RHIZOMATIC RESISTANCE: A PEDAGOGY FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

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by

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**Introduction**

Reading radical or critical pedagogical journals and books can easily overwhelm any educator who wishes to use education as a means to combat social injustice. Radical pedagogy can be mobilized against threats which undermine social equity such as the militarization of education\(^1\), globalization\(^2\), conservatism\(^3\), the abuse of children's rights\(^4\), heteronormalization\(^5\), racism\(^6\), pollution and harmful economic policy\(^7\), standardized testing\(^8\), Eurocentricity\(^9\), and the war against terror\(^10\). However, this overabundance of problems can baffle any teacher trying to decide what type of direction he or she should attempt to take when planning a curriculum aimed at social transformation.

There are just too many different social values, theories, and institutions that need to be challenged and critiqued. How can any teacher be responsible for choosing just one? How can one choose a topic which would be more beneficial to both society and the student as a whole? Where can one possibly start? The

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2. Peterson, 15-18; Miller, 8-14.
3. Schrecker, 7-11; McIlenen, 15-19; Lazere, 20-4; Chamberlain 2-6.
4. Nieto, [http://radicalpedagogy.icaap.org/content/issue7_2/neito.html](http://radicalpedagogy.icaap.org/content/issue7_2/neito.html).
5. Akins, 16-23.
6. Campbell, 33-7; Picower, 11-18.
7. Gardner, 24-33; Banning 11-18; Adelman, 5-10.
9. Gibson, [http://radicalpedagogy.icaap.org/content/issue6_1/gibson.html](http://radicalpedagogy.icaap.org/content/issue6_1/gibson.html).
problem, as I see it, stems not from the choice of questioning these monolithic institutions and abstract theories, such as racism, universities, governments, or neoliberalism, but setting the goal of transforming one of them instead of the groups of individuals who have produced them. Now, where these teachers get it right is their focus on building students’ ability to critically analyze and critique the system. The problem they have revolves around their implicit supposition that institutions and abstract theories are responsible for the social injustices inherent in our social system and are therefore set as the focal point for transformation instead of the groups of individuals whose beliefs and relationships are responsible for the cultivation and perpetuation of social inequity in our society. While their approach on focusing and encouraging students to challenge their perceptions, positions, and privileges provides them with the tools for reflection, their aims of combating these immense institutions and intangible theories obfuscate the entire project by implicitly instructing students that these institutions and abstract theories exist as the cardinal points of resistance as opposed to the inequitable relationships which they participate in and beliefs these students possess themselves.

Let’s be perfectly honest: who can possibly hope to struggle with or overcome such behemoth institutions and recondite theories? When faced with a project of such immensity, where is the possibility for success? When titanic institutions such as universities, governments, corporations, and impalpable theories such as heteronormalization, neoliberalism, and racism are the ultimate
focal points for resistance of radical pedagogy instead of the people who
constructed them—and, because of this, are responsible for the bigotry and bias
they reflect—how can we expect any student’s hope not to be inevitably
transformed into desperation and failure? This approach undermines our
students’ attempts at struggling for social change and ends up leading to the
failure of the project as a whole. Simply teaching students to recognize the
inequity inherent in institutions and theories through the evaluation of texts,
themselves, and the media in the classroom may lead to critical awareness and
cognizance of the problem, but it does not provide students with the opportunity
work to transform the inequitable relationships responsible for producing the
injustices that plague our communities. Institutions and these theories are mere
social constructs and are not responsible for the creation and proliferation of
these inequalities: people are. Not only are people responsible for the
construction of these institutions and concepts but these institutions and
concepts are the product of and are representative of the relationships, values,
ideologies, and beliefs that people possess. While altering these social
constructions may change some of the effects, at least temporarily, it does not
challenge the cause: the relationships, values, and beliefs of the people that
produce, perpetuate, and validate these institutions, laws, states, theories, and
the social inequalities in the first place. In order to make any significant change
to the social injustices in our society we must first work to challenge the manner
in which social inequality is produced which ultimately leads to the inequitable
treatment and social existence of others. Only, then, after a great deal of work and time, will we ever see any significant amount of mitigation of the social injustices of our time.

However, before going into any specific detail regarding how radical pedagogy could be mobilized to transform the oppressive relationships and prejudiced values and beliefs people possess at a local level, we should first examine in more detail an example of a pedagogical project which offers institutional change as a solution for the injustices produced by inequitable relationships at a local level. This can be seen in numerous works of radical pedagogy and of their theorists, such as Henry Giroux, R.I Simon, and Donaldo Macedo. This is not to say that these works do not have merit or should not be valued, studied, and appreciated. They have provided invaluable scholarship which will allow radical teachers to reference, draw inspirations from, and develop the critical awareness that they necessarily espouse. Furthermore, the scholarship that they provide helps to build an archive of source materials that educators can use to educate themselves as well as their students on the social constructs which implicitly produces these social problems. Titles such as The University in Chains by Henry Giroux, Teaching Against the Grain by Roger I. Simon, and Literacies of Power by Donaldo Macedo provide invaluable scholarship for educators to learn from but place too much attention on ostensible institutions and theories that many believe are the causes of social inequities instead of the relationships which cause them. In order to better
illustrate this, I will demonstrate how Donaldo Macedo in his book *Literacies of Power* implicitly follows this approach. By doing this, I do not intend to invalidate this work of scholarship. On the contrary, I believe that it offers crucial and invaluable insight about how institutions, theories, and ideologies influence and mislead individuals in society; however, I believe that numerous sections can easily be indicative of this institutional approach.

While, as I have just stated, a number of chapters could illustrate this point—Macedo spends a great deal of time demonstrating how the lack of inclusion of critical literacy development in education allows the public to be deceived by the U.S. government—I prefer to focus on a project that he proposes to a university faculty group collaborating in a seminar on the “Future of the University” in the second chapter of his book entitled “Our Common Culture”. Throughout the beginning of this chapter Macedo discusses the conservative right’s objections to the inclusion of critical pedagogy and the focus on the development of critical literacy in the classroom, which ultimately leads him to begin discussing the need for the proliferation of multiculturalism throughout institutions in the U.S. as well as the western, euro-centric recalcitrance to do so. During this discussion he uses this project to not only demonstrate the need of projects to promote multiculturalism in universities as well as the implacability of faculty and institutions to implement such changes. Prior to this he spoke on the numerous instances of racial unrest that had been occurring at the time and in the past at colleges and universities in the U.S. In order to provide institutional
support to challenge and arrest such racial tension and incidents from occurring in the future, he suggests the creation of a Center for Race Relations and Cultural Studies at five participating universities. Macedo explains that

[a]gainst the landscape of racism and xenophobia on campuses, in particular, and in society, in general, I proposed to participants in the “Future of the University” seminar at a major public university that it would be to the university’s benefit to create the structures needed to encourage and support rigorous studies in racial and cultural relations. By promoting racial and cultural relations as an area of rigorous inquiry, the university would not only be better equipped to deal with the racial unrest within its campuses, but it also would have the necessary understanding concerning race and cultural relations to contribute positively to the prevention of racial riots, as witnessed in schools across the United States. The university, through a more thorough understanding of race and cultural issues, could help create conditions so that universities and schools could become learning centers and not war zones, where students would not fear for their safety. (53)

The individuals participating in the seminar agreed that this should be tabled for more discussion and asked him to write his ideas in a memo that would be distributed to the whole group. However, when the memo was distributed, the cochair who had asked him for the written proposal in the first place attached his
own argument, in the sake of fairness to both sides, arguing against the necessity of creating such a center. Instead of redundantly demonstrating the flaws in the cochair’s argument—Macedo has done this successfully enough in his book—I wish to demonstrate the inherent flaws in setting up a Center for Race Relations and Cultural Studies as a solution for combating the racial tensions and incidents happening across the U.S. This is not to say that I will agree with or side with the cochair’s argument who rather unfortunately argues that such a center and multicultural research is unnecessary because of the universal greatness embodied by the Western canon of every subject, whether science, art, mathematics, or literature. Instead, I will illustrate that the creation of an institution which will seek to address the issues that Macedo suggests above will be largely ineffective to combat the challenges of race relations on campus throughout the U.S. and make an impact, if any, on society as a whole.

To begin with, the initial misstep in this proposal results from the core purpose of its foundation: research. Before including the memo that introduces his idea for the Center for Race Relations and Cultural Studies, Macedo describes a number of instances of racial tension and actions that have occurred throughout the nation prior to this meeting which, he explains, justifies the need for such a center to be created in order to help educate not only the universities participating in the creation of and research at this center but the entire United States. “Multicultural issues intertwined with racial and gender realities are now dominating campus life across the United States. Hardly a day goes by when
one does not read about yet another incident or racial skirmish at some school, college, or university” (Macedo 51). Before describing his suggestion for the Center for Race Relations and Cultural Studies, Macedo gives a number of examples of racial tension and violence that occurred at a number of different universities and colleges around the nation, such as outrage over racially insulting graffiti at Georgia State University in Atlanta, an African American student’s attack by a white visitor to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and staged sit-in at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill which demanded a more central location for a proposed black cultural center. When reading these examples, it may seem understandable why Macedo suggests the creation of an institution which seeks to ameliorate these problems; actually, a number of the students suggested and demanded this as a result of these incidents. However, is the creation of an institution the most effective way to combat these issues? Are the institutions themselves responsible for these incidents? Of course, they do bear a great deal of responsibility if these incidents occur on their campuses. They do and should provide all of their students with equal institutional support as well as a multiculturally safe educational environment. Obviously, from the actions that have been described the safety and institutional support has not been provided—at least not to a degree which would have averted these incidents from occurring. The universities and colleges described have not provided this for their students. The ultimate question then becomes will a Center for Race Relations and Cultural Studies,
which sets its objective as research without including a concrete plan on how this research will reach and impact both the public and the students, be the best and most effective way to handle this problem. However, before we approach that question maybe we should attempt to evaluate the problem Macedo is attempting to address first.

As I have stated before, institutions are the product of the people that create and facilitate their actions and every day activities; therefore, their actions represent and mirror those that are shared by the dominant value and belief system shared by a majority of these people. When “an African-American residential adviser was beaten up by a white visitor and [had] feces smeared on the door of his room[, enraged] scores of black students rampaged a 22-story dormitory” (Macedo 51) at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1992. The question then becomes what caused this incident to occur. The university has a great deal to blame for this incident. While some of the circumstances were beyond its control, can they completely be held responsible for an individual who was not even one of their students? For such an outcry to be made by such a large number of students the university must not have provided the institutional support or such a public outcry would not have taken place. Racial tensions had been building up and the participants of these actions must have experienced and witnessed numerous racially motivated incidents, whether big or small, for such a public display to occur. However, was the institution the direct cause? If not, what was? Before we answer that, let us examine two more incidents cited
by Macedo. “At Michigan Olivet College [in] April [1992], a racial brawl inspired by a white student’s allegation of harassment resulted in the hospitalization of two students and the temporary withdrawal of almost all of the school’s 60 black students” (Macedo 51). Was the college completely responsible for this incident? What should they have done differently to avoid this type of escalation caused by ignorance regarding race? Finally,

[...] Georgia State University in Atlanta [in fall 1992], 70 black students staged a sit-in at the office of President Carl V. Patton after unknown students scrawled racially insulting graffiti on a campus trash can. They successfully demanded the creation of an African-American Studies Department. (Macedo 51-52)

While, as I have stated above, the colleges and universities associated with these egregious events do hold responsibility for not doing more to prevent them from happening, what is the most immediate cause or impetus behind these incidents? If we look closely, I suggest that all the examples Macedo cites are the results of the inequitable relationships and ignorance of people culturally and ethnically different from each other. All these incidents are racially motivated because of an ignorant enmity towards people of a different race and culture, in this case African-American. Of course, the schools involved should have preempted this by dong more to raise awareness to this problem. Instead of merely creating a research institution that studies multiculturalism across a number of disciplines, would not the resources of these universities and others
like it be better spent on providing opportunities for the students involved to interact, share, and learn from each other? Of course research is necessary to provide scholarship to study this issue; however, if this scholarship and the institution that produces it has no plan on how to apply this research to challenge the inequitable relationships that occur in everyday life beyond intellectual pursuit and the classroom, it will remain confined to an academic space and leave no impact on the outside world that provided the impetus for the scholarship in the first place. It will only reproduce the detrimental schism which separates a great deal of academic research and its direct impact on the outside world today. In order for academia and the educational system as a whole to significantly impact the social system, then, it must incorporate a pedagogical approach into its instructional practices that bridges the divide between the scholarship it produces and the socially transformative action that needs to take place. Unfortunately, as I will shortly illustrate, Macedo’s Center for Race Relations and Cultural Studies does not offer a solution to this division. While some of its general aims are sound, it fails to suggest a manner to unite this gap at the moment of its implementation. However, before we address this question further we should examine Macedo’s solution for the racial tension and violence at universities and college across the country in more detail.

Within his memo Macedo describes what a Center for Race Relations and Cultural Studies would entail if it should be created. In short, the center would “argue for ways in which cultural processes can be understood so as to illuminate
the goal of developing a new pedagogy that would inform the public about the purpose and meaning of living in a democratic ever-changing multicultural society” (Macedo 55), “analyze theory and practice of defining the ethical and social responsibilities of citizens who are part of a complex web of race, class, ethnic, gender, and cultural texts” (Macedo 55), “highlight cultural processes as forms of textual, social, political and racial analysis” (Macedo 55), and “offer analyses of the ways in which the urban populace constructs meaning out of the richly textured fabric of their diverse histories, languages, and communities” (Macedo 55). At first glance, these goals actually sound as if they could potentially address the issues students may have with racially and culturally relating to one another. It calls for a pedagogy to educate the public and calls for a great deal of study about how different cultures, ethnicities, and genders interact with one another. Of course, these goals are laudable. These suggestions appear to offer sound and effective goals to challenge the perspectives and cultural understanding of students that eventually allow for racial and cultural tensions to rise at schools, colleges, and universities. However, the reader receives a better understanding of the purpose of this center through evaluating the objectives he provides: the objectives offer no suggestions on how to apply the knowledge gained from the research into transformative action that could ultimately alter the inequitable relationships outside the walls of academia. The Center for Race Relations and Cultural Studies will “bring together both national and local scholars to pursue research
which links society to wider cultural and racial processes” (Macedo 56); “collect, document, produce, support and disseminate research in the areas of cultural studies and race relations” (Macedo 56); “create and enhance on-going discussions among faculty from various disciplines regarding the relationships between various cultural processes and race relations studies” (Macedo 56); and “conduct collaborative research concerning urban policies with various organizations in the state government and other agencies that work directly with a multiracial and multicultural population” (Macedo 56). While the first set of goals seemed extremely promising, what happened to the students in this equation? How and why are they being eradicated from the process all together if they were the impetus which caused the proposal of the research center in the first place? If the issues exist between the manner in which students understand and interact with each other, how will this institution that seeks to raise awareness and tolerance of multiculturalism ever make an impact on the individuals that were the impetus for its creation? In all actuality, it seems they have been completely removed from the equation. The objectives as Macedo has stated focus on catering to two people: scholars and members of the universities. If they are to be the main focus of the institution and those that this center seeks to service, how will their research ever reach the students? The only way I see that this will be possible is that these scholars and faculty members then become responsible for relaying this information to their students. Students will then study it and incorporate it into their scholarly works. If the
issues that are occurring center around the relationships between students, shouldn’t they be the focal point of the actions that this institution takes? In this model the educators become responsible for providing what they learned to the students opposed to the students working together with the faculty to begin to critically understand the issues that make racially and culturally motivated incidents possible and then work together to transform the school, college, or university. This proposal removes any faith that the students have the knowledge or capability to recognize the problem and work to change the manner in which they relate to each other and make incidents like those mentioned above less likely to happen again. Furthermore, by placing faculty and scholars at the center and focus of this center, Macedo’s proposal seems to imply that the research ultimately trickling down to the students in the classroom would be chosen by the instructor rather than material that both the students and the educators produced together and decided were necessary for the transformation of the school, college, university, community, and society to take place. This proposal inappropriately places too much emphasis on what the scholars, faculty, and educator place on the important areas of studies opposed to what students could illustrate that they need if they were integral parts of the process.

What makes this proposal and approach sadly ironic is the intimate knowledge and relationship that Macedo has with Paulo Freire’s works and Freire himself. Not only did Freire write a favorable forward to this book but
Macedo wrote the introduction to the 30\textsuperscript{th} anniversary edition of \textit{Pedagogy of the Oppressed}. While some may believe that Friere’s agreement to write a forward to the book should allow the reader to assume that \textit{Literacies of Power} has Freire’s sanction of its materials, there are too many similarities between what Macedo proposes and the banking system of education that Freire describes occurs under an oppressive regime. While I do not wish to imply that the proposal that Macedo has offered is intrinsically oppressive, it does not, however, place the student in the forefront of the action to seek to transform the relationships that continually produce and reinforce this problem. It is difficult to say that students are even on the periphery. While the reader may argue that the creation of the research center could be the precursor to the involvement of the students, this suggestion has two major flaws. To begin with, if this is the case, Macedo does not include this in his proposal, and if it is not present in the initial planning stages, then, what are the chances that the students will be included in later versions? Secondly, the students must be engaged in the planning process of any project that seeks to help bring about an alteration in students’ racial relationships. If their interactions are part of the problem, then they must be involved not only in the implementation but also the planning of the project, in this case the research center. Freire explains that every socially transformative action must involve the participation of all individuals to become successful: a communion must be created between the leaders and the people.
Apart from this communion, we do see dichotomy: leaders on one side and people on the other, in a replica of the relations of oppression. Denial of communion in revolutionary process, avoidance of dialogue with the people under the pretext of organizing them, of strengthening revolutionary power, or of ensuring a united front, is really a fear of freedom. It is a fear of or lack in the faith of the people. But if the people cannot be trusted, there is not reason for liberation; in this case the revolution is not even carried out for the people, but “by the people for the leaders: a complete self-negation. (Freire 129)

Macedo’s project, regardless of its goals and ideals, does not involve the students at any significant stage of either the implementation or the planning of the research center project. By evaluating the initial activities that Macedo suggests the center should seek to offer, it becomes painfully obvious that the students themselves will be nothing but a barely included afterthought. “The primary function of the Center will be to promote research” (Macedo 56), and students will barely be mentioned in the activities he offers. The Center for Race Relations and Cultural Studies will provide for “[t]he creation of regularly scheduled faculty seminars to review the most recently published research in cultural studies and to exchange information and criticism regarding our own on-going projects” (Macedo 56), “[t]he creation of a documentation center that would collect and classify works on culture and race relations” (Macedo 56),
“[t]he sponsoring of scholars for two and three day visits” which would allow for
“both faculty and students the possibilities for dialogue and critique” (Macedo 56),
and “[t]he pursuit of research funding for external funding agencies” (Macedo 56).
When we look back at the unfortunate inspiration for the creation of this center,
the racial tension and incidents that had been happening across the U.S., it
becomes difficult to understand how this issue will be addressed by this proposal.
Where the driving force for the creation of the Center for Race Relations and
Cultural Studies was the incidents and negative interactions that students had
with one another, these tragic and unnecessary details seem to be completely
replaced by desire to receive opportunities for research and outside funding.
While research is necessary, it must be applied to have any significant impact,
applied beyond the production of further scholarship and the wall of an academic
classroom. Research becomes valuable not simply because of the knowledge it
produces but because of the manner in which it is applied. Macedo’s proposal
offers no concrete plan of implementation or significant involvement or
collaboration with students in the production and dissemination of this
knowledge. It widens the schism between research and application rather then
connecting them. This proposal clearly appears designed to serve institutions
rather than the needs of the students, which begs to question what purpose it
serves to challenge the relationships that caused the incidents in the first place.
Shouldn’t education serve the needs of students, whether attending a university
or public school system, rather than those of an institution? While institutional
support is important, only the alteration of the students’ relationships themselves not the institution will lead to lasting social transformation and therefore, must be the focus of any action or project that seeks to help bring about social change.

To begin with, this approach demonstrates an inherent distrust in the ability of students to make changes in their own lives. In this case, all the potential changes and directions of study have been left up to the educators with the students at the universities which house the center serving merely as a the target for the results of research and inquiry instead of involving them directly in the process and allowing these students to dictate where this research and inquiry should be directed. While many may seek to question my argument by noting that at least Macedo is making an attempt to make a difference in the structure of schools, colleges, and universities, this approach does not allow for the transformation of the relationships that produced the problems in the first place. In all actuality, this project demonstrates an implicit lack of trust in the ability of students to reflect and challenge the multiple loci of the problem: their own understandings, perspectives, and interactions. Freire explains that

[i]f true commitment to the people, involving transformation of the reality by which they are oppressed, requires a theory of transforming action, this theory cannot fail to assign the people a fundamental role in the transformation process. The leaders cannot treat the oppressed as mere activists to be denied the opportunity of reflection and allowed merely the illusion of acting,
whereas in fact they would continue to be manipulated—and in this
case by the presumed foes of manipulation. (126)

The students must be involved in the process if social transformation is to take
place. While the supporters of this project may admit changes need to be made,
and in a small way we could offer them a modicum of praise for at least
recognizing that there is a problem, the solution that has been devised refuses to
address the roots of the problem. What is worse is not only that this solution
refuses to engage students in learning to become critically aware, which is what
Macedo notes as the most important thesis of his entire book, but by endorsing
this method, Macedo refuses to ask those who would participate in this project to
examine themselves. The lives of students and those on whom the research will
be focused have not even entered in the equation; they are merely objects to be
studied. These objectives and aims of this project demonstrate the refusal for
the faculties and scholars to challenge their positions and their complicity in this
entire mess. Of course, they

truly desire to transform the unjust order; but because of their
backgrounds they believe they must be the executors of the
transformation. They talk about the people, but they do not trust
them; and trusting the people is the indispensible precondition for
revolutionary change. A real humanist can be identified more by
his trust in the people which engages him in their struggle, than by
a thousand actions in their favor without that trust. (Freire 60)
The problem which arises when attempting to bring about social transformation through institutional change is that the relationships between individuals that produce the social injustices that we seek to ameliorate largely go unchanged. While a number of individuals who participate in the research may personally alter their outlooks and the approach to their scholarship, the inequitable relationships that produced the possibilities for the formation of these intuitions and beliefs will go unchanged, especially when we take Macedo’s suggestion as an approach to solving this issue. If we want to challenge these social inequities and decrease the possibility that individuals inequitable interactions will reproduce them, we need to utilize an approach that can lead to systemic change and not be satisfied by only transforming elite individuals in isolated instances, and this can only be done by working \textit{with} not \textit{for} the people to develop an understanding of the social influences and relationships that lead their interactions to produce this problem. This cannot be done through the creation of an institution or merely through reflection inside the safe confines of a school, college, or university. Educators who wish to bring about true and lasting social change must not only engage students in further developing their critical literacy but act during this process to challenge the social inequities they witness in their everyday lives, and this can only be done by working with the people, by involving the pedagogical process in the community.

Another aspect that is problematic with Macedo’s proposal is that it creates a strict demarcation between research and action. Both are necessary in
order to allow a complete understanding of the issue to be developed while at the same time using this knowledge to most effectively challenge the social inequities inherent in the social system. True social transformation “cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection: only then will it be a praxis” (Freire 65). Students and educators alike must work to transform the relationships that cause these problems, and this cannot only be achieved in the classroom or through a research project. It must engage students in questioning these relationships in their everyday lives in their homes, neighborhoods, and communities. “Political action on the side of the oppressed must be pedagogical action in the authentic sense of the word, and, therefore, action with the oppressed” (Freire 66).

Unfortunately, Macedo’s proposal merely seeks to simply accumulate scholarship on the topic as opposed to involving students in the process that might make multiculturalism a real possibility in this country.

This type of pedagogy consistently ignores and overlooks the loci that produce the social injustices that it is attempting to combat. Even though the evidence and examples are right in front of them, most critical pedagogists refuse to recognize it. Often they even discuss the relationships that result in social unrest or, in Macedo’s case, racial confrontation; however, these only serve as examples of the need to challenge the institutions that produced them as opposed to taking them as tangible evidence that the inequitable relationships themselves are the problem. The relationships should never be overlooked or
simply inserted into research as evidence belying the influence these social constructions have on groups of individuals; however, they repeatedly preference examining and critically analyzing these social constructions as opposed to the people that create them, which ultimately only serves to reinforce the social construction, which in turn safe-guards and perpetuates the institutions that provide them with their position of privilege and livelihood. Macedo’s proposal for a Center for Race Relations and Cultural Studies approaches the problem no differently. While rightfully criticizing a number of conservatives’ critiques on multiculturalism, Macdeo consistently provides examples that illustrate the social racial bigotry inherent in our inequitable social system which results from oppressive relationships opposed to social constructs, such as institutions. When critiquing the rhetoric employed by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Macedo suggests that

[i]f Schlesigner and his conservative cohorts really believed that African-Americans and other racial minorities are separatists, they should look Cornel West straight in the eye and explain to him why, after all of his intellectual accomplishments as a major scholar in the United States, New York City taxi drivers refuse to pick him up as a paying passenger. (Macedo 45)

The problem that exists here is not between a distant abstract institution and a group of individuals; the problem revolves around the people. While the institutions which men create can influence and perpetuate the manner in which
people act, the issue at stake in this example is between two racially and culturally different individuals, Cornel West and a taxi driver. The relationship that must be transformed is between two individuals, and this cannot and will not be done by a center solely focusing on research devoid of plan of action, such as a community outreach project. In fact, without an action in the community this type of relationship will never be addressed. While Cornel West and other scholars might work together to research the existence and instances of this problem and through this research come to a better understanding of the issues surrounding multiculturalism in the United States and possibly even each other, where does the taxi driver whose behavior and perception of black men caused him to refuse West service fit into this proposal? The sad fact is that he doesn’t. While the Center for Race Relations and Cultural Studies will offer a number of institutional opportunities for scholars to advance their careers, it will do absolutely nothing to alter the relationships that allowed or caused the taxi driver to prefer to lose money on a fare rather than stop to pick up an African-American. While Macedo’s proposal does offer an opportunity for reflection to the elite academic scholars, it refuses to involve the community members in this reflection or the scholars in any type of community action project. It excludes two components which Freire notes as required for social transformation, action and leaders united equally with the community.
Macedo provides his readers with another example by illustrating another instance when similar discrimination occurs to another well-known and respected scholar in a university setting.

This day-to-day racism in the United States is not limited to the streets of New York but is alive and well in the ivory tower of academia, as noted by Henry Louis Gates Jr., a professor at Harvard University, when discussing his experience at Duke University: “It was the most racist experience I ever had in my professional life...No matter what kind of car I drove or house I had, it was assumed it was a gift from the university. It was all a ‘where did that nigger get that Cadillac?’ kind of thing.” (Macedo 46)

While this incident does occur in a university setting, the issue does not center around institutional oppression but the inequitable relationships between groups of people. The issue is not that the university itself has imposed this racial prejudice on Gates—the institution was and probably in many ways still is reflective of these inequitable relationships—but that the relationships which the people staffing the institution and living in the surrounding community participate in perpetuate and produce this type of bigoted environment. The fact that both these examples cited here occurred to scholars and professors is irrelevant. The important aspect is that these confrontations were the direct result of oppressive relationships in the community opposed to distant and absent social constructions. In order to make the creation of the Center for Race Relations
and Cultural Studies beneficial for both the students, scholars, and community, it would need to utilize its research to implement plans which would encourage all of these individuals to analyze not only how racial divisions exist in society and in the world but also in their own lives. This must be achieved by more than mere collaborative research but also through collaborative community action which would provide all participants with the opportunity to explore and alter the manner in which the participate in the inequitable relationships that produce these racial disparities. However, Macedo's proposal does not include this component. Because its objectives are mostly reflective, the proposed Center for Race Relations and Cultural Studies does not contain the social transformative activities that will make the alteration of these relationships possible. When examining these examples and those that I have quoted earlier happening at different colleges, universities, and schools, they only seek to underscore the need to develop a pedagogy that seeks to develop a critical understanding and transformation of these relationships in our students; however, unfortunately educators and students have too often been trained to ignore the signs that indicate this even if it is directly in front of their face.

This becomes blatantly clear when examining the response to Macedo’s memo. Before Macedo’s memo detailing his proposal for a Center for Race Relations and Cultural Studies was distributed to the other members of the seminar, a cochair chose to write a counter argument and attach it along with Macedo’s in order to provide the seminar members with an unnecessarily
included other side of the argument (unnecessarily because it deals not with the need for the creation of a center to research and study multiculturalism but because it lambasts the concept of multiculturalism itself—not the exact topic of Macedo’s memo). However, what becomes plainly obvious when this section is placed under minimal scrutiny is that the fault does not solely reside with the cochair for his inclusion of this argument or with the other members of this seminar who allow this ill-informed argument to silence a discussion on the necessary inclusion of multiculturalism into any seminar entitled “Future of the University” but in Macedo himself by not working with the members of the seminar to first evaluate their own positions and the loci of their own opinions in regards to multiculturalism and then, work with them as a group in order to develop a solution that they all feel provides the alleviation that they all have come to view as the problem. Of course, this is not the easiest thing to do in a seminar that has not been designed for this purpose and that already has constraints such as time, topic, and scope which could hinder the attainment of such an end; however, would it not be better to work to critically analyze the relationships that make these perceptions and opinions possible, which could ultimately lead the members of this seminar to work to challenge similar relationships in their institutions instead of merely proposing a project which comprises the proposal of only one individual and perspective. If we take Macedo’s description of the environment at the time, is it a surprise that the fulfillment of this proposal did not happen? Freire explains that “[m]any political
and educational plans have failed because their authors designed them according to their own personal views of reality, never once taking into account (except as mere objects of their actions) the *men-in-a-situation* to whom their program was ostensibly directed" (94). Because Macedo’s proposal did not involve the seminar attendants in the planning process (he explains that he completed the proposal between seminar sessions and on his own), Macedo was incapable of building the revolutionary relationships necessary to make the commencement and completion of this project possible. The other members of the seminar neither had a stake in its creation or could feel the project addressed their needs or of their universities. Macedo describes his disappointment as a result of this experience. How can he be surprised that his idea did not float but sank? Inequitable relationships must be transformed before we can expect significant social and institutional change. Before any changes can be made to any institution or social construct the appropriate transformation to the relationships that produce the social injustices we wish to challenge must take place. This is why any pedagogy that sets its focus on combating behemoth intuitions, over-powerful states, and distant, abstruse theories is basically no more than a practice in futility. Without reflecting and challenging through action the relationships that produce inequity in our neighborhoods and communities as well as in our schools, colleges, and universities lasting social transformation will never take place.
Chapter 1

In the introduction I have described the danger of dividing research from action and the necessity of its application in order to help bring about social transformation. The fundamental weakness of this division and its pedagogical methods is its implied belief and acceptance of the position, production, and origin of power. While institutions do affect individuals, individuals are responsible for creating the social injustices which radical pedagogical classrooms attempt to combat at a local level. When large social institutions and abstract economic, social, gender, race, etc. theories are the focal points in classrooms espousing radical education and are, also, the objects discussed as needing to be transformed, they easily become understood by our students as the implied source and producer of power which causes social inequities and, thus, become the focal point of all their action. However, in truth, these are only the effect. In all actuality, the social injustices that we observe and experience are a result of inequitable relationships in our communities. According to Michel Foucault, “[P]ower is not an institution, and not a structure” (93). Inequitable relationships and social inequity do not originate from a distant superstructure; we produce them daily in our classrooms, neighborhoods, and towns. Therefore, in order to transform these inequities, we must challenge ourselves and others in our everyday lives and in our interactions in our communities. In order to better
understand this concept, I will demonstrate how Michel Foucault’s description of how systems of power are produced in *The History of Sexuality*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s concept of the rhizome and multiplicity in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and Paulo Freire’s notion of the production and alleviation of oppression in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* can be synthesized in order to produce a pedagogical approach which will challenge and alter the local inequitable relationships in which people participate and, because of this, become capable of the mitigation of social injustices and the transformation of communities and the social system as a whole.

When speaking of power, Foucault is not referencing a system or institution which sole purpose is to impose its will upon the citizens of a specific state. He does not analyze a method of power that exists in an *abstract above* and bequeaths its edicts, like a monarch, onto its subjects. This concept of power is incompatible with Foucault’s theory of its development. “[P]ower must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization” (Foucault 92). Power, for Foucault, is created in the disparity of equality inside force relations. Readers may question how Foucault’s definition of power can be reconciled with Freire. While Freire, upon first inspection, may appear to be speaking of a longitudinal system of power, the fact that he sets the alleviation of oppression as beginning with the alteration of the inequitable relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor illustrates that Freire, too, implicitly
subscribes to the belief that power is produced at a local level through the inequitable interplay between individuals.\textsuperscript{11} Similar to Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari also place inequitable relationships as the origins of power. However, instead of merely euphemistically naming them force relations or power relationships, Deleuze and Guattari find a middle ground between Foucault’s power relationship and Freire’s oppressed/oppressor paradigm and aptly name the relationship microfascisms\textsuperscript{12}.

Neither Foucault, Freire, or Deleuze and Guattari, when they speak of force relations, microfascisms, or the oppressor/oppressed paradigm\textsuperscript{13}, are referencing ephemeral entities that can only be understood through theoretical examination. Power, for all three, is created at the grassroots level, between individuals. As I have already stated, power is not produced through the actions

\textsuperscript{11} The relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor must be intrinsically changed in order for the oppressive system to alter. “Conversion to the people requires a profound rebirth. Those who undergo it must take on a new form of existence; they can no longer remain as they were. Only though comradeship with the oppressed can converts understand their characteristic ways of living and behaving, which in diverse moments reflect the structure of domination” (Freire 61).

\textsuperscript{12} Deleuze and Guattari describe and reference Foucault’s system of power when describing their power system. “Each power center is also molecular and exercises its power on a micrological fabric in which it exists only as diffuse, dispersed, geared down, miniaturized, perpetually displaced, acting by fine segmentation, working in detail and in the details of detail. Foucault’s analysis of ‘disciplines’ or micropowers (school, army, factory, hospital, etc.) testifies to these ‘focuses of instability’ where groupings and accumulations confront each other, but also confront breakaways and escapes, and where inversions occur” (Deleuze 224).

\textsuperscript{13} From this point on I will be referring to force relations and power relationships, microfascisms, and the oppressed/oppressor paradigm as microfascist relationships—not only for the sake of space but as a recognition of their inherent similarities.
of institutions, such as governments, corporations, or school districts. Our daily interactions generate and perpetuate it. Power develops within the manner individuals relate to one another. The very nature of these relationships creates an unequal distribution of power among those that participate in these relationships in our communities, such as between teacher and student, man and woman, psychiatrist and patient\(^\text{14}\), heterosexual and homosexual, native citizen and immigrant, or white and black. The disparity and inequity between relationships of individuals can easily be demonstrated through a brief examination of the results of the 2007 National School Climate Survey conducted by GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network. This survey was administered to 6,209 middle and high school students in the United States. The survey found that “86.2% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed, 44.1% reported being physically harassed and 22.1% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation” (GLSEN.org). These students were harassed because they possessed the subjugated or oppressed position in relationships based around sexuality. Because these students are not heterosexual, they are abused in school; however, the problem extends much further than assault in the classroom. The inequitable relationships that lead to the harassment of these students also lead to the construction of institutional subjugation on a much larger level. The connection between the local and the macro level can be easily demonstrated

\(^\text{14}\) Foucault provides more detailed account of this microfascist relationship in The History of Sexuality Volume 1.
when the results of these surveys are compared to the movement to deny LGBTQ individuals the right to legally marry. The relationships that led students to verbally and physically abuse their fellow LGBTQ classmates are also led individuals to vote for laws that have denied the LGBTQ community the right to marry in Ohio in 2004 and support Proposition 8 in California in 2009. I am not suggesting that every individual who voted for one of these amendments also verbally and physically harasses LGBTQ individuals. However, the inequitable relationships between heterosexual and LGBTQ individuals are responsible for both actions. What happens at the local level influences the society as a whole. However, even though inequitable relationships can influence institutions, the institutions themselves are not responsible for the inequity: the inequitable relationships people participate in are. Unlike an oppressive state that can be overthrown and replaced by a more benevolent one, the oppression that causes the social injustice in our communities does not solely reside in a removed state apparatus but is the result of our inequitable interactions with each other. “What makes fascism dangerous is its molecular or micropolitical power, for it is a mass movement: a cancerous body rather than a totalitarian organism” (Deleuze 215). Only one participant possesses the ability to exert authority on their counterpart, as can be seen through an examination of the example between heterosexual and homosexuals above. The other is, therefore, subjugated and rendered subservient to the other’s authority. Another example of this can be easily demonstrated through a short analysis of the anatomy of what Freire describes
as the banking system of education. Similar to both Foucault's force relation and Deleuze's and Guattari's microfascisms, the banking system of education relies on a teacher/student relationship, where the teacher possesses all authority and the student is the object and point of exertion for this authority. The teacher is depicted and set up in a position as the master of knowledge\textsuperscript{15}; the student, the object to which the knowledge must be imparted, merely plays the role of the receptacle of information\textsuperscript{16}. The banking system of education provides no space for the agency of the student or for the development of a critical consciousness that could ultimately extricate the student or teacher from his or her position in this microfascist relationship\textsuperscript{17}. This type of relation traverses and diffuses through all relationships in our communities and society. It starts locally and then through all relationships in our communities and society. It starts locally and then

\textsuperscript{15} Freire, 72.

\textsuperscript{16} "Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the 'banking' concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing deposits" (Freire 72).

\textsuperscript{17} "They do, it is true, have the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store. But in the last analysis, it is the people themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system. For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human" (Freire 72). The banking system, or Foucault’s psychiatrist/patient example, provides no opportunity for the development of the critical consciousness necessary to be critically subjective, and, therefore, achieve what Freire describes as humanity. Students are not exercising or learning to use their own thoughts to analyze and evaluate the knowledge given. The banking system of education serves as a site for the objectification and oppression of both students and teachers. For teachers not only uncritically provide information, they, also, do not possess the skill and ability to analyze the information themselves. They have already absorbed and merely pass on the knowledge and model the behaviors that perpetuate the microfascist relationships in the social field.
disperses to other social entities, such as institutions, that merely repeat the relationships that these localities provide. A multiplicity of force relations beginning at a local level which connect with others in vascular fashion and repeat, perpetuate, and reinforce each other laterally throughout the social field results in the constitution of our system of power.

If power is produced at the local level between different individuals, then, power itself is not produced by social theories or institutions. While this is not to say that these do not have profound impact on the lives that we live and inform the way that we interact with each other, they, however, are not one of the loci where inequitable power is produced. Foucault explains that power must not be sought in the primary existence of a central point, in a unique source of sovereignty from which secondary and descendent forms would emanate; it is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable. (93)

Power, contrary to what many believe and how much of the implicit direction of radical pedagogy’s approach would belie, is not hierarchical. In Teachers as Intellectuals, Henry Giroux, for example, discusses the importance that schools have in indoctrinating students into the dominant system of beliefs of a given society. According to Giroux, “schools [are] merely instructional sites designed to pass on to students a ‘common’ culture and set of skills that will enable them to
operate effectively in the wider society” (Teachers as Intellectuals 3). Giroux asks teachers to move beyond a curriculum that blindly reinscribes social dominant values and beliefs to one that becomes more democratic by critically evaluating the wider world as part of classroom study\(^{18}\). While he does seek to help students to become critically aware of their positions and the positions of others\(^{19}\), he does not seek to alter the inequitable relationships that produce the beliefs and values that he seeks to challenge in the first place. Even though he seeks to build awareness, he seeks to challenge how the institutions operate opposed to setting the inequitable relationships as the point of contention in the first place. John Tagg in The Learning Paradigm College also sets institutional change as the ultimate goal of his pedagogical project. He explains that

> [f]requently groups or individuals within the college see themselves as victims, an innocent and well-intentioned us besieged by the ignorant or venal them. I want to suggest that at most colleges the visible enemy—the them that is blighting our lives and impeding our work—is not the enemy at all. The real root of our most persistent and pernicious problems is the invisible enemy, the one we don’t see because we see it everyday: the organizational paradigm governing our institutions. (5)

Tagg sets up an institution, the college itself, for change opposed to the people who produce it. While it does appear that he recognizes that people are part of

\(^{18}\) Giroux, Teachers as Intellectuals, 19.

\(^{19}\) Giroux, Teachers as Intellectuals, 34.
the process, he does not set the people themselves as the focal point of what needs to be changed. For Tagg, the institution is the problem, not the people who are producing it. People should be the focal point of any type of pedagogy that aims at social or even institutional transformation because people produce it. However, both Tagg and Giroux seem to forget that power is not a system centered around a single or several oligarchic points, where the few dictate the actions of or influences the many. There is no lynchpin, no center. In fact, it exists in a disparate state where all the various microfascist relationships, interconnecting and interacting, reciprocally coalesce into a circulatory and veinal system (minus the heart). Deleuze and Guattari suggest “the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system without a General and without an organizing memory or central automaton, defined solely by a circulation of states” (Deleuze 21). The microfascist relationships serve as nodes in this rhizomatic system of power, and while some nodal relationships might have social predominance for a time, no single node dictates any of its counterparts’ fluctuating states; therefore, the inequitable relationships we participate in in our communities, whether between men and women, national and immigrant, hetero- and homosexual, white and Hispanic, become the basis of the structure and ultimately produce the inequitable social system in which we live. Take for example the microfascist relationships between men and women. While this relationship has made huge leaps and bounds to mitigate its inequitable nature, a great divide still exists in our social system today. There still exists a schism
between responsibility and position. Even though the lines between gender disparity have indeed blurred, social responsibilities such as housework, taking care of the children, nurturing the family are still often expected of women while responsibilities attached to authority still are generally considered masculine, such as providing for the family, protecting the family, and financially underwriting a relationship. Men often receive an inequitable position with more authority. While this is by no means an in-depth or comprehensive analysis, this type of microfascist relationship can help explain why men still make more money statistically than women with the same job and similar amount of education and experience. This disparity can be further evidenced by the large difference female households make opposed to male households (whether with a family or single). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, male households, regardless of family status, make over $10,000 more than female households\textsuperscript{20}. Furthermore, we can begin to understand why substantially more men are hired as CEOs, supervisors, and managers and why it is often considered odd when a man decides to become a nurse in a nurturing field that is usually associated and populated by women. These male/female microfascist relationships are prevalent throughout the rhizomatic power system and aggregate and reinforce each other which ultimately influences how men and women interact and the positions they possess throughout the social field, whether it be at home or at work.

\textsuperscript{20} Denavas-Wait, 5.
Power has no head to cut off. There is no focal point for us to challenge. Instead of searching the abstract, distant above for the source of power to question, we must look below to the microfascist relationships that we produce in our social interactions. Concepts such as race, neoliberalism, classism, and heteronormalization are social constructs which are produced through the manner in which we interact with one another opposed to being created by distant institutions. Freire notes that “[i]t is as transforming and creative beings that humans, in their permanent relations with reality, produce not only material goods—tangible objects—but also social institutions, ideas, and concepts” (101). We produce the inequities that we condemn. Individuals’ complicity can be further illustrated by examining the manner in which law enforcement uses racial profiling to choose suspects and also make arrests. In The Covenant with Black America, Maya Harris describes how “[a] study of racial profiling on the New Jersey turnpike found that while only 13.5 percent of the cars on the road had a black driver or passenger, 73.2 percent of motorists stopped and then arrested were black” (Smiley 80). However, this is not solely restricted to New Jersey. “In Maryland”, Harris also explains, “white and black drivers seem to violate traffic codes at equal rates, and yet 72 percent of the people who were stopped and searched by police were African American” (Smiley 80). These disparities in arrests and searches are the result of the microfascist relationships possess regarding African Americans. This problem is exacerbated because only “11.7 percent of full-time sworn police personnel are African American, 77.4 percent
are white” (Smiley 81). Because a great deal of the police officers are white and also possesses an oppressive position in the white/black microfascism and obviously associate the definition of black with the criminal position in a law-abiding/criminal microfascism, this defined relationship leads these police officer’s to make choices in their jobs that reflect their oppressive status in these relationships. Their choices are the product of their positions in their microfascist relationships. Institutional arrest records are influenced by the racial profiling done by the police officers who choose the individuals to arrest. These officers making the arrests may not fully be conscious of what influences their decisions; however, this lack of awareness does not exonerate them from guilt but provides an illustration of why a pedagogical project must be employed which questions and alters these microfascisms in the future. Furthermore, the responsibility for racial profiling does not solely rest with white police officers. Even officers of different races participate and are influenced by these microfascist relationships and may make similar choices based on race when making arrests. The microfascisms provide a pattern for all individuals, regardless of position, on the choices individuals make in society. When these statistics are kept in mind, no reader should be surprised that there is a huge disparity in prison populations according to race. For example, “[b]lacks make up 43.9 percent of the state and federal prison populations but only 12.3 percent of the U.S. population” (Smiley 53). Also, “[l]atinos constitute 12.6 percent of the country’s population, and yet they are 18.3 percent of the prison population” (Smiley 53). However, when this
is compared to the fact that “[w]hites account for 69 percent of the U.S. population and 34.7 percent of those incarcerated” (Smiley 53), the positions each group holds in microfascist relationships become apparent. It is obvious from these statistics that white individuals possess a position of privilege and oppression in their microfascisms. The relationships that that white police officers and others in the criminal justice field possess allow for this disparity to be produced. Of course racial profiling cannot be completely blamed for this inequity. Other factors, such as economics and access to equal education must be considered when analyzing these statistics; however, microfascisms also cause disparities along racial lines in these areas, too. According to the NAACP, In 2002…while 78 percent of whites graduated from high school with a regular diploma, only 56 percent of blacks and 52 percent of Latinos finished high school with a regular diploma. Likewise, while 40 percent of whites left high school eligible to pursue a college education, only 23 percent of blacks and 20 percent of Latinos were ready for college. (Belk)

Microfascisms also are responsible for the disparity in access to education, too. These disparities are produced through choices influenced by their position in microfascisms made by individuals on a community, state, and national level, even through the government itself is responsible for enacting them, and the methods from which funding is allocated to schools, such as property taxes, are created and voted on by groups of individuals. Furthermore, choices influenced
by microfascist relationships also cause a disparity in access to economic opportunities. In another report the NAACP describes how “[e]ven when income and credit risk are equal, African Americans are up to 34 percent more likely to receive higher-rate and subprime loans with a prepayment penalty than are their similarly situated white counterparts” (Morris 3). Identical to racial profiling, individuals make these decisions not institutions. While the institutions are ostensibly responsible for these loans, individuals make the decisions that determine the rates of these loans. Furthermore, all of the results of microfascist relationships that I’ve briefly discussed here compound and influence each other, resulting, ultimately, in a situation that seems almost impossible to overcome. Without equal access to education, individuals cannot obtain the education they need to obtain a job that will allow them to make enough money to qualify for lower loan rates. Also, the inordinately high incarceration rates for African Americans restricts the jobs that can be applied for, because of restrictions regarding felony convictions, which in turn restricts the ability to afford to go to college and obtain a job that will offer economic freedom. Microfascisms produce the institutional barriers that restrict Black Americans from qualifying for loans at a lower interest rate. All of these instances are the result of the inequitable relationships that individuals participate in. In order to be able to combat these injustices, we first must accept our own complicity in their production and perpetuation. We, as members of our communities and citizens of our particular nation, are responsible for the bigotry, prejudice, and economic
divide that we witness and bemoan in our communities\textsuperscript{21}. If we fail to recognize our complicity in the production of social inequity, the injustices endemic in our society cannot be changed. When we ask our students to combat these abstract concepts, we merely advise them to try to change the effects without challenging them to alter the nodes of power that are causing the problems in their lives and social interactions. While it is possible that they may help to make an impact against this one instance or effect, due to the fact that they have not had the opportunity to challenge the sources of the problem, this inequity or social injustice will repeatedly occur. Because we have been unsuccessful in altering the roots of the problem, these microfascist relationships will perpetually be free to produce social inequalities.

However, the problem that we must make sure to avoid is to simplify these microfascist relationships into mere binary relations. It can be too easy, especially when reading in Pedagogy of the Oppressed of the oppressed/oppressor paradigm, to simply understand microfascist relationships as binary opposites. Microfascist relationships are not so rigidly defined. Our subjectivity or identity, if you will, is not a mere summation of a single relationship. It is a multiplicity or rhizome. Every Individual is rhizomatic, composed and determined by the fluid fluctuation of numerous interactions which

\textsuperscript{21} Deleuze and Guattari also comment on this concept. “Leftist organizations will not be the last to secrete microfascisms. It’s too easy to be antifascist on the molar level, and not even see the fascist inside you, the fascist you yourself sustain and nourish and cherish with molecules both personal and collective” (215).
aggregates into an illusionary whole that we recognize as ourselves\textsuperscript{22}. We are multiplicities and are individually as diverse as the varied social system. We are an aggregate that we recognize as a whole and play multiple roles in the production and perpetuation of inequity in the social field because 

\text{[m]ultiplicities are rhizomatic…There is no unity to serve as a pivot in the object, or “return” in the subject. A multiplicity has neither subject nor object only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions that cannot increase in number without the multiplicity changing in nature (the laws of combination therefore increase in number as the multiplicity grows). (Deleuze 8)}

We are assemblages of our microfascist interactions. Every aspect of an individual’s identity exists as a node in our rhizome or multiplicity, such as his or her position in relationships based on class or sexuality, experiences, interests, and memories. All of these things exist as nodes and connections which, in turn, construct his or her identity. Similarly, group identities and social systems are made up of nodes, which in turn aggregate into a rhizome or multiplicity. An

\textit{\textsuperscript{22} Just as the power system in the accumulation of multiplicitious nodes so is each individual. Deleuze and Guattari explain, “There are not individual statements, there never are. Every statement is the product of a machinic assemblage, in other words, of collective agents of enunciation (take ‘collective agents’ to mean not peoples or societies but multiplicities). The proper name (\textit{nom} proper) does not designate an individual: it is on the contrary when the individual opens up to the multiplicities pervading him or her, at that outcome of the most severe operation of depersonalization, that he or she acquires his or her true proper name. The proper name is the instantaneous apprehension of a multiplicity” (Deleuze 37). Our very unconscious mind is the aggregate of diverse multiplicities. This pattern extends from the most cosmic to the atomic level, from the individual to the universe as a whole. All systems are rhizomatic.}
example of the multiplicitious nature of rhizomes is provided through Paul Gilroy’s concept of the Black Atlantic. In *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Gilroy discusses the futility of denoting and demarcating a single black identity. The African diaspora’s forced migration because of slavery, their diverse cultural and historical background prior to enslavement, and the diverse experiences that the diaspora had after enslavement and emancipation have led to a complex set of black identity(s) which share numerous rhizomatic nodes, allowing for an imaginary cohesion forming black identity, but actually remain unique unto themselves. According to Gilroy,

> [s]ince black particularity is socially and historically constructed, and plurality has become inescapable, the pursuit of any unifying dynamic or underlying structure of feeling in contemporary black cultures is utterly misplaced. The attempt to locate the dispersed and divided blacks of the new world and of Europe with each other and even with Africa is dismissed as essentialism or idealism or both. (80)

Group identities are hybrids composed of rhizomes that connect to numerous nodes beyond a simple racial, gender, class, or national character. While many individuals and groups may not be aware, identities are rich and diverse structures. Rhizomes may seem rather simply constructed, but because of all the nodes that construct an individual or group identity as well as a social system, rhizomes possess an infinitely complex anatomy in which all rhizomes—
individual, group, and social—interconnect and are a part of each other. Gilroy explains when simply discussing Black music,

[t]he syncretic complexity of black expressive cultures alone supplies powerful reasons for resisting the idea that an untouched, pristine Africanity resides inside these forms, working a powerful magic of alterity in order to trigger repeatedly the perception of absolute identity. (101)

Infinite nodes from a wide variety of sources connect to construct individual and group identities. All multiplicities are in fact simply one node of a pervasive, completely interconnected rhizome. Furthermore, individuals cannot merely think of themselves as existing in only one position in one microfascist relationship, either oppressed or oppressor. They participate in and are an accumulation of numerous roles in these relationships. They should understand themselves as holding multiple positions in which we all play both the oppressed and the oppressor roles while any alteration of any of these relationships at any time would alter our whole rhizomatic schema and transform the self, even only slightly. A rhizomatic individual should not simply think of him or herself as a homosexual in a hetero-/homosexual microfascist relationship. In all actuality, a single individual could be homosexual/father/man/Hispanic/citizen/immigrant/upper class/executive vice president, possessing both the authoritative and subjugated position all at the
same time. We are diverse and multiplicitious just like our communities.
Furthermore, we can easily see the inexactness of binary construction when we
evaluate identities that complicate and question the concept of binary
classification, such as transgender, transsexual, and biracial individuals. We
need to seek to diversify ourselves as well as our communities.

Furthermore, microfascist relationships are susceptible to transformation.
Foucault points out that these power relationships are both “local and unstable”
(93). We, as community members, have the possibilities of reproducing these
social inequities with every single interaction that we have every single day. This
may leave a number of us feeling paralyzed and believing that this makes any
type of resistance impossible. Luckily, this is simply not the case. In fact, unlike
challenging abstract social mechanisms and institutions, we have the ability to
attempt to challenge them every day in our community. Unlike the distance of
abstract social theories and institutions, challenging social injustice at a local
level allows both teachers and students the possibility of making an immediate
impact. These resistances will not only act in a manner that will ultimately
combine with other resistances and challenge the system as a whole but, also,
through the involvement in their community, be engaged in social action that can
yield immediate and direct results. Students and community members can leave

\[23\] Freire illustrates this concept when he explains that “almost always, during the
initial stage of the struggle, the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend
themselves to become oppressors, or ‘sub-oppressors’” (45). The oppressed
and the oppressors play multiple roles. It is not simply binary in nature. Every
individual plays multiple roles and returns the oppression that he or she receives
onto another.
their classroom and community project feeling that they have made an actual change in the lives of others and in their community. Beyond this, the fact that microfascist relationships are unstable allow for the possibility for change. This does not mean that we can remove these relationships themselves; however, it does allow us space to change how these force relations interact and produce power.

This transformation can be better illustrated by what Deleuze and Guattari describe as the anomalous. What we need to keep in mind is that, whether we are talking about the rhizome of the social field or that of an individual, both comprise a multiplicity, which I have already explained above. Furthermore, this multiplicity, in the rhizomatic social field, individuals, and microfascist relationships, can be understood as a type of collective, assemblage, or pack. This collectivity defines the rhizome or multiplicity; the aggregate or assemblage becomes the basis for its features as a collective whole.

[A] multiplicity is defined not by the elements that compose it in extension, not by the characteristics that compose it in comprehension, but by the lines and dimensions it encompasses in “intension”. If you change dimensions, if you add or subtract one, you change the multiplicity. Thus there is a borderline for each multiplicity; it is in no way a center but rather the enveloping line or farthest dimension, as a function of which it is possible to count the others, all those lines or dimensions constitute the
pack at a given moment (beyond the borderline, the multiplicity changes nature). (Deleuze 245)

The anomalous serves as the borderline of the multiplicity. Deleuze and Guattari describe it as an exceptional individual that alters the very nature of the collective whole. This anomaly inherent in the multiplicity has the ability, because of its position at the borderline, to alter the very nature of the collective whole. Similar to Foucault’s unstable power relationships, Deleuze and Guattari’s multiplicities have the potential for change, and since microfascist relationships are simply rhizomatic multiplicities themselves, they too have this unstable nature and can be challenged in a way that can alter their very nature. If the anomaly extends past the current borderline of the multiplicity, the multiplicity changes as a whole. This does not simply occur because a line is redrawn. It extends and alters the multiplicity by adding new aspects, alliances, or individuals into the collective. This addition changes the make up of the entire collective, even minutely, and a distinctly different multiplicity emerges as a result. The collective cannot add and incorporate new features or members while remaining the same as before. Therefore, by altering the very manner in which we interact and understand each other in our communities, we can challenge the system as a whole. Because we are all integral parts of the rhizomatic social field, an alteration at any one of its

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24 This concept of the collective whole should not be confused into meaning that multiplicities combine and loose their diversity. By collective whole I do not mean the creation of an organized structure but a rhizomatic structure which is connected through nodes which produces a lateral construction, one that has no center and challenges both regulation and hierarchical organization.
local nodes challenges and alters the rhizome. The small changes we create through what we perceive as isolated resistances actually impact the social field of which we ourselves are a part. While the change may seem, and be, imperceptible at first, after numerous and continual other challenges and resistances the social rhizome itself will begin to display social change. However, in order to do this, we first must focus on challenging how these local relationships interact.

An example of how microfascisms can be transformed is illustrated by Freire’s alteration of the teacher/student microfascist relationship to one that diffuses and more evenly distributes power, where

[t]he teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. In this process, arguments based on “authority” are no longer valid; in order to function, authority must be on the side of freedom, not against it. People teach each other, mediated by the world, by cognizable objects which in banking education are “owned” by the teacher. (Freire 80)

As I have described before, both teachers and students existed in relationships that divided rather than united them. How then could the simple alteration of the microfascist relationship alter the very nature of both the rhizome that exists in this classroom and at the same time lead to the pedagogy of freedom that Freire
describes in this way? To begin with, the authority has been transferred not to one individual or a few oligarchs that control the class. Instead, as Freire has noted above, authority has been diffused into the classroom’s rhizome. Then, how has this been accomplished? The only way that this dispersal of power could have been successful is if, as is the case, both teacher and student incorporated new roles and alliances into their own rhizomatic multiplicity as well as in the classroom. As before, both teachers and students encompassed limited roles in the classroom; however, once they both incorporated the role of their other in the microfascist relationship, the border of their rhizomatic multiplicity extended and incorporated the new role. When their intrinsic roles changed, so did their multiplicity as a whole. The entire dynamic of the classroom transforms. Not only did the teacher and the students, through the incorporation of different roles, develop different assemblages, but they also redefined the classroom collective themselves. Not only does Freire’s example of the transformation of the teacher/student microfascism demonstrate the manner in which an individual’s rhizome and that of the microfascist relationship can be complicated, it also demonstrates the connection of rhizomes between individuals and the rhizosphere itself. Through the alteration of the relationships between teacher and student, the classroom collective was affected as well. It ceased to be one that was falsely hierarchical to one that diffused the authority and mitigated the oppression inherent in the microfascist roles at the same time. This relational transformation illustrates how the alteration in the multiplicity of the
individual can be translated to the entire rhizomatic social field. Just as the simple incorporation of roles between individuals can alter the collective rhizome of the entire class, the alteration of classrooms system wide will itself impact the rhizomatic social system. The entire rhizosphere, the rhizomatic social field composed of an infinite number of individual and group rhizomes, is interconnected, and enough changes at multiple nodes in classrooms, neighborhoods, and communities will significantly modify the social system as a whole.

The question, then, becomes if individuals are multiplicities, which are by their very makeup diverse, then how are microfascisms produced that privilege one aspect or segment of the multiplicity over others? If individuals are truly varied and disparate how can microfascisms even exist? The answer can be found through the defined regulation of multiplicities. Microfascist relationships which subjugate and oppress others are the result of territorialized multiplicities. While all multiplicities, whether on an individual or at a group level, constantly oscillate through phases of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization, there are those that are strictly regulated and organized and

25 These three are always present and necessary for the unity of the rhizome, whether in an individual on in the social field. Deleuze and Guattari note, “Now we are in a better position to draw a map. If we return to a very general sense of the word ‘line,’ we see that there are not just two kinds of lines but three. First, a relatively supple line of interlaced codes and territories; that is why we stated with so-called primitive segmentarity, in which the social space is constituted by territorial and lineal segmentations. Second, a rigid line, which brings about a dualist organization of segments, a concentricity of circles in resonance, and generalized overcoding; here the social space implies a State apparatus. this
those that are more flexible and pliable which resists structured organizations. As individuals and groups, we allow ourselves to be segmented, defined, and regulated by the relationships we perceive we possess. Even though at times, we, as community members, play multiple roles, our adherence and capitulation to this regulation allows us to privilege one segment or aspect of our multiplicity over others, which in turn forms the basis for our microfascist relationships in our communities. Even though we remain rhizomatic multiplicities, these relationships regulate what aspects gain prominence.

[T]he strictest of centralizations does not eradicate the distinctiveness of the centers, segments, and circle. When the overcoding line is drawn, it assures the prevalence of one segment, as such, over the other (in the case of binary segmentation), gives a certain power of relative resonance over others (in the case of circular segmentarity), and underscores the dominant segment through which it itself passes (in the case of linear segmentation). Thus centralization is always hierarchical, but hierarchy is always segmentary. (Deleuze 224)

_system is different form the primitive system precisely because overcoding is not a stronger code, but a specific procedure different from that of codes (similarly, reterritorialization is not an added territory, but takes place in a different space than that of territories, namely, overcoded geometrical space). Third, one of several lines of flight, marked by quanta and defined by decoding and deterritorialization (there is always something like a war machine functioning on these lines)” (222).
This recognition of the inherent hierarchy present does not contradict the concept of the rhizome. This existence of the hierarchy, the prevalence of one segment of a multiplicity over another, allows and produces the microfascist relationships that, in turn, produces the social inequity that radical pedagogy seeks to challenge in the first place. This rigid regulation of the rhizome permits both the relegation of node or segment and the privileging of another in the individual, which in turn transfers into the subjugation of another individual in the rhizomatic social field. This relegation of specific segments is inherent in not only the microfascist relationship but in every multiplicity of each individual. We can then understand that what needs to be challenged is not only the manner in which we interact and relate with another individual but to challenge the manner we provide prominence to our own multiplicities, including our identities, values, and beliefs. Therefore, we must challenge the segments of the individual that are given predominance over another in ourselves. Similar to the manner in which the alteration of the teaching/student relationship can alter the rhizomatic social field as a whole, the transformation of the manner in which we provide

26 Throughout A Thousand Plateaus, Deleuze and Guattari constantly reference a connection between the macro and micro level. The nodes of a rhizome are connected by flows. Circulations are what help to hold the rhizome together. This goes beyond mere individuals. We are also connected and partially constructed by what we believe. Microfascist relationships are not merely oppressive relationships but pedagogical ones as well. When discussing Gabriel Tarde, Deleuze and Guattari further illustrate this concept. “Imitation is the propagation of a flow; opposition is binarization, the making binary of flows; invention is a conjugation or connection of different flows. What, according to Tarde, is a flow? It is a belief or desire (the two aspects of every assemblage); a flow is always of belief and desire. Belief and desires are the basis of every society” (219).
dominance to one segment of our multiplicities can alter the rhizome. Whether we speak of the micro-multiplicities of an individual or the macro-multiplicities on a global scale, all rhizomes are connected and influence one another. However, this does not mean that the transformation of an individual can occur in an isolated environment separated from everyday life and activities, such as simply by reading or in the classroom. True transformation of microfascisms and the social field can only occur when it is involved in the community, when people are united through the building of alliances with one another. “[W]e cannot say that in the process of revolution someone liberates someone else, nor yet that someone liberates himself, but rather that human beings in communion liberate each other” (Freire 133). It is the interaction between individuals that leads to social transformation. The alteration of microfascist segmentation and relationships cannot be achieved on an individual basis or simply in the classroom through critical analysis of texts removed from the outside world. It must be done through the development of alliances with disparate individuals in the community.

This alteration brings us back to Freire’s example of the alteration of the teacher/student relationship. While it clearly demonstrates the transformation of a microfascist relationship, the example of the transformation of the teacher/student microfascism provided does not illustrate how the alterations to the regulation and segmentation of each relationship occurred. In order to do this, we need to examine this modified relationship to better understand how this
alteration was brought about. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari describe the manner in which groups can be assembled. A group, for example a family, ethnic group, or nation, can either be organized into a filial group or assembled through mutual alliances. While the basic form for the filial group is the family, filial groups are homogenous and understand themselves through the difference from the other. This demarcation through homogeneity results in the exclusion of all those who do not fit within the accepted differentiations of the filial group. This does not merely mean that an individual relates to, understands, or accepts others that are contained within his or her family unit. Individuals who subscribe to filial groups look for those outside of their family unit that coincide with the criteria and differentiate the least from their microfilial unit. This explains how microfascist relationships remain so easily and perpetually divided. In many cases, the opposing segment of the microfascism is considered distinctly different than the individual’s accepted filial unit. This can be easily illustrated by examining national/immigrant, white/black, or man/woman microfascist relationships. These examples are socially informed and defined disparities. However, how does this concept work when it is examined though a more amorphous relationship, such as microfascisms based on sexuality? The socially contrived differences between heterosexuality and homosexuality are not as distinct as those demarcated by other microfascist relationships, such as those centered around race. However, the acceptance of homosexuality in a filial unit works in a very similar way. This inclusion hinges on whether homosexuality is
an accepted differentiation in an individual’s filial unit. If an individual’s filial unit has had experience with and accepted homosexual members, then there is a greater likelihood that he or she will not interact or place homosexuality in a diametrically subjugated position. However, this does not mean that the relegation of homosexuality has been completely obliterated from the microfascist relationship. At best, the subjugation has been mitigated; however, the oppression of homosexuality has been greatly lessened. Contrarily, if an individual’s filial unit has not experienced and accepted homosexuality within its accepted forms of differentiation, homosexuality will be excluded from the possibility of a mitigated form of equality all together. It will not be partially relieved from its relegated status until its differentiation, or its *otherness*, has been accepted into a specific individual’s filial group. This disparity can be demonstrated through further analysis of the GLSEN 2007 National School Climate Survey discussed earlier. The fact that homosexuality is excluded from many students’ rhizomes allows them to physically and verbally abuse LGBTQ students. According to GLSEN,

The survey of 6,209 middle and high school students found that nearly 9 out of 10 LGBT students (86.2%) experienced harassment at school in the past year, three-fifths (60.8%) felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation and about a third (32.7%) skipped a day of school in the past month because of feeling unsafe. (GLSEN.org)
The exclusion of homosexuality from students’ rhizomes permits these actions. If LGBTQ students were accepted into heterosexual students rhizomes, these types of harassment would be less likely to happen. Students must learn to accept what they deem as an other. It’s only when alliances are formed between disparate other that these diverse nodes can be incorporated into alien rhizomes. However, this can only come from exploration, experience, and understanding; therefore, we must seek to challenge this rigid formation, or segmentation, of acceptance in our communities.

In order to do this, we must decenter the predominance of groups’ whose rhizomes have been centered and formed around their filial experiences with those which Deleuze and Guattari have created through the utilization of experiences gained through the formation of alliances outside the filial unit. The reader must not directly oppose alliance-base groups with those formed by filial means. Such an opposition would simply set them up to be defined as binary opposites, and this is not the case. As I have stated earlier, Deleuze and Guattari, as well as Foucault, are opposed to the simplification of the segmentation of multiplicities into binaries. While alliance-based groups can be understood as being drastically different from their filial counterpart, they do share a number of similarities. Filial groups are understood through the hierarchical pattern of the family, where, similar and indicative of microfascisms, authority is wielded by a leader and his or her followers are subject to his authority. On the contrary, Deleuze and Guattari illustrate the relationships in
alliance-based groups as more similar to animal packs\textsuperscript{27}. Similar to filial units, there are leaders and followers which occur in packs. An individual will often take the lead and others follow. This rigidity of the rhizome is never entirely mitigated. In fact, removing all rigidity would be to subscribe to self-destruction. However, these relationships are, unlike microfascisms, rigidly designated. New leaders can emerge at any time. Its organization is fluid. However, every rhizome must be rigid and fluid at the same time: deterritorializing and reterritorializing. A level of rhizomatic rigidity and fluidity of identity, whether micro or macro, individual or group, is necessary to keep the self whole; it only becomes harmful and oppressive when the fluidity of identity is abandoned and only rigidity is left to approve and exclude others\textsuperscript{28}. However, unlike filial groups,\footnote{Deleuze, 241. \textsuperscript{28} While Deleuze and Guattari wish to mitigate rigid territorialization, the do not seek to remove it entirely. This would be self-destructive. “Why is the line of flight a war one risks coming back from defeated, destroyed, after having destroyed everything one could? This, precisely, is the fourth danger: the line of flight crossing the wall, getting out of the black holes, but instead of connecting with other lines and each time augmenting its valence, \textit{turning to destruction, abolition pure and simple, the passion of abolition}. Like Kleist’s line of flight, and the strange war he wages; like suicide, double suicide, a way out that turns the line of flight into a line of death” (Deleuze 229). Instead of seeking the destruction of the self, they seek to produce a self and relationship with others that not only seeks to territorialize but, also, to constantly question this territorialization which will ultimately allow for the inclusion of other aspects or segments to be included into a multiplicity, in either the individual or social field rhizome.}
collective packs still contain a high level of fluidity in their organization. Leaders can be opposed, overthrown, cast out, or chosen. However, their relationships contained within a collective pack are not strictly regulated by filial origin. Collective packs, while some relationships may have connections through ancestry, are not regulated in such a rigid manner that it would exclude those that are different to them. Instead of family ancestry, collective packs are made through alliances and are markedly different than its filial counterpart. “The origin of packs is entirely different from that of families and States; they continually work them from within and trouble them from without, with other forms of content, other forms of expression” (Deleuze 242). Alliances are made through the acceptance of others. The very nature of collective packs is heterogeneous opposed to the homogeneous nature of those surrounding the family. They exist and constantly question and challenge their own existence and, through the fluidity of their collectivity, constantly revise their own makeup through the incorporations of others or other features in the group and through the continual reassessment of their collective alliances. Alliances can only be made through understanding, experience, and acceptance of a disparate other. Actually, they can be better understood in terms of friendship in contrast to family. Diverse others are encountered, explored, and incorporated into the rhizomatic whole. Of course, alliance, similar to the filial unit, can reject or exclude other; however, unlike its filial counterpart, alliances in collective packs have the possibility of
change. No matter what an individual does, he or she can never change his or her family. However, alliances can be made and altered. It is fluid in its acceptance and collection, and while it can ultimately be undermined by extremely varied forces that establish in them interior centers of the conjugal, familial, or State type, and that make them pass into an entirely different form of sociability, replacing pack affects with family feelings or State intelligibilities,

(Deleuze 246)

we, as teachers, students, and community members, must work to prevent this from happening in our classrooms, neighborhoods, communities, and states.

An example of a positive impact the development of alliances can make to a classroom and a community is provided through a brief description of a classroom project conducted by Michelle Fine and Bernadette Anand at Renaissance Middle School in Montclair, New Jersey. In order to better have an understanding of the struggle for desegregation locally in their town, students participated and completed a Civil Rights Oral History Project. At the beginning of the project, students discussed and explored the various conflicts that occurred in the Montclair by examining local newspaper articles, lawsuits, and the school boards plans for integration. During that time, the class wrote a letter to their local newspaper and asked for community members who had either participated in or observed the integration of the 1960s to volunteer to be interviewed by the class. According to Fine and Anand,
In interviews with African American and White men and women educators, parents, activists, then children in the schools, we heard detailed stories of white resistance to integration, some surprising white support for integration and opposition to community schools, complex reactions to desegregation within the African American community, and the delights and the vulnerabilities of having a "mixed" group of friends. (5)

This project provided the students and the community members with the opportunity to explore each others opinions and assumptions of each other. By exploring others stories, participants gained an understanding of each other that allowed the connection of rhizomes to take place. According to Fine and Anand, we spent much time trying to figure out how each of the interviewees and each of us constructs narratives of our lives and our politics; how profoundly our race, class and gender positions influence what we hear, and how we frame and interpret issues of social (in)justice. (7)

Participants examined significant nodal points of others rhizomes that were formed at difficult and important points in their lives. This provided them with the opportunity, through analysis, to begin to gain a better understanding of each other’s rhizomes and also accept and incorporate different aspects of other rhizomes because of the understanding that was developed. The project even forced the class to question their own inherent perspectives. After one interview,
the class found that it needed to revise its own interviewing questions because they began to realize that it had an unconscious bias believing that segregation was bad and integration good, which some of their interviewees, both white and black, did not agree with. The class became aware that “unacknowledged was the pain, the loss, the questionable consequences of integration, especially for African American children, families and teachers” (Anand 6). Not only did the interview process allow them to form alliances with others in their community it also forced the class to question themselves. Because both groups, the students and community members alike, came from such a diverse group, this offered them the opportunity to develop alliances along a number of lines, generation, class, gender, and race. Through this interviewing process, all the participants were able to evaluate and incorporate others and through this, develop alliances which extended beyond the project alone. The alliances that formed even prompted students to challenge discriminatory practices in their community. After their interviewing sessions revealed that racial profiling was occurring in local stores, students and faculty [organized] a strategy for a delegation of Renaissance students and faculty to visit stores that are "discriminately suspect" of youths. Some students [conducted] community based research in which white and African American students enter a particular store and the "researcher" documents who is followed, who is asked to leave, who is asked for help. They
are keeping notes, honing their research and activist skills. (Anand 8)

Not only did the project allow for students to develop alliances through the interviewing process but allowed students to connect what they learned about the past and others in their community to begin to participate in community action projects which attempt to build on the progress that the integration of the 1960s in Monteclair helped to start. Students and community members developed alliances that gave them a vested interest in their community as well as a desire to improve it for those living in it currently and for those in the future. Because of the alliances these participants made, this project facilitated a form of community engagement which mirrored the topic which they studied. Similar to the people they interviewed, students, through this project, became involved in civil action that continues to struggle for social equality and transformation.

Similarly, alliances are foundational for Freire’s theorization of a pedagogy of the oppressed. The oppressed and the oppressors cannot be divided in their reflection and action, their praxis, their struggle for emancipation from the oppressive social system. Both sections of the microfascist relationship must come together in order to transform the hegemonic system that only provides freedom to one and subjugation to others into a relationship that provides freedom for all. This will never be achieved through the strict and rigid filial relationship. Both the oppressor and the oppressed must form and develop alliances that allow them to transform the inequity inherent in the microfascist,
rhizomatic system. This can only be done if both reject the strict regulation of their positions and begin to explore their relationships to attempt to understand and produce alliances with each other. Freire explains that

[c]onversion to the people requires a profound rebirth. Those who undergo it must take on a new form of existence; they can no longer remain as they were. Only through comradeship with the oppressed can the converts understand the characteristic ways of living and behaving, which in diverse moments reflect the structure of domination. (Freire 61)

Similar to the expansion of the multiplicities through the incorporation of disparate elements, the oppressors and the oppressed must amalgamate alliances that bring them closer together. By learning about and understanding what they had once considered an other, the alliances that both the oppressor and oppressed form leads them to the possibility of transforming the inequitable system. However, this transformation can only be achieved through comradeship, through alliance. Both segments of the microfascist relationship must assume aspects, perspectives, and positions that until now have been unknown to them, and through the development of these alliances both can transgress the rigid confines of their multiplicities’ borders and emerge, after the process, reborn as distinctly new persons. This is the exact method that must be implemented in our communities and what has occurred in Freire’s alteration of the teacher/student relationship.
Then, how do we encourage the development of disparate alliances in the classroom and beyond? While, as I have stated earlier, it is possible to form new alliances in the classroom, this is problematic for a number of reasons. Generally speaking, it can often be difficult to find a truly heterogeneous environment and the alliances that students have made within the classroom demonstrate a step in the forward progress, the purpose of this pedagogical process is not to reinforce the alliances that the students already possess but to introduce them to experiences and others, whether people or values, that are distinctly different than the alliances they have already formed. But this does not mean that the pedagogical approach should solely be determined by the teacher. The classroom, students and teacher alike, should choose what organizations, groups, or causes to work for and with. To simply allow the direction of the pedagogy to be determined by the teacher is to merely fall back into the banking system of education and remove the possibility for true growth in both the students and the teacher. The development of alliances, as Freire demonstrated, must first be altered between the teacher and the students. This should serve as a model of alliance building that both the teacher and the students can look back to as an example of the method to form other alliances. The entire class must be involved with the development of the pedagogical process. Secondly, we may not find a truly heterogeneous class where alliances
can be formed simply between the walls of the classroom because often the makeup of the class represents the demographic of the people living in that particular geographic area. In this way, even what many of us would consider a heterogeneous group can be understood as homogeneous. If the collective classroom does not challenge the multiplicities that the teacher and students possess, then the ability to form new alliances, while not impossible, becomes less effective because the pool of potential alliances have been limited. There simply are not enough opportunities and nascent alliances to be formed in a classroom. Generally speaking, the students, and probably also the teacher, know the collective class too well. The demographic of the class is too similar to their multiplicity.

Therefore, the collective class must seek to work with and experience disparate elements in the community. The question then becomes how can community engagement be accomplished and taught in a classroom setting. To do this I will give a general example of how this can be accomplished in a literature classroom. The first stage in this case would be to assign a work of literature. The implementation of a text can be accomplished with any type of literature, but it should evoke and have the possibility to address, in some manner, several different social injustices that are prevalent at that time. This can be chosen by the class, but because of the institutional restrictions—often texts need to be purchased prior to the start date or there are assigned topics or genre of texts—this will very often need to be chosen by the teacher before the
class has even started. As I have stated above, it is extremely important for the
students and the teacher to be involved in this planning process. One way to
provide for this would be to offer a text that addresses a number of social issues,
or better yet, choose a number of texts for the length of the class that deal with
these issues and choose, as a class, a topic that has evoked class interest,
discussion, and can be readily explored in the community. However, this may
not always be possible due to the often limited length of the class, which, should
the choice of the text be assigned to the students, would make any actual
extensive exploration of the community impossible because of time restraints.
While a work of literature chosen by the class would be ideal, the actual
exploration of the class and the community itself is actually more important.

The next step would be to read and critically evaluate the work of literature
and the collective class’s reactions and relations to it. This can be done through
a number of ways: discussion, supplemental materials that expound on the
particular social issues that the work of literature addresses, or sociodrama. The
class should evaluate how they believe these issues impact their lives and the
community. Students and teachers alike should explore their competing opinions
and discuss what led the students to form these opinions. The class should then
decide what social issue they would like to focus on for their community project
and then, explore and research how this social issue manifests in their
community. This can be done by a number of different methods and probably
should involve several: researching non-profit organizations, statistics, or studies
produced by a number of different institutions; interviewing community members, activist, or family members; student writing which reflects on how they have experienced this in their own lives; or researching any historical events that took place in or nears their community. This phase should not be simply limited to those that have been mentioned. The purpose of this stage is to better make informed decisions on how to approach the community project and also gain a better knowledge of the social issue itself. Next, the class should designate an organization, preferably non-profit, that deals with this issue on a regular basis. The organization, potentially one researched during the previous stage and one that came to speak to the class, should offer opportunities for the students to work with the population that they serve. For the best results, both the class and the organization itself should be involved in the reflection portion of the project. The critical analysis should not merely be reserved for the class, but the organization and the population its serves must be continually involved in this reflective process. All participants—the class, population, and organization—should then decide what project that class could participate in and what services they could offer. The class, then, should begin volunteering with the organization all the while working with the population being served and critically evaluating and sharing the experiences both the students and their clients have had during the project. The purpose of this step is not only to become critically aware of the problem in their community but to form new alliances with a disparate group through the development of understanding. All participants should leave with a
better knowledge of not only a social issue but more importantly with a different collective, pack, or multiplicity that they had not been allied with before. Once the project has finished, students will not only have worked to better their community but leave with a more diversified and extended multiplicitious rhizome than before starting the project. Done numerous times at numerous nodes through out the social rhizome, this will lead to lasting social transformation.

The question then becomes how can we make a system wide impact with such isolated instances of resistance? Foucault’s notion of power also provides for this eventuality. According to Foucault, “power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations” (94). While Foucault suggests that power is not something to be usurped, this does not mean the microfascist relationships cannot be altered in our communities. However, unlike a great deal of radical pedagogy and politics, the purpose of the project of community engagement is not to unrest power but to revise the way it is produced. The struggle to alter the interaction between two microfascist relationships and develop alliances between disparate individuals is not to simply overturn the power relationship on its head, where the subjugated becomes the oppressor and the oppressor becomes subjugated. This reversal would not offer any amelioration to the current inequitable system. While those who in the past were relegated to the bottoms of society would finally receive some privilege, the system itself would not change,
and we would end up with new positions of privilege for those formerly
subjugated but without any significant change. The goal of this project is not to
simply provide for those who have been disenfranchised but to alter the system
to one that will provide for all of its citizens. Also, this would be a
misunderstanding of Foucault’s concept of power. “Power relations are both
intentional and nonsubjective” (Foucault 94). While power has a set of goals and
aims, it is not something that we can manage and maneuver.

Furthermore, because the social system is rhizomatic, interconnected, and
circulatory, it allows for the connection of these resistances, which, just like the
alteration of multiplicities, will ultimately extend and alter the rhizomatic social
field itself. Just as we need to revise how we think power is produced we must
also revise how we comprehend and approach resistance. Similar to how power
is not produced from above, neither should resistance aim to topple a fictional
longitudinal power structure. We need to understand that our singular
resistances on multiple nodes when connected collaboratively into a collective
rhizome or multiplicity challenges and diversifies the social rhizome itself.
Resistance should begin to be understood as Deleuze and Guattari describe it as
epidemic or contagion. In rhizomatic resistance, challenges should not be
targeted but understood as viral. “Alliance…is the form of expression for an
infection or epidemic constituting the form of content” (Deleuze 247). Instead of
expecting our efforts to change how the system works and produces social
injustices by striking and toppling one of its vague theories and institutions, we
need to understand our resistances as social transforming viruses, where resistances occur on multiple spots and infect the rhizome until our results, no longer symptoms, produce a rhizomatic power system that provides more equality for all. Through this concept we can begin to understand that our isolated instances of resistance cease, actually, to be isolated. Because the rhizome and nodes circulate and interact with every other node, all our actions are connected and provide the possibility to real and lasting social change. However, this cannot be done if we do not focus on challenging the social system at the grassroots level in our community. We need to unite against social injustices, whether created by microfascisms centered around race, sexuality, or gender, through local action.

The point is not to remove the power from the system: this is impossible. The aim of radical pedagogy should be to disrupt the manner in which the power is produced. This cannot be done in only an isolated instance. This, then, makes the fact that “power is exercised from innumerable points” (Foucault 94) extremely important. Since the production of power is decentered, so should be the approach that aims at altering it. Since power is produced through the combination of a multiplicity of nonegalitarian microfascist relationships “whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in various social hegemonies” (93), the resistance to its production should be similarly patterned. By altering the manner in which groups of individuals interact locally in our communities we have the opportunity
to alter the entire social system. If laws, social institutions, etc. are the product of the current microfascist relationships in production, then, these same laws and institutions can be altered by numerous resistances to the manner microfascist relationships work in our communities. An example of this is the recent advances that gay marriage activists have made in Vermont. The New York Times explains that the recent victory allowing same-sex marriage “makes Vermont the first state to allow same-sex marriage through legislative action instead of a court ruling, and comes less than a week after the Iowa Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriages in that state” (Goodnough). The fact that same-sex marriage was legalized through the legislature demonstrates the alteration of the microfascisms of not only the legislators but also the people that elected them. Opposed to forced change through a Supreme Court of a particular state, this advancement can be understood as the alteration of the people locally who elected officials who would approve such a motion. The work of gay advocates have obviously had a large impact on the people of Vermont, but their work has also been making headway in the transformation of individuals’ perceptions of the position of LGBTQ individuals nation wide. According to the New York times,

[p]olls suggest that Americans remain divided on the issue. A CBS News poll last week found that while 6 out of 10 Americans think some form of legal recognition is appropriate for same-sex couples, only a third think those couples should be allowed to marry.
Americans are somewhat more supportive of same-sex marriage than in 2004, when just 22 percent supported it. (Goodnough)

While progress may only be incremental and not overwhelming, the alteration of local microfascist relationships allow for changes to occur nationwide. This also serves to demonstrate how the transformation of individuals’ rhizomes can lead to social transformation on a national level. Unlike attempting to combat abstract theories and institutions, community engagement actually offers a pedagogical project that can change the system and also provide hope for the resisting participants. Regardless of the fact that the transformation in Vermont occurred at an institutional level, alterations had to first be made locally in order for the legislature to be elected and vote to allow same-sex marriage. When examples such as this are kept in mind, working at a local level can no longer be dismissed as so trivial in scale that it can make no lasting or significant impact and difference. Local projects and points of resistance can be understood as part of a larger organic resistance to power: rhizomatic resistance. A multiplicity of resistances will combine, and, if worked locally to change the nonegalitarian methods that groups of individuals interact with each other, ultimately change the system, as is the growing trend in the nation surrounding same-sex marriage. Grassroot efforts, properly targeted, become understood as the supreme threat to an oppressive or inequitable system.
The reason why any type of resistance in this manner is possible is because resistance does not exist outside of the system. Resistances can never be conducted exterior to the system of power.

Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power, there is no “escaping” it, there is no absolute outside where it is concerned. (Foucault 95)

The idea that resistance needs to be removed from its seat of power then becomes null. In all actuality any type of resistance that purports to place itself in a position removed from power becomes suspect. The only act that a project such as this successfully achieves is proving that it is absolutely ignorant of how power is produced. If the resistance that is made is ignorant of how power is produced and perpetuated, how affective could it ultimately hope to be? This actually suggests that instead of housing resistance safely inside academic institutions and inside the classroom, we should actively insert rhizomatic resistances inside the community where the inequitable microfascist relationships are in play. Instead of attempting to change the system in exile, we should do our best to engage our students in activities that ask them to reflect and act on the power relationships where they are produced, and while these relationships are active and reflected in our classrooms, they primarily preside and are reinforced in the community. Therefore, we need to stop hoping that what students learn in class will be transferred to their lives outside of the classroom.
and insert our classes in the community. If we do not change our pedagogical practices to involve community engagement in the classroom, we run the risk of any critical reflection that students gain in the classroom becoming compartmentalized in the minds of our students as only intended for academic use which will then never be implemented outside the classroom walls in the community.

If we, as educators, wish our students to utilize the insights that they gain in our classrooms, then we must provide them with the opportunities to act on these insights while they are concurrently reflecting on them. If the mere fact of evaluating our inequitable system is enough, why has there been no truly systemic change over the past decades after the nascence of radical and critical pedagogy? Many educators have spent the majority of their careers working to combat the injustices inherent in our social system; however, has any truly emancipatory change occurred because of these efforts? We need to cease to think that resistance and revolution can merely happen in the classroom and involve community action into our curriculum. Educational study after educational study has stated that students need to be actively engaged in real-life application of the subjects we are trying to teach. Why should social justice and social resistance be any different? If we merely help our students develop a critical consciousness without developing the skills to actively attempt to change what they view as needing revision, how can we expect them to act to bring about social change when social activism through action is contrary to what we
have demonstrated in the classroom? We have incorrectly assumed that
discussion has become equated with modeling of action. It is time to realize that
reading books and discussing is not enough. If we want social change, we must
involve our students in socially transformative action. In this way, radical and
critical pedagogy needs a revolution of its own before it can ever be truly
effective.
Chapter 2

In the first chapter, I discussed the necessity of reevaluating how power and inequity is produced in our social system. As I have stated, instead of regarding our system of power as having a rigid and hierarchical structure, we need to begin to realize that in all actuality its structure is rhizomatic. Furthermore, I have discussed that in order to mitigate the production of injustices in our rhizosphere, we must transform the inequitable nature of the microfascist relationships that are responsible for its proliferation and how this transformation is possible. I have also provided general examples of how community engagement could lead to their alteration. However, up until this point, I have not gone into any significant detail regarding the process in which this transformation should be elicited. I believe this approach offers a radical pedagogical classroom a simple process. This is not to intimate that the planning stages of a community engagement process or its implementation is ever going to be easy. As most things in life, the things that offer the best results are also those that require the most work. Make no mistake: involving community engagement in the classroom curriculum requires a significant amount of effort, which should be evident because of its radical break from the pedagogical practices of the traditional and the every-day classroom. Not only will teachers need to break from their traditional approaches but will also need to incorporate a
largely different set of methods from what they have learned or may have been practicing for a number of years.

However, while this may seem to be a significant roadblock to the commencement of a community engagement project, it is actually an integral part of the process. In order for radical transformations to occur in the rhizosphere, radical changes must be implemented in both the classroom and community. Old methods must be revised and new ones executed. Where the final chapter will demonstrate how Lorraine Hansberry’s “A Raisin in the Sun” can be utilized to help bring about social transformation when combined with a community engagement project, this chapter will deal with providing more detail of the theorization of how this transformation is occurring when this type of radical pedagogy is put into play. While planning and integrating a community engagement process might be difficult, the actual transformation and expansion of participants’ rhizomes will appear to occur independently. As I will explain in larger detail later, this happens naturally every day. The incorporation of disparate information and experiences is what leads to every individual’s and society’s formation of identity in the first place. We are all the amalgamation of various points of information, experiences, and localities anyway, which coalesces around a falsely unified notion of self. As I have stated in the last chapter, we are all multiplicitious collections of disparate nodes, which constantly evaluate information and experiences and either incorporate or exclude them from the perpetual assimilation and construction of our identity. This is constantly
occurring. The purpose of our pedagogical approaches, then, must be to alter the manner in which this inclusion and exclusion occurs with the participants in the community engagement process. Instead of rejecting the information and experiences that do not coincide with an individual’s or group’s rigid concept of self, we as instructors must not only challenge students and community members but also our own evaluative process. The purpose of any pedagogical project, in my estimation, should always seek to provide students with the skills or ability to utilize what they have learned inside, or outside, of the classroom once the class has ended. Therefore, the objective of any community engagement process should be to provide its participants with the ability to constantly seek out and incorporate disparate nodes into their multiplicities. Participants must learn to incorporate rhizomatic resistance in their every day lives by continually deterritorializing and reterritorializing their rhizomatic identities by incorporating elements different from themselves. Rhizomatic resistance is impossible if its facilitation relies on a single individual, whether student, community member, or teacher. The process must be completely internalized and self-sustaining and self–replicating in order for any type of transformation of rhizomatic identity to take place. The purpose of pedagogical approaches in the classroom through the utilization of community engagement then becomes to encourage, bolster, and perpetuate the incorporation of multiplicities in order to alter groups’ and individuals’ rhizomes through the incorporation of what is seen, to them, as
disparate others. The question then becomes how this process, propped up through pedagogical practices, occurs.

While this might seem like an extremely simple statement, every individual, group, or rhizosphere, regardless of its scope or complication of its multiplicity, is capable of change. Along these lines, every individual, group, or rhizosphere can and will benefit through the diversification of the rhizome. Of course, we constantly witness alterations in the people we know everyday. How many times have you said or overheard, “He/She just isn’t the same person as he/she used to be”? Or, how many people can you say that you’ve grown apart from? Of course, we recognize that we change and that we will not be the same person that we were in the past. Actually, we expect it and often seek through education and experiences to facilitate this process. The question, then, is how did this occur? And the simplest answer is that some level of knowledge, experience, or relationship has been incorporated that has altered the individuals, group, or rhizosphere in question and has lead to this change. It is fair to say that these types of alteration to rhizomes are universally accepted and expected. If they were not, then why would parents seek to influence their children to stop spending time with a particular crowd because it offers a bad influence? Or, if this was not the case, why would there be such an aversion to the incorporation of bilingual education in the public school system or the admittance to the necessity of producing government documents in multiple languages. In these cases, there appears to be a fear of change, of corrupting
influences; these groups and individuals fear the alteration and expansion of the rhizomes that they have extremely rigidly defined and coveted. However, we must understand that alteration to rhizomes and the rhizosphere are inevitable and will constantly occur whether we want them to or not. Freire and Deleuze and Guattari speak of people, their rhizomes, and therefore, the rhizosphere as constantly in a process of becoming. However, a process of becoming is not a mere replication of other forms and patterns of mimesis. Individuals that incorporate disparate elements into their rhizome are not merely acting. As I have stated in the previous chapter, the transformation of the rhizome only occurs through the incorporation of disparate elements into the rhizome. This should not be understood as mere mimicry, which is often the case when individuals incorporate characteristics of separate rhizomatic groups (if proof is needed simply think of the derogatory terms used for white individuals who listen to and wear what is considered African-American). In all actuality, Deleuze and Guattari explain that “[b]ecoming is certainly not imitating, or identifying with something” (Deleuze 239). The act of becoming results in an alteration of the rhizome, a reorganization of constructed identity. Rhizomatic resistance should not be reduced to role playing, even though this type of activity can be utilized to critically analyze an individual’s understanding of what is perceived as a disparate other (an example will be provided in the subsequent chapter). This process actually leads to the transformation of rhizomes and microfascist relationships, and while this type of pedagogical approach may not be
Endemically employed in an educational environment, it is nonetheless an important component to the human experience.

In many ways, this act of becoming is exactly what makes us humans: our ability to transcend our current rhizomatic structure and change. Therefore, if alteration to rhizomes is inevitable, is it not the responsibility of educators to provide students, the community, and themselves with continual opportunities to develop the ability to critically analyze and perfect this process? Shouldn’t a pedagogical environment seek to provide this group of people with the ability to critically evaluate and incorporate the elements into their rhizomes that they deem relevant? Freire explains that

> problem-posing education affirms men and women as beings in the process of *becoming*—as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality. Indeed, in contrast to other animals who are unfinished, but not historical, people know themselves to be unfinished; they are aware of their incompletion. In this incompletion and this awareness lie the very roots of education as an exclusively human manifestation. The unfinished character of human beings and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity. (84)

Then, what is responsible for this change? The answer is *learning*. By learning I do not want to be understood as meaning simply formal education. Both formal education and the experiential learning through the activities and places people
encounter in their lives contribute to the alteration of the rhizome. It may become counterproductive to this argument because of the past semantic attribution to the concept of education; therefore, I will refer to this process as learning. However, if the learning process, whether formal or no, is responsible for the alteration of the rhizome and the very transformation of the microfascist relationships themselves, then incorporating rhizomatic learning into the classroom is as important as the core components of education itself: reading, writing, and mathematics. However, individual and group rhizomes cannot be forced into incorporating elements into their multiplicities. This is in fact antithetical to the purpose of the process of rhizomatic resistance itself. While communal, the participation of this process must be autonomous. It cannot be forced and neither can the result. This would only place the participants as objects and merely reaffirm and perpetuate the microfascist relationships that produce the social inequities that rhizomatic resistance seeks to ameliorate. Not every individual or group will demonstrate a profound transformation of rhizome after one or several participations in a community engagement process that employs rhizomatic resistance. Multiple attempts will be required before significant progress can be made. However, rhizomatic resistance must first overcome the rigidification of the rhizome in order to allow the expansion of a multiplicitious identity to take place. We, therefore, must take a closer examination of what causes this rigidification before continuing further.
The question then becomes if the incorporation and complication of the rhizome is a natural process, then how does it become rigid in the first place? I have already briefly discussed the important role that rhizomes play in identity construction. An individual’s or group’s concept of identity is the result of the collection of multiple nodes into a falsely assumed unified whole. In *Cognitive Psychodynamics*, Mardi J. Horowitz describes the concept of rhizomatic identity as *self schemas*.

A self schema is an organized compendium of meanings that a person attributes to his or her self. It is a patterned aggregation of elements, not a random multiplicity of attributes. A self schema is an ordered constellation of associated beliefs. (Horowitz 88).

These attributes, or nodes, connect, where some gain prominence and others are deemphasized, and lead to an individual’s concept of self and also to the roles they play in microfascist relationships.

Roles of self are often embedded in expectations about roles for other people. Scripts for how the self can, or does, react to others are included in such role-relationship models. Scripts of action sequences are associated with roles and body images. Values, rules, and self-regulatory styles are also categories in a self schema. (Horowitz 88-89)

Therefore, the multiplicities that provide the framework for what individuals understand as their identity lead to both the inclusion and exclusion and the
emphasizing and relegation of others, which in turn leads to the formation of microfascist relationships. The process of formation and perpetuation of these relationships as well as an individual’s rhizomatic identity must, therefore, be critically analyzed and challenged in order to mitigate the exclusion and relegation of other identities. Where many rhizomatic identities are understood as fixed, and therefore exclusive, the purpose of rhizomatic resistance through the integration of community engagement in the classroom is to help participants develop self schemas, which from this point on called rhizomatic identities, that are more fluid and therefore inclusive of rhizomatic identities and nodes different from their own. Even though every multiplicity is the product of disparate and separated parts, the collection and amalgamation leads to the formation of an identity that falsely believes it is a solid whole. In all actuality, identity is the product of these remarkably different components interconnecting, interacting, and ultimately demarcating itself from others. Of course, this is largely done by not only including components, or nodes, that are deemed compatible but more importantly excluding others that are not deemed congruent with the multiplicities false unified whole. Through this territorialization of the accepted concept of self, other nodes and rhizomes become excluded and through this process of inclusion and exclusion does an individual or group begin to form their notion of identity. As previously stated, this territorialization leads to the production of borders, and these borders serve to limit what other nodes are then incorporated and rejected by an individual’s or group’s multiplicity. Even though most of us
believe that we possess a freedom of choice in this matter, these borders, left unanalyzed, guide and restrict the choices we make regarding our perpetual identity formation. Freire explains, “Humans...because they are aware of themselves and thus of the world—because they are conscious beings—exist in a dialectical relationship between the determination of limits and their own freedom” (99). Choices can and are made as long as they do not challenge an individual’s identity borders. These borders serve as guard posts which limit what nodes gain membership in rhizomes and what gain entrance. Without becoming critically aware of these borders, their seemingly implacable territorialization remains the guide posts that exclude disparate others and allows for the formation and perpetuation of the microfascist relationships that produce the inequalities that rhizomatic resistance attempts to subvert. Therefore, pedagogical approaches must seek to make its participants aware of not only rhizomatic borders but also of the manner in which they are formed. They must develop the ability to both analyze these borders and act to change them, developing a critical eye of the world while staying immersed in action seeking to change it. Paulo Freire explains how this can happen:

As they separate themselves from the world, which they objectify, as they separate themselves from their own activity, as they locate the seat of their decisions in themselves and in their relations with the world and others, people overcome the situations which limit them: the “limit-situations.” Once perceived by individuals as
fetters, as obstacles to their liberation, these situations stand out in relief from the background, revealing their true nature as concrete historical dimensions of a given reality. Men and women respond to the challenge with actions with..."limit-acts”: those directed at negating and overcoming, rather than passively accepting, the “given.” (99)

This territorialization, these limit-situations, causes individuals and groups to understand their concepts of self as finite and fixed; however, because of the incomplete nature of human beings, this is simply not the case. Instead of perpetuating a pedagogy which only succeeds in reinforcing this territorialization, we must employ one that makes participants aware of the fluidity of rhizomatic identities and our perceived concepts of self. The constant evaluation and inclusion of multiple nodes into a particular rhizome occurs daily. We are constantly complicating our multiplicities and incorporating elements, information, and experiences, into our rhizomatic concepts of self. Even though our multiplicities have been territorialized there constantly remains a process of fluid deterritorialization. If this did not exist, there would be no space for group and individual growth, no opportunity for becoming and for the alteration of microfascist relationships. Both territorialization and deterritorialization exist simultaneously and rely on each other’s opposing influences to reinforce, stabilize, and make necessary the process of the other. While under brief inspection, these two processes might seem to be antagonistic to one another,
they are in fact complementary forces that allow for the perpetual formation and maintenance of identity. Rhizomes and rhizospheres, and therefore rhizomatic identities, could not exist without both; neither exists without the other. Because both territorialization and deterritorialization are necessary for the formation of identity and indeed the rhizomatic social system itself, both processes must be present during any form of pedagogy which seeks to include rhizomatic resistance in its curriculum. However, because a large majority of groups and individuals view their identities as well as their rhizosphere as fixed, due to the limit-situations and territorializations that fix rhizomatic identities (whether individual, group, or system), our pedagogical approaches must seek to instill in its participants an understanding that rhizomes are not actually fixed and concrete in nature but rather more viscous and fluid in nature, a semi-solid. Horowitz also allows for this transformation with his concept of self schemas. The complication of the schema, the rhizomatic identity, provides the opportunity for significant change.

Contradictory traits occur in people all the time. But connections can be made between even polar-opposite beliefs. Competing intentions and expectations can be linked together. Self-organization can become richer and more complex, more integrated, and more differentiated through the formation of supraordinate schematization. However, enrichment of identity
usually occurs in the context of meaningful relationships. (Horowitz 115)

While the complication of identity can happen individually, the most significant changes to rigid concepts of self occur when it is coupled with the formation of new relationships, the development of new alliances. Therefore, pedagogical approaches must offer opportunities and environments for the formation of these new alliances to occur. However, the rigid demarcation must first be broken down and replaced with more fluid processes of identity formation and perpetuation instead. This concept of fluidity allows for the incorporation and expansion of multiplicities through the amalgamation of the anomalous. Furthermore, this concept of fluidity allows for an understanding of identity creation which better falls in line with the actual method of formation of rhizomatic identities and the social system as a whole. It recognizes the fact that new nodes become incorporated into our rhizomes every day but also highlights the necessity to view rhizomes as malleable, organic structures rather than strict, rigid edifications that restrict the freedom of the groups and individuals that subscribe to this belief. Even though our multiplicities are constantly under assemblage, because of territorialization and the limit-situations that rigidification produces, we tend to seek out and only incorporate nodes that coincide the aspects of our multiplicities that have already gained acceptance. This is where the inclusion of community engagement in the classroom allows for the analysis and the possible inclusion of disparate elements. Because we generally seek
rhizomatic environments that coincide and resemble those that we have experienced in the past, community engagement in the classroom allows for individuals to be placed in situations, environments, and around individuals that do not coincide with their accepted territorialized concepts of self. This provides the opportunity for the analysis and potential inclusion of the anomalous into their rhizome which in turn will lead to the expansion of the territorialized border, and offers the development of the *meaningful* relationships that Horowitz suggests will lead towards the complication of rhizomatic identity. The inclusion of community engagement in the classroom allows for the incorporation of the anomalous to take place and begins to encourage the fluid development of the rhizome that places deterritorializing and reterritorializing acts at the center of rhizomatic assemblage, providing for a culture where this process can perpetually take place.

However, before I begin to describe this process, it must be understood that neither deterritorialization nor reterritorialization occurs separately from the other. Semantically, this can be easily misconstrued; however, unlike what their affixes suggest neither happens before or after the other. In all actuality, they occur together. Beyond this, neither can occur without the addition of its counterpart. In this manner, this process is not unlike what Freire has described as *praxis*29, where both reflection and action are necessary to lead to social transformation. However, unlike Freire’s praxis, it is not possible to participate in

29 Freire notes “Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it” (79).
an action of deterritorialization without reterritorializing what has recently been deconstructed. Where simply reflecting in Freirian thought leads to mere verbalism and solely action leads only to activism, deterritorialization and reterritorialization do not exist without one another. For deterritorialization occurs when borders have been questioned and new information and experiences have been either excised or included, but neither individuals, groups, or systems would exist afterwards if reterritorialization did not accompany this in order to redefine the boundaries of the rhizome, and therefore, rhizomatic identity. Similarly, without the challenge of the multiplicity through the analysis of new or old nodes through deterritorialization, no reterritorialization could possibly take place. Both of these processes are necessary for the fluidity of rhizome and rhizomatic identity to exist. Without the continual reworking of both of these processes each rhizome’s growth would be complete, and no development would be possible let alone working towards social transformation. Therefore, participants in rhizomatic resistance and community engagement should not seek to cause deterritorialization or reterritorialization to occur separately from the other. This would be to misunderstand the ability of expanding rhizomes themselves and at most impede the participants in making progress. Participants must understand that both deterritorialization and reterritorialization occurs throughout the entire project and that their purpose is not to ensure that one happens before the other or to attempt to force one to take primacy in one form of action over another but to facilitate the analysis and utilization of these process to help bring about the
transformation of the microfascist relationships, which will in turn also help to lead to the transformation of the rhizosphere as a whole. However, having said this, for the sake of lucidity and the effectiveness of my argument, I will break down each process in its own in the following order, deterritorialization and then reterritorialization, in order to be able to speak in detail rather than suggesting or providing primacy of the first over the next one.

As I have already stated above, every participant will enter into a community engagement project with differentiating levels of rigidity and fluidity. Each participant’s susceptibility to either of these concepts relies on a number of different reasons. For example, age may be a factor, or the diversity of participants’ life experience, which results from a currently diversified rhizome, may cause for some to progress more quickly. However, the flexibility of each participant’s multiplicities is of very little importance. To begin with, there is very little possibility or purpose of identifying this before the onset of the project, and furthermore, there is little reason to recognize this before the community engagement project begins. Its objective is not to ensure the same level of diversification of each rhizome or that the fluidity of each participant is equal before the project begins; the goal of pedagogical rhizomatic resistance is simply to encourage progress, regardless of how big or small, in each rhizome, whether it’s an individual’s, a group’s, or the rhizosphere itself. The scope of the progress is of little consequence; the project will be successful if both groups and individuals see some level of progress in themselves. Significant progress will
not be uniform and guaranteed after the conclusion of the project. As I have already discussed, multiple participations will be necessary before significant progress will be experienced by all participants and even more systemic integration will be required before any systemic transformation of the rhizosphere takes place. However, this should not be the rubric used to qualify success of the project. The participants should gauge success for their experiences and self-assessment. If they, through self-evaluation, believe that they have built alliances with other participants who, at the beginning of the project they have labeled drastically different than themselves, then the project should be considered successful. Because both deterritorialization and reterritorialization occur simultaneously, the best thing to encourage that this process will take place is to immerse them in the community as soon as possible. This will lead to more progress and rhizomatic expansion to take place. There may be a selection process for both the curriculum and the community organization before the actual project would begin. Of course, this is completely acceptable; however, the purpose of the project is not for the participants to only reflect on themselves but to learn to incorporate disparate “others” into themselves. This does not mean that projects must begin at the beginning of the semester; in all actuality, it can be started at any point; however, participants must be immersed in the new environment once the project has commenced in order for the community engagement project’s efficacy to be at its highest degree.
The reason that immediate inclusion into the community is so important is because it is what actually begins the process. The immersion in an unknown environment with an unfamiliar group of disparate individuals is the first step in deterritorialization. This community environment allows for participants to challenge the borders of their rhizomes in a way simply working in the classroom would never allow. Working with what is perceived as disparate individuals makes it possible for participants' awareness to be shocked into the analysis of their rhizomatic borders and then begin to assess their relation with regards to the environment and the people they then find themselves in communion with.

Immediate community engagement allows for participants to

[...]odge [themselves] on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. (Deleuze 161)

Unlike the homogenous space of the classroom, the community offers participants with the opportunity to question not only their rhizomatic position but also that of others. It allows them to evaluate where they meet and where they diverge. At this point, participants become aware of the roles they play in microfascist relationships. By first entering into this new environment with disparate individuals, they will have reactions that will illustrate the position that
they possess in this relationship. While this may be evident, it may not be
cognizant. They must begin to become aware of these reactions and of the part
their multiplicities play in producing them. Initially, these reactions may be
unrecognized. Their actions may surface emotions, thoughts, or actions,
suggested or executed, that serve to place their counterpart in a relegated
microfascist position. These must be the subject of discussion and exploration.
As well as the supplementary material I suggested in the previous chapter, these
emotions, thoughts, actions, and experiences must become the material of the
lesson. In order to become aware of the microfascist relationship, all participants
must analyze the roles or perceived roles that they play during the community
engagement project, especially those that they simply reenact without ever
critically analyzing in their everyday lives. They must become cognizant of their
positions in microfascisms before they can be changed.

The dynamic interplay between wishes, fears, and defenses usually
operates at preconscious levels, which are close to awareness but
still unconscious processes, people can use reflective
consciousness to gain insight. They can then reach new decisions
on how to revise knowledge, correct errors of belief, and improve
their circumstances. The new decisions usually lead to new
behaviors. Repetitions of thought and behavior increase certain
associational network patterns. Such repetitions are a way that
people can slowly reschematize themselves. Awareness, insight,
decisions, and repetitions can lead to reschematization and a revised or better integrated sense of identity. (Horowitz 43)

Becoming aware of the microfascist relationship is the first step in transforming the inequity that leads to social injustice. An activity that may help in this would simply be for each participant to describe themselves, and therefore, their identity and also the identity of the other participants of the community engagement project. These not only allow for participants to become aware of the anatomy of their rhizomes but to become better aware of their perceptions of others. All participants should have the opportunity to read and discuss the description of themselves and those people made of others. They should discuss what they find is valid and challenge what they find has little basis to nodes in reality. While this process may be difficult, it will allow the participants to directly deal with the rigid and inimical nodes that each participant has in their multiplicity. Furthermore, they begin to analyze where they feel these perceptions originated from. Where did they learn these roles? What lead them to form these nodes, these opinions? How do they reinforce these relationships in other areas of their community and in their lives? How are they harmful to others? However, care must be taken to ensure that this continual part of the process doesn’t become combative. Participants must develop some level of comfort with each other before this part off the process begins. They need to be aware that even though they are being honest their thoughts and actions may be hurtful. Each group of participants should have a facilitator who mediates any contentions by placing
the point of contention, such as a racial or gender stereotype, up for discussion and analysis. The facilitator’s role is not to control the exercise but to help initiate and maintain discussion by encouraging other participants to suggest points to discuss. The goal is to build alliances not further increase divisions. The point of this analysis is to become aware of divisions and through understanding, begin to recognize that the separation between those in microfascist relationships are not as far as each participant thinks. Through their analyses they will begin to accept and then incorporate the other into their multiplicities.

Participants will also begin to understand that along with their differences their rhizomes contain numerous nodes in common and that many of which overlap in many cases. This challenge is necessary for the deterritorialization to occur. Participants' rhizomes must be shocked or unsettled into awareness of itself, which could not be achieved in an environment which merely reinforces their borders through a lack of disparate rhizomes. By becoming aware of more than merely the perimeter of their borders, such as shared nodes, participants can begin to recognize the different aspects that their rhizomes have in common, which in turn allows them to find a connection between each other. Of course these nodes will not be exactly identical. There may simply be some similarities. However, these similarities may be enough to allow for the participants to find connections through the similarities of these nodes. This begins the process from which participants’ rhizomes themselves become interconnected, which in turn begins the process of acceptance into each participant’s rhizosphere. Of
course, because these nodes themselves will never be fully identical and will contain several disparate elements, the initial interconnection of common nodes can and should be understood as the nascent incorporation and utilization of the anomalous. A major point to be understood is that these similar nodes will never be identical between participants: there will always be different perspectives and interpretations of similar concepts; however, finding these small connections and differences are pivotal in the cultivations of rhizomatic resistance, for both deterritorialization and reterritorialization. These may be shared interests or experiences, talents or aspirations. Either way, these similarities bring these individuals closer together. The incorporation of largely similar elements and the recognition of disparate ones provide a foundation for these processes to take place. However, the sharp contrast that is provided by the immersion into a uniquely different aspect of the community through an organization allows for the environment that will permit for conflicting aspects of participants’ rhizome to become evident or highlighted, as if in extremely detailed relief. Once this foundation has been provided, participants must begin to analyze these components. However, before I continue, I must reaffirm the praxis that will be occurring during this stage of the process. While on this and the subsequent sections of this chapter I will be largely speaking about the analysis, or reflection, of participants’ rhizomes, it is the actual action that has allowed for this analysis to take place. Without the community engagement and integration that participants will participate in during their chosen project none of this reflection
could ever take place. What must be understood is that even though I am largely focusing on reflection at this given time and to a large extent throughout the entire chapter, the participants’ actions are paramount in ensuring that this analysis takes place; therefore, action and reflection, similar to territorialization and deterritorialization, should not be considered contradictory or merely supplemental aspects or community engagement and rhizomatic resistance. Both components are necessary for the entire process to take place and ensure any significant progression in the rhizosphere. This first must be achieved by decoding the different components of participants rhizome, which as Freire explains, cannot be done divorced from reality.

“[D]ecoding” requires moving from the abstract to the concrete; this requires moving from the part to the whole and then returning to the parts; this in turn requires that the Subject recognize himself in the object (the coded concrete existential situation) and recognize the object as a situation in which he finds himself, together with other subjects. If the decoding is well done, this movement of flux and reflux from the abstract to the concrete which occurs in the analysis of a coded situation leads to the supersedence of the abstraction by the critical perception of the concrete, which has already ceased to be a dense, impenetrable reality. (Freire 105)

While participants will easily, because this action itself is natural, connect through the similarities of their rhizomes, the aim of a community engagement project is
to analyze, or decode, the differences that place them in false opposition to each other and their microfascist relationship. In this way, participants can begin to understand what aspects of their rhizomes allow for microfascist relationships to develop. If the purpose of the project is to focus on gender or sexuality issues, then, the participants must begin to evaluate their own perspectives and beliefs and how they coincide with other participants. In what areas do their rhizomes interconnect and in which way do they contrast? In some way, this could be understood as simply mapping each other’s rhizomes, looking for intersections and divergences of belief and identity. When moments of intersection are recognized, these should be reinforced, and where divergences occur, participants should attempt to understand what causes the divergences and exclusion of these divergences in their own rhizomes. The similarities that all participants share will provide enough of a foundation to evaluate these contradictions; however, the purpose of deterritorialization is to find places which allow participants to break down the rigidity of their borders and begin to incorporate new nodes inside their multiplicities. Therefore, pedagogical approaches must aim to reinforce this incorporation, which will generally result from understanding.

Paulo Freire offers a number of ways that this can be achieved. He describes that this can be done through the use of images, such as photographs

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30 Freire suggest numerous different approaches to this process. “Once the breakdown of thematics is completed, there follows the stage of its ‘codification’: choosing the best channel of communication for each theme and its
or drawings, and texts which allow the participants, through their reaction to the chosen medium, to analyze their reactions and position in the rhizosphere accordingly. Freire explains,

Equally appropriate for the methodology of thematic investigation and for problem-posing education is this effort to present significant dimensions of an individual’s contextual reality, the analysis of which will make it possible for him to recognize the interaction of various components. (104)

However, instead of using texts and pictures that may connect with their reality, I feel that any project involving community engagement should use the experiences that the participants share as the material for analysis. Of course, texts and educational material should be used to bolster this process and to provide material for comparison and discussion, but participants experiences must also be incorporated into this analysis to ensure they connect their discussion of the material to their own rhizomatic identities. This can be done through discussion, writing, sociodrama (which I will illustrate in the next and final chapter), also, similar to Freire, the incorporation of texts, movies, and other types of media. All of these should not only allow for the analysis and expansion of rhizomes but also provide an opportunity to build on the skills that are

representation. A codification may be simple or compound. The former utilizes either the visual (pictorial or graphic), the tactile, or the auditive channel; the latter utilizes various channels. The selection of pictorial or graphic channel depends not only on the material to be codified, but also on whether or no the individuals with whom one wishes to communicate are literate” (121).
necessary for the participants to be successful in life and in the classroom: all of which are necessary to justify the incorporation of community engagement in the classroom and in a community organization. Community engagement provides for both the expansion of the rhizome as well as the building of skills that will help participants succeed academically and in their community. The important aspect of this is to explore and analyze not only how rhizomes are organized but also analyzing what caused them to form. By doing this, participants not only learn how their rhizomatic identity as well as the rhizosphere itself implicitly influences the relationships they develop with others and the roles they play in the power system as a whole.

The point to remember is that the rhizomatic conflicts that participants will analyze occur locally. They are not the product of the rhizosphere but of the microfascist relationships that each participant plays a role in. The analysis should aim to evaluate the position they possess in the microfascist relationships. Of course, these roles themselves are multiplicitious and each participant will play multiple roles. Through their experiences, they must evaluate what are the key components that allow for the creation of these roles; however, they must first be aware that they are participating in these relationships. Analyzing both their first impression and the assumptions they had before beginning the program may give some very good clues as to the anatomy of the relationships themselves. This should be done on all sides, with the students, teacher, and community members as well as with the staff of the organization that the
classroom has partnered with. Every participant, as a result of the role that they play in the microfascist relationships, will come into to the project with certain expectations of their counterpart. An analysis of these expectations can be one of the first tasks. Each relationship that participants find themselves in, then, becomes a topic for analysis and discovery. They must become aware that they are playing the roles that they seemingly take part in.

When an individual is presented with a coded existential situation (a sketch, or photograph which leads by abstraction to the concreteness of existential reality), his tendency is to “split” that coded situation. In the process of decoding, this separation corresponds to the stage we call the “description of the situation,” and facilitates the discovery of the interaction among the parts of the disjoined whole. This whole (the coded situation), which previously had been only diffusely apprehended, begins to acquire meaning as thought flows back to it from the various dimensions. Since, however, the coding is the representation of an existential situation, the decoder tends to take the step from the representation to the very concrete situation in which and with which she finds herself. It is thus possible to explain conceptually why individuals begin to behave differently with regard to objective reality, once that reality has ceased to look like a blind alley and
has taken on its true aspect: a challenge which human beings
must meet. (Freire 106)

Because all too often we are not fully aware of the microfascist relationships we
subscribe to, these relationships are largely invisible to us. We may be aware of
the inequity which exists between individuals but are unaware of the relationships
themselves. While we are conscious of our participation, implicitly, because we
constantly resubscribe to them through our perpetual participation, we are not
fully aware of the influence these paradigms have on our actions and the manner
in which our action and participation has in producing this pattern throughout the
entire rhizosphere itself. Participants must first begin to analyze and become
aware of these microfascist relationships before attempting to reterritorialize their
multiplicities. Without this, no actual deterritorialization has been accomplished,
and this awareness is necessary before the incorporation of disparate nodes can
be achieved. Once participants begin to understand the nature of microfascist
relationships and the manner in which they are produced and the possibility of
their alteration, they, through their continued interaction and the personal, not
microfascist, relationship with each other, will begin to understand the necessity
for the transformation of their roles to take place. The paramount goal of the
project should be to encourage the transformation, regardless of its scope, of
how students relate to one another. The conflicts that arise during this evaluative
component should be shared and offered up for discussion by the group as a
whole. Deterritorialization is in actuality largely the development of critical
awareness of the inequitable power system that we are all a part of. Becoming aware of the fact and anatomy of our own multiplicities will lead to the understanding that these relationships as well as the brittle borders that falsely attempt to confine our concepts of selves are not as strong as participants generally expect them to be. They are in fact challenged and expanded every day; therefore, an indispensible component to the analysis process must be to discuss how each participants’ multiplicities functions throughout their entire life. Realization of this process is important because it provides hope for the possibility for relational transformation of the future. Community participants, through sustained interaction, will offer the inevitable alteration of the project’s rhizome comprised by those of its members. Where a great deal of these rhizomes would have limited points of contact before beginning the process, a great deal of interconnectivity will have resulted by the end of the project. These new directions then allow for the incorporation of different nodes from disparate others into each participant’s rhizome, therefore, leading to the possible reterritorialization of each one, and this must be done through the alliances developed through interaction that each participant will have through the community engagement project that occurs both inside and outside the class.

During deterritorialization, every time a border is examined and brought down another is constructed again. Since many may believe that the purpose of community engagement in rhizomatic resistance is to break down borders, reterritorialization would probably seem to be a regression in this process. Why
should we build up walls once we finally succeeded in knocking them down?
The purpose of rhizomatic resistance is not to merely succeed in bringing about identity destruction; the purpose is to slowly redevelop borderlines that will begin to include others that have been excluded in the past. No participant should expect this to be a fast process: it will take time. Each reterritorialization will only advance borderlines in incremental fashion. Absolute acceptance should not be expected during the first project. While not a significant change, an informed and nuanced understanding of a counterpart in a microfascist relationship is the first step to acceptance. An understanding of those that have at one time or another been excluded denotes the fact that new connections, rhizomatic lines, have been formed, which will allow for the possibility for complete rhizomatic inclusion in the future. These connections provide the basis for the formation of rhizomes, those formed and interconnected between participants of community engagement projects. The more connections that are formed the more likely these lines of connections will serve as bulwarks for relationship building in this and in future projects and in the outside world when participants are no longer participating in community engagement in a classroom: the goal is that they will constantly form new lines and, through this, perpetually develop new relationships and expand their concepts of self. Rhizomatic identity, instead of being the point of exclusion, then becomes the starting point from which all other actions of inclusion can take place. Deleuze describes the connectivity between
rhizomatic identities, their constructions, and how connections between disparate identities can lead to the deterritorialization of the entire rhizome itself as follows:

If we imagined the position of a fascinated Self, it was because the multiplicity toward which it leans, stretching to the breaking point, is the continuation of another multiplicity that works it and strains it from the inside. In fact, the self is only a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities. Each multiplicity is defined by a borderline functioning as Anomalous, but there is a string of borderlines, a continuous line of borderlines (fiber) following which the multiplicity changes. And at each threshold or door, a new pact?...Every fiber is a Universe fiber. A fiber strung across borderlines constitute a line of flight or deterritorialization. (Deleuze 249)

The lines that participants trace during their actions and deterritorialization allow for the formation of lines that in turn, when enough connections have been made, lead to the formation of a new, expanded borderline and, therefore, concept of self, or rhizomatic identity. This is true even if there are only minute alterations because even the smallest incorporation of disparate nodes leaves each group’s and individual’s rhizome to be altered. The anomalous connections serve as the precursor for reterritorialization because new territories must first be explored before they can be incorporated into the multiplicity. The incorporation of the anomalous is a key component of the expansion and reterritorialization. This is
not as difficult as it may seem. The purpose of a community engagement project is to form relationships, or alliances, with those that have been excluded from participants’ rhizomes in the past, especially those that have been placed in an oppressive or subjugated role over other participants.

The entire process circles around the examination and inclusion of the anomalous.

It is evident that the Anomalous, the Outsider, has several functions: not only does it border each multiplicity, of which it determines the temporary or local stability (with the highest number of dimensions possible under the circumstances), not only is it the precondition for the alliance necessary to becoming, but it also carries the transformations of becoming or crossings of multiplicities always farther down the line of flight. (Deleuze 249)

The anomalous is key to both the deterritorialization and reterritorialization. These points of rhizomatic extension allows for the expansion of the rhizome. However, where the anomalous serves as the focal point that allows for this expansion to take place, the key point for the creation and maintenance of the newly formed borderlines and territorialization is the building and formation of alliances. Alliances are constantly being formed on their own; they are created and maintained every single day. However, pedagogical approaches must be utilized in order to ensure that the formation of these alliances occur between rhizomatic identities that possess opposing positions in the rhizomatic power
system. Of course, this is not as easy as it sounds. If these microfascist relationships could be easily surmounted and set aside, then there would be no need for attention to its development in the educational system. The difficulty is that these microfascist relationships completely inform the manner in which we act and regard others as well as strongly influence opinions and decisions we make in our lives regarding those seen in opposition to our rhizomes. To illustrate this we must begin to evaluate why it so easy to blame every individual for the crimes committed without an analysis for the situation that produced the possibility for this crime to occur, or evaluate how many people dismiss and ignore the homeless without ever taking the time to begin to understand what social forces caused this situation to take place. These divisions exist, and this process is not easy. Lifetimes and generations of social memory must be decoded before alliances can be made and sustained. Therefore, in order to encourage this, pedagogical approaches must be made in order to foster alliance development. Participants must learn to incorporate disparate elements into themselves in order to ensure the expansion of the rhizome and, therefore, the expansion of the self. “Any relationship involves commitment to shared agreements, tacit or explicit” (Horowitz 144). When this happens participants become aware of the anomalous and then accept this into their own rhizome. This may occur because they notice similarities to a particular node, such as individuals sharing interests and experiences. Alliances are formed through these connections, and the stronger the alliances the more likely rhizomes will
remain connected in the future. However, the point should not merely be to connect individuals. Too many of us today can accept singular instances of disparity in one individual while still rejecting the mass whole which this singular individual represents. Serious efforts must be made to allow for the connection and development of alliances beyond connection to individuals while excluding a larger social group. The fact that this is done between groups instead of between individuals because a group situation allows for more alliances to be formed; however, beyond this, analyses must be made that connect how these microfascist relationships influence and affect the larger rhizosphere. This connection must be made to the larger social system if we hope that participants will apply what they learned to more than just the individuals they participated with during the community engagement project.

This must constantly be repeated to ensure for the fluidity of the rhizomatic identities to continue. Of course, if possible, this should happen multiple times through multiple projects with the same participants; however, more importantly this must be done throughout the rhizosphere to cause a distinct impact on the system as a whole as it does on groups and individuals. A fluid rhizosphere must be the goal. This will lead to the alleviation of the social inequity and injustice. Having laid the necessary theoretical framework, the next chapter will offer an example of how this process could take place in a literature classroom.
**Conclusion**

In order to make this description of the community engagement as a form of rhizomatic resistance complete, it is necessary to provide an example which shows not only the organization and group of individuals participating in this project but also the activities that will help facilitate the transformation of the rhizomes and microfascist relationships of its participants. While theory is necessary for the understanding and implementation of such an undertaking— instructors, intellectuals, and scholars alike should never enter into any project without some level of the theoretical understanding of the actions that they plan to engage in—I feel theory itself has less value if not placed into practice. By this, I do not intend to suggest that theoretical works have absolutely no value or that they serve no purpose in the construction of a resistance to any social system—any one who would make such a claim, I think, would find themselves quickly inundated with numerous examples and academic critiques which would prove otherwise. However, I do intend to suggest that theory’s impact is largely diminished until it is applied either to real life or its author provides an example of how to integrate her or his theory into every day life and struggles. This point has no less weight with regards to the theoretical framework that I have developed up until this point, especially since I have been espousing a theory that necessitates reflection and community action as a tool for social resistance
and transformation. Therefore, this final chapter will focus on providing an example of how to put community engagement and rhizomatic resistance into practice. Now, while a great deal of planning is necessary for such a project to be successful, I will not spend a great deal of time describing the specific details, such as the meetings, collaborations, and planning process that should be involved in the incipient states of the community engagement project.

I have already described in earlier chapters how I believe this should be achieved and how I believe this could be successfully done. Should the reader feel that more exploration is needed before implementing the planning process I would suggest taking a more in depth look and reading at Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* which I have noted substantially for the articulation of my theoretical premise, but probably more beneficial, I suggest reading works and essays written by and about Myles Horton and the Highlander Folk School to help in this process. Horton’s and the Highlander Folk School’s communicative methods and approaches have proven successful with organic and what I have termed rhizomatic resistance with social transformative projects from the Civil Rights Movement to today. Instead, I plan to demonstrate what approach to take once the project is in progress and how to foster the rhizomatic transformation and expansion that is necessary for this type of resistance to take place. Now, as many readers may have already discovered, community engagement is not an entirely new approach. Even today, there is a growing interest in community engagement under the auspice of service learning. Similarly, students,
regardless of level, participate and spearhead a project that places them within an organization that allows them to utilize the skills learned in class in order to complete a social service project that benefits the community. While these types of approaches move in the right direction, they are, however, not fully realized rhizomatic resistant projects. While they are beneficial in aiding the community, which is one of the most paramount aspects of community engagement and rhizomatic resistance, and provide for the haphazard possibility for alterations in rhizomes and relationships to occur, these projects do not set the transformation of participants’ rhizomes as a goal of the project. This transformation might well occur, but this is more a result of lucky happenstance rather than concerted planning and effort to do so. For resistance to be truly rhizomatic, any community engagement project must place activities and efforts to make malleable and expand rhizome and through this effort, seek to transform the inequity and subordination of microfascist relationships tantamount with the completion of the community project itself. Without these two components, no resistant project which involves social service can indeed be considered rhizomatic. Therefore, I will provide the reader with an example of a rhizomatic resistant community engagement project, complete with an example of an organization to partner with and activities, demonstrating one manner in which to approach and effectively produce the intended rhizomatic and microfascist transformations described in the preceding chapters.
As I have mentioned in Chapter 2, one manner in which this can be achieved is through the utilization of a rhizomatic text. Of course, the argument can be made that essentially every book is rhizomatic, and for the sake of simplicity, I would be willing to concede that this is essentially true. However, when I mention a rhizomatic text, I do not intend to make a simple redundancy; for if every book is rhizomatic then it serves no purpose to term any book rhizomatic; this would simply equate in calling a rhizomatic text a book book. Therefore, when I claim that a rhizomatic text is needed, I ask for a book to be employed that is ripe with rhizomatic tensions, one which has rhizomatic conflict easily found on its most superficial nodes and surfaces. A text which requires unbelievably laborious effort to analyze and discuss its rhizomatic and microfascist elements would not be best suited for this purpose. Rhizomatic resistance requires a book whose tensions are easily found, analyzed, and utilized to help bring about the transformations earlier described. The text is not the most important aspect of the rhizomatic resistant community engagement project. However, the selection of a suitable text does carry a certain level of importance because the activities that surround it will be a major component which will offer an opportunity for the possible exploration and understanding of rhizomatic differences and expansions and microfascist conflicts to be analyzed, organized, and orchestrated. While these elements will constantly be revised and confronted during participants interactions in the project, this component will be one of the few times, if not the only one, where a deep and scheduled
analysis of the participants rhizomes and microfascist roles will take place; therefore, understandably, the chosen text/s hold/s a great deal of significance with regards to the success of the rhizomatic resistance as a whole. Then, the work selected must have enough conflict to make it beneficial and complementary to the aim of the project. With this in mind, I have selected to demonstrate how Lorraine Hansberry’s play A Raisin in the Sun reflects the rhizomatic and microfascist discord described throughout previous chapters and can be used, when accompanied by a number of explorative activities, varied in their approach and medium, to help bring about multiplicity expansion, the alteration of oppressive microfascist relationships, and, eventually, become one step in macro-rhizomatic transformation system wide.

However, before I move on and elucidate the different approaches one could take when using “A Raisin in the Sun” as a component of rhizomatic resistance, it is, first, necessary to demonstrate its worth as a rhizomatic text but also analyze the existence of rhizomatic conflict within the text itself. Therefore, it is important to examine not only the content of the play itself and also the avenues which have been explored through different examples of scholarship. The appropriateness of this play can be easily illustrated through the varied responses to the play at its opening and by the numerous reactions critics have given since its debut. A great deal of scholarship has been produced about this play. Jeanne-Marie A. Miller states, “A Raisin in the Sun celebrates black life in all its diversity” (134). The play recognizes the varied nodes that construct
different individuals’ and cultures’ rhizomes. *A Raisin* is a perfect example of the multiplicitious nature of *black identity* and its interconnectivity to alternate nodes and rhizomes. Just as an individual’s rhizome is compromised of varying nodes of disparity that seem to coalesce into a manageable whole, group identities are plural. Therefore, any group identity should actually be considered as an assemblage of disparate identities which have been universally understood as a whole. *A Raisin* offers and embodies this multitude and holds it up for reflection. Many different scholars and intellectuals have explored all of the characters and discourses about the different economic, class, and gender influences and antecedents that made the production of this play possible. Furthermore, Hansberry herself has often been the subject of such criticisms. Philip Uko Effiong notes, “Shaped by her background and experiences, Hansberry’s drama dealt with a lot of African-American themes, but she did not restrict her focus to this subject” (30). Hansberry’s play is as diverse as her own rhizome. Her play is not merely about black experiences; it offers numerous directions from which to analyze the complexity of identities, which is immensely important to ensure the success of a rhizomatic resistance project. The purpose of teaching “A Raisin in the Sun” is not merely to examine a single pair of microfascist relationships, black/white, but also to explore how a multitude of relationships can be challenged. To do otherwise would be to make assumptions regarding what areas participants need to challenge the most which would be counterproductive to the entire process itself. While the study of human
relationships must be organized and well planned, it must also be organic, allowing for the pathways of analysis to be determined by the participants themselves. This will be the only way to allow for a successful project. *A Raisin in the Sun*’s critics participate in this rhizomatic process since their opinions about the play have almost been equally as varied as the avenues that they have used to explore it. Their variety of discourses alone easily proves the applicability of this text to a rhizomatic resistance project.

The presence of rhizomatic conflict in *A Raisin in the Sun* can be easily understood when an article by Robin Bernstein entitled “Inventing a Fishbowl: White Supremacy and the Critical Reception of Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun*” is analyzed. In this essay Bernstein describes how the critical responses after the play’s opening on March 11, 1959 presented a dichotomy between universality and particularity. It is through these contradictory assertions that the reader’s awareness of the play’s inherent rhizomatic conflict should begin to take place. One of the first areas that Bernstein explores is the manner in which critics attempted to simply define the play through the myopic lens of *black* experience. Critics lauded it as an amazing microcosm which allowed for the witnessing and understanding of an exotic representation of the black other, completely encapsulating it within this rigidly defined concept of identity and disconnecting it from any other possible avenue for analysis. For them, the play satisfied their need for an authentic black identity and culture without questioning their own complicity in the injustices that are represented on
stage and without examining their own microfascist relationships. These critics rigidly positioned black experience outside their rhizomatic border, ensuring the safety of the demarcation of their rhizomatic identity. Bernstein claims that

[the play’s ability to appear to encapsulate “Negro experience” in the readily knowable, digestible, and non-threatening form of theatrical realism arguably satisfied this impulse and thus constituted the primary reason for the play’s success among white audiences.” (18)

Where the first set of critics only focused on what they perceived as authentic black experience and thus demarcated this other outside their rhizomatic borders, the other half of the critics completely erased any ethnic particularity and lauded it for its universalism. They only analyzed how the play related to themselves, and due to the fact that they refused to acknowledge any shared nodes with what they perceived as a black rhizome, their assessments exorcised any detail in their analysis which could call into question the organization of their rhizome and their position in a microfascist relationship. By simply lauding it for its universality, the critics were able to praise the play without analyzing and challenging the roles which perpetuate the inequity in their everyday lives and the rhizosphere. Both the critics that argued for the establishment of the play’s universality and its particularity provided analyses that refused to threaten their rhizomatic borders. They only accepted the components of their play that left
their borders unchallenged and allowed for their anti-racist sensibilities to remain in take. Berstein explains that

[t]his action positioned blacks as if in a fishbowl: they could look at each other, but not at anything beyond their immediate context.

This fishbowl could sit comfortably, decoratively, on a shelf in a white household; white people could peer through the glass (which contained and controlled the exotics and simultaneously kept the white spectator safely separated from the creatures)...In other words, erasing Hansberry’s authority to speak about anything but her (white-defined) culture created a “glass” barrier that separated white audiences from the play’s black creators and characters and rendered the subaltern collectable—and thus produced white power. (19)

These critics’ responses to the play bring to light not merely the racial tensions in the play but how the drama can be utilized to analyze the microfascist relationships and rigid borders of the audience. In her essay, Bernstein clearly exhibits and defines the clear racial inequities produced by microfascist relationships. This above example demonstrates how a text can easily be used to analyze not only the material and subject matter but also the audience of A Raisin in the Sun. However, it also exposes the need for orchestrated activities and analyses in order to ensure that any alteration of readers’ or audience’s rhizomes occur. Even though this play and its critiques allowed for Bernstein to
formulate this hypothesis, the drama itself failed to challenge any of the relationships of these critics. Bernstein explains that the critics were easily able to explore the play without experiencing any significant challenge to their rhizome. Therefore, any project which seeks to enlist the use of rhizomatic resistance to help bring social change must include a level of analysis and exploration in order to achieve rhizomatic expansion.

In a similar vein, black critics assed A Raisin in problematic ways. For example, scholars of the Black Arts Movement criticized the play for what they saw as stereotypical representation of black characters. The movement questioned the depiction of Lena Younger, the mother of the Younger family. Margaret B. Wikerson explains,

she was seen by audiences, particularly white audiences, and critics alike, as a familiar figure from the American literary and dramatic canon: the dark-skinned, white-haired, conservative mammy of the ‘good old days,’ who revered the master, sought to emulate his lifestyle, and struggled to keep her unruly children in line. (42)

Opposed to other critics Lena Younger here was seen to reinforce the microfascist relationships which, at the time, the Black Arts Movement was attempting to overturn. This claim reinforces Bernstein’s argument that it is possible for the white audiences to leave after watching the play without experiencing a challenge to their rhizome. They witnessed what they expected,
a black play. While *A Raisin* was significant because it was one of the first major successes of a play written by an African American writer, critics of the Black Arts Movement perceived it as a work that did not go far enough. To them, it did not successfully force the white audience members to evaluate the privileged positions that they held. Furthermore, they felt the play did not portray African American men in a positive light. “[T]he Black Arts Movement took umbrage at Walter Lee, who seemed ineffectual, impotent, and proven wrong by his mother, a reductionist view of their situation, demeaning the black man’s struggle for manhood in a racist society” (Wikerson 42). In this case, it was not only the racial depiction that caused the problem but also the powerless role that a black man was forced to present on the stage in front of the audience. Therefore, this is an example of the strife within black communities as well as an illustration of the oppressive microfascist gender relationship represented in the play, which the Black Arts Movement feared would then be associated with black males. Walter Lee’s character did not match the role of black men that the Black Arts Movement felt a piece of art should represent. All of these examples easily show how and why *A Raisin in the Sun* is the perfect addition to a community engagement project which seeks to challenge social inequity.

However, before moving on to the activities it is important to discuss the organization and the participants that will be involved in this project. Even though the majority of this work has focused on incorporating rhizomatic resistance and community engagement into classrooms and curricula, social
transformation does not simply have to occur inside a classroom setting. Numerous different organizations and groups of people can include this method of social transformation into their project. The one thing that each organization needs to do is to ensure that the participant base includes disparate members who should not all be from the same community. Whether the project incorporates participants from the different non-profits, school districts, or even corporations, the involvement of disparate groups of people will ensure the larger likelihood for significant rhizomatic transformation and also widen the possible number and various types of rhizomes that could be altered. For this example, I will show how a high school English classroom which is matched with a local non-profit organization can ultimately lead to rhizomatic resistance and begin to alter the rhizosphere. The best way to begin to incorporate this project into a school system and community is to start with a small group of individuals and to expand it with subsequent projects. As I stated in the second chapter, the success of the program, not solicitation, will easily bring more interested individuals to the cause without forcing us to spend an exhausting amount of effort attempting to convince them of its virtue. The school will be an average urban high school with a classroom of between 20-25 students. Regarding the face and gender of the proposed classroom for the 2007-2008 school year, I will use the general demographic of Akron Public Schools. The student population will be approximately 48% black, 42% white, 1.4% racial, 6% multi-racial, and 2% Asian/Pacifica Islander (Akronschools.com). The students will be 51% male and
49% female (Akronschools.com). While it is not necessary, the classroom, in this case, will be on an academic tract, with the majority of the students desiring to go to college. Of course, community engagement and rhizomatic resistance is not only intended for those who wish to go to college because every individual can benefit from this process, and the rhizosphere will indubitably profit from a multiplicitious group of individuals regardless of their long-term life goals. The choice of an academic tract is to better transition the selection of the non-profit organization into the process.

The non-profit organization that the classroom will be paired with is an actual organization called The Summit Education Initiative (SEI), which is based in Akron, Ohio. The appropriateness of its selection can easily be understood through reading their mission: “Summit Education Initiative forges strategic alliances among education, business, civic, and community leaders that increase the educational aspirations and achievement of all Summit County children” (Seisummit.org). Obviously, the mission statement of this organization in many ways mirrors the goals of a community engagement project. This makes it an ideal candidate for partnership with the English classroom mentioned above.

When choosing which organization to partner with, it is not necessary to ensure that their mission statement perfectly fits in line with that of rhizomatic resistance. In fact, it does not have to fall in line at all. However, it is paramount that all involved entities make a binding agreement to do their upmost to make the project be a success. Success, like in most endeavors, completely rests on the
commitment and engagement of groups and individuals. Furthermore, the utilization of an already established organization provides a number of things: a pre-made connection to a number of individuals inside the community but not part of the classroom; an easy planning process for all groups involved. The latter makes the creation of a project unnecessary for already overworked teachers and also provides for the inclusion of the community of individuals who may not have been able to be recruited should the classroom have planned this enrollment entirely on its own. Also, it ensures that there is no duplication of services. If an organization currently exists which provides services to a distinct group of people, such as the homeless, the LGBTQ community, etc., there is no reason to duplicate the same services that are already funded elsewhere. While there is a great deal of money available to fund projects there is never enough to cover need, and a project should collaborate rather than compete to provide services to communities. Committed participation of a previously existing organization, even if its mission does not completely mesh with the goals of rhizomatic resistance, can also help transform the rhizome of the organization as well as those of the individuals, which in turn will help to bring about the transformation of the rhizosphere. However, all participants, whether organizational staff, students, volunteers, etc., must be involved equally in the planning process. They must all be considered as equal participants as they plan the design and implementation involved in the rhizomatic exploration process.
However, simply aligning with SEI is not enough to incorporate community engagement in the classroom. While SEI is an admirable program, its mission statement, obviously, demonstrates that its activities and organization and its scope are too generally aligned to serve this project. Instead, I intend to demonstrate how a partnership with one of their successful and established programs, Destination College, will be a better immediate partner for the project. “Destination College is a 17-month program that ushers high school juniors through the transition from high school to college” (Seisummit.org). During these 17 months, Destination College provides a number of services which help to bridge the gap for students whose goal is to attend college: it offers ACT prep, conducts a leadership/teambuilding camp in the summer, offers financial aid consultation for the family, partners groups of Destination College members with community organizations to conduct action research projects, and also pairs them with mentors, adult volunteers recruited from the surrounding community who seek to provide guidance through their length of the project and beyond. Destination College collaborates with high schools throughout Summit County which has a student population with a demonstrated need of their services, such as Akron Public Schools and Tallmadge Public Schools. In this case, Destination College is similar to SEI because it offers a number of services. However, instead of incorporating community engagement and rhizomatic resistance in each of the above components, this project will focus on an already successful relationship of the program, such as that form between the mentors and the
students. While this relationship does appear to have an inherent microfascist structure, its purpose is to blur the hierarchical relationship through the exploration of each other’s rhizomes. Similar to the manner Freire’s teacher/student paradigm is altered through collective action and exploration individuals will begin to understand their counterparts and undermine the microfascist relationship.

Furthermore, the recruitment will let all participants know that the purpose of this process is to complicate the rhizomes of all contributors. Therefore, all participants will understand that they are both mentor and mentees in this process. Also, their equal participation in the design and implementation of this project will reinforce this fact. In this case, the community engagement project will already have a ready-made framework from which to begin its activities as well as the perfect situation and mix of individuals from which to bring about the required rhizomatic alliance building. Destination College already recognizes the need for the development of relationships needed in order for these students to break through the rigid rhizomatic boundaries, on a local and macro level and become successful in college and in their lives after graduating. When discussing the divide between student achievement, Destination College argues that

[t]he gap is more than academic; it is also social and cultural.

Mentors help break down barriers and shepherd these young
people from their junior year through enrollment in a postsecondary institution. (Seisummit.org)

This program encourages all its members to expand their rhizomes. The mentors are adults from the Akron community with a great deal of experience. The large majority of these mentors who are recruited and paired with mentees are successful in both the community and their careers. They have almost all completed or are currently completing their postsecondary education. However, what makes this component even more beneficial for the incorporation of rhizomatic resistance is the large variety of mentors and students it will bring to the community engagement process on both ends. This situation allows for the incorporation of individuals into the project on diverse lines, such as class, race, gender, sexuality, age, nationality, immigration status, and interest. The student and mentor population offer a great deal of diversity because they come from a number of different backgrounds and have had diverse experiences. This heterogeneity allows for the development of the perfect storm of rhizomatic resistance. Also, the utilization of Destination College is beneficial because it serves numerous needs, such as bolstering the skills of the students and helping them transition to college and allowing for the community members—the mentors—to begin to challenge the rhizomes of the students while continually questioning and expanding their positions in microfascist relationships. Moreover, Destination College offers a chance for all members to participate in a project that will not only affect the individuals participating but also the community
by inserting members with more diverse and expanded rhizomes and education potential back into the community. Destination College, when partnered with rhizomatic resistance, will help the community build alliances that will continue to connect its disparate members.

Now that the group of individuals who will participate in the community engagement project has been established, we can begin to explore the activities that, when aligned with *A Raisin in the Sun*, can facilitate the beginning for rhizomatic transformation; however, first, the reader needs to know how these activities and the project’s participants will be organized. Each Destination College member will be assigned a mentor, and each mentoring team will be organized in revolving groups in which these activities will take place. (In this case, the use of mentoring should be understood as a group in which both participants, mentor and mentee, are being guided by their counterparts). Mentoring teams will have numerous activities to build bonds together outside these activities, such as field trips, ball games, museums, college visits, etc. However, through the use of *A Raisin*, participants will have the opportunity to examine their own rhizomatic perspectives and those of their counterparts. Both the play and these experiences offer material for discussion during these activities. The larger revolving mentor and mentee groups are necessary to allow the mentor and mentees to come in contact with numerous individuals and build alliances with others beyond their counterparts. All individuals involved, whether the teachers, students, mentors, or SEI staff, will participate in the
activities and share their perspectives and explore their positions in microfascist relationships and rhizomes with all other participants.

Now I would like to demonstrate how an entire Literature class will participate in the 17 month program. Students will read and discuss *A Raisin* in the classroom while mentors either complete the activities with other mentors or do it on their own. Also, mentor and mentees will participate in planning groups, where all participants will help to plan activities; therefore, all participants will have equal input in the design and performance of each activity. The planned activities that will be described subsequently in this essay will incorporate all participants and will be held in the evenings or the weekends to better accommodate the schedules of the mentors who work during the day. During activities, mentoring teams will work with different other teams to ensure the maximum diversity for rhizomatic exploration. Finally, all participants will be required to keep a weekly journal regarding their experiences and thoughts during activities and their interactions with their individual counterparts.

Before the participants begin to analyze the rhizomes and microfascist relationships of the characters in *A Raisin*, themselves, and other participants, they must first gain a better understanding of their own rhizomes by mapping them, drawing conclusions, and sharing their perspectives about their counterparts. This assignment must be done before the mentoring teams have spent any significant time together. The exercise will ensure that the students’ answers will give a more true representation of their rhizomes before the project
begins and provides us with a better representation of their different positions and microfascist relationships towards their counterparts. This writing assignment does not need to be enormously formal since it can be easily formatted in the form of a questionnaire that is composed in such a way to encourage deep introspection and not merely short answers. Questions that may be included in the questionnaire are as follows:

- What experiences made you the person you are today?
- How do you think your counterpart will perceive you?
- What experiences do you share or have in common with your counterpart?
- What experiences make you different from your counterpart?
- What differences do you think will be the most difficult to overcome?
- What experiences do you think could make your relationship with your counterpart stronger?
- What privileges do you think you possess that your counterpart does not?
- How do you perceive your relationship with your mentoring counterpart impacting your opportunities and experiences in life?
- What type of relationship will you need to develop before any significant alteration to your idea of yourself will change?

Participants will complete this writing assignment and share their responses with their mentoring counterparts' and then, with their first set of revolving mentor groups. They will discuss how they came to these conclusions while analyzing
how and what caused their counterparts responses to be similar and different. Naturally, conflicts and disagreements may arise; however, designated group facilitators must be present to help resolve conflicts and steer the conversation to productive analytical topics. Facilitators will rotate between all participants, whether teachers, staff, mentors, or students. Participants must not expect to see significant rhizomatic expansion during the first activity. Alliances, understanding, and growth will occur during the subsequent activities as well as the individuals mentoring activities the teams plan themselves. After these activities have been completed, copies of *A Raisin in the Sun* will be distributed and the first reading and writing assignments will be given to the mentors: students will complete these preliminary writing activities as assignments in class. The reading of the play should be separated into individual reading assignments which will explore different aspects of the play and mentoring teams. Once these activities have been completed, another similar project can be engaged with a different text with the mentoring groups; however, for now, I will limit the discussion of activities to those that may be utilized to help bring about social transformation through a rhizomatic reading of *A Raisin in the Sun*.

The first activity I will propose will revolve around Benethea. Benethea is one of the most important characters for this analysis because she represents an individual who is attempting to transgress the rigidly defined borders of her rhizome. Analyzing Benethea offers the participants a model from which they can begin to understand the purpose of the project. Benethea represents a
character that maintains a constant state of flux with the world she is living in. While it may be detrimental to the finances of her family, she constantly seeks out activities that explore and expand her concept of self. Unlike the majority of her family, Benethea engages in activities that allow her to transgress the rigid roles and lines that the social system and her family have set for her. Her experiences have transcended those of her family who have become threatened by Benethea’s rhizomatic expansion, causing a great deal of conflict in her house. Rachelle S. Gold explains that “Benethea’s knowledge represents conflict between herself and her family members as well as that knowledge is rooted in her intellectual training at college (13). Her experiences in college have provided her with localities, nodes, and alliances that have allowed her to expand her rhizome and, therefore, her identity. Even though a number of readers may question the fact that she continuously flits from one hobby to another and criticize the strain that she places on her family’s finances, these activities allow her to enrich her rhizome through the exploration of experiences that have been denied to her family. Benethea’s rhizome expansion places her in opposition with her family. The expansion that has occurred is largely dependent on her experiences at college. Similar to what college experiences will do and have done for the participants in the community engagement project, her rhizome has incorporated anomalous elements and extended the borders of her identity. Gold describes the cause of the rhizomatic disparity that has developed between Benethea and her family: “When she substitutes the values she learned in her
internal home sphere with the cultural and ideological values that she learns in college, an external sphere, her family finds her threatening” (3). An example of this disparity between values and ideologies can be illustrated when Lena Younger and Benethea begin to disagree about their beliefs in religion. When Benethea’s rhizomatic alteration causes Lena Younger to question what has changed her daughter she makes the often stated claim that she brought her children up in the church and, therefore, raised her correctly. However, Benethea explains that she no longer agrees with her mother’s belief in God and demonstrates some of the influence her education has had on her perspectives on religion and life.

Mama, you don’t understand. It’s all a matter of ideas, and God is just one idea I don’t accept. It’s not important. I am not going out and be immoral or commit crimes because I don’t believe in God. I don’t even think about it. It’s just that I get tired of Him getting credit for all the things the human race achieves through its own stubborn effort. There simply is no blasted God—there is only man and it is he who makes miracles! (Hansberry 51)

This exposition of belief causes Lena to smack her daughter in order to reinforce the microfascist relationship that Benethea began to challenge and sought to reverse. This is a good example of the power filial relationships place on individuals and the pressure and social and physical violence that may be employed to reject any multiplicity development that threatens the family’s
systems of value. More than this, Benethea’s experience demonstrates the role education can play in rhizome expansion. This is not to suggest that education necessarily leads to resistance against religion; however, education does lead its students to begin to have a larger understanding of the world and, if done correctly, explore and even challenge the value systems that they took for granted and merely accepted as a child. Benethea, in this case, serves as a positive example for both the mentees and mentors.

Furthermore, Benethea provides participants with an example of how these multiplicity expansions are produced. Benethea does not develop new nodes and incorporate the anomalous on her own; the alliances she makes while attending college to be a doctor are responsible for the enrichment of her identity. The most positive alliance she forms which makes a significant impact on the arrangement and organization of her rhizome is her relationship with Asagai. A native of Nigeria, Asagai offers Benethea knowledge of a heritage that has been stolen from her. Her relationship with him comes at a time when her borders are already fluid enough through her exploration of self during her academic courses as well as her attempts to find a suitable hobby to be able to evaluate the incorporation of the anomalous nodes that Asagai’s rhizomes provides her.

Asagai is able to evolve into a cultural conduit, informing Benethea about African history, belief systems, practices, and ongoing battles against imperialism. Her cultural awareness is broadened by his
instructions on African clothing, music, song, and dance, and by his gifts of a Nigerian name, *Alaiyo*, and a Nigerian robe. (Effiong 38)

Their relationship allows Benethea the safety and encouragement to analyze and then incorporate the anomalous nodes that Asagai offers which, in turn, connect the two rhizomes. Asagai’s effect on Benethea becomes apparent at the beginning of Act I when she emerges from her room in the Nigerian dress. When questioned by Ruth, her sister-in-law, regarding her dress, Benethea responds, “Isn’t it beautiful?” and then exclaims, “Enough of this assimilationist junk!” (Hansberry 76). Her relationship with Asagai has provided her with the necessary rhizomatic connections with which she becomes capable of beginning to challenge the black/white microfascist relationship that produces the racism that is prevalent during the time of the play and is responsible for the social inequities that she then begins to fight. This relationship provides the project participants an example of a positive alliance which can make a significant impact on an individual’s rhizome; however, Benethea’s relationship with George illustrates how it can also be impacted by a negative one. Unlike her relationship with Asagai, her relationship with George does little to enrich her rhizome; in fact, the oppressive microfascist relationship that George subscribes does nothing more than subjugate Benethea to an inferior gender role. Similar to her family, George desires to reinforce the borders of her rhizome rather than transgress them. When, in the same scene which she dons her African dress, Benethea brandishes her newly cropped and *natural* hair, George, rather than accepting
her choice, belittles her by categorizing her as an eccentric. By disparaging her choices George seeks to convert Benethea into an individual whose rhizomatic formation more strictly falls in line with his own rigid categorization and definition of the world. When Benethea attempts to offer up one of the nodes that she has incorporated from her African heritage, George, because of his rigid rhizome, wants none of it. He vehemently exclaims, “Oh, dear, dear, dear! Here we go! A lecture on the African past! On our Great African Heritage!...Let’s face it, baby, your heritage is nothing but a bunch of raggedly-assed spirituals and grass huts!” (Hansberry 81). George attempts to use his romantic relationships with Benethea to keep her in line; however, her overt disinterest regarding building a long-term romantic relationship demonstrates his inability to do so. On the contrary, this relationship seems to do nothing other than strengthen her resolve to continue her rhizomatic extension. Rachelle S. Gold describes the position in which Benethea finds herself:

Benethea exists in a marginal space, not fully buying into the cultural values of the class to which she is supposed to aspire and not satisfied with the class to which she currently resides. It is as if the experience of college provides a bridge between the realm that she can claim and the realm that she dwells in; it is a kind of passing. Yet, despite the social lubricant of learning to speak correctly, and her adoption of middle-class avocations, she is not wholly comfortable in either realm. (16)
Benethea represents the nascent forms that the participants in the project will find themselves in. She proves that rhizomatic alteration is possible and also reinforces the idea that alliances are the best manner in which to achieve this. She also provides them with a very complex character with tensions on numerous lines, such as gender, race, nationality, and class, from which to explore their own rhizomatic organization.

Because Benethea can easily be understood as a character with numerous microfascist points from which to depart on an analysis, no single activity will provide enough coverage to completely and truly explore every aspect that Hansberry shows in her character. However, every activity of this project should be specific enough to allow for rhizomatic evaluation and general enough to not draconically restrict fluid avenues of discussion and discovery. While this statement may seem to be contradictory in its very meaning, the realization of these criteria is rather easy to achieve. Second, because this community engagement project uses a literature classroom, all of the subsequent activities will involve writing assignments. This will help to not only prepare the participants for the activities but also serve to build the writing skills of the students whose ultimate goal is to successfully graduate from college. This activity will involve a directed creative writing assignment. After this assignment, the designated teacher should give a lesson describing the many facets of creative writing to help prepare students to successfully complete this activity. All participants can employ any method or format to write their response: they could
write a poem, song, short story, series of journal entries, or any other creative writing style they choose to use. The point is not to restrict the choices of the participants but to offer an activity that will also showcase each individual’s strengths, interest, and personalities (all important components of their rhizomes). After reading the play, all participants will create a creative writing piece exploring what Benethea’s life would be like fifteen years after the conclusion of the play. All responses are welcome. Participants should feel free to write anything that they want to. Not only should they describe what she is doing in 15 years but they must also include what relationships and barriers they believe caused this outcome to happen. They may feel she finds some way to become a doctor or that she had to forgo her dreams in order to help provide for her family. Whatever their response, the important aspect is to evaluate the causes which allowed the effect to come to pass. This writing assignment should be due prior to the meeting in which they will be discussed. Their revolving mentoring groups should all be assigned and their counterparts should all have each other’s responses available so they can read them. To begin with, participants should discuss and analyze some of the relationships and characteristics of Benethea listed above. Next, each member of the groups should shortly share their responses to the assignment. Each participant should give their opinions regarding the relationships that allowed the development of these outcomes in the text. Students should explore this avenue while discussing what caused this to happen. Each group should discuss their
opinions but more importantly question each other’s responses in order to get a better idea of what led each individual to this conclusion. If an individual believes that she will become a doctor they must justify how this was possible. Should a member think that such a solution is not possible, then, they should be encouraged to ask the author of the response if they had taken a particular barrier, such as a lack of funding, into account. If he or she did not, then, the group must inquire whether knowledge of this boundary causes them to reevaluate the conclusion that they had drawn. If groups of people are coming up with similar answers, these groups should evaluate what experiences and relationships they feel led them all to offer similar answers; similarly, participants who disagree should discuss what relationships and experiences led them to develop and believe what they had written. The purpose of this activity is to encourage discussion and begin to bridge the gap of understanding that makes divisions and schisms between rhizomes possible. Facilitators in each group should help steer discussion in the beneficial directions and encourage deeper analysis when simple generalizations are made. Otherwise, the discussion should be allowed to organically formulate itself. Finally, participants share the goals that they have for their own lives and those that they have had in the past, regardless of whether or not they have been achieved. All participants should evaluate what barriers they have had or will have to overcome to make the realization of these goals possible. Similarly to their analysis of Benethea’s future, they should evaluate the relationships and rhizomatic structures that make
this possible. By doing this, participants will begin to better understand their counterparts while forging connections that will later transform into solid and beneficial alliances.

While Benethea will provide participants with an example of an individual who is in a process of expanding her rhizome and challenging microfascist relationships, Walter Lee Younger offers them the opportunity to evaluate a rhizomatic identity in crisis because it continually denies its socially accepted positions in the microfascist network. Walter Lee is a man with dreams. He is unhappy with his position in life and throughout the entire play attempts to convince his family members to support his financial scheme which he believes will offer him the upward mobility and economic freedom that his position in a racial microfascist relationship has denied him. Margaret Wilkerson describes Walter Lee Younger as “a frustrated and restless chauffeur, who desires the opportunities that the ‘white boys’ have” (43). He possesses the subjugated position in a racial microfascist relationship. Because of his blackness and the disparity of equality that exists locally between white and black individuals, his options are completely limited. He wants the basic opportunities that his position in the black/white microfascist relationship denies him. Furthermore, Walter Lee is the embodiment of the American dream. Jeanne-Marie A. Miller writes:

In America, it is believed that anyone can become anything he or she wants to be. Walter wants a viable stake in the American economic market and is concerned with the economic future and
the stability of his family who are in need. He believes in himself and has high expectations and a determination to succeed. In reality, he has been an ignored man, an almost invisible man, a powerless man. Walter longs for an identity and believes that money brings with it power and freedom. As a black man in a dead-end job, he feels that the dream is out of reach. (135)

In this case, Walter possesses two separate microfascist positions that complicate the attainment of his goals as well as his satisfaction with his own identity. At one point he is a perfect example of the American value system. He wants to succeed economically. He has fully incorporated the rhizomatic nodes regarding the belief that individual work and excellence can provide for individual prosperity in America. He is the consummate American. However, because he is a Black American he is incapable of attaining his goal because the oppressive nature of racial microfascisms only provides him with a modicum of space for economic growth. Barry Bluestone offers a comprehensive description of the results of the black/white microfascist relationships that has positioned Walter Lee inside rigidly defined borders without any hope for escape, significant revision of microfascist relationships system-wide, and major alterations to the rhizosphere (231). Bluestone writes:

Denied the educational resources and the physical infrastructure necessary to develop technical skills and provide an efficient means of production, while at the same time denied access to the
corporate sector through discriminatory practices in housing, in the schools, on the job, and in the capital market, the ghetto has been forced to rely upon its one remaining resource: cheap labor. (231)

Because of all these disparities, Walter has little opportunity to rise above his socially inscribed positions. As the result of inequity between local relations, these disparities represent institutional challenges that Walter is not capable to surmount by himself. While he daydreams about his life as a corporate executive with his son, he has no way of challenging the racism that results from the microfascisms that produce the roadblocks to his success. What Bluestone demonstrates is that Walter is denied a chance because of institutional barrier resulting from microfascist relationships. Because of the inequities that are implicit throughout the social system, Walter never received the resources that would make this movement likely. While it is not impossible, the odds are not stacked in his favor. Furthermore, his frustration illustrates the hopelessness that has been produced through his seemingly futile struggle against a microfascist society that fixes Walter in a subjugated position and has been organized to obfuscate any attempt at altering it. Walter, in this case, offers participants an illustration of the institutional effects of microfascist relationships. Walter cannot escape from his frustrated positions in life not because he lacks the ambition and will power but due to the fact that social barriers restrict him from expanding beyond the borders of his own rhizome. Like his sister, Walter wants to incorporate outsides nodes into his rhizomes and become complicated through a
multiplicity of new experiences; however, due to his roles as a black man and his class position, his ambitions are arrested. Walter allows participants to examine the social barriers and begin to understand their local connections. Through this, participants will be able to not only understand the border guards that refuse Walter access but also begin to examine the social restrictions that occlude many individuals from achieving in today’s social system.

However, Walter’s rhizomatic and microfascist circumscription is only exacerbated at home. At home, Lena Younger, his mother, is in charge. As Mar Gallego puts it, Lena is the head of the family, “and this position places her at the center of the family and of their conflicts” (209). Even while at home, Walter employs a subordinate role. His mother rules the household; therefore, all of the restrictions that frustrate him on the outside are only magnified and worsen once he returns home. None of the characters allow him to perform his microfascist role as a man. Lena makes all of the decisions and summarily dismisses any of Walter’s claims for the insurance money. Actually, in order for his voice to be heard, Walter must further reject his microfascist role and depend on his wife to make the plea for him. When attempting to convince Ruth to speak to his mother for him regarding the insurance money, he explains, “Mama would listen to you. You know she listen to you more than she do me and Bennie. She think more of you” (Hansberry 32). Walter’s microfascist gender role is being upturned. While an argument can be made regarding the feminist characteristics of this microfascist inversion between male and female characters, the problem still
resides because the oppression is not being decreased or supplanted. The subordinated position is not being equally distributed or mitigated; in fact, it is only reversed because Walter, not the women, becomes the subjugated player. No actual alteration of the oppressive relationship is taking place. Instead of creating a more democratic rhizomatic environment where all parties possess a more equally distributed position of power, Walter’s frustration with the outside social system is only duplicated and his despondency compounded exponentially at home, which only serves to elucidate why he seeks to build alliances among his friends rather than spend time with his family at home. By no means am I attempting to disparage a feminist reading of this text or belittle the achievement of the women in the play; however, while significant challenges are being made for the roles of the women throughout the play, those which relate to the family’s rhizomatic construction are not done in a way to avoid the oppression and problems of other family. Lena Younger’s attempt to rescue her imploding family, the effect of microfascist struggle, ultimately leads her to purchase a new house.

Holding the ghetto environment responsible for the misfortunes of the family, she regards fleeing the ghetto as the only way to solve the situation. However, instead of helping her family out, she actually causes the main tension of the play that evolves around how to spend her dead husband’s money and precipitates the climactic point, in which she transfers her position of head of the
family to her irresponsible son and he almost destroys the family altogether. (Gallego 210)

Further evidence of the failed attempt of microfascist transformation is available here. The challenges to the family’s gender microfascisms threaten the very well being of the family. Instead of producing sustainable change, the inversion of the gender roles has only succeeded in threatening the health of the family environment. In fact, the women in the house who had gained some level of autonomy from this reversal are forced to give it back in order to save the family. Ruth falls in line and supports her husband. Because of his colossal mistakes, Benethea is unwillingly forced back into the filial fold, and Lena allows her son to usurp her authority. The only solution as she sees it is to revert to microfascist subjugation for the sake of her family. She realizes that her temporary emancipation has intensified the despondency of her son. She tells her son:

I’ve helped do it to you, haven’t I, son? Walter I been wrong…I say I been wrong, son. That I been doing to you what the rest of the world been doing to you...There ain’t nothing worth holding on to, money, dreams, nothing else—if it means—if it means it’s going to destroy my boy. (Hansberry 106)

Lena’s own efforts must be set aside in for the sake of her family. This example should provide for participants an opportunity to not only examine gender microfascisms in conflict but also help them understand the futility of these types of attempts without dealing with the paradigms that microfascisms adhere to. In
order for these changes to take hold, significant work would have to be made to incorporate nodes and mitigate the role of power in these microfascisms. The Younger family in this instance demonstrates the necessity of rhizomatic resistance.

One manner in which participants could explore some of these microfascist and rhizomatic dimensions is by completing a writing assignment that forces them to write from the perspectives of one of the characters, in this case, Walter. When Phoebe Jackson began discussing *A Raisin in the Sun* with her literature class, she was struck by the fact that very few of them could relate to Walter’s decision to reject the financial proposal made by Karl Linder. Because her students came from markedly different backgrounds and experiences than Walter—the majority of her class was white and middle to upper class—she decided that she would ask them to write from Walter’s perspective to encourage them to gain a more in depth understanding of his motivations in rejecting Linder’s money.

Writing from Walter Lee’s perspective…required that students reevaluate Walter Lee’s values, beliefs, and motivations, which include his desire to have a better life for his only son. By “becoming” Walter Lee, or at least by arguing on his behalf, students saw the character in a new light and within a larger picture. The students thus continued to generate new readings while revising previous ones. (Jackson 113)
Participants in this exercise write from Walter Lee’s perspective and explore why they feel he reacts the way that he does. They should also include a short synopsis of what they would do if they were in that situation and thoroughly explain their responses especially if they feel any disparities have been brought to light. Similarly to the last activity, participants should complete this exercise before any other discussion or contact has been made and shared regarding this assignment. At the next meeting, mentoring teams should join alternate revolving mentoring groups and discuss their responses and search for common ground and inconsistencies. These paradoxes should be explored and their perceived causes discussed. They should then do further analysis into the text and attempt to relate the barriers that Walter faces to their lives. Have they ever experienced such social restrictions? Do they think that such barriers still exist? What could they do as a group to attempt to fix them? Facilitators should help guide discussion and highlight comments that may aid in examining the rhizomatic structures of the play. An alternate approach to this project may be to make the actual writing of the responses a collaborative mentor/team activity. Jackson explains,

[C]ollaborative writing enabled students to see how each reader might generate totally different readings of the text, thus demonstrating how texts can have multiple readings dependent upon the readings and perspectives of each reader. As such, in order to coauthor, students had to negotiate and collaborate on
how to put their thoughts into words to the satisfaction of each member of the group. (114)

Not only does this activity help to strengthen the alliances that are being made between the mentoring team but it will also help to begin to bridge any rhizomatic gaps and disparities that their experiences and positions in their microfascist relationships provide through the continued attempt to find common ground through the writing of this activity. The exploration of these topics will further strengthen the understanding and the alliances that all participants will be building during this process.

The final aspect of the play that I will focus on centers around the entrance and exhortation of the Younger family regarding their upcoming move. This aspect of the play may have a great deal of potential for connection to the participants, not simply because of the overt racist reasoning behind it but the family interest that precipitated the move in the first place. As I have mentioned above, the money the Younger family receives represents access to an aspect of society that has been denied to Walter and his family because of the racist barriers inherent in the rhizosphere. Equally, the move to a new house, of which the intent is to provide a better life for the family, may have similar resonance with those involved in the project. Whether one is an adult or teenager, with a family, plans to have one, or hopes to do so in the future, one gets from the play a potential nodal connection that almost every reader can relate with. As much as hard work, providing your family with a better life is equally a part of the
concept of the *American Way*. However, this is obfuscated through the entrance of Karl Linder, a member of the white community *welcoming* committee. Instead of welcoming the family into the new neighborhood, Linder does his best to convince them that moving in would be completely against everyone's interests involved, especially the Youngers. While white microfascist roles are present indirectly in the play, Karl represents the white microfascist role that has up to this point been only a vague outline and specter to the Younger family. A critic states:

Karl Linder, the caller from the neighborhood association and the only white character in the drama, is a symbol of the white outside. He is an intruder in the family and the mouthpiece of white racism. He is presented as an ordinary man, and in that ordinariness lies, for he represents the common people. He does not come clad in a Klan uniform, but instead wears a business suit, carries a briefcase, and speaks in a modulated voice. Linder is a forerunner of the hostility and potential violence that the Youngers will experience in their new neighborhood. (Miller 138-39)

Linder not only represents the microfascist disparity between white and black America but also insinuates a class comparison into the conversation. Linder and presumably his community are from similar class levels as the Younger family. If Linder's description of the neighborhood is not enough proof, then, the fact that it was one of the few neighborhoods that Lena Younger felt they could
afford to live should offer the necessary amount of evidence. Therefore, this moment provides an important moment to highlight the racial disparity between the two groups of people in the community. Economically, the Youngers are similar to the white neighborhood in which they have purchased their home. In this case, it is not some vague institution or law that is denying them access to the neighborhood but the inequitable relationship that seeks to restrict them from gaining the privilege. In all actuality, the economical system has already allowed them to gain access; however, it is the rigid rhizomatic borders and the exclusion of the black other in their multiplicity that allows for this racism and prejudice to occur. This moment provides the participants the opportunity to witness how local microfascisms exclude and subjugate others. It also can help begin a discussion that may trace how these local oppressive relationships inform and influence the institutions that seek to uphold these hegemonic relationships. Participants can then utilize this interaction to discuss if they have witnessed or experienced any similar microfascist relationships in action. Unlike the distance the use of a text will afford, the inclusion of anecdotal evidence by members of mentoring teams will provide a proximity that mere textual analysis cannot elucidate. Finally, Linder’s exhortation offers a glimpse of a perversion of the rhizomatic resistance process. He approaches the Youngers in a similar manner and explains that the people in his neighborhood “feel that most trouble in this world, when you come right down to it…most of the trouble exists because people just don’t sit down and talk to each other” (Hansberry 116). Linder has
the right idea; however, he has no interest in understanding the Youngers. He simply wishes to convince the Youngers of his position and reinforce his own rhizomatic boundaries by limiting others. This can serve as a warning for the participants involved in the project to keep an open mind and leave their personal and rigid agendas at home. The purpose of this process is to understand not the forced compliance of others to our ideas. Merely sitting down and discussing does equate to rhizomatic resistance; only when all parties involved come together with the expressed purpose of understanding will any significant transformation of microfascist relationships and the rhizosphere take place. Coming together is the first component of the process; however, truly accepting another is where the actual change happens.

Similarly to the previous two activities, the final exercise that I will suggest involves assuming one of the roles of the characters from the drama. However, in this case, it will not simply be achieved through written responses but include involving all the participants in a number of small role plays, in sociodrama. Sociodrama is an interactive form of drama where participants assume character roles and, while in character, converse with the audience and each other to help resolve an issue or gain larger insight about a specific topic outside their own perspectives. Grace A. Telesco notes that it “can be an invaluable tool in raising social and political awareness, to address a critical issue with an audience, to understand theoretical foundations, to practice a skill, or to engage in a process of psychological or behavioral change” (2). By assuming different roles
participants will be forced to make decision regarding how they believe a specific character would respond in a given situation and compare it to their own position as well as field questions regarding why they made a specific choice while role playing. In a rhizomatic resistance project, sociodrama allows individuals to assume microfascist roles that are different from their own and attempt to understand a situation from an entirely different point of view. This will also bring to the forefront any latent assumptions that the participant possesses regarding the character or role that they are playing, which also provides the audience the opportunity to question the assumptions that the actor makes. “The actors become immersed in their characters and in these issues, making their individual learning process heightened” (Telesco 8). Through active role playing the participants cease to simply consider the differences between themselves and the part they are playing but take up the persona of another. The other that their rhizomes have excluded earns an inclusionary position, even if for only a short time, while the actor must navigate the interaction between his or her actions with those which would be most likely enacted by the role they are playing. Telesco writes:

When participants are engaged in a reality based scenario where the characters remain in character and interact with audience members, there is an ability to move out of the cognitive realm into the emotional where attitudes and feelings can be tapped into and education and change can be stimulated. (2)
This action ceases to be merely an academic one; connections are made and the emotions that the role playing elicits during the sociodrama are also felt by the actor playing this character. At this point, the lines between others become blurred and the microfascist roles are broken down as the emotional connection and changes of perception of the role are altered through understanding. In this instance, participants will be assigned different characters from the play. This will be divvied out through new revolving mentoring groups. Each participant will be responsible for preparing a short writing response regarding what they perceive their characters motivation to be. Not every participant will be able to assume a role in the sociodrama; therefore, they are responsible for creating numerous questions that would help the group explore the motivations, microfascisms, and rhizomes of the characters. When the groups come together, the facilitator of the group will inform them that the sociodrama will take place on a fictional talk show in which the facilitator will be the host. Those individuals that are not on stage will play the part of the audience while their counterparts are on stage. All facilitators will have some general questions regarding the characters from the play, but this should only serve to get the dialogue started. The majority of the questions ought to come from the audience. The participants should espouse their views openly, and then the audience members will be able to ask follow-up questions. The facilitator is there, once again, to help stimulate and guide the conversation. While nothing inappropriate should be permitted, the actors should be encouraged to act out their character’s
perceived emotional responses. They should defend their positions. For example, the individual playing Linder should attempt to explain what caused him or her to attempt to exclude the Youngers from his neighborhood, and Benethea should have some vehement comments regarding Walter’s financial failure. Even Lena Younger could attempt to continually reconcile her family’s differences. Gender should not be adhered to when assigning characters. Gender inversion is also a component that may help participants explore the rhizomatic construction that results in gender assignment and definition. Once the talk show is over, similar to the other activities, the group should come together to discuss their responses and choices. Participants should explore avenues where they agree and disagree. Did someone disagree with how sympathetic Linder was portrayed? Was someone too harsh in the questioning of Lena Younger. Was Walter played too passively and cold? All of these questions should be explored. This final activity should allow them to gain a better understanding of the characters, of the Youngers, and of themselves.

Finally, once all of these activities have been completed, the first exercise ought to be completed and the new and old responses analyzed. This will allow the participants to gain an idea of the progress they made as well as offer the organizations involved some level of quantifiable and qualitative data to use to promote further community engagement projects. The only difference with the final activity is that it should include some general follow up questions to be used by the organization, such as how would you rate this project, what would you do
to improve it in the future, etc. This type of information is paramount to assure that the process stays fresh and the least successful areas are either dropped or refined until they meet the participants’ expectation and produce the desired outcomes. While participants will gain more knowledge of the text that they have explored the purpose of all these activities is to gain a better understanding of all the individuals involved. Of course, students’ skills will be improved through active participation, the areas that should be most successful and important are the alliance that will be built through these interactions. However, as I have mentioned earlier, a single rhizomatic intervention is not enough to bring about social transformation. Yet, through the regular implementation with numerous different individuals, organizations, localities, and texts, serious rhizomatic transformation will be achieved and a more equitable and just society will prevail. It may start small but through systemic implementation the results will slowly become larger and ultimately help produce the society for which so many worked have worked hard for, for so long.

Should this type of project be frequently implemented in numerous locations in the majority of communities and nations, a significant reorganization of microfascisms and of the rhizosphere will occur. While the alteration of any pedagogical practice is extremely difficult, the results will make the effort worthwhile in the end. Even though the initial results of rhizomatic resistance and community engagement will be evident in the participants only, as similar projects become more frequent the institutions that radical pedagogy has long
questioned will begin to change because the people who have designed them will revise their own creations. Through the use of rhizomatic resistance, educators will begin to see the long sought after mitigation of social inequity that so many have struggled against for such a long time. Regardless of educational level—high school, college, or elementary school—similar projects will benefit all participants and lead the experiences that will deepen their lives while complicating their rhizomes. While some types of injustices will inevitably occur, rhizomatic resistance and community engagement will offer educators, students, and community members an approach that will always be able to challenge it regardless of the form it takes and any microfascist relationships that produce it.


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