

Neutralizing the Uncanny through Culturally Relevant Teaching

Roberto Ollivier-Garza

Department of Language, Literacy & Sociocultural Studies
College of Education - The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM, USA

Abstract

At the height of the Roman Empire's power, Marcus Aurelius, emperor and stoic philosopher, identified his positionality as neither Athenian nor Roman but rather as "a citizen of the universe." For a man of his time, power and privilege to have been able to think beyond himself, in terms of the global rather than the local, suggests that he had benefited immensely from the guidance and wisdom of teachers, who through culturally relevant instruction imparted an awareness and holistic appreciation of the value of all of humankind. As one observes the multitude of current global conflicts, one questions why humanity has not been able to move beyond petty grievances to achieve the equitable global harmony and citizenship that Aurelius aspired to so long ago. Motivated by the purpose of improving academic, economic, and social equity, this exploratory essay examines historic and current North American pedagogical theories of culturally responsive teaching practices with the juxtapositional purpose of examining and evaluating the best method for minimizing Drs. Ernst Jentsch and Sigmund Freud's theories on the uncanny and the uncanny valley-effect phenomena-the objective being the discovery of improved teaching praxis to minimize educational and social cognitive dissonance in refugee, immigrant, minority, and socioeconomically subordinate students both domestically and internationally.

Keywords: cultural competency, international education, teacher training, uncanny

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