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## Are You A Spare Part

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## Are You A Spare Part

### Keywords

poetry, entanglement, becoming, curriculum, art, photography

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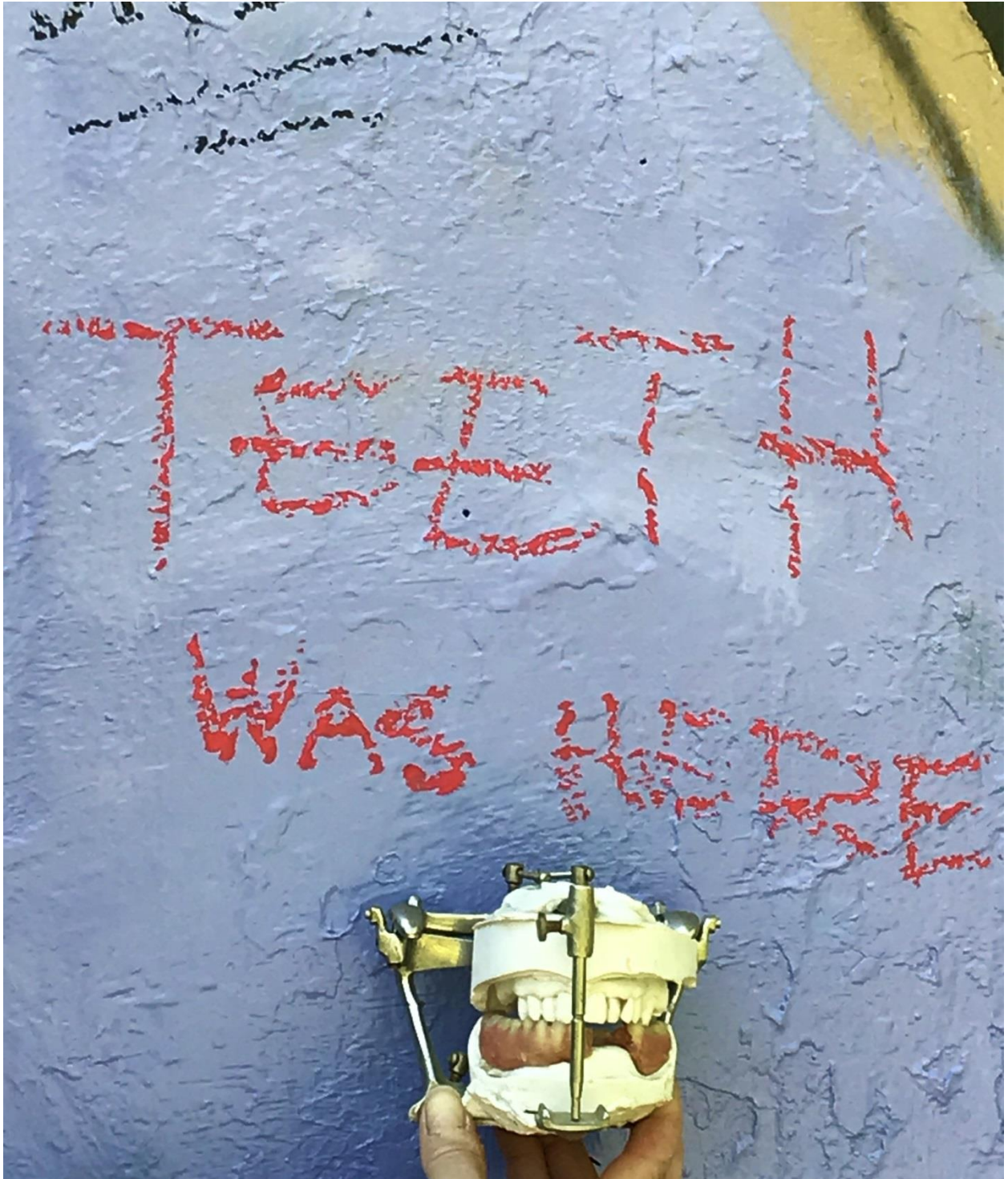
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Are You A Spare Part? Morna McDermott McNulty











### ARE YOU A SPARE PART?

The factory process of schooling fueled by a neo-liberal right-wing corporate ideology believes that placing children and teachers on conveyer belts to fit the machine of self serving profit is the best way to reform education. Or at least, they promote this for *other people's* children. *Their* children go to pricey private schools that remain far away from the factory. They believe in racial segregation and omitting history or scientific facts from our curriculum. They believe in silencing marginalized voices. They believe that burning books is a solution to their fears. Like form-fitting cogs, squeezed into molds by everything from high stakes tests and charter schools to anti critical race theory rhetoric, the "reformers" (fronted by agitated parents and orchestrated by silent architects .... billionaires and multinational corporations), will ensure *we* all take our "place" in the society *they* construct.

But many of us are, or are becoming factory model defects. There are more of us. The "reformers" who demand complicity and silence find us unacceptable. Our factory model "defects" make us unsuitable to be sold as part of the machine that will make the education corporocracy billions of dollars. Therefore we have been cast off, or perhaps jumped, off the assembly line.

But here's the good news. That makes us all spare parts.

And you know what passionate and creative communities of people in desperate times do with spare parts? They construct new ideas, new systems-- they create new worlds.

Spare parts are powerful in their potential-that they can become something different than the role they were designed for. Right now, there are educators all over the country dismantling the corporate-reform machine. But the rising tide of right-wing "guerilla tactics" (Huebek, 2001) in classrooms and Boards of Education meetings are increasingly dominating the public narrative and media optics. The efforts to privatize public education, rooted in the American Legislation Exchange Council, The Heritage Foundation, The Council for National Policy and other dark money operations, have crafted localized astro-turf movements to do their bidding. Turning away, ignoring them, will no longer suffice.

Action is critical. You don't get off the conveyer belt by thinking about it. Talking about change is important, without it we cannot change the dominant narrative, but what's most important is what we DO with this information. We need to act. Now.

While we continue to allow our public discourse to be mired in bogus debates intended to confuse the public another good teacher is fired, another child suffers at the hands of abusive testing practices, and companies like Pearson roll another million into their stock portfolio. We cannot wait. But actions require risk.

But what we are collectively learning, as one painful piece of legislation after another gets passed, is that these risks are even greater if we DON'T act. There's a famous saying (whose origins I cannot trace) that says "*All power to the imagination!*" This statement is a call to force ... a call to transform what is, to what could be. Through the imagination we can reclaim our power of, our vision for, and our *right* to a democratic, socially-just, equitable, sustainable and meaningful public education for *all* children. We do not accept the corporate brand education that comes in the form of pre-packaged cereal boxes which we are forced to consume. We have read the information on the side of the cereal box and we find its ingredients toxic. And we know there is no prize waiting for us inside at the bottom. We will not consume this product. We want to tear the box open. Remember, we are spare parts. We imagine our own future.

There's a new freedom in our collective capacity to imagine how we can fit together, work together, each with our own strengths- -each of us is a vital spare part—each has a part to play in building a new creative design for educating our children and for the life we seek to build-but one spare part cannot do as nearly as much as those that have been brought together- -we will build ourselves as self determined, cooperative fragments-- rearranging the bigger picture—if we can change perception we can change reality. We don't need a machine to tell us how this will be done—they tried that once before. It was called No Child Left Behind. They fooled us once. Now the fascist corporate machine is disguised in the language of "freedom, liberty, and choice." But you know what? That's why we spare parts are fighting back-we won't get fooled again.

References

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[http://www.theocracywatch.org/yurica\\_weyrich\\_manual.htm](http://www.theocracywatch.org/yurica_weyrich_manual.htm)