Plato's

Apology earlier in the term, and this feature reminded the student of Socrates, especially as he describes his work in that dialogue, where he speaks to and even praises people like the craftsmen, who Socrates sees as wiser than the famous politicians and poets of Athens (22a-d).

Of course, this is not the only parallel between Newton and Plato's Socrates. Newton tells stories of challenging his friends' assumptions about things like God and free will,[22] and Sowers rightly points out a resemblance to Socrates, who describes himself as a 'gadfly' who asks annoying questions in order to awaken the 'sleepy horse' that stands for the city of Athens (*Apology* 30d-31a).[23] Again, after Newton is accused of selling stolen books at his college bookstore, he turns the tables and cross-examines the dean of the college, and Sowers points out the parallels with Socrates in the *Apology*, who interrogates one of his accusers (24a-28a).[24] Our time with the *Apology* early in the term helped students see Newton as not only clever but also as remarkably alike to Socrates—in other words, students saw Newton as a philosopher.

The moving back and forth between Plato and Newton did lead to some tensions, as another student observed, saying that the

> way Huey wrote it out so simply made a lot of sense, and was incredibly easy to comprehend, so when I ended up reading the original allegory, which was much more convoluted, I found myself leaning back on Huey's words for clarification. In a way this was great, however it did leave me with a bias, in which I associated the allegory with the American education system.

A third student, on the other hand, said that they

> greatly appreciated the opportunity to make a strong connection between ancient thought and more recent methodologies. Because many of my classes are focused on ancient

thinkers,[25] it was both refreshing and important for me to be able to discuss the relevance of these ideas to more recent thinkers and current social issues.

Finally, another student mentioned both the helpful framing and the bias that the first student noted but added that this "changed for me during our in-class discussion of the cave." That's a wonderful thing to witness, and in general these accounts of wrestling with and thinking about the impact of hearing and discussing Newton's interpretation along with Plato's story speak to a valuable experience of engaging with a text in multiple ways—which also seems to have sparked valuable reflection, at least on the part of some students.

In the spirit of such critical examination, one tension in Newton's version of the cave story concerns an apparent omission, which Bornfree calls attention to: "What Newton leaves out in his retelling is the story's built-in warning to him – the warning that the story's teller will be rejected and killed."[26] Although Sowers sees implicit reference to that part of Plato's allegory in Newton's account (and indeed in the very title of the book),[27] it's true that the explicit retelling of the cave story skips that important bit. More problematically, on Bornfree's reading, this is "a significant omission, because in Plato's hands, the threat of violence *against* the truth-teller functions to justify the violence of the truth-teller, and the elitist politics he embodies."[28] In other words, by eliding this aspect of *Republic* 7, Newton's reading risks presenting Plato as an advocate for radical inclusion and democracy when in reality the *Republic* promotes a starkly different vision.

Indeed, the freed prisoner in *Republic* 7 returns to the cave not to liberate the other prisoners, but rather to rule over them (519c-520d). Newton, on the other hand, repeatedly insists on the need for community action rather than heroic leadership: "The task is to transform society; only the people can do that—not heroes, not celebrities, not stars."[29] Likewise, his

mentions of the cave story always end with an appeal to shared liberation rather than leadership.[30] This tension between Plato's elitism and Newton's egalitarian vision came up briefly in class discussion, but we could have taken better advantage of this opportunity for discussion. I plan to spend more time with this tension the next time I assign these texts.

The Panthers themselves, meanwhile, have a very complicated history with respect to violence, and violent acts haunt much of Newton's story, both in *Revolutionary Suicide* and beyond.[31] I didn't want to exaggerate the violence or contribute to a picture of Newton as a "thug,"[32] but at the same time I wanted my students to wrestle with the complexity here, especially as our nation continues to suffer from the ongoing harms of both police violence and gun violence.

These are serious concerns, but where did this leave my class? If this was truly a unit about Newton and the Panthers, then I could not assign the attack on democracy in *Republic* 8, since that would just make it about Plato instead. And the last thing I wanted to do was stand in front of 20 brand new college students and tell them Newton is reading Plato incorrectly, or that we should simply condemn him as a violent criminal.

My approach for this first class largely involved sitting with the tension and the important challenges it raises.

3. Black Panther Pedagogy[33]

On this note of navigating the challenges involved with bringing this discussion into my classes, I've learned a lot about pedagogy from the inspiring work of the Black Panther Party and the "liberation schools" they started. I worked to bring as much of that as possible into my own classes, and in particular I tried to invite my students into conversations shaped by four main pedagogical principles grounded in Black Panther Party thought: the value of a culturally

relevant curriculum, an emphasis on internal transformation, a focus on how to think rather than what to think, and a commitment to activism and civic engagement.[34] I will briefly discuss each of those and attempt to work out connections between each principle and Newton's thought, the work of the Black Panther liberation schools, and some key ideas in *Republic* 7 as well. I'm convinced that this model of education is not only valuable in its own right but is also capable of helping students form deeper connections to Platonic thought.

3.1 Culturally Relevant Curriculum

Early in *Revolutionary Suicide*, Newton discusses his time in public school in Oakland, where he was confronted with racist stereotypes and insistently low expectations:

> I constantly felt uncomfortable and ashamed of being Black. This feeling followed me everywhere, without letup. It was a result of the implicit understanding in the system that whites were 'smart' and Blacks were 'stupid.' Anything presented as 'good' was always white, even the stories teachers gave us to read in the early grades.[35]

Although there were minor bright spots, the overall experience of reading about foolish Black characters and amazing white heroes left Newton in conflict with both himself and his teachers.

> I found myself wanting to identify with the white heroes in the primers and in the movies I saw, and in time I cringed at the mention of Black. This created a gulf of hostility between the teachers and me…[36]

Ultimately, he sums up his school experience like this:

> During those long years in the Oakland public schools, I did not have one teacher who taught me anything relevant to my own life or experience…. All they did was try to rob me of the sense of my own uniqueness and worth, and in the process they nearly killed my urge to inquire.[37]

In order to work against such harmful models of education, the Black Panther liberation schools consistently focused on providing a culturally relevant curriculum.[38] As Newton's own experience shows, this seemingly small step can have an enormous impact, and with that in mind I encouraged my students to help make our conversations not only philosophically rigorous but also grounded in a commitment to highlighting relevant cultural connections and frameworks. For instance, after reading about Newton's time in school, a Filipina American student in my class wrote about parallels in her own experience in which she also felt pressure to conform to a setting in which whiteness was viewed as the norm, to the point where she didn't want to bring Filipino food for lunch anymore. Stories like hers must be part of my class if we're going to live into this work.

Such work to ground our class in culturally relevant narratives also helped us move deeper into our engagement with *Republic* 7. What better way to connect to a story about the tension between oppressive education and liberatory education than to bring in first-hand experiences of that same tension? Furthermore, although the language of 'cultural relevance' is not found in Plato, there are certainly moments when Plato's characters recognize the need to meet students where they are and to understand education as situated within a specific social and cultural context. Recall, for instance, the vastly different natures of those who study philosophy, which seem to vary a great deal depending on what sort of city they're in, and the commensurately different obligations those philosophers have to their cities (*Republic* 520a-c; and again 487a-498c).

3.2 Internal Transformation

As *Republic* 7 famously puts it, education is not a matter of putting knowledge into souls like "sight into blind eyes," but rather requires "turning the whole soul until it is able to study that

which is" (518c8-10). As Socrates goes on to explain, this is not just a matter of focusing on mathematics or astronomy, but also involves being "freed from the bonds of kinship with becoming, which have been fastened to it by eating, greed, and other such pleasures and which, like leaden weights, pull its vision downwards" (519a9-b3). In other words, education involves not only things like research and study but also a transformation of the person.

This same transformation is at the heart of Black Panther pedagogy,[39] which focuses more on the development of consciousness and character than on the mastery of specific content. As Dyson explains, in the context of adult education,

> with colonization's toxic affect on individuals' humanity, it was imperative that those impacted engage in a de-colonization process (i.e., internal liberation) to rid their minds of this force. Responsively, many Panthers not only re-defined themselves within an oppressive structure, but were able to re-position themselves as de-colonial pedagogues. This enabled them to provide a safe space for individuals to begin re-claiming their identity(-ies), while empowering people to confront their limit-situations.[40]

The person of the learner and the development of their sense of self lies at the heart of this educational vision.[41]

An emphasis on education as transformational also shows up in *Revolutionary Suicide*. Newton contrasts the shame—a psychic pain—of being illiterate to physical pain, writing that whereas natural processes can relieve physical pain, in the case of the soul, you "have to relieve it with your own strength of will, your own discipline, and determination. I had been hurt many times in fights, but nothing equaled the pain I felt at not being able to read."[42] Learning to read eased that pain and "a whole new world opened"[43] to him. And again, as I mentioned at the start,

the fact that he started with the *Republic* led to an especially significant transformation: describing his experience on trial, Newton says he

> tried to explain what a deep impression Plato's allegory of the cave had made on me and how the prisoners in that cave were a symbol of the Black man's predicament in this country. It was a seminal experience in my life, I explained, for it had started me thinking and reading and trying to find a way to liberate Black people.[44]

Learning, on this model, cannot be seen as separate from a transformative change in perception, values, and ways of living.

One key piece of this transformation involves helping students gain a "knowledge of self"[45] in order to "build up a positive image of self"[46] that can ground genuine self-determination. To put that another way, on my reading one major goal of the Black Panther schools was to help students see their own value, to see that, as Socrates puts it in *Republic* 7, "the power to learn is present in everyone's soul" (518c4-5). One major goal of my class, therefore, must be to help my students recognize the value of their own experiences and of their perspective on our texts—and also to recognize the ways in which models of education succeed or fail to consider that value.[47]

3.3 How to Think Not What to Think

This recognition of student ability and insight also grounds another key idea of Black Panther pedagogy, which emphasizes critical thinking over the memorization of content. As Ericka Huggins explains,

> the school's principles came from the socialist principles we tried to live in the Black Panther Party. One of them being critical thinking—that children should learn not what to

> think but how to think… the school was an expression of the collective wisdom of the people who envisioned it.[48]

This is not to say that the BPP schools were neutral on content—indeed one of the points on the Party's original "Platform and Program" demands "education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society."[49] Nevertheless, while an honest examination of history and society was part of the curriculum, those things were taught through discussion and the invitation to build understanding communally rather than through giving lectures or having students learn by memorization. As BPP member Reggie Schell explains it, the schools worked primarily through discussion:

> we facilitated discussions so everyone could get a picture on what took place… we even read something from Fanon or something else and would discuss it. We focused on being hands-on, not abstract about trying to reach a piece of freedom, which we did.[50]

In other words, students were treated as though they could contribute to the work of understanding and learning, even when studying complex ideas like those of Fanon.[51] And this education was itself an act of empowerment; the students did in fact gain confidence in their thinking. Another BPP member, Barbara Easley-Cox, sums it up: "As other individuals began to speak, they also grew."[52] I couldn't think of a better learning outcome for my students.

Likewise, of course, in *Republic* 7: the freed prisoner is not given a lecture about the sun; rather, he sees it for himself and draws his own conclusions (516b8-c2). And that in turn, as Socrates reminds us, models the philosopher who 'sees' the form of the good and then "must infer (συλλογιστέα) that it is the cause of all that is correct and beautiful…" (517b9-c1).

3.4 Civic Engagement

Finally, just as the freed prisoner must famously return to the cave out of obligation to their community, the students in the original Black Panther schools learned through activism and civic engagement. Education was seen as connected to and continuous with working for shared liberation. Students in the Black Panther Party's Intercommunal Youth Institute, for example, "learned writing skills by writing poetry and letters to incarcerated BPP members, by attending trials of BPP members and other political prisoners, by distributing food at BPP-sponsored food giveaways, and by selling BPP newspapers."[53]

This, to me, is both the most exciting part of this pedagogy and the area where I was most concerned about falling short. What might it look like to invite my students into this model of learning? Or, to put it another way, how can I avoid Newton's major complaint about people who just talk?[54] If I ended this unit with an essay exam, I would have done a disservice to this tradition. My stopgap assignment for this year was to turn this concern itself into a question for my students. For their midterm exam about this unit of our class, they worked in small groups to design assignments or activities for future students in this class, and part of their task was to think about ways to incorporate civic engagement into those draft assignments.

The students came up with a fascinating and inspiring range of assignment ideas. Some focused on getting involved with groups in our campus, like the Black Student Union or the foodbank. Others envisioned spending time in nearby elementary schools and helping elementary students learn about local Black history and make artworks to celebrate that heritage. One group came up with a multi-stage assignment that involved researching local issues relevant to Black Panther goals, like adequate housing and education for Black folks, and then ending with a letter-writing campaign or other advocacy work. Last but not least, one group planned to bake cookies to raise money for anti-racist work on our campus.

The students were clearly engaged by this unusual midterm, and they told me that they enjoyed both their small group work and the chance to hear about the other groups' ideas. In terms of areas for me to work on, a number of the projects focused almost entirely on Newton rather than Plato. Perhaps that's to be expected given my framing and the students' interests, but since this is an ancient philosophy class, I'll need to think about tilting that balance a bit in the future.

On the other hand, at least some students found great value in the assignment. One of them, for example, wrote the following reflection afterwards:

> I… appreciated how this assignment allowed me to think about how to connect education with the surrounding community and ways that college students can spread their knowledge to improve the lives of people around them. I was really inspired with Huey Newton's mission to educate those around him who normally would not have that opportunity due to a lack of support. Newton and Plato make me view my education in a different way, as did this assignment, because now I am thinking how the knowledge that I gain can be used to help others instead of using it for my own success.

This may be the most affirming comment I've gotten in 25 years of teaching.

But all of that still feels incomplete, as perhaps any first attempt should. And in any case, like Newton with his copy of the *Republic*, I'll keep on spending time on this and trying to learn.[55]

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[1] Newton writes, "By the time I had reached my last year of high school, I was a functional illiterate… Then I picked up [a] copy of Plato's *Republic*, bought a dictionary, and started learning to read… It was a long and painful process, but I was determined" (53-54). Huey P. Newton was born in 1942 and was murdered (likely in a drug-deal gone wrong) in 1989. He and Bobby Seale co-founded the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in 1966 in Oakland, CA. This Marxist-Leninist Black Power group focused on protection from police brutality, housing, job security, education, and liberation for Black people (see pages 122-125 of *Revolutionary Suicide* for their original ten-point platform.) For more information on Newton and the Black Panthers, see Person and also Nelson; for a helpful discussion of Newton's complex legacy, see Hughey. Finally, see Sowers for a thoughtful discussion of the relationships between Newton's life and ideas and both Plato and Socrates.

[2] Newton, 249.

[3] All credit to Brian P. Sowers for calling attention to those stories and examining Plato and Newton alongside one another.

[4] "Race, Racialization and Resistance in the US," a curricular project at Seattle University funded by the Mellon Foundation, 2023-25.

[5] The name of the class is "Origins of Philosophy."

[6] Bornfree, for example, discusses teaching these texts to incarcerated students, who "objected to reading Newton's character and activities through a Eurocentric frame. To do so set up an implicit hierarchy in which Socrates is the model and Newton the mere copy, one student suggested."

[7] I realize that in presenting concrete details like these here and in what follows, I risk appearing to trade objectivity for something more idiosyncratic or anecdotal. The Black Panther Party's emphasis on culturally relevant curriculum and personal transformation, however, seem to encourage a fully embodied account of my own and my students' learning.

[8] I also showed a portion of the excellent documentary "The Black Panthers - Vanguard of the Revolution."

[9] https://cdchc.org/clinic/carolyn-downs-family-medical-center. Thanks to my colleague Hannah Tracy for reminding me to include this.

[10] Newton, 33.

[11] Newton, 77.

[12] Newton, 77.

[13] Newton, 77.

[14] Newton, 77.

[15] Sowers, 36.

[16] Sowers, 36.

[17] For just a couple of examples, see Wilberding and Zamosc.

[18] Newton, 77. See Sowers, 36-37 for a discussion of other parallels between Newton's work and elements of the cave allegory.

[19] Newton, 74.

[20] Newton, 75.

[21] Newton, 129.

[22] Newton, 76-77.

[23] Sowers, 33-34.

[24] Sowers, 35.

[25] Students in the Seattle University Honors Program begin their time at university with two or three seminars that focus primarily on ancient Mediterranean history, literature, and philosophy.

[26] Bornfree.

[27] "Newton's application of Socratic philosophy also illuminates his meaning of revolutionary suicide. In other words, freeing those chained in the cave's recesses becomes a guaranteed death sentence, a Socratic revolutionary suicide, one that Newton consciously and willingly chooses" (Sowers, 37).

[28] Bornfree.

[29] Newton, 316.

[30] See, for example, Newton 77 and 249.

[31] For example, on the page right before he retells the cave story, Newton talks about knocking someone's tooth out (76). And the longest chapter of the book is about his alleged killing of a police officer—and whether Newton killed

the officer or not, there's no argument that he was present during a gunbattle with the Oakland police. There are more examples and allegations, but I will leave those for another day.

[32] As, for example, the *San Francisco Chronicle* labeled him (see Hughey, 215).

[33] Although I don't quote them in this section, I learned a great deal from LaRaviere's and especially Pough's work in this area.

[34] This account of four main elements is my own imperfect summary, based on materials I am synthesizing.

[35] Newton, 17.

[36] Newton, 18.

[37] Newton, 20.

[38] Huggins and LeBlanc-Ernest, 173.

[39] See, for example, Dyson, 80, and Hughey, 225.

[40] Dyson, 80.

[41] See also Pough, 474-475 for another discussion that emphasizes "change in [students] themselves" as part of BPP-inspired education.

[42] Newton, 54-55.

[43] Newton, 55.

[44] Newton, 249.

[45] Newton, 123.

[46] Hughey, 225.

[47] See also Hughey's discussion of the epistemic privilege of those excluded from 'traditional' models of education, at 219-220.

[48] Murch, 178; I first encountered this quotation in Choi's excellent online article.

[49] Newton, 123.

[50] Dyson, 85.

[51] Though to be clear, the classes described here are not the elementary school classes discussed elsewhere, but rather community education classes.

[52] Dyson, 85.

[53] Huggins and LeBlanc-Ernest, 169.

[54] See, for example, Newton, 119, 121, and 322-3.

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