EDITORIAL:
The Importance of Theory for Activist Education

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The goal of this issue of JASTE is to talk about the importance of theory in critical social justice work in science education. Critical work in science education should recognize that theory – in its many imaginative forms – is integral to critical work in education. As Homi Bhabha (1994) notes, no organized protest can happen without organizing concepts – in other words, ‘the strike needs the pamphlet’ – and the pamphlet comes from theory. What emerge in this collection are the grounds for thinking differently. What formalized space of science education is reserved for thinking? When is it okay to think? What would happen if we did? How should we think? This collection of papers attempts to cover how, why, and for what ends theory is integral to social justice work in science education - more importantly to provide the grounds for educators to think. The challenges outlined in this issue include the following: How do we align and form solidarity with others (biota/abiotas) against authoritarian science? How do we shake the frame of modernity and its controlling rationalities – from which both science and critical theory stem (just because scholarship is counter-modern does not mean it is not also modern)? What affordances does an engagement with philosophy and politics bring? Thank you to Ajay Sharma, Alex Means, Alexandra Dimick, Gale Seiler, Noel Gough, and Shakhnoza Kayumova for providing their experiences with/love of theory.

For me, the collector/editor of this work, the authors have sparked new ways of looking at the bodies of thinkers – that is to say, that thinkers in science as a diverse collection of bodies – like Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze’s (1977) bodies without organs – at moments of thought – as activists – as scholars – we may by less conjoined – in process of deterritorialization – where the way our bodies are segmented, for one minute, become light and transparent. Theory lingers on the minds of the author, the people – theory lingers in their air and becomes a uniting force for bodies. The bodies caught up with each other trying to make sense of it all. In this way, the interconnected collection of bodies in education, what intersects them and forms the faint borders of segmentation through and around the bodies, becomes a kind of phenomenon itself – critical scholars exist within a phenomenology of bodies. I will conclude with a figuring of this situation – all of us connected together; theory first unweaves, makes us light, and weaves us together again. Following both Kant and Michel Foucault, Michael Hardt (2011) claims that theory is a way out of immaturity, a way to reconnect with each other through thought for autonomy and democracy “In modernity the task of theory is to ask what characterizes our present and our age, and who is the collective subject that belongs to it” (p. 20).
Figure 1. An assemblage of segmented/unsegmented theory-bodies

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