THROWING BLACK WOMEN’S VOICES FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH
INTO AN APPALACHIAN CLASSROOM

A dissertation presented to
the faculty of
the College of Education of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

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June 2005
This dissertation entitled
THROWING BLACK WOMEN’S VOICES FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH
INTO AN APPALACHIAN CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Throwing Black Women’s Voices from the Global South into an Appalachian Classroom
(393 pp.)
Director of Dissertation: Jaylynne N. Hutchinson

This research uses theater of Black women from the Global South as a way of creating spaces in the classroom for dialogue between self and others. It examines and interrogates the relations White students from Appalachia Ohio and Black students from an urban center in Ohio make between their lives and the lives of these Black women from the Global South, as well as those viewed as the “other” in their own societies. This research is best described as a performative inquiry. It is a classroom action research and was conducted over a period of six weeks. Participant observation, interviews and artifact collection were the main means of data collection. Twenty five students from the Upward Bound program at Ohio University participated in this study. During the process of reading and reenacting the plays of Black women from the Global South and then finally creating their own play, participants reacted by displaying resistance, surprise, confusion, defensiveness and by joking around. Students showed their attempt to form dialogic relations though interactions with self, others in the class and the characters of the play. This theme emerged through students’ representation of others, of themselves, expressions of identity (womanhood, Americanism) and through their physical interaction with other members in the class and the characters of the plays. As
they moved through the process of reading and finally staging the plays, issues of Whiteness, race, injustice, conflict and discomfort emerged. The results of the research suggest that although Whiteness seems to have some impact, the prospect of forming relations with others outside the U.S. goes beyond Whiteness. On creating relations outside the U.S. the barrier seems to be more directly related to power. My research findings indicate that while race is a barrier domestically, within the global framework Americanism or Americentricity, plays a more significant role.

Approved:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation marks a point in my life’s journey; it is the beginning of things to come. As I look back at the journey I am reminded that I was not alone. There is an adage in Antigua which states that “one hand can’t clap,” this is certainly the case here. It’s hard to list all the people who encouraged and strengthened me during this period, but I will try. If I forget anyone its not because I am not appreciative, its because “ma head nah good 😄.” First and foremost thanks to my creator, I am thankful for the many experiences that he has brought me through and to, words cannot express my thankfulness.

This dissertation is as a result of team work. I could not have completed this work without the support of my dissertation committee. Thank you, Dr. Jaylynne Hutchinson, my adviser and dissertation chair, for your dedication, commitment and rigor. Thank you for going beyond your role as chair and taking on the multiple roles of editor, friend and mentor. To Dr. Najee Muhammad, sincere thanks for your guidance and words of wisdom. I will never forget your reminder of the proverb that until lions tell their stories, tales of hunting will always be told by hunters. You have inspired to me to tell my story and to ensure that the stories of my people are told. Dr. Esaiba Irobi, thank you for your enthusiasm about my work and your guidance particularly in the field of theater in education. Your expertise in this area was invaluable. Dr. William Howard, thank you for the role you played as the methodologist on my committee. I am indebted to you for offering me the opportunity to explore first hand how African women speak.
through the performing arts. My experience in Ghana was possible through your contribution and this experience, in part, guided my research interest.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. I use this term loosely since I am referring not only to the family I have through blood but through love. I thank my Mom who never completed secondary school but made sure that I had the opportunity. From the time I was born she knew that I was college bound. She has encouraged me every step of the way even when she did not have a clue about what I was studying. I thank all the women before her and all the women in my life for instilling the desire for freedom, knowledge and social justice. These women have been a source of strength and inspiration and are my aunts, sisters and grandmothers. These women include Pearl Dickenson, Yvonne Gordon, Dr. Aissatou Balde, Dr. Thandi Onami, Winsome Chunnu, Ayanna Jordon, Kelly Vassel, Dr. Mary Weems, Holly Raffle, Donna Hughes, Jeannette Dja Gasa and Dr. Mary Welsh, just to name a few. Off course there are also men who touched my life in many ways. First thanks to my amazing husband, De Nyago Tafen, who has been with me every step along the way. Thanks for your patience, love and encouragement and for your editorial skills☺. Thanks to all my brothers Malcom Buckley, Youssef Diallo, Gerard Akindes, Donald Hughes, Beidy Sow, Tyrone Carr, and Cornel Hughes Jr. for your ideas, technical skills, encouragement and support.

This is certainly not the end, the journey is continuing even as I write. I dedicate this work to all those who have affected my life in so many ways particularly to the men and women who live in the Global South and in pockets of the Global North that has conditions similar to those found in the Global South.
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CHAPTER ONE

Setting the Stage

Background

The term “throwing women’s voice” at first glance might appear to be linked to ventriloquism; however throwing voices or voice throwing as used in this dissertation refers to the Gambian tradition of “Sani Baat”, a disruptive action that brings the speaker into the center of discourse. Jagne (1998) explains that “by ‘throwing’ in one’s voice, a disruption of discourse can take place. The act of ‘throwing’ one’s voice can create an epistemic violence to discourse that will create a space for the hitherto-unheard voices” (p.13). Although Jagne speaks of voice throwing in a Gambian context its application extends beyond Gambia.

Within the Caribbean region the concept and act of throwing one’s voice also exists. The singing of Calypso is considered as a voice throwing activity. Calypso earned its reputation as a throwing one’s voice action through literal and figurative means. In the early days of Calypso, during their auditions, Calypsonians were told to “throw your voice” (H. Liverpool, personal communication, 2004) which meant to sing loudly especially because of the lack of a microphone. As a genre, Calypso is renowned for its history of voice and resistance. Historically those who have been oppressed have used this art form as means of placing their voices where they can be heard (Liverpool, 1990).

Tools of voice throwing such as Calypso have been used by those marginalized within their own societies and globally. It is therefore not surprising that Siga Jagne, a
Gambian scholar, advocates for throwing one’s voice in response to the exclusion of African women from mainstream feminist discourse (Jagne, 1998). The exclusion of African women from the continent and the Diaspora, women from the Global South and women worldwide due to their race and class, is a form of marginalization and is indicative of the lack of dialogue or dialogic relations.

Exclusion would not occur if there was dialogue. Dialogue goes beyond having a conversation with someone; it is a state of being where one is able to connect with another. Dialogue happens between people and occurs only when there is the realization that the other is not an object but a partner in the world (Sidorkin, 2000). Dialogic relations are formed when people are able to engage in dialogue. Engaging in dialogue as noted by Sidorkin and others is not an easy task (Sidorkin, 2000). It requires attention to making connections with others and involves examination of one’s privileges and biases.

The problem of dialogue is evident not only in feminist discourse but in other avenues of life. There is a lack of relation between people in the core of U.S. society and those on the margins. Appalachia offers an example of this disconnect. Appalachia although part of the U.S. in many ways resembles countries found in the Global South (Gaventa, 2002). Even though there are many similarities questions arise concerning not only the relation between people in the core of U.S. society, but also the relations between marginalized populations in the U.S. and other marginalized groups in the world for example the relations between Appalachians and people living in the Global South.

Education offers the possibility of examining these disconnects and discovering solutions. Evidence of this possibility is observed through the recent discussions in
education about the need to move from an educational discourse that is centered on structures, e.g. school reform, testing, etc to a discourse that is focused on relations, specifically dialogic relations (Sidorkin, 2004; Gilligan, 1995; Noddings, 1984). This is not to say that the work on structural school reform is not important, however without a focus on engaging the dialogic, the problem of meaningful relations will remain. In addressing the problem of relations and dialogue, Sidorkin (1999, 2002) argues that classroom teaching should be centered more on the relationship between teacher and student; he calls for “The Pedagogy of Relations” to be administered in the classroom. I am of a similar mindset; however my thrust is not only on teacher and student relations, but also on fostering dialogic relations between student and student; and students and the community of others both inside and outside the classroom.

This dissertation investigates relations. As a result of the similarities noted between Appalachia and the Global South, I am using the technique of “Sani Baat” or “throwing one’s voice” to investigate the relations of Appalachian students as they engage with the theater of Black women from the Global South. Throwing one’s voice is an important facet in understanding dialogue because Western women have been speaking for and to women from the Global South without listening to their voices (Kolawole, 1997; Mohanty, 1997). The discourse has been monologic. By throwing their voices, women from the Global South can have their voice heard, they can participate in the discourse on what it means to be a woman and define their own brand of womanhood reaffirming that they are active participants in the world and not objects. Through “Sani Baat” the monologic nature of discourse can be disrupted and dialogue began (Jagne, 1998).
The philosophy guiding the emerging relational discourse on education in the Global North is not new since many African societies have long believed in the proverb “I am because we are.” This means that individual existence is contingent upon being able to relate to others (Asante, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 2002). Sidorkin (1999) points out that “the self is co-authored by others; it is a locus of multiple dialogues” hence, being able to engage in dialogue between the self and others is a necessary part of education (p.142). I share the assumption that Education is a process or set of experiences that allow humans to create themselves. It involves reasons, intellect, intuition, emotion and creativity (Tozer et al., 1998, p.4). In creating one’s self it is important to interrogate the self and its positionality and connections to the wider community of others (hooks, 1994). Hence the quality and quantity of this dialogue or connections has grave implications for the educative experiences that occur in the framework of creating the self.

Siga Jagne calls for the action of throwing one’s voice as a means of engaging in dialogue. She says that “African women have been silenced and suppressed by colonialism and patriarchy and that they must force their discourse on existing discourse by voice throwing” (Kolawole, 1997, p.6). Jagne (1998) explains that “by ‘throwing’ in one’s voice, a disruption of discourse can take place. The act of ‘throwing’ one’s voice can create an epistemic violence to discourse that will create a space for the hitherto-unheard voices” (p.13). The objective of “voice throwing” is to create spaces for those voices that have been unheard. African women have been active in fulfilling this mandate and have used vehicles of music, theater, film and novels in this endeavor.
Similar to the African woman’s voice in feminism, the Appalachian voice in the U.S. context also has a problematic history. Hence in this dissertation I will take a voice throwing method originating from Black women from the Global South and utilize it with Appalachians students to examine its effects.

Concerns about voicing are not only visible in African and Appalachian communities. In Caribbean feminist scholarship “voicing” is encouraged as it refers to the varying articulated levels of consciousness and alienation, action and inaction that categorizes Caribbean women’s experience (Rowley, 2002). Voicing is a political process since through this process women engage in naming and representation (p.24-25). Voicing occurs in many forms. For example within the Caribbean region gestures such as chupsing (sucking one’s teeth), cut hye (a dramatic way of looking at some one from head to toe then closing one’s eye and turning one’s eyes away from the person), and placing one’s hands on the hips when talking to those in authority are associated with gestures of rebellion. From personal experience women’s involvement in Carnival activities such as playing mass, steelband and participating in calypso competitions are also seen in a similar vein since these women are often referred to as “getting outta hand.”

Women from the Caribbean and Africa are linked together through a common history. Many of the women found in the Caribbean are of African descent, their ancestors were Africans who were enslaved and taken to the Caribbean. Another commonality is that both areas are referred to as the Global South. For the purpose of this dissertation I am using the term Black women from the Global South to refer to those
women who live outside of the so called developed countries of the United States of America, Canada and Europe, who are of African origin and are found in what is commonly called Third and Fourth world countries. According to Aubrey (2003) the Global South refers to the world’s less developed or developing countries ranging from countries of the “rich but yet to industrialize” Middle Eastern countries to the so called Fourth World (p.2). Fourth World refers to the poorest countries in the world which includes the sub continent of India, most of Sub-Saharan Africa and most of the Caribbean. Aubrey (2003) also notes that most of the countries from the Global North were former colonizers of the countries of the Global South.

This dissertation will focus on the voices of women from Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean and students from Appalachian southeastern Ohio. I have decided to focus on these regions for four reasons. First because this is an internationally oriented educational project; research has indicated that there is need to educate students in U.S. classrooms about women living in the Global South (Merryfield & Subedi, 2003). The second reason is because of the status of Sub-Saharan African and the Caribbean as Third and Fourth World areas. Third, because of the relationship between Africa and the Caribbean, the Caribbean is part of the African Diaspora. Fourth because of the similarities between Appalachia, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, all three areas have conditions that are found in areas of the Global South.

The Caribbean is part of the African Diaspora and there are many socio, economic and political similarities between Africa and the Caribbean. I draw upon a Pan-Africanist ideology that argues that in order to understand Africa (as seen in this case, the
African woman) one has to study Africa and her Diaspora; the reverse is also true. There are many different definitions of Pan Africanism, however, one central theme has been the glorification of the African past and inculcating pride in African values (Esedebe, 1994, p.5). Pan Africanism calls on Africans from all countries to recognize their common origins and history and to be involved in the struggle for freedom, which is the emancipation of the mind (personal communication, Muhammad, 1998).

As in the use of the concept of Pan-Africanism there are complexities involved in the use of the term Global South. Aubrey (2003) argues that the terms Global North and South do not accurately depict the conditions that exist both between countries and within countries since “there exists a significant North within the Global South and a significant South within the Global North” (p.2). This is evident in the Global North as represented in the life conditions of African Americans, Native Americans and also people living in the Appalachian region who live in communities that are economically and socially similar to those found in the Global South. I will address these connections in Chapter Three.

This leads me to address why this research is being conducted in an Appalachian region. The point was made earlier about characteristics of the Global South being found in pockets of the Global North. Although research work has focused on the comparisons of these areas very few have investigated how people living in the Global South and pickets of the Global North relate to those who live in similar conditions, especially globally. My interest in this area of research is based on my experiences in my own Caribbean country, Antigua, and abroad. During my Master’s program research I
investigated some aspects of life in Appalachia; I was fascinated by the similarities between the communities of Appalachian southeastern Ohio and my home country of Antigua. Later I had the opportunity to teach in Ghana and was again struck by the similarities between the so-called developing countries of Antigua and Ghana, and Appalachian southeastern Ohio. A journey of inquiry into the educational ramifications of my observations resulted. I began to question the way students learned about people from other places, particularly Black women from the Global South since this is the category to which I belong. I also began questioning whether the boxes (North, South, West, First World, etc.) used in academia, while they may serve to simplify things, in some cases, might actually prevent students from seeing the overall picture and the interconnectivity of their world.

It became especially clear that these questions are worth further investigation after the events of September 11th 2001. It became obvious to me that people need to be aware of their larger world, connections, their responsibilities and contributions to the global sphere. This was reflected in a special report issue of *Rethinking Schools* entitled “War, Terrorism and our Classroom.” The articles of this edition shared ways in which classrooms can help students grasp the significance of September 11th by being creative, critical and reflective. September 11th demonstrated even more the need for meaningful global education and the need to access connectivity or what Sidorkin describes as Buber’s “interhuman.” The interhuman refers to what goes on between humans, the relations between people which is in essence what life is all about.
Examining how education can be more effective in this endeavor and the use of theater in education as one way of achieving this became a focus for me. Theater is an appropriate choice because Black women from the Global South have used this art as a medium for voicing and resistance. I am exploring it as an appropriate choice to be used in an Appalachian classroom because of its educational value in active learning and empowerment and because of its usefulness in establishing connections and relations (Eisner, 2002; Grady, 2002).

**Problem Statement**

This dissertation uses theater of Black women from the Global South as a way of creating spaces in the classroom for dialogue between self and others. Spaces need to be created because presently there is little room for dialogic relations in classrooms. This dissertation examines and interrogates the relations students make between their lives and the lives of these Black women from the Global South as well as those viewed as “others” in their own societies. Examining how we can encourage more dialogic relation via education is necessary. Pilcher (2001) states that local communities in the United States are in crisis because the framework of nurturing and care is being eroded or in other words the ties of interconnectivity are being lost. She calls on qualitative researchers to engage in pedagogies that will create spaces for “honest talk.” She further states that multiple standpoints shape people’s experience and “how one chooses to value or devalue these standpoints determine individual oppression or privilege” (p.283). Honest talk involves the concept of dialogue, where the self can be interrogated for its
relationality to others. Dialogue goes a step beyond interrogation since its major goal is establishing connections and relations. This dissertation looks at the dialogue/monologue of students as they engage with the theatrical works of Black women from the Global South as a way of exploring whether theater can be used to create spaces in the classroom for honest talk and dialogue.

Research Questions

This dissertation addresses the potential for theater of Black women from the Global South to be used as a tool for establishing dialogue among students from Appalachia Ohio. It investigates what happens when students engage with these theatrical works. The main objective of this research is to understand how the theater of Black women from the Global South can create spaces in the classroom for relating dialogically with other cultures. The following questions are being asked:

1) What are students’ reactions as they engage in the process of reading and performing the plays of Black women from the Global South, and then creating their own plays?

2) What interactions between self, others and “text” take place as students engage with theatrical works of Black women from the Global South?

3) What is the experience of students responding to issues of power/privilege/oppression raised in the theater of Black women from the Global South?
Purpose of the Study

The objective of this dissertation is to use the theater of Black women from the Global South in an Appalachian classroom as a tool to examine and interrogate the relations students make between their lives and the lives of these Black women. It also aims at investigating whether this sort of exercise enables students to further make connections with other groups marginalized within their own society. It is hoped that by using theater in the classroom students will go beyond the act of reflection, and also understand how they are personally and socially implicated in their responsibility as global citizens.

Theoretical Frameworks

No one theoretical framework is broad enough to serve as an analytical tool for this study because I am choosing to study the application of concepts to the lived experience of certain marginalized groups. In order to analyze the complexity inherent in these lived experiences, I will draw upon several explanatory frameworks. This dissertation utilizes a transdisciplinary approach; it draws upon the frameworks of cultural studies, post colonialism, feminism, resistance theory, critical race theory, and liberatory and critical education theory. What all these theoretical frameworks have in common is the emphasis on lived experiences and the quest for multiple truths. These frameworks have also been engaged in seeking out multiple voices, particularly those who have been historically oppressed. Critical thinking is at the center of each of these frameworks, as well as movement and transformation towards action and freedom.
Cultural Studies

Because of its transdisciplinarity, the field of cultural studies provides the foundational theory that frames this research. Cultural studies interrogates the role of power as one of its themes. Similar to critical theory it investigates who controls, who decides, who benefits and who looses. “Cultural Studies is concerned with describing and intervening in the ways ‘texts’ and ‘discourses’ (i.e. cultural practices) are produced within, inserted into and operate in everyday life of human beings and social transformations, so as to produce, struggle against and perhaps transform the existing structure of power” (Grossberg, 1997, p.237). While cultural studies bears the academic semblance of investigation, it deviates from traditional academic approaches since it is practical and performative as well as theoretical. This field seeks to understand and transform existing power structures that create inequality and marginalize groups of people. As a field whose interest is in the practical, that is how lives are lived and phenomenon experienced, popular culture and social institutions are some areas of cultural studies’ foci. Race, class and gender are topics of study as they impact and interact with educational outcomes and are therefore research themes for cultural studies scholars.

The multi disciplinary nature of cultural studies can be understood by looking at the themes it embraces. Cultural studies is the result of diverse theoretical legacies that are reflected through its multiple discourses (Hall, 1993). Cultural studies engages in the legitimate study of Marxism, neo-Marxism, feminism, popular culture, post colonial studies, the construction and deconstruction of signs and discourse analysis.
Cultural studies is influenced particularly by anti racist and feminists theories since these fields have been responsible for interrupting the original object of study in cultural studies. Originally cultural studies adopted a Marxist approach in understanding power dynamics, especially as it related to working class peoples, but in so doing it failed to examine how race and gender were part of the social milieu. There have been a number of changes since then; now there is a thrust on “conjectural knowledge” or knowledge situated and applicable to specific and immediate political or historical circumstances and the structures of representation which forms culture since these are the instruments of power (Hall, 1993, p.97).

Post Colonial Theory

Post colonial theory has a close association to cultural studies. For example, Edward Said’s work, a noted scholar contributing to both fields, centers on power relationships as it concerns the relationship between the West and the “other.” In Orientalism (1978) Said discussed the Western construction of the Orient as inferior to the West. Although Said’s work is often cited in cultural studies literature it has implications for post colonial studies since post colonial studies is concerned with issues related to the “other.” Like cultural studies, post colonial theory is an area that is still considered a contested field since it lacks one clear single definition. Colonialism, on the other hand, refers to “the settlement, governing indigenous people, exploiting and developing the resources of their land [for the purpose of the colonial government] and embedding imperial government” (Wisker, 2000, p.5). Post colonial theory is relevant to African and Caribbean nations because they were once ruled by colonial powers; this had
and continues to have a dramatic effect on their way of life. Post colonial theory is also relevant on those found on the margins in the U.S., for example Lewis (1991) discusses the colonial and post colonial situation of Appalachia. This will be further discussed in Chapter Three.

Post colonial both refers to the time period after colonial rule; but in some instances it refers to literature that has been written in opposition to colonialism (Wisker; 2000, p.5). Post colonial theories challenge the idea that there is a universal standpoint on knowledge development.

It provides a window for understanding how conceptions of ‘race’, notions of the racialised ‘Other’ (written with an initial capital to denote a specific category and space to which ‘non-western’ people, constructed as inferior through the process of racialisation and cultural essentialism, have been assigned), fluid identities, and hybrid cultures, have been constructed within particular historical and colonial contexts (Anderson, 2002).

An objective of post colonial theory is to give voice and access to unheard and unacknowledged voices recovering from decades of colonial rule and oppression.

One emphasis of post colonial theory has been to examine the condition of the post colonial woman. Many scholarly works concerned with post colonialism examine the body of works by women in the Third World who speak out as colonial subjects and as women. Post colonial subjects are defined as “those who ‘have suffered the sentence of history” (Anderson, 2002). Within post colonial feminism the notion of double colonialisation is important to understand; a theory formulated in the 1980’s which
describes women in former colonized societies. This theory explains that women were
doubly colonized by imperial and patriarchal ideologies (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin,
1995).

A theme in post colonial theory related to both men and women is an examination
of the relationship of the powerful and the powerless. Hegemony is often used to
describe the relationship between those who colonized and those who were colonized.
Hegemony refers to the tools used by dominant groups to oppress subordinate groups
without overt violence. According to hegemonic theory, tools such as schools and
religion are used to reinforce the status quo and preserve the position of dominant groups.
In fact this theory postulates that the tools of hegemony could be so powerful that
oppressed groups begin to believe the propaganda of the dominant groups and in this way
oppress themselves.

*Resistance Theory*

The concept of hegemony while linked to post colonial theory is important in
understanding resistance. Theories pertaining to resistance and hegemony have been
developed most notably by Antonio Gramsci (Sardar & Van Loon, 1997). Speaking to
contemporary conditions in Appalachia, Gaventa (1982) explains hegemony in an
Appalachian area and refers to powerlessness as a condition experienced by subordinate
groups in response to the more powerful. However, James C. Scott critiques the notion of
traditionally conceived hegemony. Hegemony paints a picture that the subordinate
groups are simply being controlled by the dominant group. Scott states that those who are
oppressed are not simply passive; they resist. Scott offers a compelling argument in his
piece *Weapons of the Weak, Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, (1985). Scott states that in order to understand resistance one has to look at the “everyday’ forms of resistance. This is the “prosaic but constant struggle between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labor, food, taxes, rents and interests from them . . . Here I have in mind, the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups: foot dragging, dissimulations, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, sabotage, and so forth” (p.29).

For me this definition raises questions about what acts can be labeled as resistance. Does the mere act of doing anyone of these things mentioned above result in resistance?

I will draw upon Freire’s work to respond to this question. Freire (1970) states that resistance requires a certain level of consciousness; the oppressed must have reflected on their situation and then decide to come up with ways in which they can do something about the situation, even if only in small ways. Scott contributes to this understanding by telling us that “to confine the analysis to behavior alone is to miss much of the point” (p.37). What is extremely important is the meaning that they give to their acts. Resistance should not be measured in terms of results but more on the basis of the meanings that have been ascribed to the actions. Scott further states that:

such interpretations have been invoked to account for lower class quiescence . . ..

By referring to the culture that peasants fashion from their experience- their ‘offstage’ comments and conversation, their proverbs, folksongs, and history, legends, jokes, language, ritual and religion- it should be possible to determine to what degree and in what ways, peasants actually accept the social order propagated by elites (p.41).
Previous research in this field has looked mainly at the most evident behaviors; this resulted in the dominant culture assuming many in the subordinate culture were non-resistant and under the hegemonic control of dominant society. A traditional approach to hegemony silences and gives no credit to a vast majority of the population, Scott’s work and those similar to it serves as a vehicle through which the voices of subordinated people can be recognized and articulated.

**Critical Race Theory**

Critical race theory (CRT) is as a result of articulated resistance with a focus on issues of race; it is therefore associated with post colonial and resistance theory. Critical race theory is an outgrowth of critical legal studies that challenged traditional legal scholarship of doctrinal and policy analysis in favor of a law that was more individually focused socially and culturally (Delgado, 1995; Billings, 1998). CRT rests on several basic assumptions:

1) Racism is a permanent fixture in American life

2) The use of experiential knowledge through means such as storytelling

3) A critique of liberalism; that the changes needed to confront racism can not be accomplished through liberalism.

4) Whites have been the benefactors of civil right legislation. (Billings, 1998).

Although CRT as a theory was established in the United States; the concepts it espouses are applicable globally, particularly if one accepts that Black people worldwide share certain common experiences of oppression, poverty and exploitation. Williams (1995) points out that European modernism was based on racism with the outcome of slavery
and colonization in Africa and the African Diaspora. Leonardo (2002) argues that capitalism, globalization and racism are all connected. Racism is therefore confined not only to the United States but is represented though the presence of trading blocs such as the European Community. CRT ties post colonial and resistance theory together because as far as Africa and the Caribbean are concerned if there was not any racism there would be no need to talk of post colonialism; resistance arose as a response to racism. This is evident even in the educational realm. Education is an important arena for examining how race defines educational opportunities and outcomes. There is therefore a need to talk about race in educational studies and the schooling process particularly the way it has been used as a hegemonic tool (Spring, 2004).

Critical Liberatory Pedagogy

Schooling is probably one of the few experiences common to all. Giroux and McLaren (1999) state that they see schooling as taking place within a cultural and political arena where forms of student experience and subjectivity are actively produced and mediated. . . “In other words schools do not merely teach academic subjects, but also in part produce student subjectivities or particular sets of experiences that are in themselves part of an ideological process” (p.317). School is therefore part of the everyday experience and is influential in determining how one relates to self and others.

As part of the everyday experience school life constitutes part of the social process that needs to be analyzed in order to make strides in developing dialogic relations. Giroux and McLaren (1999) describe school life as:
A cultural terrain characterized by varying degrees of accommodation, contestation and resistance. Furthermore school life is understood as a plurality of conflicting languages and struggles, a place where classroom and street corner cultures collide and where teachers, students and school administration often differ as to how school experiences are to be defined and practiced (p.317).

The complexity of school life becomes visible when one investigates the impacts. For far too long classrooms have been used as sites for domination and oppression, it is time that students be moved to the center of the classroom and for classrooms to prepare students to understand the connections with others in the world.

Giroux and McLaren (1999) propose that schools should be democratic public spheres in which “classrooms are active sites of public intervention and social struggle, rather than mere adjuncts of corporate and partisan interests” (p. 312). Schools should be change agents and not cater to maintaining the status quo. Critical liberatory education theory embraces this proposition, and examines ways in which education is taken up with social justice, nurture and care. In seeking social justice it is essential to understand how schools serve as machineries for reproducing the dominant ideology on race, class and gender. Schools play a major role in reproducing patterns found in society (Anyon, 1996). Education is a social institution and as such it tends to mirror the prevalent conditions of society.

bell hooks (1994) argues that education should be the practice of freedom. Such an education stresses liberatory pedagogy; an education that enables students to push beyond the boundaries, or transgress boundaries (hooks, 1994). Engaged and
transformative learning is emphasized in these classrooms. For these educators education
should be exciting; it should empower people and help them to critique their experiences
and empower them to act if they choose to do so. This pedagogical approach is one that
has been influenced by Paulo Freire. But while Freire neglected the dimension of gender;
gender is at the center of bell hooks’ approach. It is the emphasis on gender that
differentiates the two approaches, but both theories stress the use of education for
emancipation.

Critical liberatory education stresses critical thinking and emancipation. Students
are encouraged to question, reflect and to take action. Dialogue is an essential
component for effective action. One must understand one’s self, critique one’s self and
be engaged in forming dialogic relations. The ability to form dialogue relations
demonstrates that one is concerned about emancipation or justice and exhibits the
characteristics of critical liberatory theory which are critical thinking, nature and care.
Other theorists who hold to the concepts of the frameworks just described do on to
outline non-traditional methods for inquiry and knowledge and meaning making. As it
relates to this study I will look specifically at dialogue, storytelling and theater.

Dialogue

Freire’s work falls under the umbrella of critical liberatory pedagogy. Freire rejects
the concept of “banking education,” where the student is metaphorically an empty vessel
waiting to be filled with knowledge by the all-knowing teachers. Freire states that this
approach is a monologue or anti dialogic. Liberatory education on the other hand,
Involves creating the world; its product is reconciliation. This form of education is
dialogic and it realizes the importance of interaction between teacher and student. A result of this dialogic emancipatory or liberatory education is critical thinking. To be critical one must challenge “directly underlying human interests and ideologies” (Sirotnik, 1991, p. 245).

Patrick Finn (1999) states that “nothing short of dialogue, conscientization and explicitly teaching school discourse and powerful literacy will give all students a chance at an empowering, liberating education . . .” (p. 190). This claim is consistent with theorists such as Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux who advocate for emancipatory forms of education whereby education “is a paradox that requires both students critique of preexisting discourses and practices and a reflective process through which they continually negotiate their positionality within the culture” (Garoian, 1999, p.8). In order for dialogue to occur love, humility, and trust are prerequisites. Opposed to this is the anti dialogic that is monologic and is characterized by a divide and rule. Freire’s pedagogical theory can be seen as an extension of Martin Buber’s work on dialogue. Buber is credited for beginning the conversation on dialogue in Western scholarship.

Dialogue goes beyond talking; it is based on how those who are interacting are qualitatively able to relate to one another. For Buber life is dialogue. Bakhtin is another scholar whose work focuses on dialogue. Like Buber he also believed that dialogue is what defines life as meaningful; he states that self is only known through its relation with others (Bakhtin, 1984). Each time a person is able to engage in dialogue with another person he/ she learns more about themselves and growth takes place. Sidorkin (1999) develops Buber’s and Bakhtin’s work when he addresses the relationship between
dialogue and education. Sidorkin uses Buber’s and Bakhtin’s framework and argues that classrooms should be focused on dialogue; dialogue is not a means to an end but is at the heart of education. Sidorkin concludes that “instances of dialogue are not those where students and a teacher take turn in an orderly conversation, according to rules of ‘dialogical teaching.’” Rather, dialogue appears in some moments of disruption, talking out of turn, and laughter (Sidorkin, 1999, p.1). Dialogue differs from what we normally accept as dialogue, it is during those times where things seem chaotic and uncomfortable that dialogic moments are experienced.

Most scholars identified thus far investigated dialogue through face to face interaction, but this is not the only time it can occur. Dialogue can be established through the performing arts. Sidorkin (2002) discusses the importance of “third spaces;” third spaces are informal spaces such as the coffee houses and bars; spaces where the focus is not on the mundane aspects of life but more so on enjoyment and relationships. In this light he tells us that there are rarely any such settings in schools yet classes such as the performance arts have aspects of these third spaces interwoven in them since they often serve as informal meeting spaces in schools. Maxine Greene is an advocate of developing these types of third spaces in schools. Her approach emphasizes the arts as a tool for the process of transformation. By using the arts one is able to imagine how things could be. She states that “to tap into the imagination is to become able to break with what is supposedly fixed and finished, objectively and independently real” (p.19).

Maxine Greene’s work is rooted in John Dewey’s approach to education. Dewey emphasized experience as the path to knowledge; he stressed a “learning by doing”
educational philosophy. Additionally he emphasized the use of the arts as experience and the establishment of more democratic forms of education. The arts serve as a useful tool because “the arts are on the margins . . . and the margin is the place for those feelings and intuitions which daily life doesn’t have a place for and mostly seems to suppress. . . With the arts, people can make a space for themselves and fill it with intimidations of freedom and presence” (Greene, 1995, p.1). The students involved in this study are on the margins and the performing arts are avenues in which they can have voice. The approach advocated by Greene and Dewey places people’s experiences at the center of learning and the classroom becomes a place of connectivity – a community -- and a place where the imagination is encouraged as a path towards transformation.

*Storytelling.*

The connectivity element embedded in the arts, the performing arts in particular, may be because of its storytelling ability. The power of storytelling is central to Maxine Greene’s work and is fundamental to this dissertation. Theater is a format used in telling a particular story or lived experience and is a form of storytelling. Mello (2001) explains that storytelling is a performance art and is one of the oldest means of communicating ideas and messages. She continues that storytelling is educational because “it allows individuals to share their personal understanding with others, thereby creating negotiated transactions” (p.1). In her research using storytelling in a fourth grade classroom she reported that students were able to think more deeply about their social world. She also found that storytelling enhanced students’ abilities to “reflect and develop relationships
between texts, teller and themselves” (p.13). The use of stories in the classroom offers unlimited possibilities for constructing classrooms that are democratic and empowering.

Hutchinson (1999) argues that the core stories of students’ lives are important in the classroom for any meaningful learning to take place. Education must change the core story of the individual, and therefore stories should be given an important place in education. Telling stories is important in the classroom because a type of dialogue is created between the text and the reader; readers will be moved to tap into their own experiences and bring to light their own personal narratives. This process has a very powerful effect of transformation and can lead to dialogue with others since experiences can be shared (Greene, 1995).

Presenting the theater of Black women from the Global South in an Appalachian classroom engages the frameworks that have been discussed. It uses the voice of Black women from the Global South as a means of helping students create a dialogue between themselves and these women. Just as the focus of these frameworks are on voice and dialogue, so too is this research.

**Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of what might occur when one brings multiple voices that are on the margins into the U.S. classroom. While there is literature available on how students experience the literary works of Black women there is scarcely any work on theater. Additionally most of the scholarship using Black women’s works is based on Black women from the United States of America. The work
of Black women from the U.S. is an important component in understanding Black women’s lives. However Black women are diverse and multiple voices and sources as needed to reflect this diversity. In her dissertation abstract Ngozi (1994) states “whereas Black women novelists have received some degree of exposure Black women dramatists remain unknown because their stories are considered too private for the male dominated and public sphere of theater.” This research provides one way for these stories to be heard and the unique power of theater to be explored.

This research adds to existing body of literature focusing on theater in the Global South. As Ngozi (1994) points out there is a scarcity of scholarly material in this area. Part of the reason may be attributed to theater being a performance genre and in some cases no written texts are produced. Another reason for the scarcity of primary research materials might be because of Eurocentric definitions tied to theater limiting what is considered appropriate theater. This dissertation offers the potential for investigating indigenous forms of theater thus enriching scholarship on Black women’s theater in the Global South.

Another significant aspect of this study is that it adds to the already existing development work of drama in education. Previous works in this field do not investigate distinct forms of drama in the classroom setting, e.g., the use of testimonials or interactive theater as opposed to other forms of theater. Hence by emphasizing a specific form, testimonial theater, this dissertation adds another component to the field.

Finally and most directly tied to the research of this study, multiculturalism and global education are significant layers in this research. This dissertation raises questions
concerning the approach to teaching about the “other” internationally and locally. An implication of this study might be the need to redefine multiculturalism and global education with more emphasis placed on the ways that these two terms interconnect and ways to connect in order to transform; to see each other as human.

_Throwing Black Women’s Voices from the Global South in an Appalachian Classroom_ is a work of re-connection. Its looks at the educational possibilities of theater of Black women from the Global South and how the arts can foster social imagination which could lead to empowerment. The arts remain a place through which connection can be rekindled. By using the theater of Black Women from the Global South in an Appalachian classroom it is hoped that students will begin to think critically about their world, locally and globally, and form dialogic relationships with those who share their world.

_Delimitations and Limitations of the Study_

_Delimitations_

This study took place in the theater classroom of the Upward Bound summer program on the Ohio University, Athens campus. The focus of the study was on students attending schools in Appalachian areas of southeastern Ohio. The classroom emphasis was on theater, particularly drama from Black women from the Global South, as a tool for dialogue in classroom settings. This was the delimitation of the study, but to understand the research the limitations also have to be considered.
Limitations

A limitation of this study was one that is found in all qualitative projects; the results are applicable only to the group studied and gross generalizations cannot be made. This study does not purport to be generalizable or exhaustive on the topic at hand. Another limitation was the time spent undertaking the study. The Upward Bound program lasted for six weeks, and the study was conducted over this six week period. The study was conducted Monday-Thursday from 2-3pm and also in the evenings 6-8pm during study hall period. Additionally, I did not choose the students participating in the theater class; this was left to the discretion of the director and individual students themselves. Twenty five students participated in the study. These delimitations along with the limitation impacted the literature reviewed, results, interpretations and recommendations of the study.

Definition of Terms

In the previous section I described the limitations of my research. In a similar manner I will now define terms that are commonly used throughout this dissertation. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list since I use many terms in this dissertation. The purpose of presenting these definitions is to avoid ambiguity as well as provide a framework for readers so that they can better understand the main concepts expressed in this research. Because these terms may be understood in a variety of ways, I am stipulating their definitions for purposes of this research as follows.
*America:* I use this term interchangeable with the United States of America or United States. This term is a political one and has been the subject of much discussion since in reality America refers to both North and South America. However for the purpose of this dissertation I have decided to use the limited definition of America. I have chosen to do so because people living in other parts of the Americas use other names to identify themselves, e.g. Caribbean, while people living in the U.S. refer to themselves as Americans and are also known by the international world as Americans.

*Americanism:* Malcolm X 1964 refers to this as a system of inequalities that is set up to benefit some and discriminate against others. Bell (1992) argues that inequalities such as racism are part of the American psyche; hence this system of oppression and marginalization is innately American which gives rise to the term Americanism.

*Americocentricty:* a form of centricity where America is placed at the center of one’s experience and in assessing the experience of others (Gilroy, 1993; Zach-Williams, 1995).

*Americanization:* refers to the process of becoming an American. This involves the process of being socialized in a society that is innately racist. The results of this form of socialization which takes place through institutions such as schools is assimilation, acculturation (Spring, 2004), Americanism and possibly Americocentricty.

*Appalachia:* a 200,000-square-mile region that follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. Defined in 1965 by the U.S. congress, it includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama,
Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia

(http://www.arc.gov/index.do?nodeId=2).

Appalachian Ohio: Appalachian Ohio is located in the south and southeastern part of Ohio and is characterized by high poverty and above average unemployment rates in comparison to the rest of the state. In the identification of Appalachia by the U.S. Congress, 29 counties were identified as Appalachian in the State of Ohio.

Black women: Women of African origin living in Africa and other parts of the world.

Calypso: Musical genre of African origin found throughout the Caribbean. It is a form of Caribbean expression which bears testimony of the Caribbean experience; resistance, emancipation and present struggles.

Dialogue: refers to the relational space created between people; goes beyond mere conversation. In order to engage in dialogue those involved must see each other as subjects and not objects (Buber, 1955; Sidorkin, 1999).

Dialogic relations: The relations that exist once one is able to engage in dialogue.

feminism: Engagement with women’s issues, particularly women’s oppression and resistance. Please note that I employ this broad definition of feminism as opposed to the academic discipline called Feminism as defined by many mainstream feminists. (hooks, 1995; Collins, 1998).
**Feminism**: Addresses similar issues as feminism with the exception that it has been defined by women from the Global North and has historically excluded women of color in the U.S., working class women and women living in the Global South (Mohanty et al., 1991; Christian, 2000; hooks, 2000).

**Global South**: Countries located outside the developed countries of Europe and the United States of America commonly referred to as Third or Fourth World countries.

**Honest talk**: Honest talk involves the concept of dialogue, where the self can be interrogated for its relationality to others (Pilcher, 2001).

**Performative inquiry**: A type of participatory research where performance is used as a form of inquiry.

**Theater**: live performance which tells a particular ideas or story built around particular characters, themes, plot, dramatic elements and settings. I use the terms drama and theater interchangeably.

**Voice Throwing**: a term used by Sigma Jagne (1998) to describe the action of disrupting the prevailing discourse and bringing unheard voices into the center of discourse.

**Organization of the Study**

This dissertation comprises of complex multilayered themes. A challenge for me as a researcher is to provide a reasonable background on the topics addresses without leading the reader into unnecessary territory. This is often a challenge of transdisciplinary work as one tried to balance depth and breath. I have organized this dissertation into eight chapters. Chapter One, Setting the Stage, gives an overview of the
study. It includes the significance, theoretical framework, and research questions. Chapter Two, Throwing Women’s Voices into an Appalachian classroom, details the methodology of the research. In this chapter I describe entrée into the field, my methodological approach and analysis of data. Chapters Three and Four encompass a review of the literature. Chapter Three, Educating Us and Them, details the literature as it pertains to how the other is constructed in U.S. society. It looks at notions of multiculturalism, global education, and the construction of race, gender, class and Americaness. Additionally this chapter describes how education has been used in reproducing stereotypes about the other.

Chapter Four, Responses from Black Women from the Global South, provides literature related to Black women from the Global South. The literature reviewed provides a perspective of the colonial and post colonialism Black woman. Included in this section are issues of concern to Black women from the Global South, such as slavery, colonialism, neocolonialism and development. This chapter also includes how theater has been used as a vehicle for voice by Black Women from the Global South. The later part of this chapter addresses how the voices of these women can enter classrooms though education that incorporates the performing arts, thereby creating spaces in US classrooms for dialoguing about others.

Chapter Five, The Journey Begins, encompasses the observations and results of the research. Chapter Six, Interrogating the Journey, details the analysis and interpretation of the results and Chapter Seven, Recreating Classrooms for Dialogue, discusses the conclusions, implications and recommendations of the study.
CHAPTER TWO

Throwing Women’s Voices

_A Methodology of Voices for Dialogic Relations_

“On opening the door momentarily, unexpectedly, we recognize the stranger who is us” (Fels & Givern, 2002, p.31).

Introduction

The previous chapter provided an overview of the study; its research questions, problem statement, theoretical framework and significance. The current chapter describes the methodological approach of my dissertation. The method I employ demonstrates how the voices of Black women from the Global South were “thrown” into an Appalachian classroom. This was done to inquire about the potential of the theater of Black women from the Global South to create spaces in Appalachian classrooms for dialogue. I will give a brief overview of my methodological framework including a brief history of its development. I will then discuss my research site, methodology and data analysis.

The research questions asked were:

1) What are students’ reactions as they engage in the process of reading and performing the plays of Black women from the Global South, and then creating their own plays?

2) What interactions between self, others and “text” take place as students engage with theatrical works of Black women from the Global South?
3) What is the experience of students responding to issues of power/privilege/oppression raised in the theater of Black women from the Global South?

In order to answer these questions a qualitative approach was utilized. A qualitative approach was used because the emphasis of the current work is to gain an in-depth understanding of particular concepts as opposed to a research question meant to produce generalizable conclusions.

Qualitative research is a field of inquiry and it “involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study, personal experience; introspection; life history; interview; artifacts; cultural texts and productions; observational, historical, interactional and visual texts—that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual’s lives” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). Collecting and analyzing this type of data was important in answering the questions posed because the focus of this study was on students’ voice over time. This study stressed dialogue, and the inquiry format chosen is one that reflected the objective of the research. A prominent feature of qualitative research is its diversity in methods, analysis and interpretations (Punch, 1998). This diversity is reflected in the research process of this study. I used performative inquiry as my research strategy. Performative inquiry is a type of participatory classroom action research. A description follows of participatory research, classroom action research and performance inquiry.
Participatory Research

I utilized a participatory approach for this project. Participatory research (PR) falls under the qualitative research umbrella and is an alternative form of inquiry associated with social and political transitions in the developing world (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). Participatory research approaches are strongly rooted in liberation theology and neo-Marxist approaches to development. PR differs from traditional research methods in several ways: “shared ownership of research projects, community based analysis of social problems and an orientation toward community action” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000, p. 568).

One objective of participatory research is questioning where knowledge lies and who is able to conduct research. In so doing it takes the act of the construction and reconstruction of social reality out of the hand of the “all knowing researcher” and places it in the hands of people who traditionally would have been considered unsuitable for conducting social science research (Chambers, 1999). PR is engaged in resistance because it struggles against the traditional forms of research and seeks to put local people in the center of the research.

Classroom action research is an example of participatory research where teachers sometimes become researchers in their classrooms. Teachers are able to then make judgments about how to improve their practice (Hopkins, 1993). This form of research is important because traditionally advice about improving teaching practices come from researchers who might enter into teachers’ classrooms and through interviews and
observations make recommendations to improve the practice of the teacher (Hopkins, 1993). Shifting to having teachers as researchers declares that teachers and students are knowledgeable about their field and experience and can conduct their own research that will inform their practice.

_Participatory Research: A Brief Background_

In giving an overview of the development of the field of qualitative and participatory research it is also essential to look at how these fields have changed as the question of “what is knowledge” was explored (Chamber, 1983, 1999). As noted earlier, the purpose of participatory research is to offer more interactive ways of conducting research resulting in participant empowerment and challenging notions of where knowledge lies (Chambers, 1983). Many of the methods used within participatory research fall into the qualitative paradigm of research with its inception in the discipline of anthropology and sociology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Participatory research has its roots in African, Asian and Latin American countries (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). This type of research involved primarily development practitioners and social researchers in fields such as adult education, rural development, sociology and agriculture. Just as the need for a more participatory development evolved, there was also a need to measure development using a different paradigm rather than a positivist or even post positivist scientific approach (Chambers, 1983, 1999).

A major concern of this approach has been the question of power and the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Robert Chambers’ work on reversals (1983)—“putting the last first”—has been monumental in the dialogue
concerning this approach to research. Chambers raises questions regarding whose knowledge should be the most valued in the research relationship. He states that for too long outside experts were given the priority in terms of the value of producing knowledge and suggests that it is time for a reversal.

Chambers claims that rural people’s knowledge is an enormous and underutilized resource in many Third World countries and that local knowledge is evident in areas such as linguistics, medicine, clinical psychology, climate, agriculture and craft skills to name a few. These sources of knowledge have been ignored and their potential overlooked for research. In many ways local knowledge over-exceeds that of the so-called experts. Research experts have valuable knowledge but it is important that local knowledge be tapped into. Including local knowledge brings a balance to the research process with both researchers and participants having input. The implication is that researchers need to change the way they conceptualize knowledge and the means of getting at it (Chambers, 1983).

Work in the 70s by adult educators in the Global South aided in development of participatory research work. An example is Paulo Freire’s work in Brazil (1970) that emphasized learning through reflection and action, conscientization, and the right of people to participate in their own development. Freire’s worked with oppressed people in Brazil addressing problems of adult literacy. He viewed literacy not only as a means to read and write, but as a route to empowerment. He felt that reading and writing were political actions and one had to learn not only to read the words on the page, but the words between the pages and how it was relevant to people’s lives. Through this form of
Freire helped his students understand their situation as oppressed people, the methods used to reinforce oppression and how the oppressed can liberate themselves (Freire, 1970).

There are several characteristics of work such as Freire’s and other participatory research: Participatory research is:

1) A social process: explores the interaction of individuals within a particular society
2) Participatory: engages people in examining their knowledge and ways that they interpret themselves in their world.
3) Practical and collaborative: engages people in examining their social practices that link them with others in social interaction.
4) Emancipatory: aims to help people “recover, and release themselves from the constraints of irrational, unproductive, unjust and unsatisfying social structures that limit their self development and self determination” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000, p. 597).
5) Critical: raises questions of power and help people to question their social media through which they interact e.g., language, and mode of work.
6) Reflexive and dialectical: help people to investigate reality in order to change it through critical and self critical action and reflection.
7) Aims to transform theory and practice participatory research aims to connect the local with the global and to live out the slogan ‘the personal is the political.’ (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000, p.597).
These characteristics were used throughout my research as I will describe later in this chapter.

**Classroom Action Research**

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) tell us that qualitative researchers may take on “multiple and gendered images” (p.4). In classroom action research, a form of participatory research, the researcher takes on many images and roles. In this type of research the teacher and the researcher. The idea of teaching and researching is linked to establishing teaching as a profession (Hopkins, 1985). This is the case because systematic self study is a feature of professional fields. However in the field of education images of research in classrooms are often associated with outside researchers who enter classrooms to observe students and teachers (Hopkins, 1985).

Instructions about teaching are issued from the top, for example from departments or ministries of Education, and teachers as well as students are left out of the decisions determining what should occur in schools (Tozer et al., 1998). “Consequently our system of schooling is much like factories which operates on a rational input-output basis, with pupils as raw materials, teachers as mechanics, the curriculum as the productive process, and the school administrators as factory managers” (Hopkins, 1985, p.24). Teachers are expected to teach from the curriculum created for them and students are expected to memorize and regurgitate information. Freire (1970) refers to this as the banking system of education; it prevents both teachers and students from critically thinking about their world.

Classroom action research typically involves the use of qualitative, interpretive
methods of inquiry and data collection by teachers (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000, p.569). Classroom action research offers a way for the teaching field to become more professional as well giving teachers a voice in making decisions about their classrooms and the teaching field in general. Classroom action research and other participatory action research involves a “self reflective cycle of planning a change, acting and observing the process and consequences of the change, reflecting on these processes and consequences, and then replanning, acting and observing, reflecting, and so on” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000, p.595). This cycle encourages transformation both of students and teachers because it embraces critical thinking, action, and reflection (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994; Shor, 1992).

*Performative Inquiry*

Just as there are many forms of participatory research there are also different types of action research. My research, although a classroom action research project, is framed as a performative inquiry. Performative inquiry is a form of classroom action research that is a “research methodology that invites students to explore imaginary worlds within which space, moments of understanding and intercultural recognitions are possible” (Fels & McGivern, 2002, p.23). Performance infers creative action exhibited through dance, theater, writing, music, visual and media arts. Through performance, performative inquiry investigates the creative actions and interactions that take place in the performance space. In the case of my research, the performance space was created in my classroom hence linking performative inquiry and classroom action research.
Testimonies of women’s lives in the form of theater were used. These testimonies served to facilitate students in going beyond empathy. Boler (1999) explains that too often students become empathic toward others who they are learning about. She argues that classroom learning fails in this respect because there is no action associated with empathy. Testimonies offer a way for students to examine the lives of others, investigate causal factors for the situation, consider how students lives affects the lives of others and what actions can be taken. Performance inquiry views performance as an action site of learning, a space wherein “creative action and interaction create opportunities for learning,” (Fels & McGivern, 2002, p.33) thereby offering the possibility for teaching and research.

The stages of classroom action research are reflected in performance inquiry. Fels and McGiven (2002) explain that collecting and sharing experiences among participants after performances is essential. Questions asked during this time could be: what happened? What choices of action were taken? What other actions or responses might have been possible? What insights or feelings or questions emerged? What might have been learned from the experience? This reflection might be generated through activities such as group discussions, circle sharing, journal writings or replaying situations that emerged. The reflection process is important because performing and learning must be linked. Without a space for this reflection this link might not occur. The interaction between learners results in an exchange of knowledge that creates an environment for learning.
A learning environment is central to classroom action research because the researcher functions as an investigator and also teacher. A learning environment is created because “knowledge is seen not as separate from the learner but embodied within creative action and interaction” (Fels & McGivern, 2002, p. 24). Students create their characters and plays based on what they know. For example if a student is creating a play about Native Americans he or she will create a story and characters to tell the story based on what he / she knows. According to Valera (1987) “what we do is what we know, and ours is but one of many possible worlds. It is not the mirroring of the world, but the laying down of a world” (p.2). This allows the participant researcher to gain access to what students know. The next step allows participant researchers to watch for transformative learning with the insertion of performative inquiry. Through performance inquiry new worlds are created. This new world is created by participants based on their experiences, culture and interactions with others (Maturana & Valera, 1992). Freire refers to this when he says that by reading the “word” one participates in the shaping of the world (Freire, 1998).

Additionally, performative inquiry offers a way for teaching about others while at the same time investigating social responsibility. “When we take on a role, often we are said to be ‘in the shoes of the one we are playing. Yet to claim to be so entirely is impossible and yet, through drama, it is possible…. to have a momentary recognition of the realities that shape each others world(s)” (Fels & McGivern, 2002, p.26). The essence of living is meeting others (Buber, 1955; Sidrokin, 1999). In the process of meeting others dialogue can take place and realities shaped. Similarly Singing Francine
(1994) sang that when people from different nations meet, they created their new nations. My research using performative inquiry aimed at encouraging students to create “new worlds.” This was reflected throughout the research process.

The Research

Initiating the Research

The creative process is often associated with qualitative researchers (Eisner, 1991). Denzin & Lincoln (2000) describe the researcher as a “bricoleur,” a maker of quilts or a person who assembles images into montages. Montage is a method of editing whereby several images are “superimposed” to create a picture (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.4). Montage also occurs in theater where several different images are presented in creating a play. Examples of theater montages include A Coloured Place (1998), Voices from the Ghetto (2002), Living Positively (2001) and A Black Woman’s Tale (1997). Montage permits multiple perspectives, voices and strategies. In theatrical montages often there are many protagonists who tell their stories.

In keeping with the participatory approach, my research methodology allowed for the actual research and the participants involved to guide the methodological component of the research. Flexibility was an important factor in my dissertation. An example of this flexibility is that in my research proposal there were many things I stated I would perform, but some of this had to be changed so that students could guide the research. For example the monologue plays I had planned were not performed in class. Students were more concerned about other issues that arose as we created the final play,
particularly as it concerned the concept of the Ankh. I had to adjust class time so that it was dedicated to these discussions. As a result the monologue performances had to be sacrificed. Janesick (2000) mentions that qualitative research is like the choreography of a dance; it must therefore be fluid, creative as well as flexible. Methodologies used must also reflect this.

Entrée to the Field

Before engaging in the study I spoke to Ms. Ayanna Jordan, the interim director of the Upward Bound Program about conducting my research that summer with her students. By this time I had already been offered the position of theater instructor for the summer component of the Upward Bound program. I chose to conduct my research with this group of students based on the delineation of the research problem and questions (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). My study’s emphasis was on Appalachian students and most of the students participating in the program are residents of southeastern Ohio. This area has been designated by the federal government as part of Appalachian Ohio. When I met with Ms. Jordan, I showed her my proposal and we discussed the intricacies of the dissertation. Once she agreed to the possibility of using Upward Bound as the proposed research site, I discussed this potential with my dissertation committee.

In accordance with IRB requirements, permission of participants was sought and a description of the research given. This was done during an Upward Bound meeting held before the summer session started. I was granted permission by Ms. Jordan to use that meeting to discuss my research with parents/guardians as well as students present. At this time I explained to those present the purpose of my research and also informed them
that their participation was voluntary and should they decide not to participate they would
not be affected in any way. Parental permission was sought for those under eighteen.
Even after parental permission was obtained, I again briefed students about the research
project during the first day of class, and asked for their permission. The tutor/mentor
assigned to the theater class also granted her permission to be part of my research.

Research Site

The research was conducted with students involved in the Upward Bound summer
program. The Upward Bound program is a part of the Federal TRIO program which
began in 1965 (Upward Bound, 2003). The name TRIO was given because originally
there were only three programs: Upward Bound, Talent Search and Student Support
Services (Upward Bound, 2003). These programs were created to overcome class and
social barriers to higher education. At first these programs were called Special Programs
for Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds and were geared to low income and
potential first generational college students. TRIO programs have expanded and now
include Upward Bound, Talent Search, Students Support Services, Veterans Upward
bound, Educational Opportunity Centers, Ronald E. McNair and Upward Bound Math/
Science.

Upward Bound is a college preparation program for high school students and
veterans. Ohio University’s Upward Bound mission is geared primarily to high school
students. The program functions during the academic year and students are required to
attend workshops and meetings that address preparation for college, e.g., SAT and ACT
preparation, as well as advising sessions dealing with college life. Usually students
traveled to Ohio University on Saturdays to participate in these workshops. Tutoring sessions are also offered to students who require extra tutoring. Besides preparing students for entrance examinations and the rigors of college life, cultural diversity appreciation has been a focus for the interim director (A. Jordan, personal communication, April 13, 2004). There is also a summer instructional component of the program and students are required to live in campus housing and attend classes as well as participate in extra curricular activities.

During the six week summer phase I taught theater classes in a classroom located in the Research and Technology (RTEC) building on the Ohio University Athens campus. My observations were mainly focused on what occurred in this room. The RTEC building is located on the eastern side of campus on the corner of Richland Avenue and West Mulberry Street. Room 201 was designated as the classroom for theater classes. In the evenings, students’ study halls were held from 6-8pm Monday through Thursday in Jefferson Hall on Ohio University’s campus. My research also included these study sessions.

Research Participants

The participants of this research were students enrolled in the Ohio University Upward Bound Summer theater class. As stated previously, the Upward Bound program is geared towards high school students who are from low income families and who are considered as potential first generation college students. In the abstract of the Upward Bound Handbook (2003) it is explained that in southeastern Ohio there is a need for this
program because there is a high number of low income and/or first generation college students in this area. The handbook states that

Although the area is rich in Appalachian culture and heritage, it is, and has historically been, one of economic, educational, social and cultural deprivation.…

Many youth from the target area have the potential for success, but lack the academic preparation and support, motivation, social and cultural skills necessary for success in education beyond high school (p.2).

It is because of these features that programs such as Upward Bound are needed.

Sixty students participated in the summer program. During the academic year students were recruited for the program. To participate in the program students needed to meet the criteria of being potential first generation college student, have a low income status and/or be from an underrepresented minority group as well as have a GPA of at least 2.5 (A. Jordan, personal communication, April 13, 2004). In order to remain in the program and participate in the summer component of the program, students had to maintain a GPA of at least 2.0 and attend at least 5 meetings and workshops held during the academic year. The summer in which this research was conducted, students participated in various classes such as computer science, multicultural studies, English and math. Students had a choice between dance and theater; the students along with the interim director of Upward Bound, made the final decision regarding student’s choice of classes. At the beginning of the summer session there were 25 students enrolled in the theater class. I performed the role of teacher and researcher in this class.
The summer component of the program ran from June 23- July 31st 2003, and students lived in residential dorms on Ohio University’s campus. Traditionally, this particular program serves high schools located within southeastern Ohio that include counties designated by the federal government as Appalachian Ohio. Presently there are sixteen high schools that are part of the program: Alexander, Athens, Chillicothe, an urban Afrocentric school, Crooksville, Eastern, Federal Hocking, Logan- Hocking, Meigs, Miller, Morgan, Nelsonville-York, River Valley High, Southern Local, Trimble and Vinton County Consolidated High School. After my proposal was accepted I was informed that the participant group would change. The Afrocentric school was a recent addition to the program and students from the school would be involved in the summer component. The Afrocentric school is located in an urban area of Ohio, embraces an Afrocentric pedagogy and serves primarily African American students. This racial diversity would be a new aspect of the program.

Method of Data Collection

The primary data collection methods employed in this study were artifact collection, observations and interviews.

Observation

In the classroom I performed multiple roles; I was a participant as well as an observer. This research is a classroom action research and as is the manner of these forms of research the classroom was the field of study (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). I

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1 In accordance with my IRB and my responsibility as a researcher to protect the identity of my informants, I have decided not to reveal the name of this particular school.
observed students during their regular class time from 2-3pm, Monday through Thursday. Observations were carried out for a duration of six weeks. Observations were also carried out during the evening study periods that were compulsory for all students. These were held from 6-8 pm., Monday through Thursday. I scheduled appointments with groups of students during these times to ensure that students were available to meet for interviews as well as for their theater work. I did this because of my previous experience working with Upward Bound. Previously I worked as a tutor/mentor and noticed that during evening sessions class work from other instructors took up students’ time. By scheduling appointments students were better able to more efficiently manage their time.

As I observed students, I took notes based on my observations. I observed students’ interactions with each other. I observed how they interacted with me as a teacher and also as a researcher. I also observed them when they were involved in various activities, e.g., playing games and creating their plays; the characters they chose, how they developed their character, and their reactions to the other characters in the play; these were all important aspects of my observations. Notes were entered daily and reflection on the notes were carried out twice weekly (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As I reflected on my notes I looked for theme patterns that were developing. Observing while at the same time participating was important in understanding the dynamics of students in the classroom. Additionally this served as a tool in investigating how the theater of Black women from the Global South can aid students to reflect on issues relating to power and privilege and their connections to the women whose works they investigated.
Interviews

In addition to observations, two interview sessions were carried out with students. One was carried out with all the students (twenty-five) and the final one with eight students. Built into the Upward Bound program was a mid-summer evaluation that was to be prepared by the instructor about students in their particular class. After submitting my evaluation report I took the opportunity to meet with students to discuss my evaluations with them and to get feedback regarding the class. This first set of interviews was unplanned. As I spoke with students they provided information that I realized would be useful to the study. These interviews were informal; they were not taped. I choose not to tape them because I observed that students spoke more freely when a video camera or tape recorder was not present. As students spoke I took hand written notes. I used this forum as a way of learning about students’ perceptions of the class.

A second set of interviews was carried out during the final week of classes. I had to wait until the end, when students had created the final play so that students would have been through most of the process. Originally I intended to interview fifteen students. Students were selected through purposive sampling (Punch, 1998); the purpose was to ensure that I interviewed students living in different areas throughout southeastern Ohio as well as both male and female students. I also felt it was important to interview students from the Afrocentric school. There was already an almost equal ratio of students to areas lived in Ohio in the class. My concern in the selection process was mainly on gender representation. I placed all the names of students who had given me their permission to be involved in my research into two paper bags; one bag contained the
names of female students and the other male students. I shook the bag and drew names out of each bag shaking the bag each time before I drew out a name. In the end eight students were interviewed (four males, four females), in addition to my class assistant. Two of these students attended the Afrocentric school.

It was difficult to interview more than eight students because by the final week some students had dropped out of the program for various reasons such as expulsion, sickness, and family issues. Additionally students had a hard time scheduling appointments during this time because they were under a lot of pressure to finish up other class work. The tutor/mentor assigned to the theater class was also interviewed. This is the person who had the responsibility of assisting the instructor. The tutor/mentor lived with students and was in contact with students twenty-four hours each day. I met with the tutor/mentor before the summer session started, and then once every week when classes started to discuss what was happening in the class and to receive any suggestions or concerns that she had regarding the class. I met with her the final week of class to get her overall impressions. Betty, the tutor/mentor, helped me in designing the class and as class was in session offered ways to improve the class.

Semi-structured interviews were used in the second set of interviews as opposed to the unstructured informal interviews that were used for the first interviews. I chose less structured types of interviews because my objective was to encourage participants to tell their own stories (Fontana & Frey, 2000). By shifting from an interview more focused on asking the right questions to one that stresses interaction, my participants and I constructed the text together. The interviews focused on the student’s experience of the
theatrical process. These later interviews were recorded using an audio recorder and then transcribed. At first I feared that students would become formal because of the tape recorder but they were informal and at times very frank. Waiting until the sixth week of the program was beneficial in easing the formality. Both the students and I had gotten a chance to know each other and we felt comfortable discussing these matters together.

For both sets of interviews the students and I arranged a time to meet. Selection of the time was based on the preference of students as recommended by Glesne and Peshkin (1992). The first interviews were conducted in the lobby of McCracken Hall during study hall times. The lobby area had many couches and chairs laid out that allowed for small group meetings. I choose a location away from the center of the lobby. This way we were in an open area that permitted interviews to take place without disturbances. The second set of interviews were conducted at a coffee house (Perks) located on Court Street, adjacent to Ohio University’s campus. The separation between Court Street and Ohio University’s campus is barely noticeable. Perks offered a space outside the classroom to interview students. Because the interviews were conducted during the summer Perks was not crowded and we were always able to find a table where the interviews could be carried out.

Good rapport is crucial in interviews for useful data collection (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Places such as coffee houses are referred to by Sidorkin (2000) as “third spaces.” They serve as places for dialogue and relationship building. When we met for the interviews I offered students a pastry or a drink from the coffee shop. We spoke about day to day topics that eventually led to the interview questions. At the beginning of the
interview I reminded students of the research project and their right not to participate or discontinue participation whenever they wanted.

Immediately following every interview I filled out a contact summary sheet (Miles & Huberman, 1984). I made notes about information that was emphasized by students, and themes that emerged from the interviews. I also recorded my own thoughts and feelings about the interview and any questions that came up as a result of the interview. The sheet served as a reminder of the interview as well as a memo to compare themes while listening to the tapes.

One of the critiques about classroom action research is that more value is placed on teacher knowledge than any other knowledge; outside knowledge is often excluded (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). Interviews with students and the tutor/mentor were instrumental in minimizing this. The questions asked to the students and tutor mentor can be found in Appendix B. These questions served as a guide since other questions emerged during the interviews.

Artifact Collection

In addition to observations and interviews, personal documents were used in this research. Personal documents, official documents, and objects are all types of materials used as artifacts in qualitative inquiry. These are usually first person narratives that describe individuals’ actions, experiences and beliefs. Generally the narratives are provided through the use of diaries, personal letters and anecdotal records, however sometimes researchers ask participants to create anecdotal records such as a log, a journal, or notes on lessons plans (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p.451). During the
course of the six weeks students were engaged in activities such as journaling and preparing and performing monologues and plays. Artifacts also included my daily lesson plans, notes and changes made, as well as the props\(^2\) and sound effects that students collected and made. At the end of the program students evaluated all the courses that were taught that summer. This evaluation was later sent to me and I included it as part of my artifact collection. These products were analyzed.

_Journaling_

Journals formed part of the artifacts collected. Mio and Barker-Hackett (2003) discuss journal writing as an effective means of dealing with resistance that might arise to multicultural issues being discussed in the classroom. Journal writing is advantageous both for students and teachers. It helps teachers understand more about their students and therefore teachers can tailor instruction to meet students’ needs. It is beneficial to students because it helps them “grapple with ideas presented in class, make connections to their own personal experiences and beliefs and construct their own meanings” (Mio & Baker-Hackett, 2003, p.13). In this dissertation students were required to make journal entries at least twice a week. On some occasions prompts were given as a means of guiding the journal entry, while in other instances, students were given the freedom to write on a topic of their choice. Through journaling students engaged in reflective thinking that, according to Paulo Freire (1970), is a prerequisite for action.

On the first day of class students were asked to write an entry pertaining to their expectations for the class and also a little about Black women from the Global South and

\(^2\) Props are materials used on stage to set a scene e.g. tables.
their relation to these women. As the class proceeded students were involved in various projects and were continually making entries in their journals. At the end of the class students were asked similar questions as the first day of class. I included this so that a comparison could be made of students before taking the class and their perceptions when the class was concluded. Journaling offered a way for students to think about the process. It also served as a research artifact that helped to answer questions pertaining to how theater was able to foster connections between students and the characters they read and performed. Appendix C displays the prompts that were used for journal entries. These prompts followed the suggestions of Rierson and Duty (2003) in terms of the idea of having prompts for the purpose of reflection. I also used some of their prompts from their research.

Structure of Classroom Activities

Several activities were carried out to facilitate student learning. The structure for the classroom activities was based on a Forum Theater approach. This is a type of theater where the audience participates in the performance. The audience in Forum Theater are not spectators, they are “spect-actors” (Boal, 1979). The approach used is similar to the one used in the research “Rewriting Gendered Scripts: Using Forum Theater to teach Feminist Agency” (Thomson & Wood, 1998). In this approach students were involved in the process of reading and performing the original script and then recreating, performing and finally debriefing the process.

For my research students read and re-enacted the plays created by Black women from the Global South. In order to do so they had to understand to some degree the
realities of these women’s lives. It required them to put themselves in someone else’s “shoes” or at least try to do so. The re-enactments of the plays were performed in an interactive manner. After students performed what they had prepared, there was a question and answer segment. The other students in the class questioned the performers while they were still in “character” that is, the performers still acted as the characters they performed in the play. This made the performance interactive and the audience became part of the performance. The learning that occurred through this process is explained in Chapter Six and Seven. The performers were also questioned “out of character.” They became themselves, and were asked questions about their experience creating and performing their plays. This aided in understanding students’ experience of the process.

The final weeks of the class were spent creating a play that addressed what students viewed as relevant issues in the class. The purpose of the final piece was to examine what connections students made and with whom those connections were made. Table 1 highlights the schedule of classroom activities carried out.

Table 1 Classroom Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction to theater. On the first day of class students were asked to record in their journals their expectation of the class. They were also asked to define theater, Black woman, Global South and their relationship to these terms. This was to be able to evaluate students’ knowledge and perceptions of these terms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
before the class.

Following this, students were given an overview of the elements of theater. Theatrical games were played which aimed at developing students’ improvisational skills and developing trust. During this week videos were shown of two examples of Black women’s work; class discussions followed which dealt with the conditions facing these women in their own context and then student’s own context. The videos shown were Independent Woman (Destiny’s Child, 2000) and National Pride (Singing Sandra, 2002).

Students were randomly divided into groups and given their assigned plays. Each day before students got into their groups warm up exercises were performed. During this week students focused on their individual play and discussed in groups issues pertinent to the play. Information related to the setting and theme of the play was given so that students could develop their characters. For example additional information was brought into class about HIV/ AIDS in Africa and also in the Athens area. Students used this time as a way of coming up with ways in which the plays can be re acted before the class.

Performance of the plays. Re-enactment of plays began on the Wednesday and two plays were performed each day. After each play class discussions were carried out and students and students documented their reactions in their journals.

\[^3\text{Re-enactments were to begin at the beginning of that week but students needed extra time to work on their plays.}\]
Monday and Tuesday was spent discussing issues that were brought up in the plays. As a way to help students understand some of the conditions in the plays, information on Liberia was introduced⁴. This was during the time when there was an ongoing debate as to whether the US should send in troops into Liberia. Information dealt with the history of Liberia, the connection between the US and Liberia and the ongoing political situation in the country. Students⁵ also participated in an activity that examined their dependence on other places on the world. In doing so they examined personal items e.g., clothes and where these things were produced. At the end of these activities discussions followed.

On Wednesday Monologues were introduced to the class and students were given an assignment to write a monologue between one of the characters in the play and themselves. The character⁶ could either be the one they portrayed or one someone else portrayed in the class. The monologues focused on developing the characters students encountered in the play they studied. The objective of the monologues was to help students think more about their lives and their relationship to Black women from the Global South.

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⁴ This information although not part of the proposal was introduced so that students can examine an event that was occurring at that time. It was an event that was highlighted in the news and it became part of class discussions.

⁵ After our discussion on Liberia I felt this was a necessary activity so that students can begin to evaluate the interdependence of our world.

⁶ I had planned that these monologues be performed in class but due to time constraints I decided that it was best to have them begin preparing for their final play.
During this time students began the process of recreating their plays. Students were asked to form groups of four. They were asked to think about the plays they performed in class and create a theme and scenarios for their final play that addressed these issues relevant to what we had been discussing in class. The purpose of this activity was to see what sense students made of the lives of Black women living in the Global South in relations to their own lives. Additionally this play was to be performed before Upward Bound students and staff as well as parents during the closing ceremony. Since this research work uses a Process Theater approach I dealt only with the process of students as they prepared their final work. Once each group created a theme we took all the themes and created one theme that reflected the ideas emphasized by all groups.

By the beginning of this week we started creating the script and rehearsing the play. Once this was done we began creating the storyline; students continued working in their groups to do so. After this was completed the actors and directors worked together while the technicians began their process of creating props and collecting sounds. Each group had a manager and they all had to be in communication with each other so that they would know what all needed for the play to be a success.

Technician’s work could not be done in the RTEC room therefore I gave

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7 I realized that students had skills in different avenues hence instead of insisting that all students act; I asked students to choose the roles they wanted to perform: actors, directors and technicians (sound, props and lighting).
permission to the students to go to McCracken library where they would have
space to work on their productions; the actors and directors continued coming to
class. The sound crew collected interviews on diversity since the class suggested
that interviews be used in the project, music as well as other sounds. The
lighting technician continued to work with the actors and directors since there
were restrictions governing the use of the hall where the play was going to be
performed. Time was spent in the evenings meeting with the actors, directors
and managers to make sure that we were on track. The play was divided into
three scenes and I tried as much as possible not to have different actors in each
scene since this way it made it easier to meet with the groups in the evening
when they were available. There was a director responsible for each scene.

We continued working on the plays and met for rehearsal times in the auditorium
of the Music Building on two occasions. The actors were able to rehearse but
the props technicians were unable to have the props ready for rehearsal time.
The props were ready by the night of the performance. 8 As students went
through this final part of the process class discussions were carried out and
journal entries written.

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8 Due to discussions that arose in creating the storyline particularly about the Ankh I invited two of my
colleagues, Akil Houston and Mathew Hughey, to discuss the Ankh with students. Dr. Esaibi Irobi was
also present and participated in the discussions.
Preparing and Performing Plays

In the classroom students prepared and performed plays authored by Black women from the Global South. This study followed the methodology used in “Rewriting Gendered Scripts” (1998). Students went through the process of reading, performing, re-scripting and creating their own plays and then presenting a final performance. Four plays were used:

1. *Living Positively* (Bulbulia, 2001)
2. *A Coloured Place* (Conning, 1998)
3. *A Black Woman’s Tale* (Small, 1997)
4. *Voices from the Ghetto* (Des Vignes, Singing Sandra, 2002)

These plays were chosen because of their testimonial nature, their woman focus, because the themes addressed are themes that deal with issues of gender, race and class that can be applied internationally and also because they were created by Black women from the Global South. *Living Positively* was developed first as a video documentary and then as a theatrical production that looked primarily at women living with HIV/AIDS in different parts of Africa. *A Colored Place* was written by South African Lueen Conning, and examines the problems of being a Colored in South African Society. In this play Conning (1998) examines the mis-placement of the Coloured person due to South Africa’s system of Apartheid and the identity crises suffered by Coloured people living in that country. Jean Small’s *A Black Woman’s Tale*, tells the story of the Black female from a Caribbean perspective. Through the use of language, Small examines the identity of the Caribbean woman from different islands. *Voices from the Ghetto* is a
Calypso and through the form of music, image and storytelling Singing Sandra paints a vivid picture of life in ghetto areas of the Caribbean. A fuller description of these plays can be found in Chapter Three.

A process drama approach was used in studying these plays. This approach focuses on the stages students go through as they prepared their play. Unlike product drama, the emphasis was not on the final production. Process drama allows learners to interact and create the world through their bodies and mind (Moody, 2002; Kao & O’Neil, 1998; Heathcote & Bolton, 1995). In the present study, students were divided into four groups and each group was given a play that was studied and reenacted before the class. As students read and prepared for their enactments they recorded their process and their feelings associated with this activity in their journals. At the end of the course students recreated and performed their own plays. As a way of helping students make this connection, in conjunction with journal prompts, students created monologues that involved dialoguing either with the character they portrayed for their reenactment or one of the characters from the other plays.

Each performance of the reenactment and the final play were video taped. An analysis was carried out on these texts: video taped performances, journal entries and the written scripts for the plays. Additionally as part of the process students were involved in theatrical games in which they created stories that were both written and performed. These games were important for preparing students for their performance, building trust as well as for making observations. In action research, game playing provides a lot of information (Miller, 1999). They help researchers understand group dynamics and it is a
simple way to help participants become comfortable with researchers. This information along with data from participant observations, interviews and artifact collection were collected and analyzed. Interviews as well as the plays created by students were transcribed before they were analyzed.

Nine in-depth interviews, eight with students and one with the tutor/mentor, as well as the five plays created by the students were transcribed. Transcription began during data collection; I transcribed the interviews and plays. I completed this phase of the research in December 2003. Performing the transcription increased my familiarity with student’s stories and provided an opportunity to listen for content and themes (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). I transcribed complete plays and interviews word for word. I used bold print to differentiate my words from those who were interviewed. I also noted nonverbal communication in parentheses. I italicized words or phrases to demonstrate words students vocally emphasized. Pseudonyms were used during this process in order to protect the privacy of my participants. Once transcription was completed my focus turned to analysis.

Analysis of Data

Qualitative research data analysis is comparable to putting a puzzle together (Bogdan & Biken, 1992). A challenge of qualitative analysis is making sense of the data collected, reducing the data, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for data interpretation (Patton, 1990). In the present study each form of data was analyzed separately and then compared to the other forms of data, for example the journal entries
were analyzed first followed by the interviews. The following sequence as described by
Miles and Huberman (1994) informed my data analysis:

- Affixing codes to a set of field notes drawn from observations and
  interviews
- Noting reflections or other remarks in the margins
- Sorting and sifting through these materials to identify similar phrases,
  relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences
  between subgroups and common sequences
- Isolating these patterns and processes, commonalities and differences and
  taking them out to the field in the next wave of data collection
- Gradually elaborating a small set of generalizations that cover the
  consistencies discerned in the database
- Confronting those generalizations with a formalized body of knowledge in
  the form of constructs or theories  (p.9).

I grapple with describing the analysis section of my research because so many of
the processes occurred simultaneously. Data analysis began during the first day of class;
this was also the first day of data collection. I began analysis by reviewing my proposal
(Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). While reviewing my proposal I kept my research questions
in mind to check if I had answered the research questions and how much, if any, the
research had changed from its original conception. My second step was rereading my
data. There were two reasons for this step. One was to check for completeness and the
second was to reacquaint myself with what had been collected (Goetz & LeCompte,
1984). As I scanned the data, line by line, I jotted notes and observations. I wrote notes and observations based on what I thought were the most important aspects of the data (Lindlof, 1995). These notes and observations were informed by my own personal academic training and experiences, the theoretical framework used for the research and the participants of the study (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

The process of annotating and marking themes is known as coding or indexing (Pope & Mays, 2000). Codes are “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.57). From these codes categories or labels were then generated. As a way of getting started I used categories used by the students in summarizing the issues that the class addressed. This initial coding was revised using categories that were slightly more abstract (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Pattern coding then followed. This is more explanatory than the previous coding method that was used. The objective of this type of coding was to identify emergent themes; it offered a way of grouping smaller sets of themes or constructs. This step involved writing a summary of what had been found so far. I reread all the interviews, journals and plays and prepared summaries. I summarized each student’s journal, interviews and plays. Writing these summaries facilitated convergence, figuring out pieces of data that fit together (Guba, 1978). Data reduction continued through the method of constant comparison, I pulled apart my fieldwork matching, comparing and contrasting data. Constant comparison involved reading data to examine its uniqueness as well as its similarities to other data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lindlof, 1995). This led
to a refinement and renaming of categories to more accurately represent student responses.

After marking on the transcripts, journals, plays, documents, I cut out sections that had been highlighted and grouped them according to the category they had been placed. It was from this that patterns emerged. Memoing was important at this stage in theorizing relationships between the patterns. Memoing involved writing memos to myself about what I saw as the relationships between the patterns as they developed. This was then followed by developing propositions as a way of connecting sets of statements reflecting the findings and conclusion of the study. A synthesis of the research findings and its comparison to the body of literature on the topic was the final stage of my analysis. Analysis was performed on students’ journals, my field notebook, personal notes, students” plays and artifacts collected.

The Researcher in the Research

In the preceding sections I discussed my data collection methodologies and method of analysis. Discussion of the researcher is also necessary because the researcher is the “filtering lens” through which the data moves (De Marrias, 1995). The researcher must therefore be a credible instrument for the observations and interpretations to be meaningful. The attitude of the researcher as well as the researcher’s experience and bias are important contributions in establishing a credible research. Chambers (1999) advocates for participatory research that has less emphasis on methods and more on attitudes. As much as it is possible I tried to develop attitudes in line with Chambers’
advice. He describes a good researcher as one who is humble and has a hunger to be taught by the community. The attitude of the researcher should be one in which dialogue could be established that is based on mutual respect and trust. There should also be the willingness to be corrected by participants even at times when one feels that there is no true justification for the correction.

While Chambers’ suggestion is mainly for development practitioners; it is quite applicable to my research work. I considered my classroom with its learners to be a community. In fact the structure of the Upward Bound Program is community oriented. This community oriented approach is visible, for example, in the way students were divided into families with the tutor mentors as heads of the family. Students also often referred to the interim director of the program as “Mama Jordan.” Education is a development activity; it is involved in improving people’s quality of life. This is especially the case of liberatory forms of education whose objective is empowerment (Freire, 1970). Additionally education is important for the development of our world, particularly education which stresses dialogic relations (Sidorkin, 1999).

The debunking of the belief of the all-knowing researcher is very much in line with dialogic approaches to education. I was the Theater Instructor for the Upward Bound Program during the six weeks residential program and during this time, as much as possible, I tried to encourage students to become the teachers in the class so that we could learn about their lived experiences. Freire (1970) points out that as educational practitioners, that include researchers, we have to move beyond the banking form of education which is anti-dialogic and oppressive. The banking form of education assumes
that students are empty vessels waiting to be filled by the all-knowing teacher with knowledge. He emphasizes an emancipatory approach to education which stresses teacher and students participating in the experience of learning and teacher. Through negotiation students should be allowed to share their experience and knowledge (Freire, 1998).

In the classroom I occupied a position of privilege due to my status as a doctoral student engaging in research and as a teacher in the classroom. I had to be cognizant of this and try to balance this power relationship. There are some things I did in an attempt to bring more balance as it relates to power, but I doubt that it was eradicated entirely. As much as possible I encouraged students to sit in a circle during class meetings; this takes the focus of knowledge off the teacher and encourages students to play more of a role in distributing knowledge. Dialogue in the classroom was also encouraged; I did this by having small group work and group presentations. Additionally by having journal entries that were not prompted and interviews with students the interpretations made are not only through my lens but also through the lens of students.

Being able to see through the lens of students was possible through participant observations. I performed the role of both a teacher and also a researcher; this was quite a challenge. Participant observations are very common in ethnography; ethnography involves “an ongoing attempt to place specific encounters, events, and understandings into a fuller more meaningful context” (Tedlock, 2000). Participant observation denounces the stance of the all-knowing researcher and the “fly on the wall researcher.” The fly on the wall researcher refers to the belief that researchers should be objective and
only observe what is happening around them as if their presence makes no difference. If they put themselves into the research then they would bias the outcome of the research.

In contrast, those engaging in participant observation acknowledge that everyone brings to their research certain biases that are dictated by their life stories. It was important to acknowledge this and to realize that I impacted the research experience and the interpretation of data. Multiple methods were used to ensure that participants’ perspectives would also be heard. In so doing participants became co-researchers and not subjects.

As a participant observer I was sometimes confused about my role. “The participant observation ranges across a continuum from mostly observations to mostly participation” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.40). On the far left of the continuum the researcher is solely an observer. Observer as participant is the next point on the continuum. Here “the researcher remains primarily as an observer but has some interaction with participants” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.40). The next point on the continuum is participant as observer. At this point the outside researcher becomes a participant observing and joining in on the action. The far right of the continuum represents the full participant. The researcher in this position is simultaneously a functioning member of the community undergoing investigation and an investigator (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.40). This position is beneficial because it enables the researcher to learn about the inner workings of the group. The paradox however is that the more one becomes a participant there is a risk of losing sight of observations. I operated between the continuum of full participant and participant as observer. There were times when I was facilitating and engaged in
participating in aspects of the research that I was not able to observe as carefully as I would have liked. When these times arose my teaching assistant served as my observer and after the class was dismissed we discussed her observations. The times when my assistant facilitated classes afforded me the opportunity to become a participant as well as an observer. The challenge was for me to balance these two positions since I had a duty to my students as a teacher and also as a researcher.

As a researcher one of my prime concerns was validity. Validity refers to the trustworthiness of the inferences drawn from the data (Punch, 1998). It addresses the question how do my readers and I know that what I present had been correctly collected and interpreted. If the study is not valid then the findings will be worthless. In establishing validity credibility is important. My credibility as a researcher and teacher is based both along academic lines and lived experience. I have intensively studied all the plays that I taught. I have also spent a significant amount of time during my doctoral program engaged in studying different forms of theater in the classroom. Additionally I have performed one of the plays I taught. As far as the Calypso is concerned, this is an art form I have known since my birth. Additionally, the Upward Bound program and some of the students are not new to me since I spent summer 2001 as a tutor-mentor for the program and was assigned as assistant to the theater instructor at that time.

Another factor that aided validity was crystallization (Janesick, 2000) of my data collection methodologies. In qualitative research there is no one way of trying to understand a phenomenon; however representation and legitimacy are ethical concerns. Through crystallization I was able to obtain multi voiced data that was needed for this
study. I prefer to use the term crystallization as opposed to triangulation. Triangulation is the process of using multiple methods so that different perspectives of what is being studied can be obtained (Flick, 1998). The problem with triangulation is that it does not allow for as much flexibility as crystallization. A triangle is a fixed structure whereas “crystallization recognizes the many facets of any given approach to the social world as a fact of life” (Janesick, 2000, p.392). This is because crystals come in many different shapes, sizes and angles and are more flexible in the forms that it appears than triangles.

Crystallization afforded me the means to have my participants become co-researchers in the interpretation of my data. I used class time for students to tell me what they saw as major events and themes that emerged from the works we studied. Additionally during the final interview sessions I got feedback from students on the class in general and also to clarify points that they may have written in their journals, done in their plays or said during class discussions. My assistant was helpful in serving as my other ears and eyes. Together we discussed my research and its findings as it emerged. I also kept a personal notebook to understand how I arrived at my conclusions. Additionally, at the analysis stage multiple readings of notes, transcripts, viewings and listenings of video and audiotapes were performed.

Even though I performed these activities to ensure validity I am somewhat hesitant to use the term. There is a controversy regarding the means used in assessing qualitative data. Janesick (2000) states that it is time to replace the “trinity” reliability, generalizability and validity in qualitative research with more appropriate terms. These terms were used in quantitative research and were transferred to qualitative research. She
argues that qualitative research needs to concern itself less with the “trinity” and more with discoursing with the “personal, on what it means to be human” (p.394). Eisner (1991) argues that coherence, consensus and instrumentality are more appropriate terms for means of evaluating qualitative studies.

Coherence of my research was achieved when multiple methods and theories were brought together to produce a unified believable product. Consensus occurred when my participants and I discussed the themes emerging from the research through interviews, journal writings and class discussions, as representative of their experience. The final component instrumentality refers to the usefulness of the research. Usefulness can occur in many ways, e.g., by enhancing understanding and serve as a guide for future action (Eisner, 1991). A discussion on the instrumentality of this research will follow in chapter seven. There is no absolute truth in qualitative research; the information I present has been construed based on my experience and also the experiences of students who participated in the theater class that summer.

When I began this research project I questioned my role as researcher, particularly as an Antiguan woman. While I occupy a position of power I do not have the same power profile most associated with researchers. I am Black, and a woman from the Global South. This made me very much part of the research that I was investigating. As a Black woman from the Global South, the quest for claiming one’s identity, to choose one’s path without restriction from others as to what one should be and being able to name one’s self, is a struggle that I wholeheartedly identify with and claim. As much as I am part of the research I am also a stranger to parts of it. I have lived in southeastern Ohio and
studied aspects of its history and culture for about five years, but I acknowledge that I am still an outsider. As an outsider I bring a different perspective to the research so I recognize that there are some cultural nuances that may have been overlooked. By including students’ voices, I was able to get some understanding of insiders’ perspective.

Through the use of a personal journal I was able to keep track of my own journey in order to understand the dynamic of how much of this research is a part of me and yet not a part. I was an outsider to the students but an insider to the material of research. Janesick (2000) advises the use of journals in conducting research. She says that keeping a journal is helpful “for focusing individuals on the project at hand, they also serve as useful tool for describing the role of the researcher” (p.392). For me, my journal was most helpful for reflection. It served as reminder of my research questions and whether methods used in finding answers to my questions were achieving their goal. It also helped in analyzing my relationships with students as I balanced my role of teacher and researcher. The journey and struggle between my different roles is explained in the results and analysis section of my dissertation.

My research took place with students participating in the Upward Bound theater class during the summer of 2003. These students are residents of Appalachian areas of Ohio as well as metropolitan Ohio. Although my study was designed and focused on the students from the Appalachian areas, the inclusion of African American students from a metropolitan area of Ohio added unique dimensions while also hiding other potential dimensions. The journey of these students and myself are detailed in the proceeding chapters. Multiple methods of data collection and analysis were used in order to
adequately represent diverse experiences and add rigor, breath, complexity, richness, and depth to my research (Flick, 1998). My objective was not to generalize these experiences or to present the “truth.” Rather I used reflexivity, multiple voicing, literary styling and performance in reporting my findings and interpretations. Reflexivity was used to demonstrate that my work is historically, culturally and personally situated. Multiple voicing was offered as a means of disclaiming validity, “to remove the single voice of omniscience and to relativize it by including multiple voices” (Gergen & Gerner, 2000, p.1028). My literary style replaces realist discourse and uses forms that are more narrative, for example my use of “I” instead of the “researcher.” My literary style indicates that my account does not function as a “map of the world” but an interpretive activity. Additionally the use of performance removed objectivity while sustaining voice (Carlson, 1996; Case et al., 1995). As a qualitative researcher, my desire was through passion and commitment to “study human experience from the ground up, from the point of the interacting individuals who, together and alone, make and live histories that have been handed down to them from the ghosts of the past” (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, p.1063) and to share these stories with others.

Before I present the results of my research it is important to understand how this study is built on the works of other scholarly research. In the chapters that follow I detail a review of pertinent literature which will later be useful in understanding and analyzing the results of the study. As much as it is possible I try to ensure that the voices of my participants are audible throughout the study.
CHAPTER THREE

Educating Us and Them

“My family came to the U.S., and made it” (student, 2003).

Chapter One includes the theories that ground this study, as well as a description of the problem under investigation. Chapter Two contains a discussion of my research methodology, research concerns and analysis method of data. The current chapter provides critical review of the literature demonstrating how the “other” is contextualized in the United States (U.S). In this chapter I will provide a review of the literature discussing how cultures located within the U.S and cultures outside the U.S are defined as “other” based on race, class and gender. I will also review how education and schooling has contributed to the reproduction and production of the “other.” I am providing this literature review because my study involves U.S. Appalachian students; hence it is important to present literature on education in the U.S. and some of the challenges as a precursor to the study. This is not meant to be an exhaustive review of the literature on this complex topic; rather it will be a review of the literature necessary to backdrop the analysis of my data. The topics I will cover discuss previous research on the “other.” Specifically I address how the “other” is produced based on race and class in the U.S. and how these factors come into play in the global arena. The effect of gender on the process of othering is addressed in Chapter Four.
The ways in which “them” or the “other” are represented have been a key concern for those involved in diversity education and social justice. The “other” is “the representative entity outside the self- that is outside of one’s own gender, social group, class, culture and or civilization” (Sardar and Van Loon, 1997, p.13). I have written the “other” in quotation marks because it is not a neutral term. The “other” is usually viewed as inferior, exotic and ignorant (Said, 1978; Mohanty et al., 1991; Banks, 2001). Countries that form the Global South are often viewed as “other” while within U.S. society women, racial minorities, the poor, and homosexuals are viewed as “other” (Sardar & Van Loon, 1997).

The field of multiculturalism addresses otherness within the U.S., whereas the concept of orientalism and post colonial theory are used in the discourse on otherness outside the U.S, or for that matter former European colonial powers (Said, 1978; West, 1993; Banks, 2001). Though different terms are used, the commonality between the terms is that they investigate power, privilege and oppression that have resulted in the production and reproduction of the “other” within and outside of the United States and other European countries.

The use of terms such as orientalism, muticulturalism and post colonialism demonstrate the difficulties in trying to create boxes for categories that in reality cannot be neatly arranged. Helfenbien (2003), Gilroy (1993) and Spivak (1999) point out that identities are untidy; they are creolized, mestizised, and hybridized. Often identities weave the local and the global. The similarities between these terms become obvious when an exploration of the creation of “other” inside and outside the U.S is undertaken.
The story of the “other” is the story of the U.S. The history of the U.S. is about “us” and “them” (Gollnick and Chinn, 2000). “Us” was defined by the first European immigrants from Western and Northern Europe in opposition to the indigenous people. Today “us” continues to be defined by descendants of Europeans. Early Europeans formed the bedrock of dominant culture in the U.S and every group that followed (“them”), had to assimilate, either willingly or unwilling, to that dominant culture (Gollnick & Chinn; 2000; Spring, 2004).

As immigration patterns changed and U.S. society became more diverse, there was a need for diversity to be reflected in education; this need is yet to be met. The struggle for a more diversified school climate and curriculum is reflected in the rise of multicultural and international or global education. Scholars such as James Banks, Richard Delgado, Cornel West, bell hooks, D. Bell, Audrey Lorde, Angela Davis, Peter McLaren and Toni Morrison have all explored the history and the implications of multiculturalism in U.S. societies and classrooms. They have looked particularly at the role of race in U.S society.

**Race based othering**

My study investigates the use of Black women’s theater from the Global South in an Appalachian classroom. My participants are from the U.S. and it is important to understand the factors that contribute to the process of othering in the U.S. Race plays a significant factor in determining who gets labeled as the “other.” Issues of race are problematic in the U.S. The contradictory nature of race in the U.S. is evident by examining the belief that it is impossible for a Black woman to have a White baby, but
possible for a White woman to have a Black baby (Jacobson, 1998). It is assumed that one drop of Black blood makes a person and his/her generation Black. One interpretation of this phenomenon could be that Whiteness implies purity; mixing with other races contaminates the pureness of Whiteness. Such ideologies governing race is evident in an early writing entitled *The passing of the great race* (Grant, 1916) that views Northern and Western Europeans as superior not only in the United States, but throughout the world. This superiority complex is evident in the expansion of the U.S. empire and embodied in the doctrine of Manifest Destiny (Spring, 2004). Othering was used as means of conquest.

The first “other” encountered by the early settlers were Native Americans; native peoples were viewed as savages, pagans and degenerates by the English invaders. Spring (2004) noted that educational policies of the English and later the U.S. government reflected the colonizer’s thought of Native Americans as inferior. “Consequently schools were created to destroy Native American cultural and linguistic traditions and replace them with the English language and Anglo-American culture” (Spring, 2004, p.1). This system of deculturalization, “the process of destroying a people’s culture and replacing it with a new culture” (Spring, 2004, p.3) was extended to African Americans and other groups as they migrated or were forced to the U.S.

The U.S. is often described as the land of immigrants; this definition excludes African Americans and Native Americans (Zinn, 1999; Spring, 2004). Native Americans were already living in the U.S. by the time Europeans arrived. In the case of African Americans they were forced to come to the U.S., they did not immigrate; immigration
assumes choice (Spring, 2004). African Americans were captured and enslaved, they were stolen from Africa, stored on ships and sent to the U.S. This history is the same for all peoples of African descent in the U.S., Caribbean, Latin American and other areas of the African Diaspora.

The journey from Africa to the Americas is known as the Middle Passage (Williams 1966, 1970; Honeychurch, 1993). Slaves were caged in the bottom of ships and many died because of the conditions on the slave ships. Women and children endured acts of rape by sailors, and men were often beaten sometimes to death. On arriving in the U.S. and other parts of the Americas, they were sold to plantation owners and sentenced to a lifetime of dehumanization.

During slavery, African Americans performed much of the labor that fueled the American economy, but neither the slaves nor their descendants received any recognitions for their contribution; compensation is still due (Robinson, 2000). This denial of the rights of African Americans was reflected in the Naturalization Act of 1790 which defines American citizenship and highlights the bias of early government leaders. The legislation granted citizenship to only free White persons. Native Americans were excluded; they were viewed as domestic foreigners and Black were excluded, even those who were free Blacks because they were considered less than human. Even today African Americans and Native Americans are barred from their rights as Americans (Bell, 1992).

Evidence of the way African Americans and Native Americans have been denied their rights is seen through the inequalities persist even after emancipation from slavery
(Malcolm X & Haley, 1992; Bell, 1992; hooks, 1995; West, 1993). Race is still used as a basis for determining substantive citizenship. Malcolm X stated this clearly in his address *The Ballot or the Bullet* (1964):

Those Honkies that just got off the boat, they are already Americans; Polacks are already Americans, the Italian refugees are already Americans. Everything that came out of Europe, every blue eyed thing is already an American. And as long as you and I have been over here, we aren’t Americans yet. . . Being here in America doesn’t make you an American. Why if birth made you American, you wouldn’t need any legislations; you wouldn’t need any amendment to the constitution; you wouldn’t be faced with civil rights filibustering in Washington DC; right now. They don’t need to pass civil-rights legislation to make a Polack an American. No I am not an American. I’m one of the 22 million [B]lack people who are the victims of Americanism (1964).

The Americanism Malcolm X refers to imply a system of inequalities that is set up to benefit some and discriminate against others. Inequalities are especially telling in education. The year 2004 marks the fiftieth anniversary of Brown vs. Board of Education. It is a momentous occasion; it serves as a marker for the desegregation of U.S. schools. During legal segregation Whites and Blacks experienced a different form of education. Their education was different in content and also in terms of facilities, for example, school buildings, furniture, equipment and academic resources.

Even though desegregation has been remedied by law, segregation in practice continues. Tatum (1997) confirms that segregation has been on the rise since the early
1900’s. Entman and Rojecki (2002) report that while material conditions have improved for African Americans since the 1960’s; racial identity remains an important component of social appraisal and continues to disadvantage Blacks while benefiting Whites. Segregation continues; most Blacks live apart from Whites and lag behind in income, housing, health and education (Bell, 1992).

These occurrences of inequality can best be explained by understanding that racism is ingrained in U.S. societies (Bell, 1992). Alexis De Tocqueville’s (1862) description of the U.S. in the 1800’s highlighted the impact of race during that time and is still applicable to present times. In describing the conditions of African Americans and Native Americans Tocqueville says:

These two unhappy races have nothing in common, neither birth, nor features, nor language, nor habits. Their only resemblance lies in their misfortunes. Both of them occupy an equally inferior position in the country they inhabit; both suffer from tyranny; and if their wrongs are not the same, they originate from the same authors (p.359).

Tocqueville concluded that the Black and White races would not be able to coexist because of the prevalence of racism in American society. Almost a century later, DuBois prophesized that “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea” (DuBois, 1997, p.45). Malcolm X (1963) echoes Dubois; he tells us,
America’s problem is us. We’re her problem. The only reason she has a problem is she doesn’t want us here. And everytime you look at yourself be you black, brown, red or yellow – a so called Negro—you represent a person who poses a serious problem for America because you are not wanted.

Malcolm X was speaking to African Americans conscientizing them to the dilemma of being Black in America.

Today, racism remains a fixture in U.S. society. Bell (1992) explains that the racism that made slavery feasible is not dead. No African American is protected from racial discriminations. Bell (1992) concludes that “racism is an integral, permanent and indestructible component of this society” (p.ix). Bell’s conclusion is frightening; racism in the U.S. seems a hopeless situation. I agree partially with this statement but I am a little optimistic. I believe that the sting of racism can be diminished through anti racist education. Part of this education entails demystifying the category of race. However in order to engage on discussions of race West, (1993) advises that one must begin with the flaws of American society and the inequalities that exist. He argues that “as long as Black people are viewed as them the burden falls on [B]lacks to do all the ‘cultural’ and ‘moral’ work necessary for healthy race relations. The implications is that only certain Americans can define what it means to be American- and the rest must simply ‘fit in’ ” (p.3, italics mine). Usually it is Blacks and other minority groups who “fit in” while White Americans largely define who is an American; race therefore is a marker in determining who is an American.
Race and the Determination of Americaness

The focus of my dissertation is not on race as it is lived in America. This dissertation utilizes the work of Black women from the Global South. However my participants are students living in parts of Appalachia Ohio, and I argue that socialization on how race impacts American citizenship is also linked to how they will perceive other Blacks from places outside the U.S., particularly countries from the Global South. It will also impact how they see themselves as White but poor, and the negotiating role race plays for them in claiming Americaness. A discussion on race as a category in determining degree of Americaness is therefore essential. The category of race was created to serve particular groups of people. In an interview with Times magazine Toni Morrison explains the purpose of the Black race in the U.S.:  

    Black people have always been used as a buffer in this country between powers to prevent class war, to prevent other kinds of real conflagrations.  
    If there were no black people here in this country, it would have been Balkanized.  
    The immigrants would have torn each other's throats out, as they have done everywhere else. But in becoming an American, from Europe, what one has in common with that other immigrant is contempt for me -- it's nothing else but color. Wherever they were from, they would stand together. They could all say, "I am not that." So in that sense, becoming an American is based on an attitude: an exclusion of me (Angelo, 1989, p.120).  
    The category of race benefits everyone except Blacks; they are found at the bottom of the social ladder. Race is used as a marker for determining who is American
and who is not. Ralph Ellison tells us that African Americans have never been considered American enough. He says that they have been used as a marker, “a metaphor for the ‘outsider’... Perhaps this is why one of the first epithets that many European immigrants learned when they got off the boat was the term ‘nigger’ – it made them feel instantly American.” (Ellison, 1970, p.161).

Both Morrison’s and Ellison’s comments serve as evidence for the purpose of race in the U.S. Just as Black is a created category, so is White. Before immigrating to the U.S. the Irish were Irish, as were the Italians, Italians. However once crossing over to the U.S. these groups became White ((Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 1991; Sacks, 1998). Whiteness became an identifier for Americaness.

Whiteness is akin to Americaness. This is true for national products such literature. In Playing in the dark Whiteness and the literary imagination, Morrison (1992) points out that the so called national American literature obtained its status because of its Whiteness and maleness. She argues that “a real or fabricated Africanist presence was crucial to their sense [White American male authors] of Americaness” (p.6). Morrison demonstrates that this national American literature was born by contrasting Blacks and Whites, and showing how un-American Blacks were, and how American Whites were. It is through the invention of this Whiteness that the national literature was born.

In addressing the invented category of the White race, Garvey and Ignatiev (1997) state: “the [W]hite race is a club that enrolls certain people at birth, without their consent and brings them up according to its rules. For the most part its members go through life accepting the privileges of membership but without reflecting on the cost” (p. 346-347).
McIntosh (1998) refers to these privileges as White privilege. She describes it as an “invisible weightless knapsack” which Whites carry around, but are taught not to recognize. One of the benefits of being White, for example, is the privilege of being viewed an individual rather than as a group (McIntosh, 1998). Due to White privilege, Whites participate in racism, a system of advantage based on race by using their skin color for their own benefit (Tatum, 1997). In so doing people who are not White are at a disadvantage.

There is however a danger in grouping all Whites into the same category, there are different degrees of Whiteness (Omi and Winant, 1998). Within the category of Whiteness there are divisions of ethnicity, gender and economics. However, once there is a Black presence it appears as though these divisions are forgotten. For example, in the case of poor Whites, their color exempts them to some degree from the criminal class (Garvey and Ignatiev, 1996). “In fact that is how the entire working class was defined before race was invented and is still treated in those parts where race does not exist as a social category. It is a cheap way of buying people’s loyalty to a social system that exploits them” (p.347). It is color that privileges poor Whites over any Black person. Garvey and Ignatiev (1996) argue that if color no longer served as guide for the distribution of penalties and rewards, Euroamericans who are not from privileged classes would then have to come face to face with their own conditions of their position as the “economic other,” and be engaged in the struggle for a better world” (p.347).
The Creation of the Economic Other

Introducing Appalachia

Education offers a starting point for examining the inequalities existing in U.S. society along economic, race and class lines. Examples such as the video, *Children in America’s Schools* (1996) and the book *Savage Inequalities* (1991), investigate the inequalities that exist in public schools in Ohio. *Children in America’s Schools*, in particular, looks specifically at schools in urban and rural Ohio. Most of the rural schools examined are found in Appalachian Ohio. Appalachian Ohio is located in the south and southeastern part of Ohio and is characterized by high poverty and above average unemployment rate in comparison to the rest of the state. (Appendix A shows a map of the areas considered as Appalachian Ohio). The desperate situation found in most of these public schools is due to inequality in funding that is the result of low property tax valuation, high unemployment rates, low income and the presence of government lands that provides low industrial and low industrial growth (Kozol, 1991).

Within U.S. society Appalachians as a group are viewed as the “other” America, not because of the racial composition of the region but because of the economic condition of the area. Appalachia became a bench mark through which America defines its progress; it is seen as backward whereas the rest of America is seen as progressive (Coats, 1996). Appalachians are often viewed as ignorant, backward and dirty by the dominant sectors of American society, and labeled with derogatory terms such as
“hillbilly”, “cracker”, “redneck” and “White trash.” These are all terms used in labeling the White “other” (Newitz & Wray, 1997).

The name Appalachia often evokes images of “poverty and unemployment… the paucity of quality health care, education, housing and public service” (Coats, 1996, p.1). These images are often seen in the media particularly in earlier television shows such as the Beverly Hillbillies and Hee Haw. Appalachians are often blamed for causing the conditions found in the area, but further analysis reveals that the situation of many Appalachian communities is as a result of its complex history and the role it played in the industrialization of America (Lewis, 1991). This role has been undervalued and the people who gave of their sweat and toil have been all but forgotten.

Creation of the “Other” White America- A Brief History

The communities located in southeastern Ohio⁹, which comprise Appalachian Ohio, were part of the Northwest Territory ceded to the United States by France in 1783 by the Treaty of Paris (Mould, 1989). Before the arrival of the Europeans, Native Americans occupied many of the southeastern Ohio communities. The Adena, an ancient indigenous group, renowned for their skills in mound building were the earliest known inhabitants of the area. Other groups such as the Delaware, Shawnee, and Wyandot American Indians also lived in the area (Tribe, 1993).

In 1787, a group of investors called the Ohio Company comprising Revolutionary War veterans purchased 1.5 million acres in southeastern Ohio. The arrival of the

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⁹ My dissertation focuses on the Appalachian community within southeastern Ohio. Appendix A shows a map of the communities in southeastern Ohio considered Appalachia Ohio. I will therefore limit my review of the literature to this area.
Europeans resulted in a change of life for the native people; many were forced to leave the area. Many died because of disease and due to the numerous wars fought between the native peoples and the settlers. An example is the Dunmore’s war in 1774. This was a series of battles between the frontier population of Pennsylvania and Virginia and the Delawares, Iroquois, Wyandots, and other tribes. The Treaty of Greenville in 1795 aided in running many native people out of Ohio. This treaty took lands away from the Native Americans, while the lands that were promised to them by the United States were never received. Native Americans could no longer occupy lands, while two thirds of Ohio was opened to White settlement (Tribe, 1993).

Many Europeans settled these lands by the 1800s. They came in search of a better life. For some it was to escape religious persecution, while for others it was to escape famine in their countries and unfair taxation, whereas others were simply in search of wealth. Southeastern Ohio, unlike northern and western Ohio is unglaciated marked by its hilly topography. Many early settlers bypassed the area; they preferred the lands in the north and the west that were better suited for agriculture. Nevertheless, settlers during the early 18th century included the Scotch-Irish, English and the Germans.

Initially some of these settlers lived in communities along the Ohio River and then moved to other areas. They stayed because of the area’s comparative safety from Native American raids, its access to water routes and also it reminded some of the landscape of their own homelands (Mould, 1989). They were also attracted by the abundance of salt and wild game. Additionally liberalization of public land policies in
1800, 1804, and 1820 made it easier to obtain acreage through the U.S. land offices (Tribe, 1993). Policies at this time were geared at encouraging settlement of lands.

At first agriculture was the main economic activity, and the Hocking River was used for the transportation of goods. Construction of the Hocking Canal, which ran from the Hocking Valley to Carroll in Ohio, was completed in 1843 and was useful in transferring agricultural goods to more distant markets contributing to the growth of the economy. The canal relieved the region of dependence on river trade with New Orleans and opened trade between Northern Ohio and the East Coast cities e.g., Cleveland and New York (Mould, 1989). A variety of agricultural products such as packed pork, bacon and lard, salt, and then later coal were transported via this canal. The canal was also useful in bringing products from places outside of the region e.g. manufactured goods, foodstuffs and whiskey. The canal was responsible for town development because after the completion of the Hocking Canal there was a growth in existing towns and the birth of newer towns (Tribe, 1988).

The railroads soon replaced the canal as the main mode of transportation of industrial goods by the 1840s and 1850s. Once the main line railroad between Columbus and the Hocking Valley, the Columbus and Hocking Valley Railroad (C&HVRR), to Athens was completed there was noted economic and population growth. Additionally, “with construction of branch lines by the C&HVRR and later railroads that penetrated the Monday Creek portion of the mineral region brought about the founding of new communities” (Tribe, 1988, p. 4) such as New Straitsville, Shawnee, and Murray City.
The history of the communities of southeastern Ohio is one of resource extraction. Iron, timber, oil and natural gas, salt, and clay (brick production) contributed to the development of the region but not to as great an extent as coal (Tribe, 1988; Winnengberg, 1995). The possibility of using coal in the region for industrial purposes was first expressed by a Nelsonville blacksmith in the 1820’s. However it was after the Hocking Canal construction that this potential was fully explored. Coal later fueled the development of the southeastern Ohio communities.

Discoveries of coal, clay and oil resulted in extensive railroad development and the creation of communities such as New Straitsville. In the mid-1800’s American society underwent a transformation from an agricultural to an industrial economy and Ohio became one of the largest coal producing and coal consuming states in the nation (Winnengberg, 1995). Ohio’s industrialism was triggered by the manufacture of equipment for railroads, machinery for increased farm mechanization, and supplies for the Civil War and by the recognition of coal as an inexpensive fuel, especially for the generation of steam power (Crowell, 1995).

From the Civil War times to the Great Depression of the 1930s there was a significant increase in coal production which was influenced by the improved methods of transportation and mining. The period 1850-1880 saw the growth of the railroad; which contributed to the demand for coal; it became the fuel for steam locomotive engines. World War I also had an impact on the increase in coal production. Because of the war effort and increased mechanization, “by 1918 Ohio’s coal force reached its greatest level
of more than 50,000 individuals, more than 12 times its 1993 level of 4,116 employees” (Crowell, 1995, p. 6).

Coal production increased until 1970. However the number of mines in operation decreased after World War II. Between 1950 and 1970, the number of underground mines decreased by 90%” (Crowell, 1995, p. 6), and there was an 83% decrease in the labor force. The main cause for this decrease was mechanization; as mines became mechanized it was possible to undertake surface mining as opposed to underground mining. With the use of large machinery coal could now be mined more easily, quickly, cheaply, and fewer people were required for the process.

The Powerful and the less Powerful

Coal mining fueled the development of many small Ohio towns but the question arises regarding who benefited most from this industry. When the earlier settlers sold their lands and or mineral rights, the mining companies gained title to the minerals that lay beneath the surface regardless of whether or not they owned the land. But the bargaining field was not a level one. Harry Caudill (1963) observes:

On one side of the rude table sat an astute trader, more often than not a graduate of a fine college and a man experienced in the larger business world . . . Across the table on a puncheon bench sat a man and woman out of a different age. Still remarkably close to the frontier of a century before, neither of them possessed more than the rudiments of an education (p.73)

Although Caudill describes Appalachian Kentucky, this resembles what happened throughout the Appalachian region (Tribe, 1988). The broad form deed entitled coal
companies to all “coal, oil, and gas and all mineral and metallic substances and combinations of the same” (Tribe, 1998, p.74). The earlier settlers had no idea of the vast amount of wealth that lay beneath their land. The coal companies profited but these people received only a single half-dollar, the price for which they sold their land (Tribe, 1998).

Ron Eller (1982) explains that “millions of acres of land and even greater quantities of timber and mineral rights passed out of the hands of mountain residents and into the control of absentee owners” (p. 56, Eller, 1989). Additionally, if landowners were reluctant to sell illicit means would be used to obtain the rights to natural resources. Obscure land titles, lost deeds, and poor records were common in these areas and buyers used this to their advantage since they had a better understanding and access to the courts (Eller, 1989).

Once this land was purchased coal company owners were instrumental in establishing railroad systems throughout the area. In most cases this impacted migration of people. Coal companies recruited people; they needed a labor force to mine coal. Coal mining was not an easy job. Miners were paid depending on the amount of coal extracted. In addition to this they were expected to pay for their own digging equipment, lanterns and supplies. These items were usually purchased from the company store and then deducted from their pay (Winnengberg, 1995).

The actual wage received for mining coal represented only one facet of the miner’s economic condition. The amount of time worked was perhaps even more important. Sometimes miners worked only 15 ½ weeks such as in 1879 when the county
was going through a depression period. Conditions were sometimes so dire that in February 1875, the editor of the Somerset Press reported “many families in New Straitsville are living on bread and water and some are reduced to subsisting on boiled corn” (Winnengberg, 1995, p.39). It is alleged that this unsteadiness in work was due to the fluctuating demand for coal and also because of the large coal-mining work force.

The scrip system was used in the communities of southeastern Ohio (Tribe, 1988). This was a monetary unit that was used sometimes as pay. It was an aluminum or brass coin sized disc stamped with the coal company’s name and with denominations similar to that of existing US coins. “The scrip system effectively stripped the miner of practically all financial resources and encouraged spendthrift habits of the most harmful kind” (Caudill, 1963, p. 114). The script systems gave owners control of the local economy. This script could only be redeemed at the company store; the miners were therefore at a disadvantage because goods were more costly there.

It was not only the pay and the availability of work that were the concerns of mining. The conditions were also challenging. Many roof falls, mine fires, explosions, shaft falls and mine room cave-ins occurred that claimed numerous lives. Many miners succumbed to black lung disease after years of breathing in coal dust. In fact a mine fire in New Straitsville has been dubbed as the “World’s greatest mine fire.” This fire was set by disgruntled miners in 1884. Those living in the area have said that the heat generated from the underground mine, believed to be still burning today, could boil water for instant coffee and cook eggs. In fact, there have been pictures shown to depict this.
For the communities of southeastern Ohio mining was a double edged sword. On one hand, because of mining many of the Monday Creek communities experienced a boom period, but there were also negative aspects. Bob Koon, a resident of Murray City, explained that at times mining resembled a form of slavery.

They enslaved us [the coal companies]. The men would work in the mines; see they had the stores, the company owned it. Most families were broke and the men would have to go and buy the clothes and the food. The men had no money left cause the mine would take that money first, see they enslaved us. The men had no spending money. The company stores had all of it. It was the same in West Virginia (Hughes, 2000).

The mining work force was made up of Poles, Slovacs, Hungarians, Czechs, Lithuanians, Italians, and Irish. By 1942 African Americans, Austrians, Belgians, Canadians, Croatians, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Mexicans, Norwegians, Puerto Ricans, Serbians, Slavish, Spanish, Swedish, Ukrainians, Welsh, and Yugoslavians (Crowell, 1995, p. 57) also came. Mining communities developed at or near the coal mining sites. Companies built homes, stores and other structures and other institutions developed to support these communities. This included churches, opera houses, bars, and sisterhood and brotherhood associations such as the Pythian Sisters and lodges such as the Order of Red Men. Many of these structures are still standing in villages such as Shawnee. It also became necessary to develop local government as these grew.
Another negative consequence of mining was the conditions of colonization that this type of development activity created (Lewis, 1991). Appalachian communities were agriculturally based until developers or “colonizers” came into the area (Lewis, 1991). Coal companies brought jobs to the area, but the actual profit was taken outside; a similar situation occurs in developing countries. Additionally, coal mining “requires a less complex and a shorter range of skills which leads to an income distribution with a small elite [profiting] and a large number of people at the bottom” (p. 225). This resulted in an uneven income distribution, with small pockets of wealthy mine owners at the top of the social ladder, and numerous amounts of mine laborers at the bottom.

Aspects of colonialism show up in the educational realm as well. According to Lewis (1991) the industry attracted the uneducated who could and would simply work by the sweat of their backs. The educated on the other hand left the area. Additionally, political decisions, especially those affecting the mining industry, were not made at the local level; powerful coal company owners worked though the state capitals and in state courts which left smaller communities powerless in matters that affected them at the local level. Lewis’s argument is important for understanding some of the social and political negative impacts of this type of development and its consequences.

Although there were negative consequences of the mining boom, the closing of these mines in the area had disastrous implications for these small communities. By 1900 coal mining was on the decrease. The brick plants and the remaining coal mines were able to supply jobs to the population, but by this time there was already some decline in the population. Coal mining jobs continued to decrease in the period 1910-1919 as
technology aided in the mechanization of mines. The 1920s marked a period of more
mine closures and strikes. Those mines that remained provided only minimal work and
more people began to leave the area (Dishon & Winnengberg, 1998).

Outward migration continued and resulted not only in population loss but also the
loss of institutions that functioned as the social glue for these communities. Many
churches and lodges closed because of small membership. By the 1960s schools went
through the process of consolidation. Some felt that the population of each town was too
small to justify its own school. This had serious consequences for the communities; there
had been existing rivalry between the towns and there was some concern that students
would be treated differently depending on the village from which they came.
Additionally children now had to spend long hours commuting back and forth to school.
Forty years later the trends exhibited in the sixties have continued. This can be observed
by examining the present condition of the southeastern Ohio communities and schools.

Present Conditions of the Southeastern Ohio Communities

Richard Crabbe of Orville, a community in southeastern Ohio, described some of
the problems found in his community and similar communities:

You get the impression that you are last on the list as far as priorities. . . the
people feel they are on the last of the list, the last to get the road fixed . . . No one
here is rich. . .they are low-income people. There are a lot of people in the area
who don’t have septic tanks who don’t have aerators they have outhouses or steel
tanks in the ground where sewage goes in the ground when it gets full it goes into
the stream. There is litter around, we do what we can but it gets thrown back.
You have a lot of kids who travel these roads and throw litter out of their cars they don’t care. Drugs, alcohol, lots of problems like that around here (Hughes, 2000).

The Monday Creek watershed\textsuperscript{10} reveals insights into the socio and economic situation found in some of the southeastern Ohio communities. In the management plan for the Monday Creek watershed, Athens, Hocking and Perry Counties are described as having a 10% or greater increase in poverty rates between 1980-1995. Perry County experienced a 68% increase in its rate during that time period. In addition to this the poverty rate in 1995 for Ohio Appalachia was 19% compared to 17% for the 10 largest urban counties and 15% for Ohio. There are no hospitals, clinics or primary care centers in the watershed and in order to access health care services residents must travel 30 or more miles to the nearest hospital or clinic.

The Monday Creek Management plan indicates that only 11% of the employed residents of the four largest villages [Buchtel, Murray City, New Straitsville and Shawnee] in the Monday Creek watershed work locally (Monday Creek Restoration Project, 1999). The problem is further illustrated when one considers that 29% of all Ohio workers work close to home and 17% of Ohio Appalachia workers work in their town (Monday Creek Restoration Project, 1999).

The plan also reports that the unemployment rate for Buchtel is 8%, Murray City 6%, New Straitsville 12%, and Shawnee 8%. This is alarming compared to 5% for the

\textsuperscript{10} The Monday Creek runs through Athens, Perry and Hocking county. The Monday Creek watershed refers to land areas that drain into the Monday Creek. It therefore includes all of Athens, Perry and Hocking county
Ohio Appalachian counties and 4% for all the state of Ohio. 21% of residents in the watershed live below the poverty level and their per capita income per year is $6,000 less than the average of Ohio.

The 2000 census also highlights some of these concerns. The census reports that 11.8% of the Appalachian Ohio population earns household annual incomes of less than $10,000. For the state of Ohio, annual income of less than $10,000 is 9.1%. The medium income for the State of Ohio is $40,956 whereas for Appalachian Ohio it is $31,649.

Not only is income and employment low in this region, disparities are apparent in the educational realm. 43.7% of all Appalachian Ohioans graduate from High School, 21% males and 22.7% females. 7.9% receive Bachelor degrees, 3.9% males, 4% females. This compares to 36.1% for all Ohioans who receive high school diplomas, males 16.5% and females 19.5%. However 13.7% receive their Bachelor degrees; 6.9% males, 6.8% females. The differences are even greater when Appalachian communities are compared individually. For example, the Monday Creek Management Plan states that in Murray City 52% of the population 18 years and older have a high school diploma; however only 1% of residents have an undergraduate degree.

Amidst these conditions some families have remained in the area. There are also some who even though they have moved, have maintained interest in their communities. There seems to be some sense of community spirit among residents:

This area has always been poor but we have never been trashy. They made their own soap and their houses were clean or if the Browns had a sickness the Jones
would go over and help... we have a gentleman who has made over $4,000 to redo our townhouse just selling cans. ...(St. Clair, personal communication, 2000).

New Straitsville is an example of a community where residents exhibit a strong sense of community spirit. For example, every year alumni who return to visit their school contribute to organizations maintaining the historical and cultural traditions of the area such as the New Straitsville Historical Society. In Murray City, at the Municipal Building, lunch is served daily; this provides an opportunity for all to meet and to discuss issues that are pertinent to the community. Council meetings are also held regularly consisting of the mayor and other elected members. They are primarily concerned with matters at the village level; the general public is invited to these meetings. Churches, bars and lodges still provide a location for socialization.

The problems faced here are very similar to those faced throughout the Appalachian region. “Appalachia is the product of the historical forces which created modern America (Eller, 1993, p. 6). The history of this region is marked by an unequal relationship between the “rural resource-based ‘periphery’ and the modernizing urban ‘core’...” (Eller; 1993, p. 7). This relationship is often identified as causing the poverty conditions found in most Appalachian regions. In some ways it is fair to say that the economic prosperity of the urban core was built on the backs of Appalachians who now have little “voice” or empowerment outside of their own villages.

Appalachia is one of America’s “other” but America would be nothing without it. This mirrors arguments presented by scholars such as Walter Rodney (1981) and Randal Robinson (2000) that America and Europe would not have its position of wealth and
power if it were not for countries, cultures and groups who have been marginalized. The development of Europe and America is at the expense of marginalized groups. This history and the connections between wealth, production and poverty are usually left out of the mainstream school curriculum (Loewen, 1995).

Linking the Local and the Global

Gaventa (2002) makes a connection with the global and local as it relates to Appalachia. A renowned Appalachian and development scholar with years of involvement in development activities in Appalachia and developing nations such as India and Nigeria, Gaventa delivered an address at the Appalachian Studies Association conference in 2002. He raised several questions as it pertains to Appalachia as a global region. He asked: “as we acknowledge the importance of multiple diverse identities within the region, how do we link to those who also self identify as being “voices from the margins and living on the fringe” in other regions elsewhere? (p.87). He makes reference to the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 bombing of the World Trade Center and Pentagon and the U.S. declaration of war on Afghanistan and further questions: does our Appalachian identity get overruled by a nationalistic identity that waves the flag and supports American power unquestionably against people in other parts of the world, many of whom perceive themselves to be on the fringe of power as well? Or do we try to understand the reasons for those perceptions of marginalization and to search for a common ground based on common problems? (p.87)
One of the key challenges facing Appalachia, according to Gaventa, concerns Appalachians locating themselves as Appalachian and global citizens, and linking those voices which have been speaking from the margins with those on the fringes of global power elsewhere (Gaventa, 2002, p.90). Gaventa’s emphasis is on the need for Appalachian Studies to move from the regional level to the global level and thereby identify with others on the global level who have similar issues of marginalization.

Gaventa places emphasis on the global arena, but within and without Appalachia there are groups that fall on the margins due to race, class, gender and sexual orientation, this makes the local arena also important. Johnson’s (2000) work for example, uses the memoirs of two men, one Black and the other White, in addressing the experience of segregation in an Appalachian town in West Virginia. Communities such as Kilvert and Rendville in southeastern Ohio, have a multicultural history; many African Africans lived in these areas at one point in time (Winnengburg, 1995).

This multicultural aspect of the region is often left out when describing the history of the area. Wilburn Hayden’s article “In Search of Justice: White Privilege in Appalachia” (2002) examines how White privilege impacts life quality and life chances of Appalachian African Americans. Hayden states that White privilege is seen as normal, if it is seen at all, and one of the problems resulting from this in an Appalachian context is that there is a false perception that Whites are the only significant people living in the region. In turn this results in a “diminished depiction of the other group’s place or contribution to the region” (p.124). The challenge therefore is to form global linkages
with marginalized groups while at the same time dealing with issues of identity and inequality at the local level.

The International Other

Articles written by John Alvin Brown “Black Americans as Third World People” and Ted V. Couillard’s “The Third World of Appalachia: An American Colony” argue that African American and Appalachian communities have similar characteristics as those in the developing world. There are issues of poverty and marginality that plague these groups. H. Rap Brown in a speech given in 1967 states “I cannot talk about the ‘Third World and the Ghetto,’ for Black people who comprise the ghetto are the Third World.” Brown speaks of African Americans as belonging to the Third World. He also explains that the Third World of the U.S. is not only limited to African Americans living in ghetto areas but other minority ethnic groups and poor Whites living in Appalachian areas. Brown explains that these groups are as others living in the Third World because of the existing oppressive power structures. He calls on people to be revolutionaries in freeing themselves and others.

Research work which makes a comparison between the Third World internationally and locally also includes the presentation of Carolyn Tice and Emily Kazyak at the Institute for the African Child conference held at Ohio University in 2002 where they compared the prevalence of HIV/ AIDS in Africa and Appalachia. They debated that the social, geographical and economic situation of Africa and Appalachia results in similar conditions and spread of HIV/ AIDS. Another study conducted by Dr. Oberhauser “Gendered Livelihood Strategies in Rural South Africa and Appalachia: A
Comparative Analysis of Women’s Producer groups in Peripheral Regions” found similar livelihood strategies employed by women living in these areas. Additionally, *We Make the Road by Walking* (1990) offers an intriguing dialogue between Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and Myles Horton, founder of the Highlander Institute located in an Appalachian region. Both Horton and Freire discuss their experience working with marginalized groups in Brazil and in the U.S.

The studies mentioned offer a comparison between Appalachia and developing countries. They show the commonalities of problems faced by these areas; Africa and other areas in the Global South such as the Caribbean because of their social, geographical and economic situation in the world, and Appalachia because of its position socially, geographically and economically within the United States. What is lacking however is information regarding how Appalachians relate to other people who share similar social and economic realities.

In *African Images: Racism and the end of Anthropology*, Rigby (1996) tells us that in an international context there is the concept of the “other.” This “other” is seldom the White European or North American male. “The other is those people whose peculiar differences from this normative creature [the White male] need to be explained and come to terms with” (p.1). Edward Said’s monumental work *Orientalism* (1978) marked a historical point in academia for a discussion on otherness. “Orientalism refers to ways of defining and locating Europe’s other” (Ashcroft & Ahliwalia, 1999). Specifically, the Orient referred to places in the Middle East as well as the countries of North Africa. Said asserts that the colonized people living in these areas were often described as “inferior,
irrational, depraved and childlike” in many of the scholarly and literary works produced by Europeans (Sardar and Van Loon, 1997, p.107). While Orientalism serves as a lens for examining otherness one of its primary limitations is its stress on the Middle East. Many countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean experienced European domination and are also considered as “other.” There is therefore a need for a term that describes the experience of othering and domination regardless of the area of the world.

Scholars in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Asian countries use the term post colonialization in describing, resisting and critiquing othering. Most of these critiques come from countries that were former colonies of the European powers. Interestingly there has been an increase of multiethnic groups from these countries moving to Europe and the U.S. Those viewed as the “other” within U.S. societies can trace their heritage back to those countries that are considered as the Global South. Herein lies a connection between the multicultural “other” and the international “other.”

Within the U.S. and Europe, in order to produce distance and emphasize power, race and ethnicity is emphasized so as to create distance between “us here” and “them” – not only out there- but also “within here” (Longgreen, 2001, p.230-231). Race and ethnicity, along with class and gender is used in differentiating between “us” and “them” within the U.S. In the international realm, race and ethnicity tends to be masked and economic factors become more prominent. This is seen when looking particularly at the other in Africa and the Caribbean.
Africa as “Other”

One way of examining Africa as “other” is by investigating myths perpetuated about Africans. There are many myths about Africans that exist in U.S. societies. Cudjoe (2001) lists some of these stereotypes as:

1. The origin of African people began with a person (Ham) being punished by (Noah) by being turned Black because he looked at his drunken father naked.
2. Africa was the “Dark Continent” that needed enlightenment from Europeans in order to become civilized, developed and economically stable.
3. The most significant historical events and contributions of Africans are a result of their interacting with Westerners.
4. African people run around half naked, causing social unrest for no good reason, and are therefore incapable of governing themselves or other people.
5. All Africans live in huts that are situated in simple societies and engage only in subsistence farming.
6. Africans were not educated until Europeans arrived and built their first schools and other institutions of learning.
7. The political structure of the traditional African continent consists of a ‘tribe’ of people being directed by a male headman or chief.
8. African women and children depend on males to engage in hunting and gathering activities or earn wages in order to survive (p.6).
This distinction of the African “other” is seen predominantly in media. Mainstream media promotes negative stereotypes of Africa. Usually there is emphasis on the sensational, preference for catastrophes such as droughts, the use of simplistic notions of conflict causes, notably “tribalism” and a focus on non Africans as victims or helpers (Palmberg, 2001, p.9). The information Americans receive about Africans come mostly from media, television in particular. In *Tarzan in the classroom: How educational films mythologize Africa and miseducate Americans* (1993) the author states that in a report from the Carnegie Corporation in 1967 Africa was cited as being the most neglected area of the world. More than twenty years later the Rockefeller foundation came to the same conclusion (Cudjoe, 2001).

This lack of education informs questions that some Americans ask Africans. For example Okoye (1971) describes his experience in the U.S.:

> It was only after I had arrived in the United States that I discovered that Africa enjoyed an unfavorable image abroad. At dinner parties I was shocked by the ethnocentrism of many highly educated Americans. University professors glibly described the peoples of the second largest continent as uncivilized, as savages. African religion and art were categorized as ‘primitive’. Our dances denounced as erotic. . . (p.151).

Okoye critiques American academicians who have been found guilty as condemning Africa as a place devoid of history and philosophy. Okoye’s work was written in 1971 however it is not uncommon for African students in 2004 to be asked questions such as,
whether they lived in houses in their home countries and if they wore clothes when they were home.

Both African men and women are subject to these misinformed myths. Men are portrayed as “polygamous perpetrators of barbaric acts” (Cudjoe, 2001, p.16), while women are depicted as victims who are dependant on their spouses and oppressed. What is left out of these portrayals is the fact that African women have led some “of the most liberal, prominent and productive lived recorded in history” (Cudjoe, 2001, p.17). Their roles included pharaohs, warriors, queens, drummers, warriors and scientists. These privileges were either curtailed or lost with the introduction of colonialism (Bingham & Gross, 1992; Clegg, 1991; Van Sertima, 1997). Americans remain misinformed about Africa and continue to create myths about African peoples.

Caribbean as “Other”

Depictions of areas of the Global South are similar and yet different at the same time. For example, Africa and the Caribbean are depicted differently. The Caribbean is part of the African Diaspora; it is a region that has retained many of its African characteristics, for example food, dance and music, but yet it has its own myths. In the African context there is more of an emphasis on development needs. Africa is perceived to be plagued with poverty, famine, tribal wars and disease whereas the Caribbean islands are considered tourist destination spots. At first glance there seems to be unrelatedness between how Africa and the Caribbean are portrayed in the U.S. Further examination shows that there is a relationship (Urray, 1990). Both tourism and development work are
involved in reducing the distance between “us here” and “them out there.” The everyday lives of “them out there” becomes the gaze of the tourist and also the development worker. In this process the “other” or “them out there” is changed into objects to be studied by “us here.” The “us here” remains the subjects (Longgreen, 2001).

Tourism occupies various degrees of importance to Caribbean economies and ranges from being important to being vital (Manley, 1996). In its early days tourism mirrored slavery. The best jobs were reserved for White Americans particularly in Jamaican hotels. Tourists brought their racial attitudes with them and locals were often “unwelcomed on the beach or in the hotels, treated as dehumanized curiosities and exotic objects in tourist literature” (Puttullo, 1996, p.65). Caribbeans were often marginalized in their own countries.

Nobel prize laureate V.S. Naipaul argued in the 1960’s that tourism was a type of new slavery. “Every poor country accepts tourism as an unavoidable degradation. None has gone as far as some of these West Indian islands, which in the name of tourism, are selling themselves into a new slavery (1960, p.210). The same observations have been made by Frantz Fanon (1967), Jamaica Kincaid (1988), and Hillary Beckles. Beckles calls tourism a new form of plantocracy. Tim Hector (1994) has also added his voice to this critique. He states “in the beginning a tiny, foreign elite in ownership and management controlled sugar. In the end a tiny, foreign elite in ownership and management, controls tourism. Slavery or wage slavery has been our lot” (p.1).

Tourists, both European and North American visit the Caribbean for many reasons: climate, beaches, safety, language comfortability (most of the islands speak
some form of European language: English, French, Spanish, Dutch), fantasy fulfillment and fun. In the tourist imagination the Caribbean offers a “heaven on earth” or “a little bit of paradise” experience. Caribbean locals are expected to conform to this expectation and wear smiling faces at all times for tourists pleasure. This keeps tourists coming back year after year bringing in needed tourist dollars to keep the islands afloat.

Not only the place, but the people too are expected to conform to this stereotype. The Caribbean person, from the Amerindians whom Columbus met in that initial encounter to the twentieth-century taxi driver whom tourists meet at the airport, is expected to satisfy those images associated with paradise and Eden. The images are crude: of happy, carefree, fun loving men and women, colorful in behavior; whose life is one of daytime indolence beneath the palms and a night time of pleasure though music, dance and sex (Pattullo, 1996, p.142).

These images of the Caribbean have been reinforced down thought the centuries by explorers such as Columbus, historians, anthropologists and travel brochures. Brochures concentrate on hotels, beaches, landscapes and fun. Along with this is the offer of sex and romance. The region has become a romance destination which explains the rise of all inclusive hotels such as Sandals which is a couples only hotel offering tourists a haven for their romantic getaway.

One form of romance tourism involves a tourist woman who meets a local man and is romanced by him. During the time of her stay she is hosted by him; he shows her the culture and attractions of the island. In exchange she offers him money and days of living above a lifestyle to which he is unaccustomed. Sometimes they two actually fall in
love and find ways to be together permanently. The novel and subsequent movie, *How Stella got her groove back* is a depiction of this type of romance tourism. This is a novel that was created into a movie. The protagonist, an African American woman in her forties, goes to Jamaica for vacation. In Jamaica she meets a Jamaican man, who is much younger than she is, falls in love and begins realizing what is important in life.

Davidson and Taylor (1999) note that as “others” local men are viewed as beings possessed of a powerful and indiscriminate sexuality that they cannot control, and this explains their eagerness for sex with tourist women. . . . The other is not selling sex he is just doing what come naturally” (p.40). What has also been noticed is the desire of White women tourists for darker skinned men. Blackness for these women is equated with ‘well defined muscles’ dreadlocked hair and ‘skin darkened almost blue black (Phillips, 1999, p.187).

It is not only men who are viewed as exotic but Caribbean women as well. Kampadoo (1998) contends that the “exoticization” of the “other” is firmly embedded in Caribbean history and is attached to globalizing economic pressures, informing prostitution relations within the tourism industry. During colonial times Black women were perceived as sexual objects, rape and sexual abuse were popular and concubinage and prostitution became an important part of Caribbean society (Kampadoo, 1998; Beckles, 1989). Caribbean societies continue to be important to the tourist trade. The image of the Caribbean woman is based on the assumption that “local girls ‘are really hot for it’ and the women’s ‘highest ambition is to be the object of a Western man’s desire” (Kamadoo, 1998, p.11). The color of the women’s skin also plays a part in the imagery.
Non-native White women are seen as unsexy, their White skin is connected to civility. Exotic women are considered sexier because they are seen as natural and untamed (Cebezas, 1999).

Contrary to the desire of White women for Black men, many White male tourists have a desire for the women of mixed heritage. This preference of the White man was observed even during the days of slavery (Beckles, 1989). Mulattos were more highly valued in slave markets. A child of mixed parentage would bring higher income to the White slave owners than a child of Black slave parents. Beckles (1989) states that the slave of mixed heritage was particularly valuable to the slave owner because unlike the other female slaves she could generate three income flows: labor, prostitution and reproduction. This legacy continues today, Kampadoo (1998) found that skin color played an important role in tourist sexual preferences with men preferring women who are from mixed races.

Race plays a significant role in how peoples of the Caribbean are perceived. Economics is a significant contributor but race and gender are also as significant. This is exemplified in sex tourism, where the Caribbean person is viewed as exotic. This exoticness was cultivated during slavery and colonialism, pulsates through “American construction of nation, as well as national masculinist ideologies and practices in the post colonial societies, reasserts itself again through the new forms of western economic and cultural imperialism” (Kampadoo, 1998, p.9). Unfortunately tourism is seen as a type of education; since through this means it is supposed that people are exposed to different cultures. But this is not happening, at least not in the Caribbean context. Very few
tourists know of the life that exists in the Caribbean islands or for that matter the differences between the islands. Very few know the role of the Global North in the lack of other economic development.

The view of the tourist is limited to the hotel, beach and sights. Encounters with local people is limited to those who serve them e.g., the taxi drivers, hotel workers and beach vendors. Tourism creates cultures into what the dominant culture think they should be, and imitation of American ways is the result. In the end “tourists have retained the power to create their own (often uninformed) images of the Caribbean. The whole region thus becomes homogenized, its contrasts and distinctive heritages either neglected or lost” (Patullo, 1996, p.183).

Education: A Catch 22 Situation

If tourism has served as an informal education space for learning about other cultures, the classroom serves as the formal space. However education presents a catch 22 situation; classrooms promise education but in the end they “miseducate.” Classrooms often serve to reinforce stereotypes of the “other” instead of helping students question the existence of socially and racially constructed categories and work towards a society where everyone has access, justice and equality. The U.S. classroom bears more responsibilities for this type of learning because schools represent sites whose primary function is to ensure learning takes place. Additionally, more people have exposure to schools in comparison to those who can afford to go on leisurely trips to other places in the world. At the university level departments such as Women’s Studies, African
American Studies and various International Studies programs, for example African Studies, have the responsibility of educating Americans about diversity nationally and internationally. For students in K-12 classroom the social studies curriculum represents the subject area whose purpose is to educate students about other cultures.

Returning to my research site, the curriculum guide for the social studies program at Federal Hocking (1987) and Alexander Local School district (1986) is aimed at preparing students to “become enlightened American citizens who understand the democratic process.” In order to achieve this, students need to be aware of their responsibilities to their society and world community. The aim of social studies therefore is to help individual students gain a better understanding of self, others and the world. This is important because how one perceives their connection with their society and the world can determine levels of social consciousness and hence citizenry and activism (Banks, 1999). “The collective well-being and genius of society correlate directly with the health, happiness and vitality of its individual members. Consequently, knowledge of, respect for and promotion of cultural diversity are essential to the effective preparation of education for democratic citizenship” (Gay, p.5, 1997).

Teachers must therefore grapple with exposing students to a type of global education that pushes students to interrogate their relationship to marginalized groups both at the local and global level. Teachers are increasingly being asked to address societal issues and global concerns in their classrooms (Baker, 1999), however these two issues fall both within the category of multicultural and global education which are usually handled separately in the U.S. educational system. When these two disciplines
operate independently they often compete with each other. In order to lessen the competition and consider them both, cooperation between the two is necessary. As Paul Gilroy (2000) points out “we do not have to be content with the halfway house provided by the idea of plural cultures. A theory of relational cultures and of cultures as relation represents a more worthwhile resting place” (p.275). Showing how cultures relate should therefore be a major thrust of education.

Ladson-Billings (1994) research looks at effective teaching practices; her work concludes that a good educator is one who can bring the components of multicultural and international education together since a good educator is one who is able to help students connect the self, nation and the international. Most research has focused on how students relate to other groups different from themselves in the U.S. or how students relate to groups from outside the U.S. Rarely have studies combined multiple components and delved into the connections between self, nation and international. Based on my literature search, even more rare is the application of this in an Appalachian context.

While schools have been given the charge to educate about the other there are problems in the actual practice. The first is that schools themselves traditionally have participated in creating the “other.” Schools have participated in social reproduction, helping to maintain the status quo. Schooling has aided in deculturization (Leistyna & Woodrum, 1999; Spring, 2004) and miseducation (Woodson 1990; Asante, 1998, 1999; hooks, 1994 ). School curricula have focused on Europeans and emphasized their history and culture. Other cultures were represented as inferior, or not represented at all (Asante, 1998, 1999; Takaki, 1993). Macedo (1999) refers to the “pedagogy of big lies” in
describing how schools teach concepts such as nationalist pride without encouraging critical thinking (Loewen, 1995; Zinn, 1990). In this way schools serve to reinforce the status quo and facilitate social reproduction.

Tom Paxton’s song (cited in Macedo, 1999, p.4) captures the uncritical style of learning that too often occurs in schools:

What did you learn in school today, dear little boy?
What did you learn in school today, dear little boy?

I learned that Washington never told a lie,
I leaned that soldiers seldom die,
I learned that everybody’s free,
And that’s what the teacher said to me

That’s what I learned in school today
That’s what I learned in school.

I learned that policemen are my friends,
I learned that justice never ends,
I learned that murderers die for their crimes
Even if we make a mistake sometimes.

I learned that our government must be strong,
It’s always right and never wrong
Our leaders are the finest men
And we elect them again and again.

I learned that war is not so bad
I learned about the great ones we have had.
We’ve fought in Germany and in France,
And someday I will get my chance.

That’s what I have learned in school today,
That’s what I have learned in school.

Interestingly Paxton uses music to create an awareness of how learning takes place in the U.S. classroom. Women in countries which form the Global South have also been vocal through music about their life situations. Unfortunately the real lives of these women are rarely studied in U.S. classroom. In the same dogmatic learning style when international women are studied in the classroom there has been the tendency to view international women as both exotic and inferior. A recent issue of *Social Education* (January/February, 2003) was devoted to “Women of the World.” One of the articles of this publication stated that “since September 2001, the American public has given unprecedented attention to the lives of women in the Middle East and South Asia especially Muslim women and women in Afghanistan” (Crocco & Merryfield, 2003, p.5).
The authors commented on the negative images portrayed and the need for social studies educators to rectify this.

In another article in the same issue “A Global Educational Framework for Teaching about Women of the World,” the authors state that in their interactions with women from all over the world surprise is often expressed at outdated American information about international cultures, countries and sometimes even continents (Merryfield & Subedi, 2003, p.10). In addressing these misconceptions Merryfield and Subedi encourage social studies teachers to:

1. Confront exotica, stereotypes and misinformation directly and to replace faulty information with new information.
2. Teach multiple perspectives through primary sources and contrapuntal literature.
3. Develop student skills in analyzing how people’s norms, beliefs and values shape their world views and the knowledge they accept as truth.
4. Teach about interactions of power, prejudice, injustice and world view.
5. Provide students with cross cultural experiential learning (p.14)

Hase (2002) adds to this discussion by offering a critique of the ways international women are studied in the American classroom. Hase argues that simply introducing materials about international women is not enough; this in fact tends to reinforce and propagate notions of “Third World Women” as exotic/inferior, other. She states that during the 1990’s great efforts were made to bring the global into the
classroom, however most accounts on internationalizing the curriculum are written by Western feminists thus only their perspectives are presented.

Hase describes her experience in teaching “global feminism” in U.S. universities and concludes that students were more willing to learn about the “exotic” issues such as genital mutilation which affected the women of the Third World but were less willing to learn about how the United States shapes the process of globalization. She continues that “after learning about the ‘plight’ of third world women and the ‘horrific’ oppression they are subjected to, my American students would come to the reassuring realization of ‘how lucky’ they were and to the question of how they could help those poor third world sisters” (p.95).

Hase asserts that these attitudes have to be challenged. She cites Alice Walker’s video “Warrior Marks,” a video that examines genital mutilation in some African countries, as an example of a feminist although of African, European and Native American descent speaking about African women. Hase raises the question as to whether Walker “has the right to speak and act on the behalf of African women” (p.95). Alice Walker according to Hase is still a “westerner” and a citizen of a “First World” country. Hase concludes that “in order to avoid this sort of ‘globalizing as othering’ a curriculum transformation should be conducted in a way to challenge students’ perceptions and assumptions of western superiority, their voyeurism and their missionary attitudes” (p.102).
Further goals should include educating students to become aware of and examine U.S. responsibility as well as their own positionality and accountability in the U.S. dominated global economy and politics. She also suggests that non-American instructors (of color) may be suitably, if not uniquely positioned to raise and explore global power imbalance within the context of the classroom. In a classroom in which a foreign-born professor of color teaches American students, instructors and students do not share the common subject position of “we western feminists.” Instead in such a classroom the instructor-student power dynamics directly and indirectly are shaped by and reflect the large power imbalance of the world. (p.103)

Such a classroom can create dialogic spaces encouraging dialogue and honest talk. Dialogue encompasses being able to form connections with others (Buber 1955; Sidorkin, 1999), however there is a problem with the way the other is taught in schools especially when the focus is on international women. International women are often taught as being foreign exotic objects in the classroom, hence monologues result instead of dialogues. This is problematic because the self is not an isolated entity but is created in collaboration with others. This is achieved only though dialogue. One of the prerequisites for dialogue is listening, listening to what the other parties who are involved have to say about the issues at hand. The focus of this dissertation is on utilizing the discourse of women from the African continent and the Caribbean in order to overcome the educational challenges presented. The following chapter will present literature
addressing what these women have been saying about themselves. It is only when we have listened to their voices can dialogue begin and dialogic connections created.

**Summary**

This chapter focused on an investigation of how the “other” was created in U.S. society. I began my review of the literature by examining the “other” locally. The other has been defined based on race, gender and economics. This becomes problematic because by having these divisions in society one group benefits at the expense of other groups. This is particularly telling in the area of public good such as education. “Othering” however is not a local concept, it also exists in the international arena. In this chapter I provided a discussion of the literature which examined areas of the Global South particularly the Caribbean and Africa and its relation to Appalachia in considering notions of othering. In my literature review I provide research which demonstrates that in the international realm as in the local realm race, gender and economics play a role in othering. Appalachia provides a site where there linkages can be further examined.
CHAPTER FOUR

Talking Back: Black women from the Global South

“Don’t draw she no circle” (Des Vignes, 2002).

Chapter Three detailed a literature review about how the local and international other is conceived in parts of Appalachian Ohio, Africa and the Caribbean. This chapter will discuss how Black women in Africa and the Caribbean, have been talking back to those powers who have labeled and categorized them as other. This dissertation focuses on the theater of Black Women from the Global South as a vehicle for voice and its use in an Appalachian classroom. Literature review dealing with Black women from the Global South must therefore be presented for readers to fully grasp the depth of this research, its findings, interpretations and implications. I will begin by sketching an overview of the feminist movement particularly the changing concept of the movement as it was critiqued by women within the U.S. and globally. I will also show the tools women have been using to talk back. Emphasis will be on theater and its appropriateness as a vehicle for the voice of Black women from the Global South.

Feminism is the lens used in analyzing women’s experience from the Global South however, the feminist perspective used in often one from the Global North (Mohanty et al., 1991). Usually the term Western is used in defining this form of feminism but Global North is more descriptive as explained in Chapter One. For decades, the discussions of feminism have been monologic. Global North feminists assumed the responsibility of talking for other women without finding out the actual experiences of these women and
how they might differ from their own position. Mainstream feminism promised empowerment for all women.

Feminism is ‘the belief that women are full human beings capable of participation and leadership in the full range of human activities- intellectual, political, social, sexual, spiritual and economic’. In its broader sense, feminism constitutes both an ideology and a global political movement that confronts sexism; a social relationship in which men as a collective have authority over women as a collective (Collins, 1998, p. 66).

A global feminist agenda goes beyond this description; and incorporates the economic, political and socio-status of women. It comprises several areas:

1) The economic status of women and issues associated with women’s poverty (educational opportunities, employment, prostitution and inheritance laws as it pertains to property).

2) Political rights for women such as the right to vote, to assemble, to hold public office as well as concerns of violations to women such as rape and torture.

3) Marital and family issues such as marriage and divorce laws, child custody policies and domestic labor.

4) Women’s health and survival issues, such as reproductive rights, pregnancy, sexuality and AIDS (Collins, 1998, p.66).

Despite its promises feminism as practiced by mainstream feminists excluded some women. Over the past years feminism has been the subject of critique particularly by women of color living in the United States of America and women living in countries
from the Global South. The feminist movement has been “challenged on the grounds of cultural imperialism, and of short sightedness in defining the meaning of gender in terms of middle class, White experiences and in terms of internal racism, classism, and homophobia (Mohanty et al., 1991, p.7).

Growing out of the Civil Rights movement and in response to mainstream feminisms the Black feminist movement evolved alongside the second wave of the American Women’s movement due to issues of racism and elitism (James and Sharpley-Whiting, 2000) and in 1973, the National Black Feminist Organization was formed. Collins’ work (1998) demonstrates that Black women have challenged the assumptions made by White feminist that they include all women when they speak of “we.” Collins (2000) points out that there is a long history of Black feminist activity even before this time and cites names such as Maria Stewart, Sojourner Truth and Anna Julia Cooper as examples.

Some contemporary feminists claim that “any woman in the world has more in common with any other woman —regardless of class, race, age, ethnic group, nationality —than any woman has with any man” (LeGates, 2001, p.2). Many Black women and women of color globally question this assumption of White Western feminists and see feminism as an extension of Western domination. African women from the continent are suspicious of Western Feminism; they are skeptical of the colonial ties between feminism and multinational capitalism. Many African women for example, Mariama Ba are quick to point out that they are not a feminist in the western sense of the word (Parekh & Jagne, 2001, p.7)
Barbara Christian (2000) critiques Feminist theories as failing to take into consideration the complexities of life including race, class, gender, cultures and peoples’ histories. She states that “Feminism has become an authoritative discourse, monolithic, which occurs precisely because it does have access to the means of promulgating its ideas” (p.20). bell hooks extends this argument when she says that “Feminism in the U.S. has never emerged from the women who were most victimized by sexist oppression; women who are daily beaten down, mentally, physically and spiritually— women who are powerless to change their condition in life” (hooks, 2000, p.131). Hooks refers here to women of color and working class women who have less privilege in their society due to their race and class. However while hooks critiques the traditional feminist movement, she has worked to create an inclusive view feminism that does incorporate the voice and lives of Black women (hooks, 2000).

hooks draws attention to The Feminine Mystique (1963) by Betty Friedan, the publication which paved the way for the contemporary feminist movement. This book however, did not acknowledge those women who were the least empowered. Friedan equated her condition of an American housewife to the same as any other American women; she ascribed a certain homogeneity to all women. In so doing she ignored women of color and poor White women (hooks, 2000). Friedan assumed emancipation was the ability to leave the household and go to work. She excluded thousands of poor women, many of whom were women of color who have worked for generations, usually for White women. For these women emancipation might be to stay home and raise their own children.
hooks (2000) states that while housewives had real concerns their concerns were not reflected by the masses of women. When the *Feminine Mystic* was written, more than one-third of all women were in the work force (2000, p.132). Friedan erred in placing the experience of middle to upper class women at the center of the feminist argument. She universalized one group’s experience -- something that was contradictory to the principles of feminism itself.

The lived experiences of non White women shape their consciousness; because of this, the life experience and consciousness of non White women differs from women who have some degree of power (hooks, 2000; Collins, 1998, 2000). hooks suggests that Black women have a central role to play in the making of feminist theory since their work can enrich this movement due to their diverse experiences (2000, p.145). The work developed by Black women tends to focus on womanhood from an Afrocentric perspective.

*African Centered Notions of Feminism: A More Dialogic Approach*

Centeredness refers to placing people at the center and making people and their particular experience central. Asante (1998) offers an alternative to the Eurocentric point of view and suggests one in which Africa becomes “the subject and not the object” (p. 1). Afrocentricity places the African person at the center and not at the margins. Additionally Afrocentricity seeks agency and action (Asante, 1998). Asante suggests that in order for Afrocentricity to be achieved one has to link Africans to their classical past and to give prominence to the role of Africa in past civilizations and as well as in present
times. African centered notions of feminism were defined by Black women living in Africa and the African Diaspora based on their experience of racial oppression. Black women have sought to define their own form of feminism and Black feminism is one of the results. There is however some discomfort with using this term because although it uses the term Black, the word Feminism and all it connotes is still present.

One of the difficulties of using the term Black feminism is that it is still assumed to operate within a White Western feminist framework; only more broadly. For example within some White feminist academic circles there is an emphasis on individualism, individual subjectivity and personal advocacy. This conflicts with the ideology of Black feminists since understandings of life experience are more group oriented (Collins, 1998; DeCosmo, 2000). Within the traditional feminist framework issues that are solely focused on women receive the most support and issues that do not affect only women do not receive full support.

Another tension between Black feminism and the more traditional White feminism is the conflict between feminism and the religious traditions of Black women. The presence of lesbians within forms of North American feminism conflicts with certain religious beliefs that homosexuality is a sin. Not only is this a religious concern but it also overlaps with the commitment of Black women to their Black men. Lesbians are viewed by some as women who, because they have a preference for women, have rejected men. Because of this, White Feminism is sometimes seen as an enemy to men which is problematic for some Black women feminists. This is not to say that there is an absence of lesbians in the Black community because this is not the case. Black lesbians
exist but within some Black communities this life style is frowned upon; homosexuality is a taboo.

In order to make a distinction between White Feminism and Black feminism, Womanism has become an alternative choice for women who feel uncomfortable describing themselves as Black feminists. Collins (1998) quotes Shirley Williams that “one of the most disturbing aspects of current Black feminist criticism [is] its separation-its tendency to see not only a distinct black female culture but to see that culture as a separate cultural form having more in common with White female experience than with the facticity of Afro-American life” (p.70). Womanism seems to embrace more of the Afro- American life and also the African life since this is a term that has gained the acceptance of African women on the continent.

Alice Walker in her work *In Search of Our Mother’s Garden* defines Womanism as:

A Black feminist or feminist of color... who loves other women, sexually or asexually. Appreciates and prefers women’s culture... sometimes loves individual men sexually and/or nonsexually. Committed to the survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Womanist is to feminism as purple is to lavender. (Walker, 1983, p.xii)

Alice Walker’s description of Womanism, while it sets it apart from feminism and Black feminism, shows that there is still some relationship between all of these forms.

Cleonora Hudson-Weems (1993) introduces another term, Africana Womanism, and makes even more of a distinction between this movement and feminism. She states
that “the Africana woman, in realizing and properly assessing herself and her movement, must properly name herself and her movement Africana womanist and Africana womanism” (p.2). To clarify her stance she says that:

Neither an outgrowth nor an addendum to feminism, Africana Womanism is not Black feminism or Walker’s womanism that some Africana women have come to embrace. Africana Womanism is an ideology created and designed for all women of African descent. It is grounded in African culture, and therefore it necessarily focuses on the unique experiences, struggles, needs and desires of African women (p.22).

Africana Womanism embraces Pan Africanism and Afrocentricity; it is grounded in glorifying the African culture and experience. A look at the difference between feminism and an African worldview offers additional insights to why there is the argument that the two cannot be juxtaposed. There are some differences as well as commonalities between the two; this is depicted in Table 2. Black women’s involvement in defining themselves is not a divisive mechanism but a way to enrich the discussion on womanhood; Black women have different experiences and viewpoints.

_African Women from the Continent and Alternative Feminist Discourse_

Ideas such as Black feminism, Womanism and Africana Womanism are some of the terms used by Black women in defining themselves. These however come primarily from African American women although some women from the African continent have aligned themselves to these definitions. Zach-Williams (1995) notes that Black feminist
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>African</strong></th>
<th><strong>Feminist</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Interdependence- group rights; collectivism- extended family</td>
<td>Interdependence; the development of a more egalitarian cooperative organizational structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Nature/ divine order is powerful</td>
<td>Emphasis on nature and humanity’s relationship to it</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Death is transformative birth; all children are raised by all adults</td>
<td>Emphasis on birth (with procreative choice) rather than death (as in the doctrines of sacrifice)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Cyclical –rhythmic time concept; eternity is immeasurable</td>
<td>The acceptance of finitude and the birth/death cycle</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Sexes are equally divine</td>
<td>Emphasis on women’s experience’s, intuition and emotion</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Spiritual force animates all matter</td>
<td>A celebration of the body and sexuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Self defined as extended I/ We (rather than I/Me)</td>
<td>Emphasis on the empowerment of the individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Acceptance of cultural pluralism</td>
<td>Emphasis on choice and the acceptance of pluralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. All elements are connected and equally necessary (superiority/ inferiority is rejected); holistic logic</td>
<td>Emphasis on holism (rejection of discrimination, gender hierarchy and dualism).</td>
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*(DeCosmo, 2000, p.26)*
forms consists of “specialized knowledge created by African American women …. This definition tends to ignore the specificity of other black women’s experiences” (p.6).

Zach-Williams (1995) uses the term Americocentricity in referring to the assumption that Black feminisms embrace all women of African descent, since the experiences it defines are primarily Africans living in the United States. The experiences of Black women from the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa and other parts of the Diaspora while similar are also different.

Women from the African continent have also been active in expressing their experiences but their voices have taken forms other than scholarly publications. African women’s theory is often in “narrative forms, in the stories [they] create, in riddles and proverbs, in the play with language, since dynamic more than fixed ideas seem more to [their] liking” (Christian, 2000, p.12). This is not to say that African women from the continent do not engage in so called “scholarly” publication, but for the most part they are more visible in the literary art forms.

There are many African women who are engaged in describing the African woman’s experience. The works of women such as Ken Bugul, Calixthe Bayala, Aminata Sow Fall, Werewere Liking, Flora Nwapa and Ama Ata Aidoo, are just a few example of women who demonstrate how women have used literature, both written and performative, for self expression, self definition and self discovery. Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, a Nigerian poet and scholar is one of the most vocal women on the continent speaking about women and development. According to her the African woman has six mountains on her back: one is oppression from outside, the second is from traditional
structures, the third is her backwardness, the fourth is man; the fifth is her color and race and the sixth is herself (1994, p.28).

Other African women on the continent have contributed ideas on what they see as their own form of African womanhood. Davis and Graves (1986) describe the African form of feminism as first recognizing a common struggle with African men for the removal of yokes of foreign domination and European/American exploitation. This position is not antagonistic to African men but challenges them to be aware of women’s subjugation. Second, it recognizes the barriers imposed by traditional society as well as those reinforced and introduced by colonization. It aligns itself with international feminism while at the same time delineating a specific space that is more in line with the experiences of African women. Third, by acknowledging that African societies are ancient societies and that women must have addressed the problem of women’s position in society, this form of African feminism looks to historical accounts for indigenous feminisms. Fourth, African feminism does not simply follow the agenda set by Western feminism. It respects the status of the African mother but questions obligatory motherhood and the favoring of sons. Fifth, this form of feminism respects women’s self reliance and the formation of cooperatives and social organizations. Sixth, an African feminism is concerned with women who have gone through war and other social upheavals. Seventh, this form of feminism investigates traditional and contemporary avenues of choice for women’s emancipation (Davies & Graves, 1986).

Another description comes from Chikwenye Ogunyemi who independently coined a similar term to Alice Walker and Clenora Hudson-Weems (Arndt, 2000). This
African Womanism” is very similar to “Womanism” and “Africana Womanism” but it addresses issues Ogunyemi considers not relevant to African women in the Diaspora. Ogunyemi states that her theory addresses “issues like extreme poverty and in-law problems, older women oppressing younger women, women oppressing their co-wives or men oppressing their wives” (Arndt, 2001, p.714). She assumes that women in the Diaspora do not experience these situations, but I will later show that even though the experiences may not be exactly the same, they are similar.

Senegalese women often have taken a lead in raising feminist consciousness; in addition to what has been described by Davies and Graves, their feminism is committed to all Senegalese women regardless of their economic background. Education is also stressed but more importantly Senegalese feminism has been framed and determined by Senegalese women. According to Assiba D’Almeida (1994)

the Senegalese model shows that the women of the Yewwu Yewwi movement [meaning wake up and then wake someone else up] do place their struggle in a historical, political and ideological frame, but they are not overly interested in theoretical issues. They are engaged in what I would term a practical African feminism . . . one that serves to empower women, working by themselves to better their lives here and now (p.18).

The Senegalese model is different from the models that have been mentioned. Unlike other models particularly Black Feminism, Womanism and Africana Womanism the debate occurs among relatively privileged Black women. Collins (2001) advises that these theories could benefit by examining the mis-match between what Black women in
academia identify as needing attention and what women who are not in academia might view as being important.

Regardless of the name chosen the activity of naming is very important. This encourages dialogue among Black women as they engage is the political activity of “talking back” to the prevailing powers (Collins, 1998). Talking back challenges two basic assumptions that have been made about oppressed people. The first is a Marxist approach to working class consciousness and the claim that false consciousness makes the working class unable to penetrate the hegemony of the ruling class; hence subordinate groups “buy into” or unconsciously accept their own oppression. The second assumption is that the oppressed are not capable of articulating their own standpoints. The act of “talking back” refutes these two assumptions and supports James C. Scott’s theory that the oppressed are not passive or unconscious, but they resist hegemony through every day acts. Many of these acts occur outside the purview of the dominant culture, or are encoded so as not to be seen as resistance. “Talking back” is one of these acts; the narratives, fictional literature and theater of women are perhaps some of the best known avenues for exploring ways in which women resist.

Caribbean Women and Alternative Feminist Discourse

Women’s experience is as diverse in form as it is in voice. There is no one module that can represent the totality of Black women’s experience. Afro-Caribbean women bring another perspective to the dialogue on womanhood. The Caribbean is part of the African Diaspora and as such it is important to study women from this region
because the majority of the women living in this area are of African descent. The women from the Caribbean have not been as involved with renaming their experience in comparison to Black women from the African continent and the U.S. (Mohammed, 1998). Although Caribbean women have not given their forms of feminism specific names, Caribbean feminist literature has been engaged in “challenging dominant feminist theories and their inability to adequately engage with definitions of otherness” (Rowley, 2002, p.39).

Due to its colonial anthropological inheritance, the Caribbean has mistakenly been described as a strong matriarchal society. Rowley (2002) however argues that the Caribbean is a matrifocal society. While both matriarchal and matrifocal concepts imply that women have power what distinguishes the two is the “impact of women’s ability to act at the broader parameters of social, economic, political and ideological order” (Rowley, 2002). Matrifocality is “a social process in which there is a salience of women -- in their role as mothers -- within the domestic domain, correlated directly with the class position of the population involved and focusing on the articulation of kinship and class” (Smith, 1996; Rowley, 2002; Mohammed, 1998; Barrow 1996). On the other hand matriarchy assumes that women have positions of power not only within the home but also ideologically, socially and institutionally (Rowley, 2002).

This matrifocal nature of the Caribbean tends to inform the nature of womanhood. In her interviews with women from the Caribbean island of Tobago, Rowley noted that there were several factors that influence womanhood in this region. The first is reputation and respectability. Virtue is expected from Caribbean women (Mohammed,
There is a social need for acceptance, and in order to gain acceptance the woman has to abide by the societal codes regarding what is considered to be good and acceptable behavior of women. As a result “the construction of the matrifolk therefore begins at a juncture where self is coerced into being marginalized from the experience and immediacy redirected towards a community based sanctioning of shame and reproach” (Rowley, 2002, p.30). Failure to comply with the set rules have serious consequences even at the institutional level e.g., expulsion from school. An explanation for this might be because of the absence of standardized legislation coupled with the small sizes of the countries.

A second factor that influences Caribbean womanhood is motherhood and marriage. These periods of life represent the most pivotal point in the Caribbean woman’s experience. Through these passages women gain their identity as women within their societies. While these are critical experiences for women in the Caribbean, the two are mutually exclusive of each other. Caribbean women often wait until they are much older before engaging in marriage. This might be a way for Caribbean women to affirm their independence (Rowley, 2002). Mothering seems to play a greater role in determining the accomplishment of womanhood than marriage. From my experience living in the Caribbean, it is not uncommon to hear women declare that it is their children that are most important to them because men can leave you; whereas when you have a child he/she is yours.

A third factor is economics. Caribbean societies are developing societies and economics play an instrumental role in Caribbean womanhood. Amidst the tremendous
economic hardships and pressures there is an overwhelming need for Caribbean women to provide for their children regardless of the personal sacrifice. This reaches even to the extent of personal levels of exploitation. This personal sacrifice is often misunderstood resulting in myths of the Caribbean woman as super woman and strong woman (Rowley, 2002). These myths assume that the Caribbean women can overcome all obstacles. A consequence of this myth is that problems affecting Caribbean women are not considered a priority. Regardless of whatever comes their way it is assumed that these women would be able to deal with their own problems without any help.

Compared to their counterparts in the Global South, Caribbean women have higher levels of economic autonomy than found in most parts of the Global South (Momsen, 2002). The legacy of slavery coupled with later male migrations is a factor responsible for this condition. In the English and Dutch speaking Caribbean, women have long had access to land ownership; this is not the case for the Francophone and Spanish islands since inheritance laws have limited women’s access to wealth and property. While Caribbean women may own land it is found that women’s farms in the English speaking areas are smaller, less accessible and are in areas where the soil fertility is low in comparison to their male counterparts; hence gender inequality remains. Many women see education as a way of dealing with their economic hardships so there is a tendency for more women than men to take advantage of education as a path to economic advancement; many Caribbean universities now have a higher female than male enrollment.

The landscape of the Caribbean has witnessed political, social and economic
changes since the 1980’s and women from the Caribbean faced many challenges as wages fell and unemployment, especially for women, increased (Momsen, 2002). The global political importance of the region diminished with the end of the Cold War and sources of development aid were reduced. Additionally, trade policies such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the establishment of the European Union (EU) trading blocs once enforced left the region out in the cold. The islands are not able to compete effectively at the world market level; many of the islands’ economies have taken a beating. This problem is left to women to tackle at the family level; in many instances they are the head of the households. At the family level problems are manifested through an increase in crime activity of family members, drug use, increase in school dropout rates and teenage pregnancy.

Gender relations in the Caribbean cannot be presented in a simplistic manner since there are many complexities that have to be taken into consideration. Issues of gender in the Caribbean are somewhat of a paradox. Janet Momsen (2002) writes:

Within the Caribbean regional diversity of ethnicity, class, language and religion there is an ideological unit of patriarchy, of female subordination and dependence. Yet there is also a vibrant living tradition of female economic autonomy, of female-headed households and of a family structure in which men are often marginal and absent. So Caribbean gender relations are a double paradox: of patriarchy within a system of matrifocal and matrilocal families; and of domestic and state patriarchy coexisting with the economic independence of women. The roots of this contemporary paradoxical situation lie in colonialism (p.45).
Momsen explains that the situation of the Caribbean woman today is rooted in an historical framework of colonialism and slavery. The double paradox that exists makes understanding the Caribbean woman a very complicated process. Often scholars do not understand its complexity and offer simplistic versions of the Caribbean woman. These simplistic versions are then taught in U.S. classrooms, if at all.

*Theater, Voice and Talking Back*

In the classroom and other spaces in U.S. society, African, Caribbean and other Third World women are often described in terms of silence, “underdevelopment, oppressive traditions, high illiteracy, rural and urban poverty, fanaticism and ‘over population’” (Mohanty et al., 1991, p.7). Contrary to these claims, women have not been silent about the images that have been presented about them. According to Ogundipe-Leslie the reason for this claim of women’s silence is because few scholars have searched for African women voices. She questions:

*Are African women voiceless or do we fail to look for their voices where we may find them, in the sites and forms in which these voices are uttered? . . .* We must look for African women’s voices in women’s spaces and modes such as ceremonies and work songs (Kolowole, 1997, p.9).

Theater is one of the spaces in which women’s voices are found and the discussion on womanhood is central in many of these African women’s plays. This is because theater and drama are about the possibility of transformation; they go beyond traditional
cognitive knowledge because of its use of the body (Chalk, 2002). As Wehr (1987) and Loveel (1991) explains:

when we immerse ourselves in the experience of being alive in the body then meaning becomes lived rather than examined . . .. Given that the oppression of women is deeply internalized to a point where the oppression is accepted as the norm, it is necessary to move beyond cognitive knowing to access the tacit dimensions which rests within the body and the unconscious (Chalk, 2002, p.4).

It is the use of the body that makes theater different from the novel or other written genres; theater does not become theater until it is performed. The body is used in telling one’s stories. These stories, because they are dramatized becomes real.

Theater is an effective tool for women to educate about their lives because of the value of theater as an educational tool. In order to understand how theater can add to the learning process it is helpful to look at it as laid out by Mallika Henry (2000). She defines it with reference to three characteristics:

1) The actor as Illuminator of the Human Heart: Some actors see their work as a process of learning, research or personal development. Through the process of role playing the actor can learn a lot about the self, the world and others. The act of role playing involves putting oneself in someone else’s positions; it is therefore through this act we learn about others and hence about ourselves.

2) Drama and Development: Drama has been viewed by theorists such as Peter Slade as an experience through involvement, witnessing, sincerity and absorption. In support of this claim, Henry (2000) cites from E. J. Burton as well as other researchers.
Burton saw drama as a total philosophy “which brings together human potential in a completed process” (Henry, p. 49, 2000). She also explains Misson’s perspective of drama as a site for constructing subjectivity which operates at the nexus of intelligence and emotion.

3) Drama as Research: The process of drama has been likened to the process of research which is involved in acquiring knowledge. This involves the process of deconstructing a script and putting meaning to it. This is very similar to the way that we interpret our own worlds. In essence then theater is an active “exploration of meaning based on the notion of personal voice” (Henry, 2000, p.52).

These characteristics make theater an appropriate medium through which Black women from the Global South can speak. Playwrights participate in the discourse on women’s experiences through their characters and through literary devices. Characterization refers to the manner in which a “dramatist has symbolized his/ (her) ideas through people who imitate them” (Satyo, 1998, p. 160). The character is revealed in many ways e.g., via dialogue and interaction with other characters or actions done to the character by the other characters in the play (Satyo, 1998).

Dialogue between characters and audience, may take the form of conversations, monologues or songs and is perhaps the most popular tool a playwright employs in weaving his/ her story. What the character says about his/ herself, what other characters say about him/ herself and the actions of the character in the play reveals the nature of the character (Asante, 11th Nov. 2002, personal communication) Literary devices used include the use of puns, irony, sarcasm and metaphors. Playwrights may also use tools
such as contrast, humor, suspense, exaggeration, proverbs and local language in order to tell their stories (Asante, 11th Nov., 2002, personal communication).

Theater in African Context

Zakes Mda, South African scholar on Theater and Development defines theater as “actual performance . . . [it] involves live performance that has action planned to create a coherent and significant dramatic impression” (Mda, 1993, p.45). African women have used theater as a vehicle for speaking for other African women, as well as with African women. Through their plays they “create and redefine new spaces, not only in their internal margins but also in the margins of feminist and hegemonic discourse” (Nfah-Abbenyi, 1997, p.150). By speaking from a position of experience and claiming their right to do so these women testify that are capable of acting on their world.

The women writers have used their works in fulfilling what they see as their responsibilities as African women writers. The first responsibility is to tell about being a woman and second to “describe reality from a woman’s point of view, a woman’s perspective” (Ogundipe- Leslie, 1987, p.5). This is in terms of her position as a woman, her social conditions, her social class and ethnicity. Some women have extended this commitment even further and are looking at the relationships between African women on the continent and the Diaspora. Examples of such women’s work include Ama Ata Aidoo’s Dilemma of a Ghost (1970) and Tess Onwueme’s The Missing Face (1997).

Another commitment exhibited by African female writers is correcting false images of the African woman. Throughout African literature and in African and American societies women have been stereotyped as mother or as the erotic and exotic
lover. The stereotype also includes the sophisticated urban woman and the backward rural woman (Kolawole, 1997). These archetypes are often used in order to show the existing conflict between traditional and modern society. “The sophisticated woman is shown as completely divorced from life in the country or from relatives and friends who are not living in her city or sharing her night life . . . counterpoised to this ‘city girl’ is the rural woman, another mirage, the ‘pot of culture’ who is static as history passes her by, who wants the old ways of life, who speaks like a lobotomized idiot about ‘iron snakes’ (railways) and ‘our husband’” (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1987, p.7). Women are rewriting these myths and creating female characters who are active participants in their societies; who are reflecting on their society and coming up with solution- women who are critical thinkers.

A commitment to writing about the socio, economic and political conditions of the Third World is another contribution of African women. Ogundipe-Leslie (1987) states that women writers need to situate their awareness and solutions within the larger global context of imperialism and neocolonialism. She infers that dealing with these issues helps one to understand the social, political and economic conditions that exist in many African countries (1987).

African women are addressing the six mountains women confront as defined earlier by Ogundipe-Leslie and are tackling it though the “voice” of theater. Living Positively (2001) and A Coloured Place (1998) is an example of this. A Coloured Place is based in South Africa and is about the experience of Coloureds living there. The play focuses on the experience of Coloured women. The play is performed by one woman,
through the use of projections and voice recordings she tells the story of different women living in South Africa. Conning, the playwright, looks at the identity crisis experienced by Coloureds. Gangsterism is a prominent theme in the play as well as the impact of the American media on South African youth. Domestic violence, and teenage pregnancy are other themes that are highlighted in the play. In creating this play Conning interviewed South African Coloureds and then crafted the play based on these interviews. The play is testimonial based because it tells of lived experiences.

*Living positively* was created first as a video production and later as a play. Both men and women affected by HIV/AIDS were interviewed. Those interviewed hailed from South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania, Swaziland, Zambia, Ethiopia and Uganda and provided their perspective on what it is like to live with the HIV/AIDS. The interviews demonstrated how cultural, social and economic factors played a role in spreading the virus. An example is the difficulty of discussing condom use within marriage. Sometimes husbands travel out of town because of the unavailability of jobs and return only during the weekends to their wife and family. In such cases the wife cannot ask him to wear a condom. In addition to social taboo those interviewed discussed the inaccessibility to medicine to control HIV/AIDS, as well as a general lack of information about the disease and its consequences. The interviews formed the script for the play.

Theater has an empowering value because it gives women a vehicle for voice and creates the opportunity for dialogue. It also enables women writers to stretch their imaginations and allow their actors and spectators to imagine what they considered to be
heretofore impossible, and analyze their own lives and experiences. It is in this way that theater becomes a weapon for empowerment.

**Theater in Caribbean Context**

Many of the concepts regarding the African woman and theater are applicable to the Caribbean woman. Theater companies such as Sistren Collection in Jamaica have actively engaged theater in development work and voicing Jamaican woman experience. Outside of this, works such as Jean Small’s *A Black Woman’s Tale* is present although not as well known as work of other male Caribbean artists such as Dereck Walcott. *A Black Women’s Tale* is a one act play which tells the story of different Caribbean women. The play begins with a girl who experiences childhood and then the script moves to another woman going through womanhood. The play tells of the struggles of Black women in the Caribbean. The play tells of incidents such as rape, sexual harassment of young girls by older men, designated household chores that are only for women e.g., cleaning. The women in the play are diverse and they all use different expressions to tell their stories. They use language (e.g., English, French creole and English creole) poetry, dance, miming, and monologues.

The women from the French Caribbean are more prolific in their production of plays than their English speaking counterparts. This might be because of the way theater has traditionally been defined and scholars have investigated mostly those forms that conform to European notions of what theater should be. *Post Colonial Drama Theory, Practice and Politics* (1996) argues that the creation of indigenous forms of theater is one way in which post colonial subjects have resisted colonialism. An example of this is the
Carnival celebrations in the Caribbean, specifically the Calypso monarch competition. Calypso is an art form that is found in most Caribbean countries and Calypso is an indigenous form of Caribbean theater (personal communication, Liverpool, 2004). The Calypso competition is theatrical in nature because through song, language, enactments and costumes, Calypso artists relay their messages based on various socio and political themes.

Possibly the best definition of Calypso is offered by the artist themselves. For example David Rudder, the well known Calypsonian from Trinidad describes the art form in his song entitled “Calypso Music”:

Can you hear a distant drum
Bouncing on the laughter of a melody
And does the rhythm tell you come’
Does your spirit do a dance to
This symphony?
Does it tell you that your heart is afire
Does it wash away all your unlovely
Are you ready for a brand new discovery . . .

It is a living vibration
Rooted deep within my Caribbean belly
Lyrics to make a politician cringe
Or turn a woman’s belly into jelly
It is a sweet soca music

They could have never refused it

It makes you shake like a shango

And why you’re shaking you don’t know (Rudder, 1990)

From interviews conducted with Caribbean nationals for previous research, (Gilbert & Hughes, 2002) those interviewed described Calypso as a Caribbean cultural expression in song of the current social and political (to a less extent spiritual/ religious) state of affairs of their country/ another country/region /world. Some also described it as a way of getting to know what are the significant incidences/ problems/ cry of people at a certain epoch in time (B. Innocent, personal communication, March 2001). Additionally it is important to state that Calypso cannot be separated from its sister event, Carnival; Calypsoes are produced for Carnival making an art form that has a seasonal production. Carnival is held annually in most Caribbean countries; Calypsoes are also produced once every year.

The name Calypso was coined after the art form was already in existence. The exact roots of the name are still unknown. In tracing the history of Calypso many have described it as having originated from Europe. In fact one of the most popular Calypsonians, Roaring Lion (Rafael de Leon) in his rendition “Land of Calypso” sings that “calypso is an ancient French ballad that was adopted by Trinidad” (2000). Hollis Liverpool, an ethnomusicologist and also a calypsonian (Mighty Chalkdust) states that “the notion that the Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago originated in Europe arose from the fact that the Carnival festivities in some ways resemble the Trinidad Carnival are held
today in Europe” (1998, p.24). He further states that “European writers undervalued the experiences and thought processes of the oppressed lower class in Trinidad and Tobago particularly those of African descent” (p.24). Liverpool contests that while it is true that the Spanish and the French who colonized Trinidad contributed to the art forms found in Trinidad today, as far as Calypso and Carnival are concerned “it was the African who revolutionized the celebrations” (p.30).

In *Caribbean Music from Rumba to Reggae* (1995) the authors state that there are five themes on Caribbean music: race and ethnicity, sex and sexism, music and politics, unity and diversity and international themes, for example, migration. Calypsonians also address issues related to history and voice. Calypsonians often look at what is the written history and have sought to argue against it especially when the written history comes from a Eurocentric perspective. An example of this is “Columbus lie” where the Mighty Chalkdust refutes the claim that Columbus discovered the Caribbean. Calypsoes can also be seen as an instrument of the voiceless.

In her article “Crossing Gendered Space: An Analysis of Trinidad’s Carnival from a Feminist and African Centered Perspective,” DeCosmo gives an account of Calypso and Carnival. She states:

The French planters in Trinidad in the late 18th century began their Carnival festivities at Christmas and ended them on Ash Wednesday. Balls, concerts, dinners, hunts and other festive events were held in the countryside. When the British took over in Trinidad and set up their own colonial rule in 1802, the French Carnival tradition was continued. The governor gave masked balls and
members of the upper class would drive their carriage through Port of Spain going from house to house in masked disguises. Free persons of color could wear masks but were not permitted to join the festivities of the ‘privileged’. Since slaves could not take part in these festivities, they held their own celebrations which included stick fighting (a ritual of dance-like movement also known as the kalinda), dancing, singing and drumming. They also performed little shows or plays, and organized themselves into regiments led by individuals wearing the costume of the king or queen. Their songs were often songs of insurrection and revolt. (p.6)

The Trinidad Carnival, the most popular of the carnivals in the Caribbean ends on Ash Wednesday but in some of the other Caribbean islands, for example Antigua, it is an annual summer festival held in order to celebrate emancipation from slavery. The Kalinda described by DeCosmo can be traced back to Guinea and the songs were rebellious. Songs were described as being warlike and followed the African call and response patterns as singers boasted of their feats. These chants later developed into the calypso and contributed to its rhythm and melody (Liverpool, 1998, p.98).

After emancipation (1830’s) participation by Afro-Trinidadians increased and they dominated the event. The British government, fearful of a rebellion occurring like the one that occurred in Haiti banned the practice of camboulay (a re-creation of a fire drill accompanied by drumming that was part of the carnival celebration). This resulted in bloody riots by the lower economic class of the African population but the ban on drumming was reinforced. Since then Carnival has been a site of contention between the
upper and lower segments of Trinidadian society. The 1900s to 1930s saw the rapid
refinement, institutionlization and commercialization of calypso. In the 1930’s
(sometimes referred to as the golden age of calypso), Decca and RCA Victor started
producing records for artists such as Atilla the Hun and the Roaring Lion. These artists
became popular in the Caribbean as well as in the Caribbean and Africa. The most well
known case is the case of the calypso “Rum and Coca Cola.”

The Calypso arena is a male dominated territory although there are claims that
woman were the original transmitters of these songs (Maison-Bishop, 2001). There is
evidence to support that women sang and composed early calypso (Hill, 1972; Pearse,
1956; Rohlehr, 1990, Warner, 1982). Within the past few years women have reentered
this arena and are responding to the images that have been presented about them. In fact
the emergence of women as winners of the Calypso Monarch competition in Trinidad
(Denyse Plummer, Singing Sandra, Calypso Rose) is symbolic of women being active in
telling their stories.

This is not only being observed in Trinidad but also in the smaller islands such as
Antigua. Tim Hector (1999), a well known Antiguan historian and politician argues that
presently women are the “real interpreters of life as lived in Antigua” (p.1). He continues
that “the most exciting talents that have emerged in Antiguan calypso over the last decade
of the twentieth century have been women -- Singing Althea, Lady Smooth, Queen Ieva,
Lady Falcon, Calypso Val and Kesta.” Some of these women have used the Calypso
Monarch arena to challenge notions of womanhood that have been created about them. It
is through this platform that women render testimonials of the role of slavery, colonialism
and neocolonialism and other socio-economic and political issues that have fashioned the Caribbean woman.

When one examines the artists who participate in this art form generally they are from the ghetto areas and other poverty stricken areas of the country. An example is Singing Sandra (Sandra Des Vignes) who in her rendition of *Voices from the Ghetto* speaks of the experiences that face men and women living in poverty areas. She highlights issues affecting women such as rape, teenage pregnancy and crime. Singing Sandra sings of a Caribbean ghetto area void of opportunities and amenities where crime is rampant. She sings of a mother living in this area whose daughter was raped and becomes pregnant and whose son is in jail for manslaughter. Death is a common experience in this area but the authorities don’t care. In the end Singing Sandra declares “I know what I talking about you know, I from the ghetto.”

Not only are the themes in Calypso significant, but also the particular type of language usage has meaning. The extravagant use of words is very evident particularly by older Calypsonians. What seems to have happened here is that these Calypsonians were proving that they can speak the English language better than those who invented it themselves and in some instances going so far as to create their own words. At one level this can be seen as making mockery of the English language while at another level one may question whether it is just another symptom of internalized colonialism. Most modern day singers depart from this trend although it is still utilized. What is more common is the use of the local English which is sometimes called “breaking up de Queen’s English.” This form of expression goes against the basic rules of how “proper
English” is to be spoken and the local English dialect is given preference. By using language in this way the local is put at the center instead of always being at the margins. Hence this local use of language is a form of resistance and also an act of empowerment.

The theatrical nature of Calypso is important to this dissertation since I incorporate calypsos as form of theater in this work. The enactment and response to the Calypso can be examined as a resistance mechanism. When Calypsoes are being performed they are acted out on stage. This brings to life whatever the Calypsonian is singing about and hence makes his/ her message even stronger. For example if the theme is one of racism the scene depicted is one in which a person may get beaten because of the color of their skin. Because these images are visual, the message is more powerful. Calypso and other forms of theater offer a potential for dialoguing with those who are perceived as the “other,” particularly African and Afro- Caribbean women. This potential remains untapped. Undertaking such projects might prove a fruitful exercise; there is much to be tapped.

*Learning about the Other: Creative Arts and Social Imagination*

The creative arts offer an opportunity to learn about and relate to Black women from the Global South. Creative Arts are spaces used by African and Caribbean women in expressing what it means to be woman in their particular societies. Julie Doughty (2003) advocates the use of literature to teach about the African women; she argues that “if African women are studied at all they are often constructed as poor, abused, exotic or victims.” Doughty counters however that African women have been active in
documenting their own history through literature and the creative arts and also have a role beyond those noted; they have a space for empowered voice.

The teaching of literature is often stressed because of its potential to develop social imagination that has been defined as “the capacity to invent visions of what should be and what might be in our deficient society, on the streets where we live and in our schools” (Greene, 1995, p.5). Maxine Greene (1995) states that by engaging in such an activity one participates in a form of thinking that “refuses mere compliance, that looks down roads not yet taken to the shapes of a more fulfilling order, to more vibrant ways of being in the world (p.5). Social imagination moves beyond what is and looks at what could be, bearing others in consideration. To reach for this one must be able to question situations as they exist and how everyone involved benefits and looses. From here one then comes up with situations where everyone benefits. In this endeavor there is the possibility for dialogue to evolve and problems solved. In the development of social imagination there is also development of empathy. To be able to imagine a just world for everyone one must be able to feel and understand the situations of others; hence the need for empathy. Imagination serves as a way of seeing things from other people’s perspective and can cut across many lines including gender lines (Greene, 1995).

In demonstrating the consequences of a lack of social imagination and hence the lack of empathy Maxine Greene draws upon the case of Anita Hill as an example. She states that “the cry of ‘They just don’t get it!!’ that greeted the handling of Anita Hill’s testimony at the Senate confirmation hearings for Clarence Thomas’s appointment signaled that the male senators’ inability to grasp what was happening was due not only
to their amused indifference but was also to a *failure of imagination*” (p.37, italics mine). Greene points out that this failure should serve as an example for teachers because by failing to be empathetic the result was an incapacity to create or even participate in a community. Imagination allows for community building since it is through this process that one is able to make connections with other human beings that is in essence, what a community is all about.

Empathy, while it might be a starting point, is not enough. Megan Boler (1999) argues that while empathy might inspire action in a particular context such as running to aid a screaming woman, empathy does not necessarily lead to justice or to any shifts in existing power relationships. She contends that while reading literature might develop empathy, she differentiates between passive and active empathy. Passive empathy is empathy without action. Boler calls for another type of reading that she calls testimony reading; one that requires self reflective participation in order to “recognize oneself as implicated in the social forces that create the climate of obstacles that the other must confront” (p.166). To move beyond empathy means to examine how oneself contribute to the oppression of another. For example since my study involves race issues, a part of the process that would demonstrate a move beyond empathy would be for White students to begin to examine their White privilege— how they benefit because of the color of their skin while others suffer because they have a darker skin tone.

Testimonial writing lends itself to reading that elicits responses beyond empathy. This occurs probably because of the format and purpose of testimonies. When testimony is transferred to written text it is known as a testimonio: “a novel or novella length
narrative, produced in the form of a printed text, told in the first person by a narrator who is the real protagonist or witness to the events he or she recounts” (Beverly, 2000, p.155). Testimony/testimonio is different from oral history and autobiography. In oral history it is the intention and interpretation of the researcher that is most important whereas in testimonio it is the direct narrator who uses what the research offers to make his/her story public, to bring his/her story to an audience to which he/she could not normally access. The narrator in testimony usually occupies a position of subalternity. This points to the difference between testimonio and autobiography. “The very possibility of ‘writing ones’ life’ implies necessarily that the narrator is no longer in the situation of marginality and subalternity that his or her narrative describes” (Beverly, 2000, p.556) since they now occupy the cultural status of an author.

Readers of testimony are asked “to identify their own identities, expectations, and values with those of another” (Beverly, p.558, 2000). This is why Boler (1999) suggests that there is power to move beyond empathy when reading testimonies. There are some examples in the research literature that demonstrates the use of testimonies in helping students see others as they see themselves. Rierson and Duty (2003) used the testimonies of four Latina women in their classrooms. Although they describe the process they used, the outcome of the process is not recorded. More research is needed to show the actual outcome of testimonies used in the classroom in fostering relationships between students and those who are being studied.

Testimonies are also found in other formats other than the novel; other areas of the arts are using testimonies. This is an avenue that has a lot of potential for research.
For example, several women dramatists are using testimonies as part of their process for their theatrical works e.g., Firdoze Bulbulia (South Africa), Lueen Conning (South Africa), Sistren Collection Group (Jamaica), and Anna Deveare Smith (United States). The musical art form Calypso also utilizes testimony since in many ways this music bears witness of the happenings in Caribbean society.

The oral testimonies showcase Caribbean societies as having maintained many of their African traditions. As in many African societies these oral testimonies are rich avenues for understanding Caribbean life. Davies and Fido (1990) point to oral literature as a source for examining issues of gender in Caribbean societies. They state that oral literature “provides a tremendous amount of materials for the study of the development of traditional and contemporary attitudes to women, and of women towards themselves—consistently portrays women in the worst extreme as an evil despicable entity or at best as a malleable, unthinkable submerged personage” (p.165). Calypso is cited as an example of oral literature that should be examined in order to learn more about Caribbean women (Davis and Fido, 1990; Warner, 1982).

Black women of the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa do not deny that oppression of women exists in their societies; what they argue about is the way they have been presented. Through their stories they show women are not powerless; power limited or less powerful perhaps; their stories also demonstrate how women negotiate within their communities to overcome barriers. For these Black women from Africa and the Caribbean being a woman does not only mean speaking out about gender oppression but also about issues that affect all who live in the Global South regardless of gender. Some
women have even rejected being called feminists even though their theater addresses women’s issues. According to Flockeman (1998) the women who have rejected being called feminists do not necessarily have a problem with doing feminist work, but what they are claming is the right to do their own naming of women's struggles and not simply adopt a name that has been mandated by the Global North.

**Theater in the Classroom**

Earlier in this dissertation, I mentioned the potential use of storytelling genres such as theater for educational purposes. The valuable use of theater has been realized, but for the most part its potential has been utilized outside the classroom especially in countries located in the Global South. However there has been a development in the body of works that examine the use of theater for classroom learning. Theories in this field have been developed by theorist such as Peter Slain, Brian Way, Augusto Boal, Gavin Bolton and Dorothy Heathcote (Combs, 2001).

The reasons made for incorporating theater in the classroom are similar to the arguments made for including arts in the school curriculum. Eisner (1995) lists 10 reasons for the importance of arts in the curriculum.

1) The arts teach children to make good judgments about qualitative relationships. Unlike much of the curriculum in which correct answers and rules prevail, in the arts, it is judgment rather than rules that prevail.

2) The arts teach children that problems can have more than one solution and that questions can have more than one answer.
3) The arts celebrate multiple perspectives. One of their large lessons is that there are many ways to see and interpret the world.

4) The arts teach children that in complex forms of problem-solving purposes are seldom fixed, but change with circumstance and opportunity. Learning in the arts requires the ability and willingness to surrender to the unanticipated possibilities of the work as it unfolds.

5) The arts make vivid the fact that words do not, in their literal form or number, exhaust what we can know. The limits of our language do not define the limits of our cognition.

6) The arts teach students that small differences can have large effects.

7) The arts traffic in subtleties. The arts teach students to think through and within a material. All art forms employ some means through which images become real.

8) The arts help children learn to say what cannot be said. When children are invited to disclose what a work of art helps them feel, they must reach into their poetic capacities to find the words that will do the job.

9) The arts enable us to have experience we can have from no other source and through such experience to discover the range and variety of what we are capable of feeling.

10) The arts' position in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults believe is important.
Eisner is an advocate for incorporating the arts in schools and views the arts as a way for 
enhancing the quality of education (Eisner, 1974, 1994, 2002).

Drama in education developed as a response to the call for a more child 
centered approach to education; this meant putting the child in the center of the 
curriculum instead of being directed totally by the teacher. Dewey (1900, 1916, 1934) 
calls for the utilization of lived experiences and the arts in developing child centered 
classrooms. This form of education called for a more democratic approach to education; 
it called for negotiations between teacher and student.

The framework for bringing theater into the classroom has a long tradition. 
Scholars such as Peter Slain, Brian Way, Gavin Bolton Dorothy Heathcote and Cicely 
O’Neill have been very active in promoting this type of activity in their classrooms. 
Slade describes drama as the creative act of doing. Child drama as defined by Slade 
embraced “any spontaneous activity generated by the child/ himself in pursuit of doing 
and struggling with life” (Bolton, 1998, p.121). Slade is accredited for being one of the 
first pioneers of children’s drama in the Global North. He believed that drama should be 
in the center of education, in fact that the quality of education should be judged based on 
its Drama. There are two main identifiers of Slade’s “Child Drama.” The first is that it is 
free from teacher interference and the need to entertain an audience. The second 
identifier is based on an exploration of space where students after the creation of a story 
by the teacher based on students’ ideas and after a sound stimulus e.g. music was selected 
were involved in either moving freely and spontaneously or interpreted a prepared dance
drama. Slade’s philosophy of drama in education was based on his desire to simulate freedom of expression among children especially given the rigidness of school structures.

Brain Way, a colleague of Slade, also made a significant contribution to the field of drama/theater in education. Slade made a distinction between theater and drama, theater he explained with the communication between audience and actors whereas drama concerns the experience of the actors, regardless as to whether or not there is an audience. Way emphasized the whole person; and he divided personalities up into facets related to Speech, Physical self, Imagination, The Senses, Concentration, Intellect, Emotion and Intuition. (Way, 1967). Way’s emphasis was more on the function of Drama hence depending on the target e.g. speech, the particular models would be followed (Bolton, 1998). Way’s approach was focused on acting as a private activity and self actualization.

A third person whose name is popular in the field of theater/drama in education is Dorothy Heathcote. Heathcote extends the notion of drama as an act of doing to include meaning making. Heathcote sought to use drama in a way that students would search for meaning and the connectivity between their lived experience and drama. Heathcote’s focus was not only on drama as a subject within the school curriculum but on drama as a site of learning and how its principles can be applied across the school curriculum. Her work stresses not only students but the role of teachers and the part they play in helping students negotiate meaning.

Aspects of Heathcote’s work are evident in the works of Gavin Bolton and Cicely O’Neill. Both Bolton and O’Neill’s work emphasize placing drama in the center of the
curriculum. They emphasize Heathcote’s living through drama approach. O’Neill’s emphasis is on process drama, one she describes as being more concerned about the process of creating the drama and not necessarily on the product.

Theater has an added value of being able to bring to life the lived experiences of others (Combs, 2001). Drama in education, Theater in education or Process Drama as it is sometimes called “relies on the combination of kinesics, emotional and intellectual involvements in improvisational activities to promote a range of experiences from artistic self expression to active leaning in particular content areas” (Grady, 2000, p.4). The theater done in this context is primarily for the benefit of students. Strategies such as games to enhance trust and cooperation are employed as well as story dramatization that relies on improvisional skills and techniques borrowed from Augusto Boal’s “Theater of the Oppressed.” Forum Theater is an approach to theater developed to help people reflect on their situation and then be empowered to make changes.

Augusto Boal developed Forum Theater as a form of theater for the oppressed. This is a type of participatory theater in which even the spectators become spect-actors. There are no spectators, rather they are wholly involved in the theater; they are actors. The purpose of this form of theater is to analyze and discuss problems of oppression and power; and explore solutions to these problems. This particular type of interactive theater is rooted in the pedagogical and political principles specific to the popular education method developed by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire:

1) to see the situation lived by the participants;

2) to analyze the root causes of the situation; and
3) act to change the situation following the precepts of social justice. (http://www.spunk.org/texts/art/sp000338.html)

According to Boal (1979) this form of theater goes beyond the passive empathy which Boler critiques. Participants are very active in the process; they are not passive. Boal argues that although this is theater the fact that participants are actors means that they are critically thinking and are moved to action.

An example of the use of theater in the classroom that has combined all these approaches is research work conducted using Forum Theater such as “Rewriting Gendered Scripts: Using Forum Theater to Teach Feminist Agency” (Thomson & Wood, 1998). This research explores the quest for a pedagogy of transformation and agency. In this study researchers presented original scripts to students and after performing the original scripts students created their own scripts based on their lives and what they learned from the scripts. In this way students were engaged in reflective thinking and were moved to action through re-creation and performance.

The research mentioned above examined sexist dynamics that sustain violent relationships in the U.S. Bowers and Buzzannel (2002) also used theater in a similar manner; their research sought to use theater in order to dialogue on issues of race, class and gender. In their findings they discuss the occurrence of dialogic moments. They argue that theater provides a medium for such moments to occur. Other works for example by Donna Tromski and Glenn Doston (2003) investigated the potential of Interactive Drama for multicultural learning. The focus of this though has been on the actual performance and its impact on actors and audience members. Additionally their
research focused on multicultural understanding of others within U.S. society. It did not include the understanding of the international other which is a much needed component for dialogue.

Theater as Pedagogy for Dialogue

Sidorkin (1997) refers to dialogue as the essence of living. Sidorkin uses Buber’s theme of “I and Thou” to refer to the relational point where one relates to other human beings as equals. Pilcher (2001) speaks about the “crises of decommunitization,” wherein communities have limited spaces for caring and hearts have become closed. Gilligan (1995) advocates for an ethic of care in correcting this and Sidorkin calls for a pedagogy of relations. Similarly, Nel Noddings (1984) offers the three C’s of care, concern and connection in correcting decommunitization, these are all important elements of education if one believes that education is to foster relations and dialogue.

Education is needed in overcoming the disconnect that results in racism and other forms of discrimination. Toni Morrison sums up the importance of education when she states:

It is a question of education, because racism is a scholarly pursuit. It's all over the world, I am convinced. But that's not the way people were born to live. I'm talking about racism that is taught, institutionalized. Everybody remembers the first time they were taught that part of the human race was Other. That's a trauma. It's as though I told you that your left hand is not part of your body (p.122).
In her attempt to find solutions to the disconnect encountered in classrooms, Pilcher (2001) investigated the results when Black women’s voices from the U.S. are thrown into a U.S. classroom. She found that students reacted by displaying anger, resistance to change, guilt, accommodation to change, and hope. Black women in the class experienced silence and uncertainty. Pilcher’s study however only investigates Black women in the U.S. and her students were lumped into one category of White.

Another study (Hytten & Warren, 2003) examined how students engaged in a class focused on the political and social power of Whiteness. They found that while studying Whiteness students often personalized the issues in order to reconcile their own experiences with those whom they were studying. While this may seem as a way to understand the other, the problem is that the focus remains almost entirely on the self. McIntyre (1997) observes that one of the strategies Whites use to ignore their Whiteness is to “privilege their own feelings over the conditions and feelings of people of color” (p.76). This process is called appeal to self (Hytten & Warren, 2003)) and is done through a “discourse of connection” (they site parallel experience to show how similar they are), “discourse of self absorption” (they highlight their guilt, embarrassment and struggle in confronting White privilege) and a ‘discourse of friends and family” (they compare themselves with their more racist friends and family members and affirm themselves through dissociation).

Another approach is through an appeal to progress where students demand action rather than talk. “These calls for action are also accompanied with a missionary-like zeal to make changes immediately” (p.74). This Hytten and Warren call a “discourse of fix
it.” Progress also gets called upon by showing how far we, the dominant culture, have come. This is known as the “discourse of mark it.” Another form of the “discourse of progress” concerns individual forms of progress where students see studying Whiteness as enriching themselves, making themselves more rounded, sympathetic and understanding (discourse of me). While this sounds positive the problem occurs when students trivialize the importance of racial issues to simply broadening their knowledge of multicultural issues. They assume a “tourist frame of thinking which involves stopping along the road of life to learn bits and pieces of other cultures” (DeRose, 1999, p.190; Sleeter, 1993, p.14).

“Appeals to authencity” is another discourse identified by Hytten and Warren. Students call on particular experiences to validate their thinking about diversity and call on non Whites to tell them what they should do or think. They used “the discourse of others” by asking non Whites for their opinions and then treating these opinions as representing the group. Alternatively these use the “discourse of yes, but . . .” where they show that even though they understand someone’s experience they don’t agree with it.

Then there is the appeal to extremes where students engage in “discourses of real vs. ideal.” Students become aware of the problem but feel powerless to do anything about it. Associated with this is the “discourse of niceness vs. conflict” where students seek comfort, safety, politeness and solidarity. The “discourse of voice vs. silence” is another discourse of appeal to extremes. Students struggle with how and when they voices should be incorporated in the class.
Understanding the workings and manifestations of Whiteness in the classroom can be helpful in breaking White privilege. The cited research demonstrates the difficulty in making any meaningful change through traditional educational formats. Students need to know how the self interacts with others but they also need to know how the self is implicated in the creating the “other” and move to action after reflection. Theater offers a platform for dialogic relationships to be created and examined. Forum theater has the potential to aid marginalized students reflect on their relationships with other marginalized groups both locally and globally, examine how they are implicated in the process, and move to make effective change.

All students, White students included, need multicultural experiences in schools that honor diversity and exposes them to all ethnic groups. This process is more effective when social injustice is placed at the forefront (Weems, 2001). Students should be provided with an education that encourages them to understand their privilege locally and globally. When they are able to do this they become “White traitors.” This term refers to Whites who, in a White racist society, “reject explanations of the world presupposing the superiority of whiteness” (Heldke, 1998, p.94; Weems, 2001).

The studies mentioned are beneficial and serve as a guide for the present study. These studies investigated American classrooms but they did not look at specific White groups. While there is significant literature showing that there are several degrees of Whiteness, there are gaps in the literature as it pertains to Appalachian students and their relation to others who are also on the margins locally and internationally. There are also gaps as it pertains to the use of testimonials, particularly theatrical testimonials in
establishing connections between self and others. Using the theater of Black women from the Global South will be beneficial in filling these gaps in the literature and finding answers to how classroom spaces can be dialogic and create global citizens focused on creating relationship based on the “I am because we are” concept of interconnectedness.

**Summary**

The present chapter discussed ways in which Black women from the Global South have been throwing their voice. I began with the quote “don’t draw she no circle” which is a warning from Singing Sandra not to limit Black women. The theories of Black Feminism, Africana Feminism, and other forms of feminisms developed by African and Caribbean women demonstrate that these women are not limited, they are thinking and acting on their world. In my literature review I present their theories and also ways in which they have used the arts in throwing their voices. At the end of the chapter I discussed ways in which the theater of Black women from the Global South can be used in U.S. classrooms.
CHAPTER FIVE

The Journey to Dialogue

“Are you going to put them back with us” (Joe, 2003)?

Chapter One provided the introductory portion of this dissertation and focused on framing the research, its theories, questions and problems addressed. Chapter Two discussed and described my methods of data collection and analysis. Chapters Three and Four served as a review of the pertinent literature. Chapter Three dealt with the concept of othering and how it has been used for the purpose of domination. This dissertation focuses on Black women from the Global South as other and their interaction through theater with Appalachian students. The fourth chapter discussed how Black women from the Global South have “thrown” their voice. Women in these parts have been creating, discussing and critiquing their forms of womaness. They have been talking back through the vehicles of the performance arts, such as theater. The later part of Chapter Four addressed how theater can be used in schools to create dialogic spaces for forming relations with those who have been labeled as “other.”

Having built a background and literature for the themes of this dissertation, the present chapter will focus on my observations during the six weeks of my study. Together my students, teaching assistant and I, undertook a journey using the theater of Black women from the Global South to try to comprehend and form dialogic relations with others. I have selected to use a narrative format to describe the research
experiences. Janesick (2000) writes that narrative forms show to readers that the research is an interpretive activity and not a “map of the world.” In this chapter and in my writing process I will use italics to highlight my own reflective comments regarding my observations, artifact collections and interviews (Romano, 2000). The narrative written in this chapter does not include the plays that students created. These will be presented separately in Appendix E. By presenting them independently I present to readers the voices of students which is one objective of this type of exercise, to give students a forum through which they can be heard.

The Journey Begins

The journey began on Monday June 23, 2003. It was the first day of the Upward Bound program. It was an extremely hot and humid day, but not uncommon for this time of the year. The theater class I taught was held in the Research and Technology Building (RTECH) at Ohio University. The RTECH building is located on the eastern side of campus tucked neatly in the corner of Richland Avenue and West Mulberry Street. The building seemed oddly placed; it appeared as if it got tossed to the side as Richland Avenue curved to give way to President Street. Facing the RTECH building are Bentley Hall, President Street Academic Center and the Computer Services Center. If one continued past these centers, Chubb Hall, the main administration building would be encountered. South of the RTECH building are Lasher Hall and Henning Hall, which are on West Union Street.
The RTEC building was four stories high, and its brown brick appearance gave away its age. It was built in 1948 and was the old engineering building (Ohio University website). The theater class was held in this building because construction work on campus limited the options available for classroom space. The construction work on campus was evident since just next door, Bentley was under construction. The campus was not completely a ghost town, but the summer decrease in student population was noticeable. This was the summer and the numbers present did not compare to the massive amounts of students who were busy going to and from class during regular quarter sessions. The humidity along with the comparative scarcity of students contributed to the slower rhythm of campus life.

I arrived at the class ahead of time to make sure that everything was ready for the students. Class started at 2 pm, but I got there by 1:15pm. I dragged myself up the hill and the stairs of the building. The class was on the second level of the building. As soon as I landed on the last step, I went through the doors of room 201, the first classroom on the right. The room was small; the chairs were lined up in five rows with six desks per row; there were about thirty desks total. There was a larger table and chair in front of the class, which I assumed was for the professor. There were some mathematical equations on the blackboard spanning the length of the front wall; there were lots of x’s and y’s; nothing that I understood. It had nothing to do with the theater class so I erased it. I turned on the air conditioning (AC) and began organizing the desks in circles for students. The room was fully equipped; there was a TV/VCR with the capacity of playing DVD’s, as well as speakers on either sides of the room close to the ceiling.
I was a little nervous. I knew some of the students, but not all of them. I met the ones I knew when I was a tutor/mentor in the Upward Bound Program; that was two years ago. Two years ago the program had a low enrollment of approximately twenty-five, but this year student enrollment was fifty-five. This represents the maximum number that could be admitted to the program. I was not sure what to expect, but I wanted to be prepared for anything. Ten minutes passed and my assistant came running into the classroom and we spoke about the lesson plan for that day. I met Betty during the first meeting for Upward Bound staff before classes began and we had discussed the plan for the theater class. I asked for her input since she was an actress and has studied and taught theater classes. At that time, when I explained to her that I wanted to focus on women’s theater from the Caribbean and Africa, Betty commented “I don’t know how the White kids will take this.” In class now on this first day, Betty and I discussed how we would work together. She asked me about discipline, specifically if I wanted to discipline the students or should she discipline them. I told her I felt it appropriate for her to discipline the students. She was living with the students and should they need to be taken out of the classroom for discipline purposes she should feel free to do so. She informed me that some of the students were “acting up.” In one of the classes they had earlier in the day the “teacher was not able to control them.”

It was about 1:55 p.m. and the students began coming in. In the first group, the students were mainly students from southeastern Ohio. I recognized some of them from my previous experience with the Upward Bound program. As the students came in, Betty and I began handing out the class syllabus and journals. They were curious about what
these were for and I asked them to wait for a moment so that we could go through the syllabus together. The other half of the students came ten minutes later. I expected only nineteen students but now there were twenty six. I inquired as to whether they were sure this was the class they were to be in, and they assured me that this was the class they had on their schedule.

I began by introducing myself, telling a little about who I am, my nationality and country. We went through the syllabus and I explained what I expected from them. I explained my rules concerning discipline in the class (see Appendix C). As I spoke I realized that some of the students were not listening to me; they were busy speaking among themselves. I also realized that the class was divided; Black students were on one side of the room and White students were on the other. All the Black students in the class attended the Afrocentric school whereas the White students attended schools located in southeastern Ohio. *It’s not uncommon for groups to sit with those who they feel most comfortable with. Throughout the six weeks students varied in how much they were willing to get out of their comfort zones. Sometimes they moved out and then returned again to where they started.* I asked those who were speaking if they wanted to share what they were discussing with the rest of the class. No one responded. I informed them that in this class when someone was speaking others should be listening, and if they were not able to abide by the rules of the class they were free to leave.

I proceeded to pass out the agreement forms for my dissertation. I reminded them what my dissertation was about and stated that they were free to choose if they wanted to participate or not. I had explained my dissertation at the parents/staff meeting for
Upward Bound before the students came on campus to begin the program. However, IRB regulations required both student and parents to give consent. There were some questions regarding my research; students wanted to know if their names would be used and if their work would be shown to anyone. I explained that I will be the only one who had direct contact with their work. I promised to use pseudo names in my dissertation. I asked students to take home the forms, and return them to me the next day if they decided to participate.

I spoke to students about the term “Black women from the Global South” and asked what came to mind when they heard this term. The class was quiet. I then asked if they knew the term “developing country.” Most said yes. I then asked them to record in their journals their first journal assignment (see Appendix D) that they would complete overnight as their homework assignment. After these preliminaries, we played an introduction game. Everyone was to find someone with whom they had little interaction and interview them about their families, what they liked doing and anything else that was important to them. The results were to be presented to the class in a performative manner. Students quickly found partners, both groups (Black and White) found someone from the other group to interview. Betty and I interviewed each other and we volunteered to go first. I initially gave fifteen minutes for the activity but it was not enough, so I extended the time to twenty five minutes.

The presentations began and some students tried to present their partners in a dramatic manner whereas others did their introductions in normal conversation style. When it was Harry’s turn to do the introduction, Donnie and Joe began laughing. Donnie
let out a loud disturbing laugh. Both Donnie and Joe attended the urban Afrocentric school; Harry attended a school in southeastern Ohio.

Denise: Can you share the joke?

No answer – just continued giggling. Joe then spoke up.

Joe: He’s fat.

Denise: So that is why he is laughing? Please in the future if you can’t control yourself leave the classroom.

Harry continued his presentation. He was one of the students I noticed when he walked into the classroom. What caught my attention was the big bible he carried. The presentations continued and the final one consisted of three students, Joe and two White Americans; one male and one female. Joe’s presentation was dramatic. For example, the person he interviewed liked basketball so he mimicked him playing basketball.

During his presentation he kept chewing his gum loudly, this was very distracting. By the time the presentation ended it was time for class to end. I asked Joe to see him for a minute and explained to him that in the future I did not want to see him chewing gum in the class. He agreed and left with the other students. The students and Betty left and I rearranged the desks back in their place. I decided to inform the Director of the program that the classroom was too small and request a room change.

Later that day I visited the Upward Bound office in McCracken Hall and I ran into one of the other instructors. As she saw me she started laughing.

Miss Lucie: I heard about you.

Denise: What did you hear?
Miss Lucie: Well I was talking to Joe and he said (mimicking Joe) Miss Lucie your class is alright, but that theater class is going to be hard.

Miss Lucie, an African American woman, had worked with some of the students before. She taught for the Upward Bound program the previous year and taught at one point at the Afrocentric school. She explained that in some of the other classes the students were disruptive so when they came to my class they were surprised at my no-nonsense approach.

*It is not uncommon for students to test teachers. It was the first day and here is where the negotiations begin about the boundaries of the class, what will be tolerated and what will not. Paulo Freire (1998) warns of the teacher who does not assume authority in his/ her class, students have no respect for such person. What is needed is a balance between the all powerful authoritative teacher and the one who shows a lack of presence and authority. I found it difficult trying to achieve that balance especially on the first day.*

**Encountering Resistance**

On the second day Betty met me in the corridor of the RTEC building. She informed me that she wanted to get to class early to let me know that the class had been moved to a bigger room. It was down the hall from the first room (210). The new classroom was bigger than the first. As one entered there was a sign by the door marked “If you alter the furniture arrangement and /or borrow chairs from another classroom for your class in this room, you must return the furniture to its original arrangement and/ or
location at the end of each class period. Thank You!” The furniture was neatly arranged, all the desks were in their lines. There were six rows with nine desks in each row. This class had all the amenities of the first class, TV, VRC, DVD player, AC and many windows, but only bigger. For the duration of the summer session the theater class was held in this room.

To begin the second day I asked students to arrange themselves in a circle. Some students pulled their desks to the middle of the room, then sat down. I asked them to help move the other desks but there was a great deal of resistance, particularly from a few of the students from urban Ohio. Some got up and moved either one or two desks and then sat down, whereas others did not get up at all. Once the lesson started I asked if there were any questions about the syllabus. I then started going through the syllabus and asked if they knew what was meant by “I am because we are.” Two students raised their hands and explained that it meant that one’s existence depended on others. I explained that this was the way we will operate in the class. We will help each other and be respectful to each other. We discussed the meaning and importance of theater and by the end of the class I asked students to put back their desk in place. The majority of the class did, but some students complained:

Joe: Are you going to put them back with us?

Some shrugged their shoulders and walked out the class without moving a single desk. At this point I realized that something had to change; I needed to re strat e gize what was going to go on in the classroom. Freire (1998) points out that there will be resistance if students feel that the teacher is authoritative.
Putting back the desks

I walked to the classroom that third day not knowing how things would turn out. I was determined to create a learning environment in the classroom. Six weeks is a short time; I needed to get the work done but I also knew that a positive atmosphere was a necessity. I arrived in the class and some of the students were already there. I asked them to please arrange the desk into a circle. I did not hear any complaints from them. As we waited for the others to arrive I began conversing with the students present about their other classes. The other students arrived and class began.

Denise: Why do you think I ask you to arrange the desks in a circle?

Joe: Because you want to see what we are doing.

Denise: Do you think I need to have you in a circle to be able to see what you are doing?

Another hand went up.

Ariel: I think it is because you want us to be able to see each other and to encourage us to participate.

This was Ariel, so far she is one of the students who is quick to respond to questions that are asked in class. She attends one of the high schools in southeastern Ohio.

Denise: I want everyone to read the note that this is on the wall by the door. They read: “If you alter the furniture arrangement and/or borrow chairs from another classroom for your class in this room, you must return the furniture to its original arrangement and/or location at the end of each class period. Thank You!”
Denise: That is why I ask you to put the furniture back when you are leaving; it is not
to give you extra work. I want to talk to you before we do anything else
today. So far I have told you what I expect from you. What about you? I want to
know what you expect from me and from the rest of the class to help you do well
here. I am going to go around in a circle.

The students began:

Student: I don’t want anyone to laugh at me.

Student: I want to be respected.

Student: I want to be listened to.

Joe: Why do you pick on me?

Denise: Pick on you? Why do you say that?

Joe: Well it’s like yesterday. I wanted to sit by Donnie but you told me to sit here.

Denise: You tell me, why do you think I separated you?

Joe: I don’t know.

Denise: Joe, I separated you because when you two sit together you distract the
rest of the class. If you were behaving when I put you together then I wouldn’t
separate you.

Joe: Oh!

Most of the class said that they wanted others to respect them. Some said that
they did not have anything to say. Once this was done I asked if everyone was willing to
do what others had asked them and they all said they were willing. I also promised to do
my part. About a week later Joe asked me if he could sit by Donnie. I asked him if I could trust him not to be disruptive. He said yes, but there were still times when he was disruptive but as the weeks progressed it decreased.

After this conversation we played “Mirror Me.” I played a CD from Brenda Fassie, a musician from South Africa, and as a way of showing them how the game was played I volunteered to be in the middle first. I started and the students mirrored me. The students were very receptive to the music; Joe in particular became very involved in the dance. I moved from the middle and took Joe’s position. He stepped into the middle and started moving to the music. When Joe moved out of the center the other students were hesitant to enter. I moved back into the center and students started asking about learning to dance to this music. After this warm up exercise ended students asked if we could do this often because they really enjoyed it. Negotiation is an important element for teachers. When students are invited to participate in the functioning of the class they are more willing to be responsible. The dance symbolized the relationship between teacher and student. The teacher should be willing to negotiate with student when they will exchange the role of teacher and student.

The class continued and we watched a music video by Destiny’s Child, “Independent Woman” (2000). After viewing the video I asked the class if this video embodied the American woman.

Student: Yes and No.

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11 This is a game in which someone stands in the middle of the circle and does an action that is “mirrored” by all. The game continues until everyone has a chance to be in the center of the circle.
Denise: Could you explain?

Student: Yes, because we are independent, but the independence in the video was materialist.

Denise: So you are saying that this video can represent the American woman?”

I looked around and some students were nodding.

Denise: Since Destiny’s Child is a Black group do you think what they sing about is only for Black women?

Sally: No I think it is for all women. Sally attends one of the schools in southeastern Ohio.

Denise: Men, so what do you think about this “Independent American woman”?

Donnie: It’s all right

Joe: Me, I just want my three women who will take care of me.

Denise: Ok everyone, let’s relate this back to theater – can we say it is theater?

Student: Yes.

Student: No.

Denise: Why do you say yes?

Student: Cause there is acting.

Denise: What makes theater, theater?

I waited. (No answer so I continued).

Denise: Don’t forget one element— it must be live or at least its primary audience must be a live one.

Student: So then no, this video is not theater.
We watched another video, a recording of the calypso *National Pride* sang by Singing Sandra. Before I showed the video I passed out the words for the calypso. I described the history of Calypso and its significance in Caribbean societies. I played the video and students watched as well as read the words. Once the video was over I asked them: what do you think? Is this theater?

Students: Yes

Denise: Why?

Student: Because it was performed live and it is dramatic.

Denise: So what are some of the issues discussed?

Student: Well I don’t know what they were really talking about; just something about National Pride.

Denise: OK what were some of the things you noticed, what images did she use?

Student: The flag and lots of costumes.

Denise: What is the flag a symbol of?

(No answer).

Denise: Normally the flag is a representation of a country. What about here in the U.S? What are some of the symbols used for national pride?

Student: Well there is the bald eagle.

Denise: What does the bald eagle represent?

(Silence)

Denise: What other symbols do you have?

Student: the flag
Student: the national anthem

Student: The colors of the flag

Denise: Interesting! What do the colors stand for?

(Silence).

Student: The Statue of Liberty

Denise: What does the Statute of Liberty symbolize?

Mitch: It has something to do with slavery. *Mitch was one of the students from the Afrocentric School.*

Denise: Really? I did not know that. What does it have to do with slavery?

Mitch: I don’t know. I just know it has something to do with slavery.

Denise: Hmm, could you check that out for me and let me know?

Mitch: Yes sure.

Denise: What were the latest arguments over the Statue of Liberty?

(Silence).

Denise: What were some people threatening to do when the French opposed the Iraqi war?

Student: Oh yeah– to change the name of french fries.

Denise: What was said about the Statue of Liberty?

Student: I don’t know.

Denise: There was some talk about sending it back to France. The Statue of Liberty was a gift from France for U.S. independence.
Students were familiar with symbols but in some cases they were not familiar with their meanings. *Macedo (1996) speaks about the pedagogy of lies which is part of the Americanization process. People are taught to be nationalist to symbols without really understanding what they mean.*

We continued talking about Calypso and the use of such performances to talk about social issues. I inquired if there was anything in their societies that was similar to Calypso. Some mentioned rap. I asked if there was anything in southeastern Ohio and there was no answer. I asked if students knew anything about Chatauquas, traveling theater companies that were common in this part of the country. One student knew about them. At the end of the class period without having to remind them, the desks were returned to their original positions. From that day until the last day of class I never had to remind students about returning their desks to its original place.

*Wearing Someone Else’s Shoes*

By the end of the second week students had engaged in elements of story telling, written journal entries, watched videos of music from the United States of America and also from Trinidad. *Drama and theater in the classroom provide an excellent way for students to learn about teamwork and consensus.* As part of the class assignment students created mini sketches about boyfriend-girlfriend relations, lepricons, being attacked by dogs, and about students misbehaving in class. *In creating these stories they used their culture, imagination and knowledge from their lived experiences. I did not include these stories because they do not directly answer my research questions; they were used as*
means of getting the class to begin talking about the theater of Black women from the Global South.

I handed out the plays created by women from the Global South for students to read and reenact. The class was divided into four groups, and each group got one play to prepare. The groups were divided randomly, each student received one play and was then grouped depending on the play they received. At the beginning of the third week I began getting comments from the groups. The group who received *A Black Woman’s Tale* was happy with their play. They told me that they enjoyed reading the play. This group was an all woman’s group; five White women and one African American woman. As for the other plays, particularly *Voices from the Ghetto* and *Living Positively*, the students were confused. They said that they did not know where to begin. *Ambivalence is sometimes a route to learning because it causes students to think critically and creatively* (Palmer, 1998).

As an introduction to the lives of Black women from the Caribbean and Africa a class period was devoted to understanding some of the history and social makeup of the Caribbean and Africa. The class was limited to generalities rather than specifics. Students had been recording in their journals their perceptions of African and Caribbean peoples. I inquired from students about their definition of a developed and developing society. Based on their definitions I asked where they placed Africa, the Caribbean and the United States. The U.S. they said was a developed nation, Africa was not a country but the countries found there were developing or third world countries. The Caribbean, they stated, was neither developed nor developing; it was a tourist destination. From
their journals students had defined people living in developing countries as poor, I asked them if there were any poor people in the United States of America.

Student: We have poor people, but we hide our poor people.

Student: When we see people from developing countries we see many poor people.

Denise: Who shows us these images?

Student: The media, the U.S. government.

Denise: Why is this?

Student: We want to look as though we are better.

Chuck, a student from southeastern Ohio, suggested that instead of examining development in terms of economics perhaps we should look at countries ability to do things that work for them as way of determining if they are developing or not.

*Performance inquiry and process drama enables teachers and researchers to use this format as a way of engaging students in critical thinking.*

We continued defining the Caribbean and Africa. We agreed that the U.S. was a country, Africa was a continent composed of many countries and the Caribbean was a region. What these areas had in common is that at one point in time they were all colonies. This led into a discussion of colonialism and its impact on African and Caribbean societies today. We also discussed a major difference between the U.S. and developing areas as the period at which each gained its independence. The U.S. became independent in 1876 whereas for many developing countries particularly in Africa and the Caribbean, with the exception of Haiti, independence was acquired in the 1950’s and
1960’s. In the case of the Caribbean there are some islands that are still under colonial rule. We discussed wars in Africa as a result, in some cases, of the way Africa was divided by colonial powers. Some issues of slavery and its consequences were also discussed. We spoke about gender relationships and the predominant occurrence of female headed households in Caribbean societies that some believe is a legacy of slavery. In the discussions about gender relations, most students agreed that in the U.S. White Anglo-Saxon males were dominant; the men in the class both Black and White agreed. However they said that they believed that in Africa relations amongst the sexes were more equal. This led to a discussion of patriarchy and the way it persists in many societies. The Caribbean was used as an example of a society that even though it had many female households was still a patriarchal society.

Some of the students were interested and wanted to know more. They kept asking questions and tried to answer questions that were asked. Donnie was particularly active, especially when it concerned matters dealing with African people. Ariel and Chuck were active as well. At the end of the discussions, Ariel remarked that these were things she had not thought about before; she needed to think more about what was discussed. The idea of colonialism and its relationship to development activity, in particular, seemed to be something that students needed to think more about. Students revealed that Africa and the Caribbean were not big components of their school curriculum. In their journals the Caribbean was described as a tourist destination. Students used images of sun, sea, happy people and music in their description of the Caribbean. How “Stella got her groove back” was another image mentioned. Many of these images were images from the
media. In addition to these discussions on African and Caribbean society, some sessions were devoted to discussing elements of the plays –theme, setting, plot, characters.

Time was taken to help students dissect the play they were studying. Betty and I went around the room to help students understand the setting of their plays, theme, plot and other elements. Once this was done, I asked students to pick a character from the play. They were to work with other members in their group to recreate their play in a manner that the class would understand the issues the playwright was addressing. I explained that these mini performances will be performed in the class and after the performance they would be asked questions in and out of character. It was therefore important that they understood their respective plays. The next class sessions were spent interviewing students on their characters and the play in general. Not only did I work with students in the classroom setting but also during their study hall period. We made appointments to work together on their mini plays. Each group signed up for 30 minutes at a time. I met with each group based on the times they arranged.

Developing characters

The students developed characters based on their plays and also based on their knowledge of the theme addressed in the play. Additionally I brought in outside information to help students understand a little more about what they were reading. For example I gave them brochures that addressed HIV/ AIDS internationally and within southeastern Ohio. Betty and I went around the room interviewing students about their role.

“Hi” I would say, “I am Denise and you?”
Student: I am Gicible.

Denise: Oh and where are you from?

Student: I am from Swaziland

Denise: Could you tell me a little about yourself?

Student: I am HIV positive. My husband passed away and I contracted the virus from my husband.

I interviewed another student portraying a South African character.

Student: I am Patrick from South Africa I have AIDS.

Denise: How did you find out?

Student: I was sick and was coughing up blood

Denise: What is your profession?

Student: Ah, I don’t know.

He began searching through the script.

Denise: I don’t think it is in there, what profession do you think Patrick would have?

Student (shrugging shoulders): I don’t know what they do in South Africa.

Maybe I am a hunter; I hunt wild animals.

A discussion about South Africa and the diversity of careers found there emerged. The discussion centered on the idea that as is the case of the U.S., in countries such as South Africa and other developing countries, there are areas that are poor and lack infrastructure and other areas that possess more infrastructure and modern amenities.
In role playing one has to put oneself in someone else’s shoes. One has to understand every aspect of the character. This often involves analyzing oneself, examining how similar and different one is to the character one is trying to portray.

Stereotypes are often revealed through this process. Some of the stereotypes held about others became evident because of the way they were represented. Some of the stereotypes of Africa were revealed in students’ journal. When I asked students about the images that came to their mind when they thought about Africa they mentioned African Americans, safaris, animals, deserts, disease, and women wearing lip plates as a sign of beauty. One student from southeastern Ohio mentioned “excellent education since Alexander the Great was educated there.” There was a marked difference between the journals of the African American students and those from southeastern Ohio. The African American students’ images tended to be more positive: motherland, their people, the beginning of civilization.

As we developed characters we discussed the themes addressed in the plays. During one of our meetings each group gave a summary of their play:

Tanya: Our play is about a woman playing different characters in her society.

Denise: Can you explain the setting of your play?

Tanya: Well it is in South Africa.

Denise: How many of you are familiar with Apartheid?

Joe: Is it some sort of agreement?

Denise: What type of agreement?

(Silence)
Denise: How many of you are familiar with segregation in the U.S.?

A few students answered but there was not too much discussion generated on that subject. I explained that the two were similar and that the play a Coloured Place addresses the identity problems South African Coloureds often experience.

As students prepared their plays I asked them to think about how they were going to present the play. The group responsible for performing Living Positively decided to use the format of a TV show in order to present their play. In one of the interviews a student remarked that American identity and media seemed to be linked. She used the example of Living Positively and A Coloured Place as an example of this. A discussion evolved in that group as students debated on how long someone could live with the HIV virus. Someone pointed out that Magic Johnson is an example of someone who had lived with the virus for a long time.

Some groups had a harder time arranging and understanding their plays. Harry, for example, kept asking me for help with his character. He explained that he was accustomed to plays where he had to memorize lines and everything was scripted. Unfortunately, he was in the group performing Voices from the Ghetto. This group consisted of four people –two males (one White, one Black, and two females one White and one Black). One of the problems this group faced was that their ideas would constantly change. First they agreed to use music and act out their roles as the music played. Then, they changed this and decided they wanted to have someone narrate the story and everyone else would act the story. This later changed since they felt that no one person should do all the narration. There was also disagreement over the story line. The
disagreement was over the career of John Paul, Harry’s character, who lived in a poor neighborhood. Harry said that he lived in Kingston, Jamaica and then later changed it to Trinidad. He said after all, Jamaica and Trinidad were the same places. *Jamaica is usually perceived as being the Caribbean; people tend not to make the differences between different Caribbean cultures.* As a way of supporting his family he sells fruits on the streets. This caused a discussion amongst the members of the group.

Donnie: who ever heard of someone selling fruits in the hood?

Denise: Do you think it is impossible for someone to have a legal trade in the hood?

Donnie: No, but I am just saying I aint ever see anyone selling fruits.

Denise: Have you been to Trinidad?

Donnie: No

Denise: There are lots of young people who sell fruits in the streets there

Donnie: Ok, but I am just saying. . .

At one of our meetings Tracie, another student from southeastern Ohio, said to me that she really wanted to play the mom’s role in *Voices from the Ghetto.* She said there was something about the character’s situation she could relate to. I asked to explain what it was and she said that she thought this woman was a hard worker and the father had died. She understood what this woman was going through based on her own experience.

*In their interviews students revealed that their choice of characters was determined either because they personally were able to identify with the character or because they knew someone who was similar to the character they choose.*
Similarly, when I met with the group preparing *A Black Woman’s Tale* many of them said that they could relate to the issues addressed in this play, especially the parts about having one’s heart broken. *Theater offers the opportunity for relation. Sidorkin calls for the pedagogy of relations in the classroom where the focus is on relating to others. In students’ journals and monologues the idea of relation was evident. Students pointed out that the lives of the women they studied were completely different from theirs but they related to their emotions such as love, anger, fear as well as their experiences such as, loss of a loved one, and abuse. Women related to the women in the play based on their womanhood. One student wrote in her monologue:*

> here we are a Black woman and a White woman who have been hurt. We are both angry and need to let it all out; we need to express our anger by talking to each other. We may both come from different places and different cultural backgrounds, but we are both women and can relate to each other through bounding as women (student, 2003).

We discussed *A Black Woman’s Tale*, from the point of view that although it is a one woman play, the play tries to embody the whole experience of the Caribbean woman. We examined devices in the play that would alert people to this and we concluded that the writer used different names of characters, language and the actual names of different Caribbean islands in order to show this.

Overall the process of playmaking was not a smooth one; there were some difficulties. Some of the students did not want to work, sometimes I looked around and they had their heads on the desks. There were times when some would fall asleep
especially during the first three weeks of class, this pattern stopped as the weeks progressed. Dominance was also a problem. Some students tried to take charge of their group, leading to group conflicts. Some students did not read the plays and consequently they had problems developing their character. Usually though, the students cooperated and there were signs that they were beginning to understand the socio and cultural dimensions of their plays. For example, during rehearsal with the group preparing *A Coloured Place*, after Larry performed his role Laura asked:

Laura: Should he say that?

Denise: Say what?

Laura: Now I am not White enough before I was not Black enough.

If we are talking about apartheid considering the situation now he should say now I am not Black enough before I was not White enough.

Larry played the role of a Coloured man who was denied a job during apartheid and again during post apartheid.

Whiteness was a theme that arose in class continuously. For example one afternoon after class ended, Guy waited for me and as I packed my bag we began conversing. Guy expressed concern about being discriminated against because he was a White male. He felt that one day this will be the case. He recounted a story of someone who was trying to get a scholarship established for Appalachian students but was turned down because the students were White males. Other students in their journals demonstrated that they were reflecting on issues of White privilege. One student in examining the relationship between himself and the character he portrayed stated “I am
subject to White privilege.” The student is White and the character he portrayed was a Black South African male. Yet another student in his monologue wrote:

I am a middleclass man and I am discriminated against
Do I deserve this? Did I hold a whip and act as overseer on a plantation?
Have I ever made anyone sit at the back of the bus?
Then why am I stereotyped with the people who did?

Similarly another student complained: “I also feel that I am not looked at the same as everyone else because I am White. Please people when equality is being preached mean it for all people.”

Deliberations

After about one and a half weeks of rehearsal time in and out of class the students were ready to perform their mini plays. Performance took place over a period of two days. These plays are detailed in the next chapter. Once the plays were performed in class we spent time reflecting on the performances. *The reflection process is an important stage in performative inquiry because it is through reflection that inquiry into the processes involved in the performances takes place.* We analyzed the use of theater as a dramatization of life and also as voice. I asked students to make a list of all the issues that were addressed in the plays that were performed. The list was as follows:

- Americanization
- AIDS/ HIV
- Apartheid
- Women’s Development
Life in the Ghetto (rape, manslaughter, drugs).

We discussed women to some degree and why women were at the highest risk for HIV and AIDS. We also discussed how women in these societies were affected by Apartheid and poverty. The students stated that there were some similarities with these themes and life in their communities. Apartheid was used as an example. Students said that segregation exists; it is still in the subconscious of people. In their journals I asked them to reflect on ways that the lives of the women in the play impacted them and how their lives affected women and other people living in developing countries. Additionally I asked them to record what they saw as their role/responsibility to people living in other parts of the world.

As we discussed the plays that were read and reenacted, in order to move students to a place where they could see the interconnectedness between the U.S. and other places in the world, an exercise was performed. An exercise was carried out in class which dealt with examining where different items were manufactured. I asked students to look at their possessions- clothes, bags, books etc., and note where they were made. I gave them ten minutes for this investigation. Once the time passed and they indicated they were ready I asked them to report on their findings. A list resulted:

China, El Salvador, Turkey, Bangladesh, Philippines, Pakistan, Senegal, Indonesia, Pakistan, Mexico, Turkey, Korea, Thailand, Darussalam, Cambodia, Italy, U.S.A., Egypt, Vietnam, Martinique, Kenya, Russia, Japan and Macau. As we went through the exercise we tried to locate the various countries on a globe. I inquired about the dependence of students and other citizens in the U.S. on other countries, and some remarked that even
though a lot of things were manufactured outside the U.S., Americans would still survive if production stopped. The conversation shifted to the ongoing war in Iraq and talk of boycotting French goods.

Denise: What would happen if other countries boycotted U.S. goods?

Lela: We would survive. For example even though gas prices have increased people have adjusted.

The conversation on war continued. Some students were silent and some were vocal and said that they supported the U.S. for going into Iraq. One student spoke of his brother in the Army and he was hoping for his return home to celebrate U.S. independence. There were sentiments expressed by students concerning the war. There was a general feeling that the U.S. presence in Iraq was to help the Iraqi people.

I brought in some articles on Liberia to further our discussions. My intent was to use a situation that was taking place in the world at that time. This was to aid in our discussions on how countries like the U.S. impact societies like Liberia, particularly women living in these countries. The class turned out to be more of lecture than a discussion. I tried to discuss the history of Liberia incorporating some African American history particularly issues of slavery and some of the visages of slavery, e.g., repatriation and the Liberian situation. The students listened but did not actively participate in the discussions. From feedback obtained from interviews done later, students reported that part of this was due to them not having knowledge about this situation; they did not feel as though they could participate in the discussion. One student in her interview indicated that for her this was a high point in the class. She explained that she seldom gets
information in class about present world events. After the performance and discussions of the plays from Black women from the Global South, the other weeks were dedicated to creating the final play.

The Final Play

The weeks flew quickly by, and before I realized it we were already in the fourth week of the program. We were only just beginning to work on the final play. This play was to be performed during the Upward Bound award ceremony. Initially, I played with the idea of having the class create three plays, however in the interest of time I decided to do one play, but have different groups of students work on each scene. I asked students to get into three groups and together we created the story for the play; each group was responsible for creating a scene for the play. I wanted to leave the storyline of the play as open as possible, therefore I asked them to think about what we had done in class for the past weeks, the plays and our discussions, and select a theme related to the class.

In order to create the story line I first asked students to come up with a theme for the play and to begin thinking of scenarios that would fit in their theme. The first group was interested in creating a play dealing with diversity. They wanted to explore the types of misunderstandings that often arose when people were trying to learn about each other. The second group wanted to look at differences in communication between urban and rural, developing and developed societies. They stated that they wanted to address “how we may live in different places but face similar situations.” The third group was interested in exploring stereotypes.
At this point in the summer it was difficult meeting with students during study hall because some of them were behind with their other classes and wanted to focus on areas such as Mathematics and English. *Areas such as math, English and science are often given priority over the arts. This is reflected in school funding; the arts programs are among the first to get cut when money is limited. In her interview the tutor/mentor complained that the theater class was only given an hour for class time. She said the time was not enough because just as students arrived it was time for them to leave.*

Additionally some were taking a film class and at this point were trying to film the pieces for a movie. I also had to take into consideration that some of the students did not like acting, but were creative in other ways. For example, some were more interested in learning about lighting and sound while others were very good visual artists. By this time the class size had also dwindled. Some students left the program because of discipline problems, some students were unable to attend the final week because they had prior commitments and yet others just did not want to continue the Upward Bound program.

As a group, we came up with the overall theme for the play. The theme included the concepts that were laid out by each group. From here, we sketched the storyline.

**Theme:** Understanding different cultures. Examining stereotypes and miscommunications.

**Objective:** Establishing common ground.
Common ground was an important focus for students. They wanted to relate to each other. For the students common ground meant coming to an understanding that amidst the differences there were many similarities.

We agreed to use an object as a narrator and this object would travel to different lands at different times to tell a story about diversity. There were several suggestions about where the play should begin. I encouraged the students to incorporate either a Caribbean island and/or African country since this was the focus of the class. Nigeria was suggested as a starting point and then Kemet (Egypt) was suggested. Most of the Caucasian students in the class never heard of Kemet, and although this was not a concept or place we discussed in class, most of the students agreed that they wanted the story to begin there. This way they could learn about Kemet. Performative inquiry takes many twists and turns. I would have preferred if students chose one of the countries we discussed in class. As the teacher I had to make the decision either to insist that we use the countries we discussed or let them decide for themselves. I decided to do the latter because I wanted to democratically include students’ voices and interests. Additionally I took this as an opportunity also to learn about something that I had heard about in passing but did not have a deep knowledge of.

Several suggestions were made regarding what object to use: jewelry, a trophy, jeans, book, suitcase, glove/mitten, shoes, quilt. Finally someone suggested an Ankh. I inquired as to what this was and I was informed that this is known as the original cross and it is Egyptian. Everyone agreed and we decided to continue the development the next day. By the next day I inquired about the roles students would perform – actors,
directors, sound, light and props. Initially I planned for the play to be simple, using very little or no props or technology. However judging from the conversations I was having with students I knew that I had to make some adjustments. Ten students volunteered to be actors and to my delight some students who had initially complained about not liking acting or being too shy quickly volunteered. With that in mind we began developing the story line.

Donnie suggested:

“Well what about this. We are in Kemet. There is an invasion. The missionaries see the Ankh, bring it to the Americas, take the head off and make it into a cross.”

This raised objections from the other students in the class particularly Lela and Ariel. They felt that when the Ankh comes to the U.S. it should be made stronger not have its head taken off. Heated debates ensued:

Student: But that is what happened – the head was removed.

Student: For me I would be more inspired if the culture was not altered. If instead of the pressure to change it grew stronger and stronger.

Student: I feel insulted. I feel as though you are saying that European cultures destroy cultures.

Student: We have to present it the way it was and that’s what happened

Student: Can I not be the director?

Student: Is this supposed to be a historical play?

It was 3pm and it was time for class to end. The air was thick with tension and nothing had been resolved. It was the weekend and I suggested that we think about this some
more and continue on Monday. Sidorkin refers to these moments as dialogic moments. Dialogue is not necessarily when students have discussions in an orderly manner but when they become excited and talk out of turn. Somehow this dialogue touched the feelings of race relations. The story that was being created was fictional but it was laced with issues that were very real. The White students were struggling with the concept that as a group Whites had destroyed many cultures and benefited because of it. Although in their journals students argued that they themselves were not responsible for the oppression of any group they realized that there were part of a group who was responsible and because they had membership because of the color of their skin they had many privileges that people of color do not have. White students grappled with understanding this and some were resistant. However this self reflection is a necessary step toward dialogic relations.

Harry waited for me after class and we walked together. He revealed that he was upset with the suggestion that the Ankh was altered in the U.S. He explained that it was actually done by the Romans. He said that by the time the Ankh showed up in the U.S. it had already been altered. I told Harry that I will have to do some research over the weekend. I confessed that I was not familiar with the Ankh and I would have to find out more. Freire (1998) points out that there is no teaching without learning. Sometimes the roles become reversed, the teacher becomes the learner and the student becomes the teacher.

Cultural tensions had been rising for a long time, but this was the first time I saw an eruption in the classroom. Ms. Jordon, the interim director of Upward Bound, called a
meeting because tension was building both inside and outside the classroom. This meeting was an opportunity for students to tell the staff what they were feeling and what they wanted us to do. All the students gathered in 318 McCracken Hall, and as the meeting began we discovered that some students almost fought in the math class that day. In the meeting the students from the urban Afrocentric school complained that they were tired of being referred to as the “students from the Africentric school.” They argued that since the students from Logan were referred to by their names, why then could this not be the same for them. *A privilege of Whiteness is to be seen as an individual and not lumped into a group* (McIntosh, 1999). *People of color carry the burden of having to interpret everything on behalf of their race whereas this is not the same for Whites.*

A few students from the southeastern Ohio schools voiced complaints about being taught in the Upward Bound program that everything they have was from Africa; it is as though their culture had not done anything that is useful. Donnie then informed these students that now they were getting an idea of what other cultures have to go though learning about European Americans all the time. *Dubois, Malcolm X, hooks, and Bell are examples of scholars who argue that race is one of the most dire problems in American societies. Woodson (1990) argues that schools do not educate, rather they miseducate African Americans. Spring (2004) presents a similar case in his thesis that schooling produces deculturation and robs minority groups of their culture.*

The class came back from the weekend and there was even more opposition about taking off the Ankh’s head, and there was more discussion about the history of the Ankh itself. I had done some reading over the weekend and I explained to the students that
based on what I read there is documentation that the early Greek Christian church
removed the head of the ankh and used this as their cross; it became the Coptic cross. I
asked the students what they wanted to do, if they wanted to choose another symbol. The
students from the Afrocentric school all agreed to use the Ankh. Whereas some of the
White students argued yes, they wanted to use another symbol on the grounds that their
parents were coming to see this play and might not feel comfortable about it. They
expressed that while they had experience with diversity, they didn’t want that thrown in
their parents’ faces. Some felt that we should work with the Ankh but should incorporate
a nice ending, for example, restore the Ankh to its original form. I advised them that this
was their play and it was up to them to create it. If they wanted to change the symbol that
would be fine with me, but I was concerned about having the time necessary to prepare
the play. The students agreed to keep the Ankh, although some did so hesitantly.

Discomfort is often a necessary requirement for learning. They were uncomfortable using
the Ankh because it required that they think about things that they would have preferred
not to think about. They had to think about race and how they and their families might
have played a part in the oppression of someone else.

I felt a little unsettled about the discussion on the Ankh and decided to invite
someone to come in and talk about the Ankh and its history. Performantive inquiry and
process drama have the flexible of allowing outside experts to enter the classroom.

Someone suggested inviting Akil Houston, the film instructor. Mr. Hughey, the
multicultural education instructor, asked if he could be included in the discussion. Dr.
Esiaba Irobi, a professor in Ohio University’s Theater department and member of my
dissertation committee was also present. They informed students that cross-like symbols have been part of almost all cultures. They also agreed that the early Coptic Church used an adaptation of the Ankh. We all listened, but the students had few questions. *I was surprised that there were so few questions and I am not sure what accounts for this. I don’t know if it was because students had already settled in their minds that they would be using the Ankh, or if they felt that since they were the ones who would create the story they would have more control over what happened to the Ankh.* Two of the students who were very vocal in opposing to the use of the Ankh volunteered to be in the final scene of the play. *I believe that they positioned themselves in this space because they would have control over what happened to the Ankh in the end. They wanted to make sure there was a happy ending.*

The last week and a half was spent working on the final plays. It was evident that things were coming to a close. More students began leaving the program while the others who remained were tired; it began getting nearly impossible to schedule meetings outside of class time. But again I spoke to each group performing the different scenes of the play, and we were able to schedule meetings and finish the play.

The groups working on props spent the last few days creating props instead of coming to class. I gave them permission to meet in McCracken library instead of coming to class. It was easier to make and store the props there than in the classroom. Each group had to converse with the technicians to let them know what was required for their particular scene. I asked them to be simple in their requests because resources and time were limited. For the last week of classes my time was spent preparing the actors for the
final piece and I was unable to meet with the other students. I spoke to the lead director and sound director everyday since they were the ones given the responsibility of communicating the needs and concerns of the other students to me.

For the final play the prop technicians created several images for the scenes. The first scene was set in ancient Egypt, and they created a pyramid, sphinx, and obtained cowrie shells. For the second scene they created an imitation of the “American Gothic” painting. They also created the Ankh. The “American Gothic” is a painting that depicts rural America. It was painted by Grant Wood and at the time he was accused of stereotyping people living in rural areas as intolerant and rigid. Grant argued that the image represents Puritan ethics and virtues he believed dignified the Mid Western character (The Art Institute of Chicago, 2004). Many of the images students presented of others were based on the past e.g. pyramid, sphinx. Betty pointed out that most of the students knew very little about their actual history and how their history related to the present. This included both the students from the Afrocentric school and the students attending schools in southeastern Ohio. The students from the Afrocentric school were familiar with aspects of Egyptian history, but that was because it was part of their school curriculum. They did not know much about the situation in Liberia nor about reparations or southeastern Ohio issues. Likewise students from southeastern Ohio did not know about African and African American history but they also had limited knowledge about their own history.

The Ankh was not the only subject of our conversations. There were also discussions on various representations of urban and rural America. For example, Harry
selected to play the role of a White man married to an African American woman in the final play. His character was of Irish descent:

Denise: Where are you from?
Harry: Ireland

Denise: How did you come to the United States?
Harry: There was a famine in Ireland. The cross was given to my family by St. Patrick.

Denise: What did your family do in the U.S.?
Harry: (shrugs shoulder) we had to work hard to get from the bottom to the top. But we made it.

Denise: What type of work?
Harry: Any type of work available.

Denise: Harry you need to be a little more specific about what your family did. Coal mining was one of the popular jobs around. By the time you are finished your audience should have a visual picture of what it was like for your family working in those mines.

Later Harry asked to borrow a CD I brought to class; it was an audio documentary explaining segments of southeastern Ohio history. I spoke to the group about using the history of the area to tell their story. I asked them about the stereotypes of the area. No one answered. I therefore asked them if people living in this area were stereotyped as hillbillies. I also asked about the coal mining history of the area. One of the directors spoke up and said that she thought that coal mining and hillbillies were only associated
with West Virginia. *One of the processes to Americanization is assimilation.*

*Assimilation results in subordinate groups not knowing their own history and culture but buying into mainstream culture and claiming it as their own* (Spring, 2004; Roedigger, 1994). *It was interesting that students did not see themselves as part of a subordinate group; they saw themselves fitting in more with mainstream America. Although these students, with the exception of those from urban Ohio, were from Appalachia they did not see themselves as Appalachians; they saw people from West Virginia as Appalachian; West Virginians were the ”other” not southeastern Ohioans.*

Returning to the play, the students had the final scene set in an urban area. Lela and Ariel were the actresses in this scene; later Donnie was added. I inquired from the group about the story for their scene. They explained that their scene would take place in an urban area that is very poor. Both characters would be members of a gang and they needed a symbol; thus the need for the cross. I asked them how and where they got the cross. They said that one of them would break into the home of the family from the previous scene and steal the cross. I asked this group to consider the type of message they might be sending. *They had been amongst the ones who cautioned us to be careful about the type of messages the play was sending and yet they were constructing an urban scene laden with gangs and thieves.* They thought about it and by our next meeting they had decided to rework their scene; they said that after thinking about it they saw that they were unintentionally buying into stereotypes and they did not want to do so.

Betty and I continued working with each group. We encouraged students to use
theater to tell the story about themselves that they wanted others to hear. In one of the Upward Bound meetings students expressed a desire to have a space to exchange their experiences and knowledge. Donnie and Mary were playing roles of African Americans and I asked them to think about the African American history of the area. How did they get here? What happened when they got here? Lela volunteered that African Americans came looking for work in the coal mines. This was a time when there were mining strikes and the coal miners viewed African Americans as strike breakers. This created enmity between the coal workers and African Americans and in the coal fields African Americans were known as “scabs.” *Theater in the classroom enables students to become experts in the classroom and share their knowledge with others. The other students listened when Lela spoke and incorporated this information into their story.*

The final play was performed on July 29, 2003. I felt content about the journey that the students, Betty and I undertook. This was a play created by the students; they created the sound, lighting and story, and we had learned much along the way. Although it was my intention to have students more engaged in discussing women from developing societies it was not to the extent I had hoped. It could be that this resulted because of the class composition; race was more evident and the unresolved issues of race and culture surfaced. The plays created a space for students to dialogue about matters they felt related to their own lives and experiences. Perhaps this is a necessary step in beginning to relate to others as “I and Thou.”
Summary

This chapter presented a discussion of my findings and overall research experience. During the six weeks of the research my participants and I went on a journey to dialogue. As a researcher I was also involved in the journey. Joe’s question to me, when I asked the students to put back the desk after class finished that day, is evidence of this when he asked: “Are you going to put them back with us?” During this time there was resistance but there was also dialogue. As the students read, reenacted and created their own plays they tried to make sense of themselves and others who constitute their world and ways for linking self with others. The following chapter will discuss the results and interrogate the findings of the research.
CHAPTER SIX

Interrogating the Journey

“We must know where we are coming from to understand how we have come to be where we are” (Conning, p. 21, 1998).

This dissertation addresses the potential for theater of Black women from the Global South to be used as a tool for dialogue amongst students from Appalachian Ohio; it investigates what happens when students engage with these particular theatrical works. Chapter One, Three and Four provided the foundational pieces for this study. Chapter One provided the introduction and summarized the problem, research questions and theories guiding the research. Chapter Two described the methodology of the research. Chapter Three and Four provided the literature review. Chapter Three detailed the literature demonstrating how othering takes place in U.S. societies, and Chapter Four examined how Black women from the Global South have used theater as their mouth piece and the potential use of theater from an oppressed group in the classroom. Chapter Five described the research experience and observations. In this chapter I will complete my analysis and discuss my results.

The following questions guided the present study:

1) What are students’ reactions as they engage in the process of reading and performing the plays of Black women from the Global South, and then creating their own plays?
2) What interactions between self, others and “text” take place as students engage with theatrical works of Black women from the Global South (BWGS)?

3) What is the experience of students responding to issues of power/privilege/oppression raised in the theater of BWGS?

Various methodological devices were used in order to understand the experiences of students as they engaged in the process. This study is an action research project and participant observation, journaling and interviewing were the principal means of data collection. In this chapter I will analyze my data; it was difficult to discuss my findings under specific themes since in many instances themes overlap. For the purpose of reporting this research, I have organized the analysis by each of the three research questions.

**Student Reactions**

The first research question asked about the reactions of students. I defined reactions as physically observable responses exhibited by students as they went through the process. I used Pilcher’s (2001) framework as a guide. She found anger, resistance to change, accommodation to change, and hope were reactions of White students as they engaged with works of Black women from the United States. In the present study the reactions of the students evident to me were:

1) Surprise

2) Confusion
3) Resistance
4) Joking around
5) Defensiveness

I will briefly discuss each of these.

**Surprise**

Students expressed surprise at the class. Through observation and interviews this theme emerged. They were surprised with the way theater was being used and also with the content. In an interview one student remarked:

“That was one thing that kinda threw me off; trying to research and stuff. I didn’t know anything about like modern Africa really and so that was really difficult.” Another student stated:

I’m used to very character based plays, but these weren’t as focused on the characters as they were on the events which I thought was really interesting and I found that even the Africa play that we did that was really different looking at. I thought what is this? Is this a play even? I wasn’t even sure how to read it at first but once I got used to it I understood a little bit well this is a way of communicating though theater from a stage person to person. And also there had been a lot more non comical improvisations which I am also not used to cause usually if we are going to improve something it’s more a personality but here we are improving in character which I have done some of that in the past but it seemed really strange to be doing that in a group.
In the first set of interviews many students explained that they were surprised with the class and were surprised that they liked it. Many had never encountered plays which highlighted Black women from the Global South or for that matter taken a class that dealt with Black women from the Global South. One student from southeastern Ohio stated “I feel enlightened on a topic I have never discussed.” It was therefore surprise that this was the focus of our class. Doughty (2003) point out that in general, schools’ curriculum does not include works from Black women from the Global South. If these women are spoken about at all they are glossed over and exoticized (Mohanty, 1997; Doughty, 2003). I also observed that sometimes associated with surprise was disappointment. Lela explained that:

Definitely for me at first the class was really hard to take because I was expecting something a lot different. I was expecting like our first year theater class; it was more focused on acting skills but this time it was more focused on communicating a message or a culture through theater and I was expecting more of that acting type of thing so that was different. At first it kind of disappointed me because I like acting and then I started getting used to it.

The surprise was sometimes associated with disappointment because students had preconceived notions of what theater is. As one student from southeastern Ohio pointed out “in our theater everything is set out. . . . . I learned that there are a lot of different types of theater that what I have ever done. The theater of Black Women from the Global South therefore offered students an opportunity to see things from a different perspective.
Confusion

In addition to surprise, confusion was another reaction witnessed. Confusion arose because students were not accustomed to the plays. They were confused about the content and the format of the plays. One student confided that although he was an avid theater student the plays he had previously encountered were scripted and all he had to do was memorize his lines. He wanted to be told what to do. Betty also made reference to students who had difficulty with improvisation. She pointed out one student from southeastern Ohio who said “just tell me what to do and I will do it.” This supports Freire’s argument about banking education, a type of education that does not encourage students to think. The teacher is seen as all knowing and is solely responsible for passing on that knowledge; the responsibility of the students is to receive all the knowledge being transferred. The problem with this system is that the students are considered as having no knowledge; their experiences are not taken into consideration. In the banking system of education, is robotic in one sense – information is put in and the expected output is a regurgitation of what has been taught in class. As a result students begin to expect precise instructions at all times without much engagement in creativity or critical thinking.

While some confusion resulted because of the creative approach of the class some plays caused less confusion than others amongst the students. *A Black Woman’s Tale* created the least confusion, an all women’s group read and reenacted the play, and they quickly embraced the play. As one of the students who was involved in the reenactment of that play explained “I understood a lot of the experiences; I connected really well with
most of them.” She felt that she was able to connect with the experiences of women from the Global South. A reason for why the play seemed less confusing could be because the group was able to quickly identify similarity of experiences that comes from being a woman. This is a basic tenant of feminism that all women have similar experiences (Collins, 1998). Additionally since the group comprised an all woman cast, it might have been easier for the young women to openly discuss and share their experiences. The theatrical format used in class provided a medium for students to voice their concerns and experiences. The format followed the “theater of the oppressed” that aims at empowering those who are oppressed by encouraging dialogue (Boal, 1979).

On the contrary, students struggled to understand and recreate *A Coloured Place*, *Voices from the Ghetto* and *Living Positively*. The confusion however assisted student learning because they had to research and dissect the plays in order to understand what was going on (Palmer, 1998). Betty, the tutor/mentor described how theater contributed to the learning process:

I see it [theater] as a necessity. I think it cuts across barriers and that’s a good way of doing it through theater because, theater it’s the one way where everybody can see how themselves and others are alike. Not that all Black people wear bandanas and are in gangs or that all White people are politicians or poor White trash. Don’t stereotype! Not just theater, but also film and TV – but theater has the potential of making people work together. The arts focus on a lot of emotion. Betty's comments are important in understanding how theater helps students move beyond cognitive learning. The emotional learning that is involved in theater adds to the
cognitive learning which are both important in understanding other cultures. These aspects of theater support Maxine Greene's argument of the need for an education which seeks to understand others; that seeks to put oneself in another person's position. Through emotion we understand others and their feelings, and it is these feelings which are the spring board for action.

In their evaluations students stated learning about different cultures was one of the positives of the class, even though at first some complained that the class was too focused on these cultures. The learning that occurred was evident in students’ journals. One student wrote: “I have never had the view of a Coloured person, in this class I did.” Another stated: “I feel enlightened on a topic I have never discussed.” And yet another said: “It reminded me that I have the power to help myself when I am a victim.”

Not only was learning evident though journals but also revealed in interviews. The tutor/mentor observed: “I think they are still learning. I don’t think it’s done. The play is not truthfully done being written.” One of the students explained:

It [the theater class] was different to the ones I am used to. I learned a lot about more other culture through theater how we as Americans see others and about other countries like the Global South. In our theater everything is set out; like one angle that people are getting and it is not usually monologue; its usually dialogue. I learned that there are a lot of different types of theater than what I have ever
done. The play, the first one that we put on, *A Black Woman’s Tale*, there were all monologues about different people lives.

One of theater’s attributes is the team building experience that helps students learn from each other (Fels & McGivern, 2002). Several students highlighted the contribution of other students to their learning. One said, “I think I learned from my classmates from seeing how they approached the different plays and especially when we are developing our play.” Another said,

I’ve been around people with different opinions before but not with the people who were in our class because they have a different kind of opinion and I liked having to understand their opinion but at the same time I didn’t like having to understand their opinion cause I wanted to stay with mine but I did like having to open up to another idea and having to compromise more it made me grow as a person.

A third student explained the value of learning from their fellow students.

I got more out of the class from what happened with the people than from what was in there. The whole way the groups were set up, we knew that there was diversity in our group and sometimes we got into controversial stuff and there is more of what people see it as than what it just is and the way that you were teaching us is more where you telling us to figure it out ourselves you ask us questions and answer us with questions.
Having these different interactions and hearing these different points of views on one level created confusion; students were exposed to perspectives that they never heard, however this contributed greatly to learning.

Each student brought to the group their own unique experience and through theater their experience was acknowledged. This is because theater places students in the center (O’Neil, 2001; Bolton, 1984; Heathcote & Bolton, 1995). The students from the Afrocentric school were able to share their knowledge of their history, for example, by incorporating the Ankh in the play. The students from Appalachia Ohio were also able to share with the group their knowledge. This exchange was noted in all the plays. In the first reenactment students negotiated their experiences with members of the group and those in the written plays; that is Black women from the Global South, in order to make sense of the plays. For example in their performance of *A Coloured Place*, in order to retell the story to the class, the group used a woman who was watching TV. As their protagonist changed, different scenes were depicted. Lela pointed out in her interview that the TV is an icon of American life and it is through this means that many Americans learn about themselves and other cultures.

*A Coloured Place* is based in South Africa but the students drew an analogy between the problems of race in South Africa and the U.S.

*(Enters Jimmy and the storeowner).*

Jimmy: *(mimes rapping on a door).*

Storeowner: *(Using Southern accent).* Come on in here boy.

Jimmy: Hello Sir *(Comes in and shakes hand with the storeowner).*
Storeowner: Have a seat.

Jimmy: Ok. (Sits).

Storeowner: I want to talk to you.

Jimmy: Ok.

Storeowner: Well you see son we got a little problem.

Jimmy: Problem?

Storeowner: You got great experience, very qualified but the problem is you are a little over qualified.

Jimmy: Overqualified?

Storeowner: See we are not really looking to hire anyone right now.

Jimmy: If I am over qualified why don’t I get the job right now?

Storeowner: Its just . . . look at it this way. Come back in three months . . .

Jimmy: Three months? (Gets up). That’s it man! (Frustrated). It’s the Whiteness in us that Blacks can’t accept and the blackness in us that Whites can’t accept. In the past we weren’t White enough, and now we can’t get a job because we are not black enough. (Turns away frustrated; both leave stage).

The character Jimmy in the students’ reenactment is not in the actual written play. The type of discrimination Jimmy experienced is in many ways similar to racial discrimination in the U.S. The shop owner has a southern U.S. accent, but the students are able to tie this in with the experience of people of color in the U.S. In the U.S., the term Coloured is an old term referring to Black people; it is usually considered to be a racist term. In the South African play, a Coloured refers to someone who is of mixed
racial heritage usually Black and White. It could be that the word triggered student’s sense of racial discrimination in the U.S. hence their reference to this form of injustice. It could also be that the presence of African Americans in the class heightened students’ awareness of the need to talk about race and racial injustice not only in South Africa, but also in the U.S.

Working in groups assisted the learning process and students demonstrated a desire to learn about others. It was observed that in the final play, the African American actors who were all from urban areas, volunteered to create and act in the scene which depicted rural Ohio. While those from rural Ohio volunteered for the scene based in an urban center. To facilitate the creation of these two scenes the two groups learned about each other and demonstrated willingness to listen to each other; they respected each other as an authority on their culture and place.

The type of classroom that evolved through the use of theater is in line with Dewey’s (1900) idea of the student centered classroom. Dewey argues that the classroom often fails to reflect student experiences. He says that the world the students experiences outside the classroom if often every different from the world inside the classroom. Student centered classrooms are classrooms where the focus is on students and what students want and need to learn. Freire’s idea of emancipatory education supports the call for student centered classrooms. In these classrooms students are not only fed information, but their lived experience is incorporated into the classroom. The form of theater used during these six weeks with the Upward Bound students moved the classroom from one that provided a “banking” form of education. The classroom bore
signs of emancipatory classrooms as students began learning about others and questioning themselves.

When this type of environment is created dialogue is possible. For example when we first began creating the scenes, the urban scene mirrored the stereotypical depiction of urban areas – high crime rate, thieves, and drugs. I met with the students and asked them to think a little bit more about the images they were creating. By the next meeting they had changed their original scenario. In a later conversation with two of the group members they explained that they thought some more about the scene and they realized that they were guilty of stereotyping others and they wanted to be more diligent in presenting images that were not stereotypes. They had critically examined themselves which is part of the internal dialoguing process that makes it possible to begin dialoging with others. Confusion, pedagogy, content and the students themselves aided in creating a classroom that embraced dialogue.

Resistance

The process of reading, performing and creating was not an easy one; there was resistance at various stages along the way. Resistance was another reaction exhibited by students. At first they were resistant to being told what they should do by myself as an instructor. By the second day of class we had discussed the meaning and importance of theater and at the end of the class I asked students to put back their desks in place. The majority of the class did, but some complained and resisted.

“Are you going put them back with us?” Joe asked. Some shrugged their shoulders and walked out the class without moving a single desk. Interestingly, the Black
students in the class were quicker in verbalizing their resistance, whereas the resistance of White students was not as obvious. Their resistance was voiced amongst their peers and with the tutor mentor. Their resistance showed up through complaining. For example in the evaluation forms some complained that we spent too much time on the theater of Black women from the Global South and that we should have incorporated other cultures.

White student resistance became more vocal during the creation of the final scene. They were resistant to the idea of using the Ankh. Students complained that using the Ankh suggested that European cultures destroyed other cultures. They were also resistant to reality; they wanted to portray race relations in a more positive light. They wanted to produce a play that matched Hollywood’s “feel good” notions of race relations. In the discussions about the final play students argued about the fate of the Ankh. When we first began discussing the use of the Ankh in the play one of the students from the Afrocentric school suggested that the Ankh should be destroyed after the invasion of Kemet. Some became very angry; they argued that this does not have to be a portrayal of the actual history of the Ankh. They thought it would be better to formulate a story line where the Ankh was preserved in its original state. Students were resistant because it forced them to deal with reality; they had to deal with how they have participated in the injustices that have taken place and they were uncomfortable with what the implications of this would mean.

Pilcher (2001) tells us that this reaction could lead to transformation. Her study investigates White students reaction when the literature of Black women from the U.S. was introduced in their classroom. She notes that rarely do students deal with
controversial issues in the classroom. However when faced with these situations they often resist through emotions such as anger, which is a resistance mechanism. This resistance should not be viewed negatively since there is the possibility of transformation when students resist, but for this to occur students must begin to question their own resistance.

The classroom using theater of Black women from the Global South provided a safe space for questioning self. Students performed their roles in character, hence they were willing to reveal more of themselves because they could hide behind their characters, they felt safe to some extent. The journals and discussions helped students to begin critically examining their characters and how much of themselves is revealed through their character. They then had the option to reveal the connection between themselves and their character to the class or only to the teacher/researcher in their journals. This safety net enabled them to reveal more of themselves. But even though theater provided a safe environment there was still resistance.

*Defensiveness*

Resistance showed up through defensiveness. White students, in particular often became defensive. I was amazed at how students personalized and analyzed the symbolism of the Ankh and how they felt that they had to defend the actions of their ancestors. They were quick to point out that they were not personally involved in slavery or any form of discrimination. Students became defensive because they felt threatened. Some felt threatened to the extent that they positioned themselves to be in scenes where they would have control over deciding the ending of the play. This could be viewed as
positive from the standpoint that students were determined to rectify the injustices of the past. The problem was however that they had not accepted as yet how they benefited because of the past and the role they could play in the present and the future. By the end of the final play students began to understand their responsibilities. In the final scene after the Ankh was destroyed each character accepted their role in the destruction of the Ankh/ cross, but what was even more important was that they realized that everyone had to work together in recreating the Ankh. Consider again the common struggle the students created in their play.

(Ariel and Lela each grab onto the cross. They and Donnie struggle for a few moments and suddenly all loose their grasp and the cross falls to the floor breaking into many pieces. The three stand and stare suddenly realizing the harm of their words and actions. They all drop to their hands and knees and begin picking up pieces muttering “I’m sorry, I’m so sorry” to each other).

Ariel: I’m so sorry . . . I don’t know what I was thinking (holds several pieces out to Donnie as if offering them to him) I had no right to fight like that. This isn’t mine.

Donnie (shakes head). Well it isn’t mine either. It belonged to my parents before me. And their before them. And their parents before that, most likely. All the way back to . . . who knows.

Lela (quietly laughing) It’s kind of funny isn’t it? I mean we’ve all had this connection the whole time and we didn’t even realize it.
Ariel: Yeah I had worried that our differences would keep us apart you know?
And we are here fighting over that we have in common.

*(They all laugh quietly. There is a silent pause as they all reflect).*

Donnie: Well, I guess it’s time we started putting these pieces back together

*(They gather around the table and reach toward the center beginning to put the pieces together).*

Lx: *(begin to lower as the group begins the process).*

The final part of the play symbolizes the acknowledgement that everyone bears responsibility in recreating a world that is socially just for all. As students demonstrated at the end of the play, dialogic relations is needed for this to be accomplished.

Instances of defensiveness were also observed when we discussed images of media and the way Black were portrayed. White students challenged the idea that Blacks were often portrayed as criminals (Entman & Rojecki (2002). They said that increasingly Latinos were the ones portrayed in a negative light and not Blacks. I agreed that Latinos were also stereotyped and portrayed negatively in the media, but Latinos are also people of color and in the U.S., society groups people as White or Black. Roedigger (1994) points out that race is an invented category; it does not necessarily mean an African American; it means someone darker than oneself. Even though this is the case, African Americans are still the ones who are most discriminated against even by immigrants groups who are of color. They differentiate themselves from African Americans even though they are also people of color; this is part of the Americanization or Americanism process (Malcolm X, 1964 Dubois, 1997; Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 1991; Sacks, 1998).
This is the process where groups are chosen as inferior so that others could occupy privileged positions.

It was interesting to note the defense mechanisms students employed. No one had pointed to them particularly but from their reactions it would appear as though they felt we were directly accusing them. It could be the students were on guard because of the presence of the students from the Afrocentric school. They were in a classroom with Black people and from their reactions it would seem that they took the responsibility of defending their race. Perhaps the findings would have been different if the students from the Afrocentric school were not present.

Joking around

Even as students employed resistance and defensive mechanisms they also exhibited other reactions. Often students reacted by joking around in class. This was a theater class and somehow it seemed as though they felt this was one of the less serious classes. This attitude of students mirrored the school system. Theater is among the first to get cut from the school curriculum when school funding becomes difficult for school districts. Many of the students in the Upward Bound program attend schools where funding is problematic and many of them revealed that theater is not part of their school curriculum. Over the course of this research project, there were some occasions when students slept in class. There were times when instead of working, they were laughing and talking about their personal business. There were also some students who repeatedly failed to read their scripts and turn in their journal assignments. In her interview, Betty, alluded to the way theater is perceived. She observed that theater occupied such a small
portion of student activities in the Upward Bound program when in actuality theater is an essential component of learning.

If I wanted to become a teacher I don’t want to do it at regular school. I want to do it as at Performing Arts School. Because watching these kids have to deal with so much English so much Math all the regular classes and then us getting, the performing arts getting, the smallest amount of time; only one hour. Only four hours all together while other classes are getting two hour time blocs instead of one hour I just kinda felt like we were put on the back burner. I feel that the arts are just as important as Math as English.

Students made remarks pertaining to this issue in interviews, journals and also through the evaluation they completed at the end of the program. They complained that there was not enough time for theater. Some indicated that theater was not taught at their school; while others stated that with the pressure to complete coursework and excel in other classes they did not have time for theater.

While the general school curriculum seems not to embrace theater as a worthwhile discipline, studies indicate that theater is an asset in increasing students learning of subjects such as English and Math (Eisner, 1974, 1994, 2002). This is because the theater along with the other arts improves critical thinking, imagination, reasoning skills and discipline which is necessary to excel in these other subject areas. The students in this study and other research studies show that theater and the arts in general are important to the whole development of students and creating classrooms that are empowering and emancipatory. The students in this study and literature emphasizing
the arts and its effectiveness in the classroom report that it is one of the smallest, least
important areas of school – so herein lies a contraction. Theoretically there is support for
education that is empowering but in practice a tool that could make this possible is not
couraged in the classroom or schools.

The lack of emphasis on pedagogy that would encourage empowerment, e.g. theater, suggests that in general schools are not interested in empowering marginalized
groups. Instead the present forms of education privilege the few. Changing this structure
would disrupt the status quo, hence it is kept the way it is to ensure that the powerful
remain powerful. Leistyna and Woodrum (1999) along with Spring (2004) tell us that
education has led in some cases to deculturization and miseducation (Woodson 1990;
Asante, 1998, 1999; hooks, 1994). This form of education encourages passivity; critical
thinking is not encouraged. It is this passivity that is sometimes found in the classroom
and may be a reason why students in the general classroom find difficulty in connection
with others. Pilcher (2001) describes this disconnect as reaching a crisis situation in the
U.S. She advises that one way to solve this problem is by creating spaces for “honest
talk.” Theater, particularly the theater of Black women from the Global South facilitates
this honest talk; voice throwing is an outcome of this form of theater.

Regarding the joking around observed in class, as a teacher I viewed joking
around as negative, however Sidorkin (1999) offers another interesting perspective. He
speaks of “third spaces” as fostering dialogic relations. “Third spaces” refers to places
such as taverns and coffeehouses that function as places for conversation. “Third spaces”
solve as spaces for “just hanging out” (p. 137). An important attribute of “third spaces”
is that they invite the stranger in to share in the dialogue; it is not an exclusive space. Sidorkin relates the notion of “third spaces” to Carnival and states that in democratic societies people need places where they can be free, a type of “utopian outlet” where they are not forced to behave. This ability to break away from norms and conventions is important in creating dialogic relations because people engage in the practice of freedom. The theater class therefore served as a “third space” and offered opportunities for dialogue as I will describe next.

An example of the creation of “third spaces” was the third day of class after experiencing resistance from students. I went to class and had a conversation with students explaining why I asked them to do certain things, especially put the desks back after class. Once this was done I asked each person to state how he/she expected to be treated in the class both by the teacher and from their fellow students. This conversation laid the ground work for creating a “third space.” Students were more open and felt comfortable. The discussion followed a game that involved dancing – this is when the third space occurred. Students participated in this dance and there was a non-verbal exchange between the students and myself. There were times during the dance when they wanted to be the initiators and other times when they wanted to be taught; the dance allowed for this structure. This was perhaps one of the most dialogic moments that occurred in the class. Students spoke to each other and revealed their fears. The environment of the class changed as the tension lightened. The class discussion marked the beginning of the dialogue and it continued during the dance. There was cooperation between students and there was laughter; we all enjoyed the moment with each other.
Students often brought up this moment in our conversations and often asked to repeat the activity.

The class served as a third space, but so did the dance. Bowers and Buzzanell (2002) speak of a similar situation when they and their students experienced a dialogical moment. In their study they used theater as a way of addressing issues of race, gender and class among teens. They describe dialogical moments as “those rare instances in which individuals transcend the ordinary circumstances of their lives through talk” (p.35). They also indicate that the dialogical moment is spiritual because it exposes one to a world beyond the physical and emphasizes the need for wholeness, a need for connecting oneself with others in order to be whole. The results of my research however indicate that dialogical moments are possible not only through talk, but also other activities that involved interaction particularly through the use of the body, e.g. dance. This might be because actions are sometimes able to reach places where words are just not enough. Through the arts students and I were able to experience dialogical moments, moments through which we could sense some connection between others in the room and ourselves. The interaction between others, self and text was particularly useful in experiencing the dialogical.

*Interacting with Self, Other and Text*

The second question of my research looked at the interactions between self, others and text that took place throughout the class. I answered this question by examining
where students raised concern about self and others. They were several themes that emerged as a result of this inquiry. These were:

1) Representation of the “other.”
2) Representation of Self.
3) Interactions with other in class.
4) Interactions with others in the text (characters).

*Representation of the “Other”*

This theme emerged as I asked students to discuss in their journals what came to mind when they heard mention of Africa and the Caribbean. This is an extract of students’ responses:

- “When I hear of the word Caribbean I think of beaches, tropical fruits, islands and palm trees.”
- “Tourism.”
- “Drugs.”
- “Reggae.”
- “How Stella got her Grove back.”
- “Happy people.”

When students were asked about what came to mind when they thought of Africa students cited:

- “Savannah and all types of Animals”
- “I would love to go to Africa to take a Safari”
- “Hot, humid place with many desserts. Everything thing there is strong.”
One person in their journal entry mentioned the people of Africa as less assimilated to Western cultures. In their journal entry plotting a scene about African women one person wrote: “My theme would be why they get lip plates and all I really know is that it attracts the men if they have big lip plates.” Another student from southeastern Ohio wrote: “Excellent education since Alexander the Great was educated here.” Yet another stated: “Disease, many people and cultures.”

The responses in students’ journals support existing literature about the ignorance of students of other cultures. Many of the images seen in students’ journals are in line with portrayals of people from the Global South. There were the stereotypical images of the African safari and animals. Little was mentioned of the people. With the exception of one person, when students referred to people living in Africa and the Caribbean they resembled the images presented by the media. For example, students perceived Caribbean people as happy, and lip plates worn by African women was an image used to depict African women. The images presented are typical of images shown on channels such as National Geographic; this channel usually focuses on the exotic and unusual, and movies such as *How Stella got her Groove Back*. What I also came to realize from reading students’ responses was that although my study focused on Black women from the Global South, students tended to “otherize” all people from Africa and the Caribbean regardless if they were men or women.

As students prepared their plays to be viewed by other members of the class their representation of the “other” also became evident. There was a situation where I asked one of the students from southeastern Ohio to think about the vocation of his character.
After several moments he stated that he thought that his character was a hunter since after all he was South African. Students’ notions of Africa and the Caribbean are in line with the literature reviewed where Africa was viewed as a region in need of development, and the Caribbean is viewed as touristic (Cudjoe, 2001; Okoye, 1977; Putullo, 1996). However it should be noted that not all students depicted the Caribbean and Africa in this manner. One student from southeastern Ohio spoke of Alexander the Great receiving his education in Africa. Additionally the students from the Afrocentric school described Africa as the “motherland.” For them Africa represented a place of wealth and knowledge. My assumption is that school curricular choices have a large impact on what students know, value and feel.

The curriculum of the Afrocentric school taught students to value Africa, particularly African history. Their images were therefore different than most of the students living in southeastern Ohio who were not exposed to this type of curriculum. *Tarzan in the Classroom* discusses that even today American students remain ignorant about Africa. I argue that it is not only Africa, but also other parts of the world as well, particularly areas of the Global South. Realistic content is not taught in the classroom and media continue to supply most of the information students receive about the international world. These images are misleading and tend to “miseducate.” This is certainly the case for the students, particularly those from southeastern Ohio, who participated in this present study.
The “other” was not confined to African and Caribbean peoples; representation of the other was also found in the way students’ depicted urban and rural life. In their final play students highlighted some of the stereotypes pertaining to this:

“It’s just . . . well most country folk don’t understand the magnitude of the issues we deal with here. It becomes a bit too much for them.”

Mainstream curriculum, which is the curriculum in the southeastern Ohio public schools, is limited when it comes to relating and learning about others. It seems that somehow difference leads to devaluation instead of an appreciation of someone’s uniqueness.

Additionally I observed that in the final play Africa was portrayed in a historical perspective whereas the urban and rural area scenes were portrayed in present times. Buber (1955) points out that one of the examples of “I-It” relationship is when the other is presented historically and the connection between the then and now is not made. He states “true beings are lived in the present, the life of objects is in the past” (p.13). This showed up with the students from Appalachian Ohio and also with the students from the Afrocentric school. The results observed here could be a result of how school presents knowledge. While the Afrocentric school is providing a rich historical understanding of identity for students, it appears perhaps that it is not connecting present lives and events. It would seem that the schools in southeastern Ohio, are doing neither.

The students from the Afrocentric school were very aware of Africa in a historical perspective, but not present day Africa. Betty, the tutor/mentor also observed a similar phenomenon. In an interview she stated:
Though a lot of Africentric kids . . . they didn’t know anything that wasn’t . . . it wasn’t that they researched on their own. It was something that their teacher told them. They didn’t know the whole history of the Ankh, they didn’t know what reparations were; Donnie was trying to give you an explanation. That’s the one thing I really remember. They say yeah they understand; a lot have heard it before; but even they didn’t really understand. And these are things they talk about every day of the year at the Africentric school. They didn’t even know about Liberia.

Betty’s observation raises question about the students who followed an Afrocentric curriculum.

Afrocentricity concerns linking Africans to their classical past and giving prominence to the role of Africa in past civilizations and as well as in present times (Asante, 1998). This is an extremely important element for African youths in the U.S. bearing in mind the history of African Americans in the U.S. and the way Africa is portrayed in the media. African Americans and other people of African descent need to be aware of their African history, but they also need to be aware of present day Africa. My observations of the students who were engaged in an Afrocentric curriculum suggests that further investigation is needed to see if their curriculum addresses historical and present day Africa. In my observations I found that the students in the class from the Afrocentric school were more taken up with Africa’s past than Africa’s present. This is important because there must be a way to connect the past and the present; the two are connected. Muhammad usually points to the interrelatedness between the past and the
present when he says “the past is in the present and the present in the past” (personal communication, 2000). My observations of these students suggest the need for a holistic education of Africa and not only a focus on Ghana, Ethiopia and Egypt. This has particular implications for dialogue. While identity is linked to history the “I-Thou” dialogic moment occurs in the present. Buber makes the argument that when one continually refers to things or people in the past we relate to them as “I-It,” they are viewed as objects and not as an equal. The African proverb “I am because we are” also reinforces the idea of relation existing in the present, just as I am in the present, so are we.

There is need for an Afrocentric curriculum as practiced by the Afrocentric school in this study. The Eurocentric nature of mainstream school curriculum mandated the need for an Afrocentric curriculum, one in which Africa and African history is placed at the center of classroom learning. Understanding African history which is also a component of African American history is necessary given the experiences of African Americans and other ethnic minority groups living in a society where they have been denied this knowledge of their rich history. It would seem as though the curriculum of the Afrocentric school has been successful in educating its students about African history, however my interaction with this group of students suggests that there is the need for the next step – to link the past with the present in order to experience the “I-Thou” relationship.
Representations of Self

In addition to representations of the “other,” representation of self was present in students’ journals and also in students’ monologues. The following is taken from one of the monologues students wrote. “I don’t get scholarships because I am not a minority and I am not poor. Where do I fit in? People automatically assume that I have the money to support myself in school. I am 17 years old and I am already $12,000 in debt.” Representation of the self was also present in the mini plays students performed pertaining to issues of adolescence as evidenced by this excerpt:

“Why are you always playing with those other girls?” asks the White young woman. (She is seated next to an African American male).

“What girls?” responds the male

(Another person approaches the couple and the female turns to talk to this person. At the same time another girl walks up to the male character and begins telling him a secret).

“What the. … ?” irritantly questions the girl friend as she separates the two.

The teacher (played by one of the students) states “class is ended” just as a fight was about to break out.

(The students begin leaving the classroom and the girl friend confronts the other girl who was whispering in her boyfriend’s ears. She warns her to leave her boyfriend alone. The play ends with the characters leaving the stage and the boyfriend hugging someone else).

Clearly, students used theater as a way for addressing issues pertaining to them.
Theater provided students a medium to use their experiences and knowledge. This demonstrated how the role of student and teacher must be flexible (Freire, 1998). For example, in the final play the students from the Afrocentric school became the teachers. They were the ones who informed the other students and the teacher about the history and importance of the Ankh. They also wrote the major part of the script for the part of the Ankh. For example in the first scene the Ankh is described and the importance of both genders in African societies is represented through the Ankh:

Hey you there! Yes I am talking to you. Do you know what I am? I am an Ankh. I hold a lot of importance to the people of Kemet. My angular top represents the Womb of a woman and my bottom represents the reproductive organ of the man. Together they give life. That is what I mean; I represent eternal life.

Another example of students using their knowledge is found in the final scene. In the final scene of the final play the characters were talking to each other about activities they have been involved in:

Donnie: (sighs) Busy, I’ve been trying to put together a petition about this school funding issue *(He keeps glancing at the cross).*

Ariel: I’ve been following that. It’s becoming a big issue around here. Some of our schools are so poor they can barely keep us with the state requirements.

Donnie: Exactly, I just feel that with better funding, these kids can have more equality in their classes and extracurricular programs. Then, they could go out and do something with the skills they gain.

Ariel and Lela: I agree
The students were able to use theater in the same manner Black women from the Global South used theater; they were also able to throw their voices. They designed plays that demonstrated that they were knowledgeable about issues pertinent to their lives. Funding of schools is a major issue for many of the communities of southeastern Ohio (Kozol, 1991). Urban schools also experience similar issues of funding and the students were able to connect these pieces of the puzzle together. Ariel and Lela were from areas in southeastern Ohio and Donnie from an urban area. They were able to understand that by working together experiences can be merged and problems solved.

As much as students had knowledge of certain issues they seemed to lack an understanding of their own history. Woodson (1990) describes the miseducation of the Negro, but it would appear as though Negroes are not the only ones “miseducated” but students living in low income brackets of society. This does not negate the unique oppression of African Americans. Woodson (1990), Spring (2004) and Asante (1998) highlight how education has been used as an oppressive mechanism. Yet Friere (2000) argues that education should be emancipatory. People need to receive an education that encourages them to critically reflect on their lives, history and situation. Recall the student who remarked that she thought Appalachia was West Virginia, that Appalachia did not include portions of Ohio. The education this student received seems not to have encouraged her to be a critical thinker.

Additionally when the final play was being created a student was playing the role of a father from rural southeastern Ohio. When I asked him to talk about his character and how he got to Ohio he said that he was Irish and his family moved to the U.S.
because of the potato famine. He continued that they came to the U.S., worked hard and they made it. I asked him what type of work his character did and he did not know. I asked him if he knew about the coal mining history of this area and the types of environments people had to work in and he was at a complete loss. Someone then said that they thought that coal mining was only in West Virginia.

The students latched onto mainstream ideas of history. They appear to have learned mainstream history, yet did not know their own particular history. Macedo (1996) discusses the pedagogy of lies and how it is constructed so that people will not think critically. Students are taught how to be “American.” The views of what it means to be American are based on the foundational views of what Americans should be laid down by early European immigrants (Gollnick & Chin, 2000). Ideas of who is an American is formulated based on race and secondly on class. Gender was also an important part, but in my study students did not appear to be as concerned with gender as a distinguishing factor as race. Race seemed to be more of a concern for students.

Americans who are considered as “other” based on economic status continue to receive an education that highlights race as a divisive force. Garvey and Ignatiev (1997) state that it is only when low income Whites understand how race has been created and begin to analyze their own position that the work for a better world will begin. The problem however is that unless these Whites who fall within the low income status begin to understand how they are interrelated to other groups and how oppression at any level affects them, they may not engage themselves in the struggle. They are White and are subject to White privilege, and seek to safeguard this privilege (Garvey & Ignatiev,
Based on my research findings and the literature on the subject I believe that unless Whites of a low economic class understand that by keeping others oppressed they give more power to the powerful and oppress themselves in the process, race will always remain a barrier in bridging the gap.

**Identity**

*Womanhood.*

Another theme raised was identity. Womanhood is an example of an issue discussed by students. Some of the female students in their monologues addressed women’s issues particularly as it related to love, and often they spoke of men having broken their hearts. They wrote of their experiences as women in their societies:

Kyra: . . . Do you want to know my experiences with the men in cultures? . . .

Men are generally good in my culture. I just always seem to attract the ones that are manipulative. The ones who take advantage of naïve women. The last man I had made a fool of me. He fed me lines of happiness while taking advantage of me. He lied to my face. My innocence made me sheltered. My innocence made me blind to my surroundings. Through everything I’ve gone through, I’ve always been honest and true. I let my guard down for a man I thought I could trust, but he just walked all over me and did what he wanted. Once I realized what was going on it was too late, he had already left me heartbroken and lost (Tani, 2003)

Another student wrote in her monologue:

I tried comforting her by sharing my own story with her. I told her that I had been stood up, hopelessly in love with a foolish boy too. Her heart was broken just like
mine has been. He had left me for another woman just like her lover had” (Tanya, 2003).

Single headed homes were another issue mentioned in monologue entries: “You don’t know how much I have been through trying to keep us as a family after your father left.” The majority of female students commented on womanhood; specifically they addressed their situation as American women and how similar or different they were in comparison to the characters in the plays written by women from the Global South.

I think it’s clear that I have much more power in my position because women are not legally controlled by men in my society. I do not have to be subordinate to any of the men in my life. I have the privilege of security and loves. And if I don’t succeed at that at first I have the power of choice to escape it (Lela, 2003).

The plays enabled the young women in the class to think about their own experiences and how it related to women from the Global South. The men never really exchanged experiences along gender lines with the characters in the play. The closest they came was connecting though giving advice.

Americanism/ Nationalism.

Another part of their identity students addressed was their Americaness. The White students in the class were more vocal about this aspect of their identity than the Black students. As described by Ellison (1970), Morrison (1992), Du Bois (1997), and Malcom X (1963, 1964) African Americans have never been treated as U.S. citizens. The U.S. has been a country where the degree of U.S. citizenship has been based on race. Macolm X observes that even though African Americans have been in the U.S. longer
than other immigrant groups such as the Italians; the latter were more quickly considered Americans than were African Americans. It was apparent from class discussions that some of the African American students felt that even though they were born in the U.S., they still did not have all the privileges as the White groups in American society. Their living situation is not the same as for Whites, particularly educational opportunities. The sentiment of the African American students can be understood by bearing in mind that the year 2004 marked the 50th anniversary of the Brown vs. Board of Education which ended school segregation based on color. Although this law was passed fifty years ago, segregation continues. Tatum (1997) confirms that segregation has been on the rise since the early 1900’s. Entman and Rojecki (2002) report that while material conditions have improved for African Americans since the 1960’s, racial identity remains an important component of social appraisal and, continues to disadvantage Blacks while benefiting Whites. Bell (1992) tells us that segregation continues and is evidenced by most Blacks living apart from Whites and lagging behind in income, housing, health and education.

The views of the students from southeastern Ohio were different from those living in the urban area; they fully claimed their Americaness. One student from southeastern Ohio wrote in his journal:

I am also looked at differently because I actually love this country and trust the country that I am living in. That makes me a follower and one who can’t make his own decisions. I love this country because of the economic benefits it has given to my family for the span of my entire life. I don’t bash it for what it has done in the past. I look at what it has done for me and what it continues to do for
people everyday. You can’t show me a person who actually has never benefited from living here. If you can I will shut my mouth. I just don’t believe in a country that I can’t trust. If I want to live in an apartment building but I don’t trust the landlord, I go somewhere else.

This student complained because to claim his Americaness was perceived as negative. But in claiming his Americaness he neglected the many groups who suffered so that others can enjoy the privilege he enjoys. He writes of economic benefits, but at the same time he falls within a low income category, since part of the criteria for Upward Bound participants is low income status. This perhaps indicates a lack of historical consciousness.

Other students spoke of their Americaness and national pride. In an interview with Lela she stated that she appreciated watching the video of National Pride by Singing Sandra. She said that she felt that Americans need to embrace their country more and not be so quick to critique it. From my observations students knew about the national symbols of the U.S. but they were not familiar with what the symbols meant. This ties in with Loewen’s (1995) argument that in school students are taught to regurgitate what is considered to be facts and not to think critically think. Another aspect of representing Americaness as identity was highlighted in the reenactment of A Colored Place. Students chose to use the television as a way to tell the story. As the play drifted from scene to scene, students used TV programs such as Lifetime/MTV to convey the setting. In an interview one of the students stated: “we tend to think of TV as a reflection of America as a whole so it was interesting to have someone watch TV and pull something out of
what it means to them.” Television, and media in general are important attributes to American identity and this was demonstrated in the reenactment of the mini plays.

Media, e.g., television is a central factor in forming ideas about self and others. Television accounts for the images most students in the class had about Black women from Africa and the Caribbean. The images students cited are images from movies and programs from National Geographic that tend to highlight the exotic. Students reported that the information they were getting in class about the Caribbean and Africa was new to them; they did not learn this at their school. They said that some of the information they had was either from the TV or from classes they had taken while involved with the Upward Bound program. The same was also true for the images presented urban Blacks and rural Whites.

Physical Interactions

In my previous discussion I stated that the White students in the class clearly expressed their Americaness. However there were times when Black students demonstrated signs of Americaness as well. This was evident when students interacted with each other and with the text. This observation was made particularly with the play Living Positively that celebrates the experiences of people living with HIV/AIDS in Africa. In this play an African American student performed the role of Dr. Lamptey, and he monopolized the whole process. The play was about him. He completely moved the play from Africa and made it American. In some parts of the script he replaced the words Africa with America. And when he calls on the rest of the world for help, his sense of the world is limited to only America. For me this was an interesting observation because
while much has been written on racial identity development, very little has been written on national identity particularly when members of marginalized groups from the Global North interact with others on the margins living in areas of the Global South. The psychology of nigrescence is an example of research on identity development. It offers five states of racial identity development. These are pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalization and internalization-commitment (Cross, 1991). These stages are evident in the lives of thinkers such as Malcom X, beginning with the pre-encounter stage where he was oblivious to racism and ending with the internalization-commitment stage where he was fully committed to the struggle of all people of African origin. However this theory does not adequately describe how racial and national identity development intersects. This is of particular importance because of the wave of Black immigrants in the U.S. and the relations between Blacks who are now immigrating and those who have been here for generation.

Referring back to my research site, while it was only this one student who monopolized the play, the other students did not question the replacement of Africa with America; it seemed as though that was the normal thing to do. What the other students questioned was his domination of the play. The White male students reacted against his monopoly. The White males in his group as well as the other White students who were audience members began asking him questions to throw him off guard, while others told him to give members of his group an opportunity to speak. The reaction of the Black students was different. They either remained silent or as in the case of one African American young woman, tried to enter the conversation. In the play, Mindy’s
exclamation, “Dr. Lamptey!” was her signal that she wanted to be included in the conversation. However when she was ignored she did not insist on being included. Another reaction was from Donnie who offered support to Joe. He attempted to prevent the other students from asking Joe embarrassing questions.

During the reenactment of *Living Positively* the class was visibly divided along race lines. Joe was clearly monopolizing the play and some of the White students were verbal in pointing this out. The Black students also realized what he was doing, however it would seem that they made a decision not to silence him especially not in front of Whites. He was one of them. The White young women in the class remained silent, some perhaps because they found Joe entertaining, and others because perhaps they did not care. In one of the interviews with students one said that these after all were “just plays.” She did not see why people were getting so worked up. It could be that other students remained silent because they thought it was safe to do so; they wanted to be accepted by all their peers and remaining silent offered them safety. Hytten and Warren (2003) discuss that in classes where race is a focus students prefer not to place themselves in positions that would be uncomfortable. They call this the “discourse of niceness vs. conflict.” They also point to another discourse, the “discourse of voice vs. silence.” They state that Whites are often confused about when to speak and when to listen because they don’t want to appear multiculturally insensitive. This dilemma often results in their silence. These two discourses may be what caused the White females in the class to remain silent.
It is interesting that these discourse models did not silence the White males in the class. They acted to counter Joe’s monopoly. They felt comfortable to speak out and they did so. It could be that they felt they had the authority to speak out. The reactions of White males and females are so different that it raises some important questions about male privilege. My results indicate that race was seen as a problem by the students but gender was not viewed as a major concern. In a prior conversation they all agreed that White males were the dominant group in U.S. society. As an observer and teacher I felt that students had accepted this as a fact of life. There was more discussion about issues of race than gender; whenever race was discussed there was conflict, different views were exchanged and the classroom was charged. On the other hand, when the discussion centered on gender there was a general agreement amongst students and the discussion lacked energy. Yet from their interactions it was apparent that gender still remains a problematic issue. Even though the plays used in class were Black women’s plays, the connection was more along race lines than gender.

There were other themes that emerged as students interacted with each other and with the text. In addition to domineering interactions and students who ignored the scripts and came up with plays of their own, there were some other observations. As it pertains to students physically interacting with other students in the classroom the dynamics changed over time. All the students, Black and White, began the class by always sitting together as a racial group. As time passed they became willing to work with other members of the class, but they would always go back to their groups. In an interview the tutor/mentor also addressed this issue:
I think they are still much more comfortable in their own personal spaces zone like when they got here. The Black kids sitting together and the White kids do the same. And even when you did group exercises some of the Black kids were in the same group. But I do think that when they work together now there is not so much suspicion as . . . this person don’t like me, they don’t look like me it’s more about personality wise not even color wise so I think that’s a big step. I think they have grown.

I think the strengths [of the class] were students getting out of their comfort zone and working together because in the end I thought it was interesting that Mary and Donnie wanted to be in the rural area scene and Ariel and Lela in the urban scene. Stereotypically speaking I always thought that all the Black kids would want to be urban and the White students rural. After they worked that out for themselves and intermingled in those final scenes where there is not just all White kids or all Black kids in the scene I felt that that’s good (Betty, 2003).

In their interviews students also commented on their interactions. One student said:

At first we were very separate and it was basically because everybody came with somebody they knew. Then the class got very heated with everyone having their own opinions. Now it’s coming back on track because we have had enough time to really talk about these things person to person. I think we are all working together pretty well now. We are seeing a little here and a little there. We are all coming together; everyone interacting really well (Ariel, 2003).

Other students voices similar opinions:
I felt like it was a bell curve. It started out where there were little interactions and at one point it got to unhealthy interactions where people were fighting and disrespecting each other like crazy and we kinda worked through that. There is still interaction but it’s more of an understanding of the interactions (Chuck, 2003).

The comments expressed by the students and the tutor/mentor are examples of how theater created spaces for interaction, honest talk and dialogue. Students worked in groups and this way they had to interact with others who were different from themselves. The theater of Black women from the Global South was a good starting point because it was safe. In the beginning students, particularly those from southeastern Ohio and those who had participated in the program since their sophomore year in high school, were uncomfortable. They were accustomed to coming each summer and spending time with students who looked very much like them. Those who did not look like them, a small minority, were at least also from southeastern Ohio. However this summer there were changes and some felt that their territory had been invaded. In one of the meetings with Upward Bound staff and students, one of the students from urban Ohio reminded the group that they were not visitors. From now on they were also Upward Bound students.

The theater of Black women from the Global South allowed students to begin to gradually explore issues of gender and race. They began exploring issues of injustice from outside the U.S. and they made the connections to situations in the U.S. After dealing with theater of Black women from the Global South students began taking a more internal look at themselves. This was the stage at which students started getting angry.
There were lots of differences of opinions, however because of the safety net that was built into the program, we were able to work out the differences. In order to do so, honest talk was necessary. Students had to come face to face with the racism in their society and admit that they were personally involved. Students also had to confront stereotypes of the “other.” For example those in the rural area had to analyze the images they presented of people living in the urban areas and vice versa. Theater provided the medium for students to engage in honest talk which at times lead to dialogic moments. At the beginning of the class, the games we played helped build trust and also taught students how to listen to each other. For example, one of the games we played was a counting game. Students closed their eyes and had to count from twenty to one. Only one student at any time was allowed to call a number. If two or more students called the same number at the same time the group had to start counting down again from twenty. This taught them how to listen to each other, and also about when to speak. When students know how to listen and when to speak an environment for dialogue is created since they will be more inclusive in their dealings with others.

*Interacting with Characters*

Not only did students physically interact with each other; they also interacted with the characters. Instances of students interacting with the characters in the play and with the text in general were evident through monologues and journals entries. For one of their journal entries I asked students to think about how the plays related to their lives. One student noted:
It did not seem like when I first got it that it had anything to do with me or anything I’d ever come in contact with cause I don’t feel I have any similarities to any of the characters who were in the play but when I started reading it I realized it wasn’t all just about the person not being able to fit in but what they were doing about it as well as my character Elisha that was my main character. I named him, he is the aggressive youth who was speaking out and even though he was coloured or mixed he was still speaking in the same manner that I would and speaking about the same things that I would just stating it because of what he believed in and not for anything other than that.

Students also tried to relate to their characters. Women related to female characters through different means. Some related through feelings:

- “Although not on a large scale I can understand and relate to her mixed feelings of love and anger towards someone close. I guess in a way I have a friend who is similar to the one she has.”
- “The characters and I have completely different lives. She is from the Caribbean and was raised completely different to me.”

Another way students tried to relate is by offering to help by comforting and also by encouraging and advising their characters. Tanya performed the role of Tracy in *A Coloured Place*. In her monologue she wrote:

Tanya: Tracy I just want you to know that I support you with your love and care for the ones who have a hard time in life. I am also starting a little organization to
help the ones who need it. (As Tanya was so moved with Tracy’s passion she stayed with her the whole night talking to each other [about] their beliefs.) (2003).

Another student Darlene, performed in a Black Woman’s Tale. In her monologue she tried to made connections between herself and her character:

“Kyra sits and cries with the comfort of Darlene. Once she settles Jill walks her to her car. She then drives away.”

In a student monologue to one of the characters in A Black Woman’s Tale the student wrote:

Me not understand? I relate well to your story. Well some of it . . . Oh fear can be the ultimate key in finding hope to do things which you would not always be able to do

Have I ever? Yes.

Fear did bring out the courage in me. Innocence was not the problem with me. I find peace in the person I was that day. Do you? No? I would just because you escaped. You made it out safe and unharmed. That’s reason enough to have peace over yourself.

Still feel bad about your friend? Yes I suppose. Why are you crying? There is no need for tears now. Remember fear is the key to courage. Don’t allow it to take over your body.

Don’t worry no one hates you. No one minds that you feel powerless and dehumanized against your teacher

Name changed for confidentiality reasons.
In the monologue to Brenda, Ariel who played the role of Sacha in *A Coloured Place* wrote:

You’re not your Mother Brenda! And you’re certainly not your Father! You can see what she can’t. You’re smarter, tougher and stronger than her. You learned to stand up to him years ago . . . Brenda when are you going to stand you to yourself, to your own fears?

Tracie, in her monologue to Adena, the mother in *Voices from the Ghetto* offered encouragement: “Do something with your life; don’t let yourself break down without a fight. You can do it! I have faith in you.” Another student speaking to the same mother said: “You need to get up and do something with your life. You are weak, helpless and self centered. Get off your butt and do something”!

Besides offering help and encouragement students, particularly the young women, related to the characters in the play by relating as women:

Here we are. A Black woman and a White woman who have been hurt. We are both angry and need to let it all out; we need to express our anger by talking to each other. We may both come from different places and different cultural backgrounds, but we are both women and can relate to each other through bonding as women. Every woman in the world is bonded together regardless of race, culture, beliefs or appearance. We all go through the same basic life situations.

Another student questioned: “Can I relate you ask? Yes in every way that’s possible to relate. We are so much one in the same. It’s too bad others can’t see that.” Both the
men and women in the class related though the same means although women tended to focus on their experiences as women. The men in the class offered help; one student spoke of helping through economic means. In a monologue to Brenda in *A Coloured Place* one student wrote:

I have been in this same situation myself so I believe I can help you. . . . I believe that you should help your whole family out by going to counseling . . . I am aware that it is difficult to live in “a coloured place’ and you are unable financially afford a psychologist. I am willing to pay for this because I believe it is necessary for every family to love each other. . . . If you accept my advice and need the money, here’s my email address. Email me and I will get the money to you ASAP.

Whereas most students were sympathetic towards their characters, one White male condemned one of the characters:

I’m not mad at you, not extremely angry. I’m just very disappointed in you! . . . It makes me depressed to know that you have something that cannot be cured. . . . I love you like a brother Jaco . . . and the Lord loves you too! But we all know that the Lord does not work in that kind of way. He’s not a give and take person; Jaco do you believe in the Lord?

This condemnation shows that there were times when instead of trying to understand the characters in the play, some students resisted connecting with the characters. By judging the characters they could not even empathize with the character. This student is sad that Jaco has HIV/ AIDS but at the same time he blames him for contracting the virus. He
then uses his personal moral and religious beliefs to condemn Jaco without trying to understand Jaco’s circumstances. In this case judging prevented him from being able to dialogue with his character. He maintained his position as a dominant White Christian male who believes that he has the power to label what is righteous and what is unrighteous.

The previous observation is in line with Hytten’s and Warren’s (2003) observation that although students express intentions and efforts at disrupting Whiteness, they draw on several mechanisms that serve to enforce the dominant position of Whiteness. These mechanisms are appeals to self, to progress and authencity. Hytten and Warren (2003) also describe another mechanism, “appeals to authenticity;” however in my study I did not observe any evidence of this. “Appeals to authenticity” is when majority students call on minority students to confirm information about the minority group; that is they call on minorities to be spokespersons for their group. Students did not call on minority group members to justify their positions. This might be because the class was internationally focused and there was no other international person in the class with the exception of myself. Even in the design of the script for final play, which included minorities in the U.S; this was not done. This observation could have resulted because of the nature of the theater class. In the final play everyone in the class had experiences about some aspect of the play; theater provided a forum for the students to share these experiences.
oversimplified the experiences of Black women from the Global South by saying that as women we all share the same experiences. In so doing they made a similar mistake as mainstream feminists by ignoring the role of race, nationality and class in the experiences of these women.

*Discourse of Connection.*

The “discourse of connections” was evident among African American students. Although I was not aware ahead of time that these students would be participants in the Upward Bound program, I found some interesting results. There is research literature about how White students interact with “others” within their society, but research is needed to examine how minority groups in the U.S. interact with those considered as “other” from outside the U.S. My research results indicate that the African American students who participated in this study connected with Black women from the Global South through similar history and experiences. The discourse however became centered on themselves and they lost sight of the experiences of Black women from the Global South. They seemed more concerned about the history of connection, but not as concerned about the present situation facing these women and their connections to the present conditions. In the case of the African American students, the discourse seems to be one of connection which led to self absorption; however Hytten and Warren’s definition of self absorption is not broad enough to encompass the African American experience in class and hence could lead to misinterpretation. Zach-Williams (1995) theory might be more helpful in providing an analysis for this experience. He uses the example of the discussions on Black feminism and points out that even in academia the
dialogue on Black feminism is assumed to involve all Black women globally, but in actuality, it neglects the voices of Black women from Global South. He questions whether the dialogue on Black feminism is an example of Afrocentricity as the claim is or if it is more fitting for it to be described as “Americocentricity.” Black feminism has been defined by African American women based on their experiences, but it ignores the experiences of Black women from other areas of the world. It is therefore Americentric because its focus is on women albeit of African descent, who are Americans (Zach-Williams, 1995).

The idea of Americocentricity appears to be a result of Americanism or Americanization. Malcom X (1964) points out that he has been a victim of Americanism, the process of becoming an American. In this process people learn quickly how to label and discriminate against people because of their difference—race, gender, sexual orientation and class. All immigrants went through this process and quickly learned how to discriminate particularly against Blacks (Malcom X, 1964; Morrison, 1992; Ellison, 1970). Ellison and Morrison speak of how race became a marker for determining who is an American, with Black being viewed as less American than other groups. Malcom X also focuses on this issue and laments the position of African Americans. He points out that the recently immigrated immigrants were more readily accepted as immigrants, particularly those from Eastern and Western Europe, than African Americans who had been in the U.S. for generations.

The discourses Hytten and Warren highlight concern power and privilege within the U.S. But in utilizing literature from Black women from the Global South the traits of
power and privilege were found in all students, both Black and White. Whiteness is a major issue in discussing othering in and outside the U.S; but my research with this particular group of students suggest that Americanization and Americentricity are important concepts in addressing how U.S. citizens in general engage in issues of power and privilege globally. The Americanization process is inscribed in school curriculum and students quickly learn that “they are world.” For example, there are many sports’ competitions held in the U.S. that receive the designation of being world competitions although there are only U.S. participants. The same is also seen in the discussion on Black feminism and feminism in general where women in the U.S. and other countries from the Global North define their identity and assume that it applies to all women. Evidence of this type of attitude was seen when students were enacting their plays. Students became central in the play and the focus changed from Africa to America. It was not only White students who were guilty of this, but Black students as well. My research suggests that besides the categories already discussed, there needs to be a discussion on Americanization, Americentricity and Americentricity

The forms of discourse highlighted in this discussion are necessary to overcome White privilege. The experience of students as they engaged in the theater of Black women from the Global South around issues such as power/privilege and oppression is a question explored by my research. White privilege is associated with power and privilege due to Whiteness and results in the oppression of non-Whites I see the many forms of discourse as a process though which students must pass if they want to become “White traitors.” This term refers to Whites who, in a White racist society, “reject
explanations of the world presupposing the superiority of Whiteness” (Heldke, 1998, p.94; Weems, 2001).

The possibility of becoming “White traitors” was observed as my students engaged in theater. They were also able to connect with the women at an emotional level. This demonstrates that there is some hope. Some stated that many of the emotions these women felt were emotions they have experienced in their lives. This speaks to one of the values of theater in helping students feel what the “other” encounters, with the critical understanding that these are the daily experiences of these women whereas what they experience by performing the role is only a small glimpse. The students genuinely wanted to establish dialogue and there were times when this happened. This will be discussed by examining students overall experience in responding to issues of power/privilege and oppression.

Students Experiences: Power Privilege and Oppression

The third question of this research inquired about the experiences of the students responding to issues of power/privilege and oppression raised in the theater of Black women from the Global South. As students read, reenacted and created plays they faced many experiences. For the purpose of analysis I grouped their experiences into several categories, but in actuality these categories are interrelated and not easily separated. The categories are as follows:

1) Encountering Whiteness
2) Encountering Race
3) Exploring Injustice

4) Discomfort

5) Conflict

*Encountering Whiteness*

Issues of power, privilege and oppression were raised in the theater of Black Women from the Global South. The theater of these women focused on their experience because of their gender, race and economic status as Black women from the Global South. Students responded to these issues through different means. One way was through examining Whiteness in their society.

In a journal entry one of the students who played the role of a South African youth in describing the similarities and differences between himself and his character wrote: “I am subject to White privilege and he is not.” Some students were able to realize their privilege whereas others became defensive and angry as seen in the following entry from one of the students from southeastern Ohio:

I am a middle class young man and I am discriminated against. Do I deserve this?

Did I hold a whip and act as overseer on a plantation? Have I ever made anyone sit at the back of the bus? Then why am I stereotyped with the people who did?

Yet another student again from southeastern Ohio wrote: “I also feel that I am not looked at the same as everyone else because I am White. Please people when equality is being preached mean it for all people.”

The monologues students wrote created an avenue for students to begin dialoguing on Whiteness and White privilege. McIntosh (1998) explains that White
privilege is “an invisible knapsack” Whites carry around but are never taught how to recognize it. Some students were able to see how they are privileged because they are White, while others resisted this concept. Hytten and Warren tell us that being ignorant about one’s power due to Whiteness helps to reinforce White privilege. It is true that the students were not physically involved in slavery and perhaps some of the other discriminatory devices used against Black. But what they failed to acknowledge is that they benefited because of this oppression and have continued to benefit. By not recognizing the benefits the have received because of the color of their skin at the expense of others their privilege remains invisible.

Encountering Race

Associated with Whiteness was the issue of race as students tried to deal with the complexity of race. The theme of race and racism was evident in the final play students created as well as throughout student’s monologues and journal entries. In the final play in the rural Appalachian scene, Donnie’s character questions his Mom:

Donnie: Why does everyone treat me differently?

Mary: different how?

Donnie: well you are Black; Dad’s White so people automatically assume I am different from them.

Race focused not only on White and Black, but multiracial people also: One student wrote in her journal: “I found that interesting, and I liked seeing that brought out in that class cause I like seeing a variety of how race affects more than just Black people or White people.” In the literature review, I discussed the “one drop rule” in the U.S, where
one drop of Black blood was considered to make a person Black. Race in the U.S. is usually conceived in Black and White terms. However, *A Coloured Place*, one of the plays students studied and reenacted, dealt with people who were multiracial and the problems they encountered because of this. This play helped students to begin thinking beyond Black and White. In his journal entry one student remarked that what he liked about the plays is that he now knows something about what it means to be Coloured, he never had this point of view before. As Helfenbien (2003), Gilroy (1993) and Spivak (1999) state identity, which includes race, is untidy, it cannot be put into a neat box. By looking at race and the many hybridizations that exist an understanding of the problems and possible solutions can be attained.

*Injustice*

Even as students discussed the concept of race they also looked at how race and injustice are related. Students sought to relate to Black women from the Global South by addressing race issues in the U.S. Slavery was one of the major themes that emerged. When students thought of Africa, they were reminded of slavery and the African Americans who were brought as slaves. Discussing slavery was one of the few instances where guilt was present. Associated with this guilt was defensiveness on the part of some White students. In their monologue, one White student wrote: “I have pretty much been blamed for slavery since I was born and none of my ancestors were even in The United States until after it ended.”

Another White student declared: “If I don’t like a person and they happen to belong to another racial/ ethnic group, then I am just being a racist, redneck, bastard as far as
anyone else is concerned. I don’t have a racist bone in my body.” Yet another White student wrote:

So let me get this straight . . . . they turned you down because you aren’t black enough? . . . I suppose that’s affirmative action for you. You know this isn’t the kind of bullshit Dr. King worked for. It’s disgraceful. Disgusting really . . . The problem is, in affirmative action, the content of your character means nothing. Your race erased your individuality. You’re no longer a person of color but a quota. You are right. It is discrimination. And you know what? It’s entirely different from discrimination 50 years ago, and almost entirely the same . . . if that makes any sense at all . . . You see it used to be generally acceptable to discriminate against African American people. The civil rights movement began reforming that- for the better at first. But you know what? We still discriminate against African Americans every day. The difference today society shoves them into a system where they are not challenged to compete for jobs. And now I see it happening . . . no matter how qualified you might be, if they need their quota and you even look sort of White, you’re shit out of luck. End of story . . .

White students seemed to be concerned about reverse discriminated and one of the students lamented a story of discrimination because of being a White Appalachian. He spoke to someone who was trying to get a scholarship established for Appalachians but the scholarship project was turned down because the group he was targeting was White. However, these writings by students seemed to serve as yet another example of students failing to examine how they have profited from being White.
There were times when White students were defensive about issues of race, but some of the conversations seemed honest, and some students admitted to White privilege and to racism: In an interview one of the White students said:

I don’t know if you know but Logan, Hocking County in general it’s a racist community pretty much a lot of people are racist there and I don’t know probably because it is a Southern thing they have a real problem with . . . and there isn’t that much African American people, there isn’t very much exposure so they are not used to it. Being surrounded by that for so long kinda gets into your mind and it tends to make you feel the same way because you are around it so much and I felt the same way for a while because of this thing in my head psychologically it made me sort of a racist person.

This acknowledgement is the first step to anti-racist work. Pilcher (2001) speaks of using pedagogies in the classroom that would result in “honest talk.” A space was created in the classroom for students to feel comfortable talking about race and power and oppression. The talk was not about how others were racist but how they themselves might have racist ideologies.

Issues of injustice were not only race related. Students in their plays and reflections spoke about poverty and female abuse being forms of injustices. For example, in his monologue on life in the ghetto, one student spoke of his character walking down the street his cousin was killed on and the poverty found in the projects where he lives. Another example is that in the final play students spoke of poverty in urban centers and also of school funding issues in both rural and urban centers. Race, however, remained a
focus for students. During the time the study was conducted, students spoke of rape, infidelity and physical forms of abuse as some experiences of women. Women were more involved in this discussion than men, but race remained a controversial and discomforting issue for most in the class.

Discomfort

Discomfort remained an area that showed promise for dialogue and honest talk. Students seemed comfortable in discussing women from the Global South; but discomfort became visible during the production of the final play. I asked Professor Houston to the class to discuss with students information on the Ankh. In a journal entry one student commented: “I feel better about the theme after hearing Professor Houston speak on the topic of the Ankh. It made me feel uncomfortable being open minded [referring to previous discussions in class] but being told that I wasn’t. And that hurt my feelings so I did not comment on anything.” Discomfort at first can result in silencing people. This should not be viewed negatively instead students should be guided to reflect on the cause of their discomfort since this has great potential for honest talk and dialogue.

Students also felt a sense of discomfort because their parents were coming to watch the final production. One student who was opposed to using the Ankh stated that he felt that although they, the students, had been exposed to diversity he did not think they needed to “throw this knowledge” in their parents’ faces. Another student stated: “I do feel that in our play it is going to be a semi shock to some of the parents. I do believe that this play will do some good for history that our parents never got around to learning.” The discomfort experienced by students served as a fertile ground for honest
talk. Students were encouraged to discuss their fears and question why they felt uncomfortable. In class students appeared to be willing to embrace diversity but when they were asked to put their talk to action by performing the play outside the classroom in front of their peers and families, they became unwilling and fearful. Boler critiques empathy as not leading to action. Theater provides an avenue for empathy to be accompanied with action and a framework to evaluate how serious students are about working towards a world where diversity is embraced. Evaluation of self seems to be an important link to action.

Conflict

Associated with discomfort was conflict. Hytten and Warren state that often when dealing with Whiteness students as well as teachers avoid discomfort and conflict. The present study however indicates that discomfort and conflict often lead to dialogic moments. Sidorkin tells us that dialogue in classroom discourse is not when students are asked “‘Socratic’ questions and encouraged to participate in an orderly discussion. Rather dialogue happens when a holistic text of curriculum is broken down, challenged, retold on one’s own words, made one’s own and then ‘stored away’” (p.73). Sidorkin devises the three drinks theory in explaining classroom discourse. He uses a metaphor of drinks at a cocktail party to describe the forms of discourse that takes place during classroom interaction.

The “first drink” tends to be monologic discourse, and the teacher is the main speaker. Students occupy positions as listeners. The “second drink” or the second discourse is dialogic- people start talking over each other, straying from the topic and
becoming excited. In this discourse students attempt to dialogue with the teacher as well as other students. Students talk out of turn and often there are disagreements. The second discourse attempts to establish dialogic relations as well as break the monological nature of the classroom. The third discourse is evidenced by small group conversations.

These three levels of discourse were encountered in my classroom, but I will focus on the second discourse because this is where dialogic relations occur. Conflict was central to establishing this form of dialogue. Discomfort was beneficial in honest talk, but honest talk was transferred to dialogue through conflict. One student explained that the conflict in class was also due to what was happening outside of the classroom. “The classroom it was stressful environment just because of things outside of the room were kinda coming out in that class in particular but I do think I have gained from the class.”

Another student expressed discomfort with dealing with conflict. This is an example of the discourse of extremes Hytten and Warren (2003) discussed. According to Hytten and Warren, students avoid disagreements and chaos at all cost because it brings their White privilege to the surface. I found a similar situation among the students who participated in the present research. During an interview one White student stated:

I think that all of us would have had a better understanding because there was a lot of fighting and a lot of hurt feelings. People not understanding things, not getting taken care of right away and I think that brought down the trust that we have, that you should have in theater. You are working with people. You should have a trust for the people you are working with, that way you can work together
as a team. I felt that the fighting took away from the trust that we were supposed to be developing.

Another White student expressed concern about the conflict:

I felt that some of the students from Africentric who were really against the Ankh were reacting to the kids who had never who had never heard of the Ankh before or did not understand and it really generalized it went from Ok you don’t understand the Ankh to none of you understand the Ankh, you don’t understand what you are talking about and it was like we who are country folk we could not understand the African culture and I do because I have researched it before and I do have an open minded view about it but I felt like people did not really want to see that.

One student explained what he saw as the root of the conflict:

I just think that nobody knew in the beginning what they were getting into with the ankh everyone agreed to it. They didn’t understand. I think a few people had a problem with that after they were told and then more people started to have a problem with it when they realized that other people were having a problem with it.

This research suggests that creating the openings for these topics to surface helps growth and learning. Theater provided a space for students to begin creating dialogic relations. This is because theater fosters democratic classrooms. Theater allows students’ voice as well as others engaged in its practice. At the end of the course Betty,
the tutor/mentor stated “if it’s anything I’ve learned it is that kids have to talk that’s how they express things and people have to let them talk.”

Creating Democratic Spaces through Theater

What accounts for the experiences and reactions of students as they engage in the theater of Black Women from the Global South? The democratic nature of this form of theater contributes to the results obtained from the study. Students spoke of the democratic nature of the classroom in their interviews: “It is all about equality because a class is not supposed to be a dictatorship it’s supposed to be a democracy but not everybody could agree on it that was the problem.” Another student observed “for a while there was the whole debate but in a democratic classroom we have discussions. After our debate I got on my computer and started looking up stuff.” Not only did theater create democratic spaces but it also created a learning environment where students not only voiced their opinions but also researched the opinions of others.

The dialogic nature of the classroom was evident in the end result of the performances. Students were concerned with finding ways to establish a common ground. One White student expressed this in her interview when she said, “The strongest theme during our theater class has been the search for common ground between different cultures. . .” This theme was also prominent in the final play produced by students, for example nearing the end of the play when the Ankh broke:
Ariel: I’m so sorry . . . I don’t know what I was thinking (holds several pieces out to Donnie as if offering them to him). I had no right to fight like that. This isn’t mine.

Donnie: (shakes head). Well it isn’t mine either. It belonged to my parents before me. And their before them. And their parents before that, most likely. All the way back to . . . who knows.

Lela: (quietly laughing). It’s kind of funny isn’t it? I mean we’ve all had this connection the whole time and we didn’t even realize it.

Ariel: Yeah I had worried that our differences would keep us apart you know? And we are here fighting over that we have in common.

(They all laugh quietly. There is a silent pause as they all reflect).

Donnie: Well, I guess it’s time we started putting these pieces back together.

(They gather around the table and reach toward the center beginning to put the pieces together).

Lx: begin to lower as the group begins the process.

Ankh: I am the sum total of my experience. I have straddled many lands. Kemet, Nigeria, Kenya, Italy, the Caribbean, Thailand and the Unites States. I am all of these: I am diverse. There are many differences but there are many similarities. We all have common ground; we are all different but the same. We are all one.

Voice: I think diversity is the blending of cultures and different teachings.
Voice: I think diversity is knowledge of different groups of people and ideas even if you don’t agree with them.

Voice: Diversity is learning from different cultures and different religions and bringing it together.

Voice: Diversity to me is the coming together of all races.

By the end of the play students demonstrated that they were willing to go beyond the types of discourses described by Hytten and Warren (2003); the discourses that serve to keep White privilege intact. They began examining themselves and their relation with others and there were times their gaze extended to others outside the U.S. Though their interviews on diversity, students seemed to display some understanding on what connecting with others meant. Students learned that connecting and forming dialogic relations with another human being does not mean that the other person had to be the same; being able to appreciate difference is needed in order to engage in dialogue.

Sidorkin (1999) states that “the greatest failing of this civilization is its inability to deal with difference” (p.144). This statement rings true since while on the outside most all U.S. citizens say they value diversity and difference, it is much harder to put it into practice. Difference in reality is viewed negatively in U.S. society. Black is the direct opposite to White and to be Black is viewed negatively in U.S. society. In one sense, Black is not even considered American. There is a fear of difference; this may be the reason why early European immigrant culture formulated the rules of American society and every group is expected to conform to these rules. If these rules are broken, the person or group becomes cut off from the rest of society.
This phenomenon is witnessed not only in the U.S. but even in early European contact with the “other.” Native Americans were different; they were therefore viewed negatively and endued harsh treatments because of these difference. The same is also true for Africans and descendants of Africans. Europeans viewed Africans as inferior and heathenistic. They thought that Africans were not even capable of thinking in rational terms. However, Afrocentric philosophies have served to overturn Eurocentric assumptions.

According to Sidorkin (1999) difference and importance of embracing difference appears to be a major component of forming dialogic relations. The ability to come to terms with difference is also evident in mainstream feminist discourse (Rowley, 2002). Many Black women from the Global South are involved in challenging dominant feminist theories and their inability to adequately engage with difference or for that matter otherness. The difficulty to embrace difference was evident in student’s final play:

Voice 1: I think diversity if a mixture of cultures and different teachings
Voice 2: Diversity for me . . . Well most people think it has something to do with different cultures but it’s really not. It really just means difference. And I’ve learned a lot of things with difference. A lot of things have happened and people are not that really different from me. No one is me so everyone I meet is different.
Voice 3: Diversity for me means the coming together of different races.
In my literature review I spoke of passive empathy, and how Boler argues that it does not lead to action (Boler, 1999). However Boal (1979) points out that in “theater of the oppressed,” theater where there are no spectators but “spectactors” the empathy established there is not passive, since participants are the actors. Boal argues that although fictional, the fact that participants engage in action means that they are not passive. The journey however is not complete. At the end of the play the characters began remaking the Ankh. The same is also true for these students – they have only just began the process.

**Summary**

The results of my study seems to indicate that in order for these students to establish dialogic relations with Black women from the Global South they have to also dialogue with those perceived as “other” within their own societies. They need to understand how categories such as race prohibited them from dialoguing with others. They also need to come to terms with how race profits them. This link is important in going beyond empathy. Theater of Black women from the Global South provided a medium for this discussion. Theater of Black women of the Global South was a form of “voice throwing.” At one point the voices of Black women from the Global South were at the center of the classroom, but the center shifted as students turned inwardly, towards self. During the course of the class most of the participants engaged in voice throwing and the center continually changed. By the end of the research students had taken another step and were looking at the relation between themselves and others in their society.
The theater of Black Women from the Global South helped students begin the process of dialogue. They examined themselves and began exploring their relation to others in their own society. They did not dialogue with others outside the U.S. to the extent that I had hoped; they first tried to wrestle with the issues at home. As Corning (1998) tells us “We must know where we are coming from to understand how we have come to be where we are” (p. 21). This is exactly what the students did. They tried to understand where they were and why and were at the junction of trying to figure out what steps they should take in order to move forward.

There were various experiences, interactions and reactions encountered as students went through the process. They exhibited reactions of surprise, confusion, resistance, joking around and defensiveness. These reactions were observed as students’ reactions to the plays and class discussions but they served as sites for students to engage in critical thinking. As students interacted with self, others and the text several themes emerged. Students represented others similar to the stereotypes found in the mass media. Not only were people from Africa and the Caribbean seen as “other,” so were people living in their societies who were different from themselves. Examination of self remained an area of complexity as students saw themselves in different lights. There were some, particularly the White students, who whole heartedly claimed their Americaness, while the African Americans in the class were less willing to be identified in this manner. However there were some observations made that were similar to both groups when it concerned interaction with others from the international world. This area
of Americaness raised questions about the engagement in Americentricity or Americocentricity for both groups.

The latter part of this chapter dealt with students experiences. Students encountered different experiences when they dealt with issues of race, Whiteness, injustice, conflict and discomfort. While taken at face value this might sound depressing, the experience was an enriching one and students felt that they were further along the road of understanding themselves and creating dialogic relations with others. The next chapter will discuss the implications of this research and avenues for future research.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Recreating Classrooms for Dialogue

“I mean we’ve had this connection the whole time and we didn’t even realize it” (student, 2003).

In this dissertation I investigated what happened when theater of Black women from the Global South was introduced to Appalachian students as well as students from an urban Afrocentric school attending the Upward Bound summer phase program. Chapter One provided an outline of the research, its questions, theoretical descriptions and problem addressed. I stated my theoretical framework as falling under the umbrella of cultural studies. This research project was multidisciplinary and cultural studies allowed me the flexibility of using theories from the fields of feminism, post colonialism, Critical Race Studies and Liberatory Education in order to frame my research. An aim of my research was examining the potential of theater of Black women from the Global South as a tool for establishing dialogic relations amongst students from marginalized groups. Scholars such as Sidorkin (1999) and Greene (1994) have critiqued education as failing to help students understand their humanness and the humanness of others. They affirm that schools and society as a whole would be a better place if schools instilled in students an appreciation for other human beings and an understanding that “I am because we are.”
Chapter Two detailed the methodological aspects of my dissertation. I described my research as a qualitative participatory research and provided literature showing the history of this type of research. My research took place in a classroom where I was both the researcher and the teacher; this locates my research as a classroom action research. My dissertation used theater as a tool for data collection; therefore it is described as a performative inquiry. Through crystallization I utilized different data collection means in order to obtain multiple view points. My main means of data collection were though observations, interviews and artifact collection, for example student journals. Students were involved in the beginning stages of data analyses and provided themes that helped in analyzing the results.

My main concern in collecting, analyzing and reporting the results of the study were coherence, consensus and instrumentality. Coherence refers to the brocolage approach of research, the multiple theoretical fields, diverse data collection strategies and interpretations. I achieved consensus by working with my participants and having them involved in the initial stages of data analysis and interpretation. Instrumentality refers to the usefulness of my data which will be discussed in this present chapter. This research is an interpretive activity and I endeavored to include students’ voices and interpretations.

Chapter Three extended the argument on the need for dialogic relations development in schools. I presented literature that demonstrated that education in the U.S. has an “us and them” approach. “Us” refers to the first European immigrants and their descendants who determined and continue to determine who is American. “Them” has been determined along race and economic lines as well as gender. Those who are
considered “them” or “other” have been subjected to some of the worse treatment that humans have endured, for example, slavery. In Chapter Three I also discussed that the “other” is not only found locally but globally as well. Concepts such as Americanism were also discussed as a way of demonstrating how the “other” is created and why the “other” has been created in this manner. In the Americanization process Black served as a marker for determining who was American and who was not. Institutions such as schools and media are major players in the Americanization process. I also provided an in-depth discussion of how race and class, using the case of Appalachia, is also a marker in determining otherness. At the close of chapter I provided research literature that demonstrates how Black Women from the Global South have been labeled as “other.”

In Chapter Four I provided evidence that Black Women from the Global South have used platforms such as theater in talking back about how they have been labeled. In addition, they have also used theater to define themselves. In this chapter I discussed how mainstream feminism neglected Black women in general and how Black women have been involved in theorizing African centered forms of feminism. In my discussion I also presented a case for incorporating theater of Black Women from the Global South in U.S. classrooms in order to begin establishing dialogic relations and break the monologue of othering. I cited examples of how theater is used in establishing democratic spaces and why this form of theater can be helpful.

Chapter Five summarized the research experience and observations. I detailed the research from the first day in class to the final day and the many conflicts that occurred during this time. Chapter Six discussed and analyzed the results of the study. In my
analysis I answered questions concerning students’ reaction to the process. Students’ experiences and interaction with self, others and text were also observed. The following sections of the present chapter, Chapter Seven, will summarize the findings of the study and provide lessons learned, recommendations and conclusions.

**Summary of Results**

The objective of the present dissertation was to investigate whether the theater of Black women from the Global South could be used as tool for creating spaces in the classroom for dialogic relations. In order to answer this question I investigated:

1) What are students’ reactions as they engage in the process of reading and performing the plays of Black women from the Global South, and then creating their own plays?

2) What interactions between self, others and “text” take place as students engage with theatrical works of Black women from the Global South (BWGS)?

3) What is the experience of students responding to issues of power/privilege/oppression raised in the theater of BWGS?

In answering the first question I observed that student reacted by displaying resistance, surprise, confusion, defensiveness and by joking around. My results were similar to Pilcher (2001). She found anger, resistance to change, accommodation to change and hope were reactions of White students as they engaged with works of Black women from the United States. Students reacted to the theater of Black women from the Global South
similar to the reactions of students in classrooms focused on understanding Black women in the U.S. Students were resistant, surprised, confused, joked around and were defensive. There are however differences between the two studies. In my study I did not encounter anger from students. Some students became angry when they were working on their final plays not while they were working on the plays that dealt directly with the plays of Black women from the Global South. Additionally, unlike Pilcher’s study, the students in this research joked around in class. This could be because the nature of the class, this was a theater class whereas Pilcher’s study used mainly novels and short stories; her study was also done in an education class and the students were college students as opposed to high school students.

The second question of this research deals with interactions between self, other and text. Students showed their attempt to form dialogic relations though interactions with self, others in the class and the characters of the play. This theme emerged through students’ representation of others, of themselves, expressions of identity (womanhood, Americanism) and through their physical interaction with other members in the class and the characters of the plays. Although students reiterated their desire to relate to others, they exhibited signs that demonstrated their desire to preserve their Whiteness. This was mainly displayed though “apeal to self” and “appeal to connections.” The “appeal to connection” was observed mainly among the African American students. However, for both Black and White students, they drew on their own experiences to show that their experiences paralleled those of Black women from the Global South. The danger particularly for the Black students was that they did not recognize the differences
between themselves and Black women from the Global South. I found that those times when students struggled to understand the experiences presented to them were most beneficial. When they could readily comprehend the situation they tended to oversimplify the experience.

As they moved through the process of reading and finally staging the plays, issues of Whiteness, race, injustice, conflict and discomfort emerged. This focuses on the third question of the research. These experiences served as a way for students to begin to reflect on the issues that were discussed in the classroom. The classroom embraced these situations; the theater process provided a space for these discomforting, conflict filled encounters since these experiences encouraged dialogue. Sidorkin (1999) explains that during dialogical moments sometimes students talk out of turn, there is discomfort and conflicts. It is during these times that solutions are found when one begins questioning oneself about why such feelings and events are experienced. Theater encourages these disruptions and outburst whereas a more traditional classroom typically silences potential outbursts.

This results obtained from this research might be useful in posing implications for exploring global relations further. Considerable research has focused on topics such as marginalized groups within the U.S. and concepts of Whiteness as a barrier for forming interracial relations (Giroux, 1997; hooks, 1995, 2000; Leonardo, 2002; McIntosh, 1998; Malcolm X & Haley, 1992; West, 1993; Morrison, 1992). The research I have undertaken hints that the prospect of forming relations with others outside the U.S. goes beyond Whiteness although it does seem to have some impact. On creating relations
outside the U.S. the barrier seems to be more directly related to power. My research findings indicate that while race is a barrier domestically, within the global framework Americanism or Americentricity, plays a significant role. Because the African American students in the class exhibited similar characteristics as their White counterparts at certain times, this raises questions about what accounts for these similar responses. This research was intended to focus only on Appalachian students in the Upward Bound theater class. Serendipitously, students from an Afrocentric school also participated. Thus its results should not be taken out of context.

In this study I found that students were able to make connection with “others,” particularly “others” locally. They also made connections with “others” from the Global South; mostly they were able to make these connections through emotions and drawing on similarity of experiences. Throughout the research there were dialogic moments, moments in which I felt both my students and I were forming webs of relations between ourselves and extending at times into the global arena. I however found that students were more taken up with creating dialogic relations with those considered “other” in the U.S. This does not mean that because they were more concerned with the domestic “other” that they will not be able to dialogue with the international “other.” I believe that this is a process and the fact that students are concerned about fostering dialogic relations means that the ground work has been laid. It is not an either or process. It could be that by forming dialogic relations with the local “other” they could then engage in also dialoging with the international “other.” To use the colloquial expression, charity begins at home. This could be the case for this group of students. While this research might
have some applications to a broader cross section of American society, one has to be aware that its purpose is not to generalize. In order to increase its applications I present some limitations, lessons learned and recommendations in the following section.

Limitations of the Study

The findings from the study can provide some useful insight into the use of theater as tool for forming dialogic relations with marginalized students. However this research should not be generalized and the context and limitations in which it was undertaken should be taken into consideration. Time was a major limitation to this research. As I mentioned earlier I felt that the study ended just as students were beginning to grasp some of the concepts presented in class. Not only was six weeks a short time, the fact that I had only one hour of class time, Monday-Thursday, impacted the study. I tried to compensate for this by attending the study sessions in the evenings and most of the social activities planned for the students while they were on campus. However I found that during these times students were sometimes busy completing homework for other classes. Time is a major consideration for research such as this one. My research involved changing attitudes however this is something that can only be done and assessed over a long period of time, particularly change that is sustainable.

A second major limitation involved the participants of the study. I was unprepared to deal with the two different groups in this study and even as I entered the research field I questioned whether or not I should also focus on the African American students from the Afrocentric school, and to what extent. They were an integral part of
the study since their presence affected the findings. I attempted to build their presence into the study but with some difficulty. At the beginning of the program 8 African American students were enrolled in the theater class. By the middle of the program 2 of the 8 students had left the program and before the program ended another student left. Hence there were only 5 who participated from the beginning to the end. I was only able to interview 2 out of the remaining 5. Some of those who left were actively involved in the class; I felt that their departure resulted in voices being left out that should have been included.

As it pertained to the participants in the class I felt that there was a limitation in terms of students sometimes not turning in their journal entries. Some students were especially vocal in class but were not responsive to participating fully in the journal writing component of the class. This served as a limitation because the journals served as one way for me to include the students’ perspective in my research. All groups were guilty of not participating in the journal entries, however; the implication was felt more among the African American group of students because of their numbers; again I believe that their voices would have added more richness to this study.

Lastly, my own experience as a researcher was a limitation. This was my first time to be engaged in research work of this magnitude. I had studied the elements of doing research work and had even completed a Master’s project, but this particular study was quite different from anything I had ever undertaken. This dissertation was very much “a learning while doing” endeavor; I learned much from this experience. As a researcher I had to make decisions e.g., regarding the scope of this study. Additionally
although I reviewed the literature and had some experience with the culture of my participants I felt that I was inexperienced in this regard. This limited my ability to fully analyze some of my observations. Just as my participants, I am still learning and even as I close this dissertation there are times when I hear a comment and realize its application to my research. The dissertation comes to an end but the learning process continues. However what I have learned thus far, I believe have implications for the dialogue on dialogic relations. I continue to discuss my learning experiences in the following sections.

Lessons Learned

Freire (1970) explains that a teacher/educator is one who teaches and learns at the same time. The same concept is applicable to a researcher particularly one who engages in participatory classroom action research. There were many lessons learned and it would be impossible to list them all, however I will describe these lessons based on the similar threads that run through most of my learning experiences. The first lesson learned deals with connections. Originally, I thought the connections students made would be through an awareness of the similarities of experiences. What I learned in the process was how important differences are for establishing connections and building dialogic relations. The times students were able to find similar experiences seemed almost too simple for them. It appeared as though they assumed that if experiences were similar, than they were all the same and they lost sight of the uniqueness of Black women’s experiences from the Global South.
Embracing similarities and differences are equally important in establishing dialogic relations, but oft-times attention is paid to either the similarities or differences. Education tends to be understood as one thing or the other, however questions of identity and connections are too complex to be viewed only dualistically. Everyone has multiple identities, and in order to embrace others we must recognize and appreciate their plurality. The duality of education is seen in the way subjects are studied, for example there is a separation between classes that are created to learn about others. Classes that stress the multicultural are often separated from those that deal with the international as a result these are seen as completely separate entities and students relate to the multicultural and the international in similar manner.

A second lesson concerns teaching. Sidorkin describes dialogic moments occurring in the classroom when students talk out of turn, there is a carnival like atmosphere in the class. As a teacher there was the challenge of allowing these moments to occur in the classroom not because of the students, but because of myself. Allowing dialogue in the class meant giving up a measure of privilege and control. My position as a teacher automatically gave me some measure of power, however; in order to create a space for dialogue in the classroom I had to negotiate this power. For example there were time when I had to admit that I did not know certain things, the history of the ankh is an example of this. I also had to give students the space to go in the direction they wanted since I believe this facilitated their learning. This was the case during the creation of the final play where I had to decide between mandating that students create a
play that included women from the Global South or leave it open for them to create a play based on their interpretations of what they had learned; I choose the latter.

I learned to negotiate power in the classroom. The game that we played “Mirror Me” is an excellent example of negotiation of power and privilege. The game began with me as the teacher being in the middle, I danced and students mirrored my actions. However I moved out of the circle and another student stepped in, once he moved out of the circle someone else moved into the circle and had their time there. All the students were allowed to be in the center and there were times when they did not want to be in the circle but wanted me to again be in the circle to offer suggestions about what they should do. This activity fits the description of a teacher, one who teaches but in the process learns as well. Sometimes both learning and teaching occurs simultaneously.

The third and final lesson involved my position as a researcher, this is related to my position as teacher as well. What amazed me was the complexity of the work. The research lasted only six weeks but the lessons gleaned went beyond the six weeks. The question that kept surfacing throughout the process involved my responsibility as a researcher. My subject matter incorporated Black women from the Global South. As a woman from the Global South I wanted to throw these voices into the classroom. At the same time I had a responsibility to the students in my class; I also wanted their voices to be heard. I recently attended a symposium where one of the presenters was concerned about the voices we hear, she said that often times these voices are the voices of the elites. A member of the audience questioned her and asked what she expected from the

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13 Herman C. Hudson Symposium, Indiana University, April 16th 2005.
elites- if she expected the elites to be silent. The question was more a rhetorical one but I thought of this question and related it back to my research. A responsibility of the elites is not to be silent but to search for spaces where the non elites are and facilitate the process of bringing these voices from the margins to the center. This dissertation is a step in this direction for me and the lessons I’ve learned will guide me as I “throw” women’s voices as well as other voices on the margins. There remains much work to be done in this field and the following sections will present recommendations that will aid in facilitating this process.

Recommendations

For Classroom Learning

My research process and activities are not new, they are built on the framework of other educators such as Cicely O’Neill, Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton. What is unique is my focus on the theater of Black women from the Global South. Theater of Black women from the Global South served to provide a dialogic space in the classroom. The theaters used for this research were testimonial and it gave students an opportunity to have an idea of the lived experiences of Black women from the Global South. While it has a great potential in U.S. classrooms there are also some barriers. As reported through reviewing literature and the results of this dissertation, theater is not viewed as serious academic work. Students often feel that this is their space to play and many educators believe that playing has no place in schools. Schools in southeastern Ohio are plagued by
under-funding issues and scare resources. When a decision has to be made schools are quick to cut theater and other arts related activities.

There is a wealth of information about the possibilities of the arts in facilitating classroom learning, but decision makers need to be educated about this. Teachers and superintendents need to be exposed to this type of information during their educational training. Teacher education should stress the important of dialogue and ways classrooms can invite dialogue. Theater should be suggested as an example of a tool that could be used.

I hesitate in providing a script for educators to incorporate in their classrooms. My study was performed in an Upward Bound class which is quite different from the educational space in public schools. I therefore recognize that it might be difficult for teachers to incorporate some of the strategies used in this research. However there are some things that teachers can do even given the limitations of the classroom. As bell hooks (1994) explains even within these limitations there are possibilities.

One suggestion is for teachers to invite multiple voices into their classroom. By inviting voices such as those of Black women from the Global South students not only learn about other lives but they also learn about themselves. Bakhtin (1984) and Sidorkin (1999) tell us that we are all in an unfinished state of growth and dialogue with others opens opportunities for growth and learning more about ourselves. Another suggestion involves opening spaces for dialogue; this is an extremely complex process particularly in environments where the objective is to teach students to pass standardized tests. Opening spaces for dialogue means that the focus has to be on dialogue; hence inviting the
conditions that lead to dialogue is vital. This includes conditions such as allowing for moments of discomfort, negotiating power while as the same time providing a safe space for students. Role playing is helpful in this respect because it is safe space while offering the possibility for dialogue. A final suggestion I offer deals with critical thinking. Here again, a format such as process drama is instrumental as it easily facilitates the asking of questions. This way students are guided to examine themselves and their relation to others. The important question of implication, particularly of the self can be addressed. Again formats such as theater are useful in achieving this because the processes involved create the environment for students to be more open for dialogue and “honest talk.” My research has implications not only for classroom learning but also for future research. I will now discuss some directions for future research.

For Future Research

The present study was undertaken during a six weeks Upward Bound Program. While there were many useful findings there is still room for further work to build upon the findings of this study. Because the study was conducted over a fairly short six weeks period, I recommend that this study be repeated, but be conducted for a longer period of time. I felt that students were just beginning to understand some of the concepts I presented to them in class when the study ended. By the time the study ended students had begun dialoging about the role of race in their society, but the dialogue had not extended to the global arena. It would have been interesting to see the types of dialogue produced if students were again reintroduced to the theater of Black women from the Global South after their final production.
Based on the results obtained more information is needed to see if race was prominent because of the presence of the African American students from the Afrocentric school. Further study could focus on students from Appalachia only without the presence of students from ethnic minority groups living in urban areas. This was the first time the Upward Bound program incorporated students from an Afrocentric school; this was a new experience for the seniors and juniors in the program who had previously participated in the program without this addition. Some of the results of the study could be explained as students’ reactions to what they viewed as an intrusion. Other studies could investigate the dialogue produced through the use of the theater of Black women from the Global South to explore if the dialogues are now different as the new students in the program see the students from the Afrocentric school not as an intrusion, but as part of the program.

My study did not include ethnic minority Appalachian students. I recommend that further studies incorporate this group and compare the dialogues that result. This study could be useful in understanding whether marginalized groups within the U.S., based upon class and race can form connections with other marginalized groups globally. This study could also be done at a broader scale with only ethnic and racial minority students within the U.S. to investigate their relations with others from the Global South. My findings might be helpful since data from my research suggests that there might be a barrier for racial and ethnic minority groups to form dialogic relations with people outside the U.S. Although they have been marginalized in their own societies, the
Americanization process seems to prevent them from being able to form dialogic relations with others who are marginalized and who are not from the U.S. I see further investigation of this as necessary for the purpose of Pan-Africanist ideals. The African American students in the class and the Black women from the Global South, myself included, share a similar history—we have the same continental origin. If there is indeed a problem of disconnect investigation is needed to find out why and what can be done to form connections.

My dissertation focused on Black women’s theater from some parts of Africa, and the Caribbean. I recommend that further studies include more theatrical pieces and more areas of Africa and its Diaspora. I limited the African Diaspora to areas considered as the Global South although as mentioned in my introductory chapter, there are areas in the Global North that bear similar characteristics to places in the Global South. It would be helpful to examine the sense students make of the plays and the connection of the plays of Black women from areas of the Global North, for example, the U.S. and Europe, to their lives. This would add to the complexity of understanding dialogic relations between marginalized people worldwide. Human beings are complex and too often we try to present materials in simplistic manners. While simplistic approaches have their advantages, by adding multiple perspectives perhaps students will be better able to grapple with the issues of diversity in a holistic manner and in forming dialogue relations.
Conclusion

At the conference for Global Africa at Ohio University in April 2004, the guest speaker, Dr. Hollis Liverpool provided a rendition of one of his calypsos. He sang that humans are exploring the moon and other planets, yet there is still so much to explore on earth because we have not learned how to relate human to human. The study undertaken endeavored to shed some understanding on how to make relating human to human more possible. We live at the time where this inability to relate seems so obvious. We arrive at decisions that affect others without taking time to reflect carefully or for that matter not caring about how we will affect others. Within the past several years decisions have been made that have directly affected people living in Afghanistan, Iraq, and those fighting the wars in those countries. All these events seem to be spurred by the September 11th 2001 bombing in New York.

September 11th 2001 made it clear that whether we want to believe it or not, everyone is part of the world; no one lives in isolation. This event somehow turned the mirror on U.S. society and some began seeing the importance of forming relations with others globally. Being in relations, specifically dialogic relations is not an easy task; being able to grapple and embrace differences, perhaps even more that similarities, seems to be an important ingredient in forming this type of relation. I do not have all the answers to the problem of dialogic relations, but I hope that my research can be part of that which addresses ways in which differences will no longer be divisive mechanisms but be forces which bring and keep people together.
As I come to the close of this research and reflect on the process and the findings
I am reminded of two poems I wrote as I tried to make sense of my research. The first is:

Different, the same
Contradictory
But
Different experience
But
Human just the same.

The second poem I wrote after I wrote my first draft for my concluding chapter.

I don’t want to be the same
The same means I have not a unique identity
Similar maybe
But the same, no way!

I am because of multiple “mees.” After many revisions of this draft I now recognize that who I am is not because of multiple “mees” but because of multiple “mees” and “yous.” Somehow I have come to a full circle. At the beginning I centered my work based on the African proverb, “I am because we are” and I conclude with the same thought. The difference however is the recognition that the “I”, that I speak of is many and complex and the “we” is as complex as it is multiple. I began this research journey with many questions some of which have been answered. I investigated the concept of voice throwing though Black women’s theater from the Global South as a means for fostering dialogic relations in the classroom. The objective of voice throwing
is to bring the speaker into the center of discourse. The speakers were brought into the center of discourse in the classroom, but this space also allowed others to throw their voices and be in the center. No one group or person should be allowed to dominate the center; the center shifts so each group gets heard. The discourse evolves as each group participates. By no means does this need to occur in an orderly manner because as noted talking out of turns seems to be more stimulating for dialogic relations (Sidorkin, 1999). I also believe that voice throwing is an activity that needs to be done continuously so that no one group would occupy the center for too long.

As I come to conclusion of this research I have many more questions. I don’t know if these questions have answers. I conclude this chapter but this is not an end of my search. A popular calypso tune from Antigua sang by Boldface in 1998 comes to mind and seems appropriate for the journey ahead and this is how I conclude:

“What you na know you jus na know. De hardest ting in ah de world ah fa know”
(What you don’t know you just don’t know, the hardest thing in the world is to know).

---

14 This was the only song he produced that year. An actual recording was never made as he sang only at the Calypso tents. There is therefore no reference for it in the bibliography.


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[http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/ls3_aubrey.htm](http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/ls3_aubrey.htm)


http://www.candw.ag/~jardinea/ffhtm/ff990903.htm


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Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press Inc.


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APPENDIX A: MAP OF APPALACHIAN OHIO
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

a) What do you think about the play you studied?

b) How did you develop the story for your play?

c) How did you develop the characters?

d) What did you like best/ least about the class?

e) What have you learned from this process?

f) What’s your relationship with the other students in the group?

g) Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

The tutor/mentor was asked the following questions:

1) How would you characterize the dynamics of the group throughout the process?

2) What do you see as the strength and weakness of this class?

3) How did students go through the process of creating their plays?

4) What is your experience and observation of the process?

5) How effective was the use of theater of women from the Global South as an educational tool?

6) Do you have any other comments you would like to make?
APPENDIX C: JOURNAL PROMPTS

Day 1
a. What is your expectation from this class?
b. What do you think of when you hear the term Global South/ Developing country?
c. What do you think of when you hear Caribbean?
d. What do you think of when you hear Africa?

Day 3
If you had to prepare a production (theatrical or musical) that involved Caribbean and African women describe the setting, theme and characters of your production?

Day 9
a. What positions do the characters in your play hold in their societies?
b. How comparable is this to the position you hold in your society?
c. How does the position of the characters influence their situation?
d. What factors contributed to the characters’ situation?

Day 15
What similarities/ differences are there between your character in the play and you?

Day 17
Think about your plays, and write a journal entry that answers the question; what does this have to do with me?
Day 19

How do you see your role/responsibilities toward your community, society and world?

Day 26

Reflect on issues and themes discussed in class

Final Week Journal Assignments

a. What are the similarities/differences between the play created by the class and those written by the women from the Global South? Explain in terms of setting, theme, characters and plot. What accounts for these differences/similarities?

b. What do you think of when you hear the term Global South/Developing Country?

c. What do you think of when you hear Caribbean?

d. What do you think of when you hear Africa?

e. If you had to prepare a production (theatrical or musical) that involved Caribbean and African women describe the setting, theme and characters of your production?
APPENDIX D: COURSE OUTLINE
Ohio University Upward Bound Program

Theater Appreciation, Summer 2003

Monday- Thursday

2-3pm

Instructor: Denise Hughes
Teaching Assistant: Betty

“I am because we are” (African proverb).

Objectives:

1) To understand the lives of Black women from the Global South through their theater
2) To understand how theater can be used as a tool for voice and empowerment.
3) To understand our interconnections, role and responsibilities as Global citizens.
4) To understand theatrical elements- character development, theme, setting, creating scripts and performing.

Students will be evaluated based on the following:

Attendance and Participation: 15%
Dramatic Presentation of Women’s Plays 20%
Monologues 20%
Final Play  30%
Journals  15%

Classroom Activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1       | Introduction to theater.  
Overview of the elements of theater.  
Theatrical games will be played which develops students’ improvisional skills and develops trust. During this week videos will be shown of two examples of Black women’s work. |
<p>| Week 2  | Students will be divided into groups and given their assigned plays. During this week students will focus on their individual play and discuss in groups issues pertinent to the play. Information related to the setting and theme of the play will be given so that students can develop their characters. Students will also use this time as a way of coming up with ways in which |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Re-enactment of plays. One play will be performed each day. After each play class discussions will be carried out and students will document their reactions in their journals.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Monologues will be introduced to the class and then the class for Monday and Tuesday of that week will create and rehearse their monologues. Students will be asked to choose a character from the play they studied and to create monologues based on these characters. The monologues will help students to think more about their lives and its relationship to Black women from the Global South. This will be useful in designing the last assignment for the class. Wednesday and Thursday will be the days in which students will perform their monologues. Journal entries will reflect on responses to these monologues.</td>
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</table>
During this time students will also begin the process of recreating their plays; students will work in the same group as they did for the first play.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Students will use this week to focus on their plays. Journal entries will be carried out to document the process and transitions involved.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Performance of the Plays. One play will be performed each day. Journal entries and class discussions will follow each performance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Classroom Policy and Grading:**

Class attendance is mandatory. Each unexcused absence will result in a lowering of grade by 5 points. All rules determined by Upward Bound will be followed in this class. Failure to heed the rules and the regulations will result in expulsion from the class. Changes can be made of this syllabus at any time as deemed necessary by the instructor.

**Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92-90</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-97</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>68-62</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>61-56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plays to be studied:


Singing Sandra (1999). *Voices from the Ghetto*.

APPENDIX E: PLAY REENACTMENTS

*Voices from the Ghetto*

Characters:

Spade: Black male from Trinidad played by Donnie

John Paul: Trinidadian youth played by Harry.

Adena: Mother of John Paul played by Tracie

Mary: Sister of John Paul played by Mary

(At the beginning of the play the music of *Voices from the Ghetto*, a calypso by Singing Sandra, is heard. Spade walks into the room and sits on a chair in the center of the room).

Spade: Yo, my name is Spade.

I am nineteen, and I live in Trinidad.

In my neighborhood you could see hate.

(Gestures with hands)

Walking down the streets someone gets popped right in front of you.

It’s easy to get some dope or something.

Everybody’s got some.

You see somebody getting raped, prostitution . . .

If you have never seen what goes on in the real hood;

I’m a show you a real life example of it.
(John Paul enters carrying a box on his head)

John Paul (calling from one side of the room): Mangoes, Papayas–four for a dollar.

(He then walks over to Adena who is seated in the front of the room. She is holding a picture of her late husband).

Adena: Why did you leave me? I wish you were here with me now. (Looks up and sees John Paul).

Adena: Is your sister with you?

John Paul: No, I’m going to find her. (Leaves the room)

(Both Adena and Spade are still on stage. Mary walks on stage but stays on the other side of the room. She begins walking fast, then she starts looking back and running. She falls).

Mary: Stop please don’t hurt me. Nooooo, stop–get off me. (Screams) Don’t hurt me.

John Paul: (Enters the room and walks over to where Mary has fallen. He become angry and makes a stab like motion with his hands plunging to the floor. John Paul and Mary keep looking down at the floor).

Spade: See what I’m talking about?

I’m talking about rape.

The brother shot the dude and now he’s got to spend the rest of his life in prison.

Mom’s sitting at home crying worrying about her baby, but she aint alone.

After that dude raped Mary, she got pregnant and now she has another somebody at the crib with.

Music (Voices from the Ghetto)
(After the performance all the characters come back out on stage and introduce themselves). This is an interactive theatrical piece. There are two parts: there is first the part where students perform their roles to an audience and the second part where the audience becomes part of the play and interacts with the characters by asking questions and making comments.

Spade: My name is Spade. I was 19 years old and live by myself. I don’t have no daddy. I’m an orphan. No body wants me. I sell drugs – whatever I do is fine.

Mary: My name is Mary; I am 14 yrs old.

John Paul: My name is John Paul; I’m 16

Adena: I’m Adena. I am 36. I’m a widow.

Student (audience): (to Adena) What is it you were saying? I could not hear you.

Adena: I asked my deceased husband Peter why he left us.

Student (audience): What is your relationship to these two?

John Paul: She is our mother.

Student (audience): Spade, what is your relationship to them?

Spade: Nothing, just telling what’s going on.

Student (audience): What’s your last name?

Spade: Matilla.

Student (audience): Are you an Italian?

Spade: Are you a Rastafarian?

Student (audience): What happened to the baby?

Mary: I don’t have it yet.
Student (audience): What are you going to do about the baby?

Mary: I am going to keep it. I don’t know anybody in the hood who have money for an abortion.

Student (audience): When are you getting out of prison? Are you in prison for life?

John Paul: Yes.

–End of Play–

**Living Positively**

This is a play about people living with HIV/AIDS. Students selected characters who were all from South Africa living with HIV/AIDS. This play is also an interactive piece however it takes the form of a talk show; therefore the audience members also become part of the play. The performance of the characters was rehearsed but not the performance of the audience members.

Characters:

Dr. Lamptey: Talk show host played by Joe.


Patrick: South African male affected by HIV/AIDS played by Trevor.

Theodore: South African male played by Mitch.

Margaret: South African Woman played by Queena.

Musa: South African woman played by Mindy.
(Seated in the front of the room are Jaco, Gicible, Patrick, Theodore, Margaret and Musa).

Chuck (off stage, Chuck is an audience member but had been asked by Dr. Lamptey to play the role of an announcer: AND NOW INTRODUCING DR. LAMPTEY

(Dr. Lamptey walks through the door).

Dr. Lamptey: (hums din din din din di da).

Dr. Lamptey: How are you guys doing? This is the Dr. Lamptey show. Thank you very much. (Goes to his seat). How are you guys doing (looks at people on stage)? How are you guys doing out there (looks at audience)?

Audience: (claps) YEAH!

Dr. Lamptey: Back again with another episode (stands). To the viewers out there how’re you doing? Once again it’s Dr. Lamptey with another episode on the awareness of many things out there in our world. I am here today to aware you the audience (sits) on the awareness of AIDS and HIV. I have here with you today a couple of individuals (points to people seated on stage) who want to elaborate on the awareness of HIV/ AIDS. I would let them introduce themselves. First . . .

Jaco: My name is Jaco. I am 33. I am from South Africa.

Gicible: My name is Gicible. I am from South Africa.

Patrick: Patrick, from South Africa

Margaret: My name is Margaret from South Africa.

Theodore: Theodore, from South Africa.

Musa: I’m Musa. I am also from South Africa.
Dr. Lamptey: As all of you already know me, I’m Dr Lamptey. We are going to start off. I would like to basically . . . To all the viewers out there, this is a very serious episode (leans forward in chair). Me, as a doctor I have never experienced any patients of mine who have had the DISEASE. Or a crisis of this majorly exploited crisis throughout America and the world. I would like to have all you viewers pay attention, get the children, grab them in the dinning room, get this focus cause here are individuals who are serious and willing to step to the plate; step up and explain about the subject. This is very serious people. So I am going to start off by having one of the highly experienced guest of mine elaborate on what we are talking about. Anyone of you can start off.

(Pause).

Dr. Lamptey: Ok –Patrick?

Patrick: I real don’t know what to say besides I have the AIDS virus, full blown AIDS. And I don’t know much about it, but that it could happen to anybody so be very aware.

Dr. Lamptey: Yes, do you mind telling our viewers how, where, specifically explain how you found out you were torn down with this problem? Explain to the audience/ viewers please.

Patrick: Well, a few years ago I was chronically getting colds and I would be coughing and I coughed up blood. So I did not know what was going on. So I went to the hospital for a check up. They tested my blood and found out I was HIV positive.

Dr. Lamptey: And you basically . . . Me as a doctor, I hear my clients say that, not that I have been with people who have the disease . . . you know this disease . . . A lot of people don’t have the mindset on how to handle having the disease. Can you explain to
the individuals in the audience how you have been able to manage to live eight years with this virus?

Patrick: Well see most people think that if you have HIV its all over. But just because you have the virus, it does not mean that you will get AIDS. Just so long as you do what you’re suppose to and exercise and just do healthy things for yourself, you have a greater chance of not getting AIDS and that’s about it.

Dr. Lamptey: Once again, just as I asked Patrick, I want to ask any of our guests to explain your situation, your name etc. etc.

Musa: My name is Musa. I contracted the disease from my boyfriend. I never thought I would be the one with HIV. You always hear about gay people and White people getting it but never me. I never thought it would be me. I don’t have AIDS I have the HIV.

Dr. Lamptey: Since we have a different level of this crisis involved in these two individuals, could you explain the difference between AIDS and HIV. How more affected . . . is there a difference in infections against the virus, side effects etc. Could you explain?

Musa: Well there is a difference between HIV and full blown AIDS. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS and AIDS is by far worse than HIlV. As far as symptoms I get sick a lot but probably not as much as he would (looks at Patrick).

Patrick: Well, Dr. Lamptey I was just wondering how you stand on that question.

Dr. Lamptey: What question? The question I asked or . . .

Patrick: Yes, the question you just asked.

Dr. Lamptey: About the AIDS difference?
Patrick: What would you like . . . ?

Dr. Lamptey: About the AIDS virus?

Patrick: About the difference between HIV and AIDS.

Dr. Lamptey: OK basically. . .  Basically . . .  I mean basically the difference is . . .

Some people think its all the same. I don’t want you to get mixed up.  I don’t want . . .

that it causes dead people. . . .  And one more thing before I answer that question.  (gets
up walks over to camera).  A lot of people, a lot of people you know, think that you can
only get AIDS from screwing around.  It’s not like that, its not even on that level (looks
into camera).  I mean viewers out there; viewers out there (looks at audience) you need
to understand that sharing needles. . . I mean we need to go into the neighborhoods, you
know the crackheads all those people sharing needles, selling these narcotics.  This is

where it all spreads (points) viewers/ listeners (walks back to seat).

Once again I am going to explain the difference between AIDS and HIV.  HIV is
basically one less stage of the AIDS virus.  HIV bothers the immune system, but it does
not break the cells down like AIDS does.  Well it does, but AIDS causes them to stop
reproducing.  And to finish the answer to that question I want to express this question
physically, verbally, mentally involving the audience.  (To camera man).  Put the camera
on the audience please.  Look at these, just look at these people.  This situation is so

serious that a portion of these audience members can even have this virus.

Patrick: Dr. Lamptey I don’t think you answered the question at all.

Dr. Lamptey: (points at Donnie, an audience member) Security . . .  Once again viewers
we are going to present more questions right after these messages. (Pause).
We are back now and like I said after the break we are going to elaborate more on the mental mindset. That it is all about death and all that stuff. So to get it on a positive note and mode, I’m gonna ask these guests of mine what . . . how can my viewers (mutters under his breath) around the world and audience be aware of this virus? Not necessarily knowing what is does and what it causes, but how can they mentally and physically be aware of this virus and avoid it. (To an audience member who has his hands raised). Hold on I’ll answer that question in a minute.

Gicible: AIDS is not witchcraft, it’s not magic; it is something that you can prevent. Something you should be testing your loved ones for. And your behaviors will affect how HIV and AIDS are spread. Your behavior affects others’ lives and you can make excuses saying we all gonna die anyway, you must take responsibility. It’s part of the world and it’s part of your lives.

Dr. Lamptey: (Shakes Gicible’s hand and then goes in front of camera). Ok thank you thank you so much. (To the camera man). Camera follow me as we ask the questions. Viewers I have a question here. What is your name?

Audience: I’m Chuck.

Dr. Lamptey: How you’re doing Chuck?

Chuck: I’m fine.

Joe: Go ahead ask your question.

Chuck: I was just wondering if we are going to hear what these people have to say without your BS in the middle?

Patrick: YEAH!
Dr. Lamptey: This is a serious matter. Security, \textit{(calls out to Donie)} get him out of here!

I want him out of here by the next commercial break or you are fired \textit{(about to sit)}

Patrick: Wait, wait, wait –he’s right.

Dr. Lamptey: \textit{(Walks to Patrick).} I know you are not telling me . . . You full blown AIDS advocate. . . Your’re about to die. You are on my show . . . this . . . We’ll be right back after this message. Go to the commercial break.

Ah, I’m going to ask you guys a few . . .

Cordella: Dr. Lamptey, I have a question.

Dr. Lamptey: \textit{(Walks to audience, he is now using a pencil as a mic).} Viewers follow me as we go. You have a question?

Cordella: Yes, Dr. Lamptey as much as we appreciate . . .

Dr. Lamptey: I’m sorry to interrupt; could you tell us your name before you start?

Cordella: Oh sorry, my name is Cordella. I work with UNICEF. We actually go out and educate the community about HIV and AIDS. And as much as we appreciate your views as a doctor and the medical implications of HIV/ AIDS, we would like to also hear from your guests, since they are local people, in terms of their own personal experiences.

Dr. Lamptey: Thank you. Viewers \textit{(looks into camera)} me as a doctor, I have a lot of self control. Go figure.

Dr. Lamptey: Once again I am going to ask my guests a series of questions. I’m going to start off with you Jaco. Mr. Jaco what disease do you have?

Jaco: I have HIV/ AIDS.

Dr. Lamptey: \textit{(Looks at audience).} Say that again.
Jaco: I have AIDS.

Dr. Lamptey: You have full blown AIDS?

Jaco: Yes.

Dr. Lamptey: Could you tell me Mr. Jaco, how has AIDS affected you in the past how many years, how many seconds, how many days?

Jaco: I’ve had AIDS for seven years. I started getting small problems like rashes, infections and I started getting sick and tired. I got fired from my job (*breathes deeply*). I get really tired; I feel like I’m getting worse.

Dr. Lamptey: Is that all Mr Jaco?

Jaco: (*Nods head*).

Dr. Lamptey: Alright Mr. Jaco.

Musa: Dr. Lamptey!

Dr. Lamptey: (*Looks as Musa and pauses*). When did you discover you had AIDS? No; excuse me, on the fact that we know you had it for 7 years could you basically take us more indepth on the day, the time, the moment, on how you felt once a doctor like myself told you had AIDS?

Jaco: I contracted it from having unprotected sex (*lowers head*). The doctor told me I had AIDS and I just felt sick to my stomach.

Dr. Lamptey: Are you getting emotional? (*Taps Josh on shoulders*).

Jaco: Yeah.

Dr. Lamptey: I’m sorry worse situation. Can I ask you one more question?

(*Jaco nods head*).
Dr. Lamptey: What do you feel Mr. Jaco, about how people should know more about the crisis of this involvement of infection negatively throughout the world which is HIV and AIDS?

Jaco: This is a disease I got from doing stupid things. I could have prevented it. (Pauses and wipe eyes).

Dr. Lamptey: I’m sorry (shakes Jaco’s shoulders). I am going to ask you all the same question. (Gets up). How has HIV affected you?

Gicible: HIV affects your life. You have to begin to worry about your loved ones. My husband passed away and I have 3 sons; they might have HIV. I’m afraid to have them tested and it becomes . . .

Dr. Lamptey: WHOA, WHOA, WHOA, I don’t mean to disrespect, me as a concerned doctor and my viewers . . . You are afraid to have your children tested? This is one of the most important stage in finding out how to stop this crisis. This is the thing with people. Viewers listen to me (pauses and looks into camera) YOU MUST GET TESTED!

Gicible: My children are adults and they can have themselves tested, but HIV is something you fear. It’s something you don’t want to admit that you have it. And that’s apart of why it spreads so quickly. No one wants to be aware, to know they have it because then they would have to be responsible for something that can change their lives, and change the lives of those they care about.

Dr. Lamptey: I really understand that, thank you (shakes Gicible’s hand). I have one more question.
Larry (audience member): I have a question for Patrick. You said you contracted HIV four years ago, and now you have AIDS. Wasn’t there a period of time when you didn’t have AIDS? When did you get AIDS; when did it go from HIV to AIDS?

Patrick: I’m not quite sure. But I know I wasn’t taking care of myself the way I should have. I didn’t know much about it at that point. But now I am aware that if you are very healthy and you try to do things healthily you can stop from getting the AIDS virus. I just want to tell everybody.

Dr. Lamptey: Alright viewers I’m going to end this episode on a final thought.

Donnie (audience member): I have a question.

(Dr. Lamptey walks over to Donnie who is lying on the floor. He whispers something to Donnie. Dr. Lamptey then walks back to face camera).

Dr. Lamptey: I want to end this episode with a final thought. Viewers, me as a doctor, I want all of you to get tested. I will try to do all I can to mentally, physically, verbally and economically establish a day that all of us Americans can celebrate the awareness of this crisis in order to be getting tested. No one should go down for this virus; we need to find a cure. And me as a doctor and my fellow employees must stop this virus. People have a lot to say and also to stop this crisis. Be safe. Take care of each other. Thank you.

Audience: (Applause).

This ends the first segment of the play. This was then followed by audience members asking questions.

Denise (teacher/researcher): We still have about two minutes for questions. The question asked about when you progressed from HIV to AIDS remember one of the
problems in developing countries is being able to get medical care, so a lot of times it progresses rapidly from HIV to full blown AIDS unless people have enough money to get medical attention as soon as they find out.

Larry (audience member): I have a question for the doctor. I noticed earlier at the beginning of the show you said you never had any patients that have HIV or AIDS. Obviously you are a proclaimed doctor cause you’re hosting your own show. If HIV and AIDS is such a problem, and it is so widespread, I don’t understand why you have never had patients who have had this before. Why is this?

Donnie (audience): You know that is not necessary . . .

Dr. Lamptey: I believe the questions was . . you know this crises is going on throughout the world. You know it is not that widespread.

Audience: It is.

Dr. Lamptey: Not to say that every patient of mine is going to have AIDS. I had patients with multiple STD’s but it never came down to ME getting a patient with HIV/ AIDS, personally.

Larry (audience): Why don’t you take them since you care so much about the awareness of it?

Dr. Lamptey: I do care about the awareness of it.

Larry (audience member): Oh, Ok.

Dr. Lamptey: If I am becoming more aware about this and ceasing it; then hopefully I may never have to interact with any STD’s or this crisis.

Denise: Does anyone else have a quick question?
Guy (audience member): Do you discriminate against anybody with sexually transmitted diseases?

Dr. Lamptey: If I discriminate? How many balls do you think I have touched?

(Time runs out which signals the end of the play).

_A Black Woman’s Tale_

This play is also an interactive piece. However it differs from the other plays encountered thus far. It deals with issues of Caribbean women; it includes an all woman cast and it uses diverse artistic expressions, for example dance, in relaying the diverse experiences of women from different Caribbean islands.

Characters:

Joy: Caribbean woman played by Erica
Kera: Caribbean woman played by Sandra
Kara: Played by Darlene
Sacha: played by Ariel
Sherese: played by Nancy
Amber: played by Amber

(Six females are standing in front of the room, one Black and the others White. Their backs are turned to their audience. Music begins and Kera turns to face audience. She has African cloth wrapped around her waist and her head).
Kera: (*Dances. She motions the discarding of clothes, she takes off the cloths around her waist and head. Turns back to audience*).

Sherese: (*Turns facing audience, she has papers in her hands, she begins reading*)

When I was at Primary School my best friend was an orphan. WE used to do everything together. WE used to sit in class together and at recreation time we used to skip and play. My orphan friend lives in a little dark room with her grandmother. She was very poor, but it did not matter to me because her grandmother was nice, and she did everything for her granddaughter, which wasn’t very much, and so my friend did not have very much in the way of clothes and shoes, and sometimes she had to wear clothes and shoes that other people gave her, and sometimes they were too big for her and other people laughed.

She was bright bright bright, and she used to get all of her math right and that kept her going. But if she ever make a mistake that teacher used to beat her so bad that it used to make me cry. That teacher! She was the cruelest teacher that I have ever known, and then my friend grandmother died; they offer to look after her and they used to treat her like a real slave. She had to do all the house work and clean their shoes and all. And if she ever made a mistake in school they used to beat her and they would be laughing then they see her flinching. That teacher! She has a big leather strap, and she used to soak it overnight so that it would swell up big big big, (*opens hands to varying lengths*), for the next morning and she would hide it in her umbrella and when she didn’t see her come to school with the strap we would be feeling glad that she forgot it at home. But you see if my friend made a mistake, she swipe it out of the umbrella and land it on her head and on
her back and on her legs, and on then they would begin laughing when hey see her jumping and screaming. That teacher!

(Pause, walks closer to audience)

One day we were going home form school, and my friend was still crying from the beating that she got, and I was comforting her and all she could say is: “Because I don’t have a father and a mother that they treat me so.” And it’s true, I know. It’s true. When you don’t have nobody to look after you everybody does take advantage of you. It’s true. But you see me, my father was a chemist and druggist, and he had his own drugstore with his name write up in front of it, and everybody respected him and that teacher know that she couldn’t beat me, because if she ever beat me my father would go right into that school and tell them off. My father never used to make fun you see. He would go right in there and tell them off. And that teacher know that she couldn’t beat me. I make a mistake sometimes yes, but that teacher still know that she couldn’t beat me. And it hurt me when my friend did not have anybody to fight for her. And you see some years later, when I hear that teacher went blind, I couldn’t even feel sorry for her.

(Pauses)

One day, I was going home from school alone. We used to live on Vlissenger Road and I decide to pass by the Rialto Cinema. My mother used to let us go to the cinema to matinee on Saturday afternoon. That was the only day we used to get to go to the cinema you know. All the other days, we used to have to sit around the dining table and turn off the radio and do our homework. But Saturday afternoon we used to get to go to the cinema to matinee. And so, I used to see bedtime stories and Sherley Temple movies.
And so I have been inside the cinema plenty times. But I don’t know how it stayed at the back of the cinema where they showed the movies. I was curious. And I was standing outside the cinema thinking how the atmosphere was so quiet when they not showing a movie. I was watching all the posters of the movies to come . . . Judy Garland, Clark Gable, Rita Hayworth and Shirley Temple. They used to call me Black Shirley Temple because I had curls just like Shirley Temple. And I was watching all them posters, when a man who was working in the cinema ask me if I wanted to see where they showed the movies. I was excited! This was going to be a real adventure. Nobody else in my class ever see where they show the movies. And he take me round the side, and to the back of the cinema and up the stairs into the room where they show the movies. Then he did a funny thing. He opened his pants . . . I was scared and I run all the way home.

(Runs to audience seated in front row).

Don’t tell my mother. Please don’t tell my mother.

(Returns to her original place on stage and turns back to audience).

Sacha: (Turns to face audience. She runs to the sides of the room shrugging her shoulder each time. She mimes picking flowers. She then mimics picking petals off the flower.)

He loves me, he loves me not, he loves me!

(She picks a heart shaped paper from her pocket; along with this is shredded paper. The papers fall to the ground. She screams. Returns to her place on stage and then turns her back to the audience).

Amber: (Turns to face the audience. She walks to the center of the stage. Falls to the ground and screams. Puts her hand on her stomach, sits up and then stands. Uses her
hand as if brushing away something. Uses her hand to show growth. Begins tugging at something, backs away, waves bye bye. Walks back to her original position and then turns her back to the audience).

Joy: (Standing near a window).

Waiting by this window,

Waiting by this window,

I am waiting by this window for you to make a woman of me.

(moves from window and begins walking around)

It is 3 am on Monday morning, (looks at watch)

And he left since Friday night,

I am waiting by this window.

I know that you did not fall asleep

On your desk in your office,

I know that the carnation red on your underpants

Is not the blood of a squashed mosquito (mimes killing a mosquito on her hand).

I am waiting by this window

For you to make a woman of me

Where- are- you?

(Goes back to the window)

Kara: So I am this woman (turns around facing audience)

Straddling these many lands,

Hole in my head,
Corn on my feet,
And callouses on my heart,
No actress now in this faded red
Of a colored’s girl’s
Hand me down.
Gone is the actress,
This here in my head
Is not steel wool,
Now powdered white
For some tragic role,
I am that woman
Echoing the poet
To tell the world
It it it
It is not enough
It is not enough
It is not enough
(Walks around).
It is not enough
To stand still
Spreading branches of security and warmth
I am this woman
Corns on my feet
Callouses on my head
And a hole in my heart.

(All women turn around and look at audience. The characters then introduce themselves).

Joy: My name is Joy I am upset because my boyfriend was out all weekend and I knew he was cheating on me and it just really hurts.

Kera: My name is Kera; I am 27 years old and . . . I started out being 13 and I went through being a teenager and I broke off my shell and became a free woman.

Kara: My name is Kara. I am 23. I was pretty much tired of being taken advantage of in situations I was very naïve and I just pretty much stated how I felt.

Sacha: Hi my name is Sacha and I’m 15, and what happened was that I invested my love to this guy I really likes and he broke my heart.

Sherese: I’ Sherese and I’m 18. I was pretty self explanatory.

Amber: My character did not have a name. She was sad to see her child grow up early and she was sad to see him go away.

Donnie (audience member): You know you said yours was self explanatory? I aint quite get it.

Sherese: Well first I was talking about my orphan friend and how she was treated because she was different and how because my father was in higher regard than hers I am treated with more respect. Then at the end I was at the movie theater and the guy he was going to rape me. So I went home but I did not want anyone to tell my mom.

Audience member: How do you feel after that experience?
Sherese: I think it helped me grow a little bit and now I know it wasn’t anything I did.

Audience member: (To Amber). You were shooing people away from your child right?

Amber: Yeah, I was trying to protect my child.

(The actresses are asked to break character). *This is a third element that is often incorporated into interactive theater. The actors are asked to explain their experience of playing their character role. They are no longer their characters; they become themselves once more.*

Denise: Can you relate to any of these experiences of the women? If so how?

Sandra: The cheating boyfriend.

Denise: Or do you think this is only for Caribbean women?

Ariel: *(Shrugs shoulders).* No.

-End of play-

*A Coloured Place*

This play is another interactive play created re-created by students based on the original play. This play is based in South Africa.

Characters:

Store owner from the Southern U.S. played by Chuck

Elija: Black South African youth played by Chuck

Dereck: CNN reported played by Chuck

Tracie (young): South African colored played by Bernadeth

Flow: South African White psychologist played by Guy
Jimmy: Colored male played by Larry

Tracie (old): played by Tanya

Brenda: South African Coloured woman played by Ria (*she asked not to be included in the research*)

(Screen pulled down in front of the room).

*Tracie (old:) (Sitting on chair facing audience begins reading).*

We must know where we are coming from, to understand how we have come to be where we are. Our stories remain untold, our triumphs unheard of our voices unrecognized. We have to show ourselves or there will always be a hollow place where out pride should be.

*(Gets up and puts a tape in the VCR. Tani, member of the audience who volunteered to hold up signs sits on the floor; she holds up a sign “Home Video”).*

Tracie (old): The term color is something other people identify me with.

Tracie (young): *(Enters stage and sits facing audience. Tani is still on stage)*

Hi, my name is Tracie. I am 18 years old. And what I am here to talk about today, *(pauses, clasps hand on table, voice gets louder)*, I am a Coloured woman and in today’s society I am not accepted. *(Pause, looks at audience, looks at paper; voice gets softer).*

In today’s society White people do not look at me like before. . . Coloured people are not accepted. And I have a hard time constantly fighting for respect. I’ll raise my hand at school and all the White people pay no attention.

*(Looks at audience)* I look around everyday, I see this girl fussing with her Afro. Have to make room for myself and my future. As I am here today I feel I should *(pauses and
looks into the air). I feel that my role is to make Black society worth living (looks down at paper). I am here because of you. (Leaves stage).

Tracie (old): (Gets up and goes to VCR and changes settings. Tani holds up another sign “CNN”).

Tracie (old): I think of Coloured people as outspoken people; down to earth.

(Enter Elija and Dr. Flow, both sit facing audience).

Dr. Flow: (Using a British accent). People in the ghetto follow the logic of survival, of doing from moment to moment, in apparently random fashion, whatever gives the most intense sensation of being alive. This insight might help to explain the senseless gang warfare and vandalism that is so prevalent in the Coloured areas of Durban. Those Coloureds who had European fathers formed a curious intermediate class between the Europeans and the mass of Coloured people. Very conscious of their kinship with with Whites they clung pathetically to such European standards they knew, without having any hope of being admitted to that European society. With ambivalent and conflicting aspirations the neglect by government of the provision of amenities and the constant reference to the uncertain origins, it is likely that Coloureds can be describes as culturally deprived. As a group Coloureds have lacked . . .

Elija: (Becomes upset and interrupts mockingly). The sentiments of unity, a territorial base and the numbers necessary for a politically effective movement of nationalism. What do you mean (becoming even more upset)? Of course we have culture, Bruin ous have their own style and there’s a lot of talent on out communities, especially in singing
and dancing. *(Shouts in Dr. Flow’s face)* Have you ever been to one of our variety shows ha ha?

*(Both Dr. Flow and Elija leave stage. Tani holds up another sign “MTV Live Real”)*.

Tracie (old): I have always thought having White in my views in my veins makes me an interesting person.

*(Enters Jimmy and the storeowner)*.

Jimmy: *(mimes rapping on a door)*.

Storeowner: *(Using Southern accent)* Come on in here boy.

Jimmy: Hello Sir. *(Comes in and shakes hand with the storeowner)*.

Storeowner: Have a seat.

Jimmy: Ok *(sits)*.

Storeowner: I want to talk to you.

Jimmy: Ok.

Storeowner: Well you see son we got a little problem.

Jimmy: Problem?

Storeowner: You got great experience, very qualified but the problem is you are a little over qualified.

Jimmy: Overqualified?

Storeowner: See we are not really looking to hire anyone right now.

Jimmy: If I am over qualified why don’t I get the job right now?

Storeowner: Its just . . . look at it this way. Come back in three months . . .
Jimmy: Three months? (Gets up). That’s it man. (Frustrated). It’s the Whiteness in us that Blacks can’t accept and the blackness in us that Whites can’t accept. In the past we weren’t White enough, and now we can’t get a job because we are not black enough.

(Turns away frustrated; both leave stage).

Tracie (old): The future of Coloured people lies in the hands of each Coloured individual. It’s the universal question of choice.

(Tani holds up another sign “News”).

Dereck: (Sitting behind a desk reading). In 1972, a young Durban Coloured mother of five, Mrs. Patricia Justien turned herself into a human torch and burnt herself to death over the Coloured shortage in Wentworth. On her deathbed Mrs Justien said that she did it to persuade the authorities to allocate a house for her self and her family in Wentworth. Now back to you. (Leaves stage).

Tracie (old): A Coloured person does not believe that he can invent anything. He can only watch, take, copy and buy, because he cannot see himself as a creator. With me, with everything I touch I ask myself, why can’t I do that?

(Tani holds up a card “Lifetime”).

Brenda: (asked not to be included in research).

Tracie (old): After watching all of this; I want my children and their children to know of a Coloured Place not rotting with division and inertia, but a Coloured Place of power and diversity, that they will not be ashamed to call home.

(The cast returns on stage and introduce themselves)
Chuck: I was the store owner (*with a Southern accent*) I’m 26. I was also Elija an aggressive youth. (deeper voice) I was also Dereck a reported for CNN.

Tracie (young): Hi my name is Tracie I am from South Africa. My mother’s black and my father White. People couldn’t accept, the White people, the fact that he was with a Black woman so a group of White men killed him. My Mom took care of me ever since.

Dr. Flow: (*British accent*). Oh I know, my name is Flow.

Jimmy: I’m Jimmy I’m 18. My Mom’s dying I need to buy her medication. I’m trying to find a job. But I’m coloured and it’s really difficult.

Brenda: (*Asked not to be included in research*).

Tracie: I’m the older Tracie and I’m 25

Denise: Does anyone have any questions for them?

Amber: Ria, Brenda I don’t understand your role.

Brenda: (*asked not to be included in research*).

Student: I don’t understand who she was (*pointing at Tracie (older)*)) like she was watching TV or whatever but like . . .

Tracie (older): I am supposed to be an activist. But instead of going out and helping I decided to go watch TV to learn from experiences of the past and future about a Coloured place, and what makes it so hard . . . It’s really hard for people to live their life without having some sort of struggle in their life. So I was watching TV to see what was going on to find out how I was going to help out with it.

Student: Dr. Flow? Is that your name?

Dr. Flow: (*British accent*). Yes, Edward Flow.
Student: Oh I ‘m sorry. What is the situation with Coloured people? What is your impression of them?

Dr. Flow: Yes, you must see it’s more of a bias for Coloured people, inducible (laughs). You must know it’s not a fair world (voice lowers). (Raises voice). You must look upon the perspective from my point of view if you want to understand the Black as I see it. It is really difficult to explain because you would have to go very elementary to understand.

Betty: Basically Dr. Flow you are telling us nothing.

Dr. Flow: No, I’m telling you, you’re too primitive to understand me that’s what I am saying inducible. (Laughter from audience)

Student: What is your name–just beside Dr. Flow?

Jimmy: Jimmy.

Student: So what happened?

Jimmy: My Mom is really sick, she’s dying; she needs medicine and the medicine is really expensive and she can’t work so I’m 18; I’m a man. I need to go out and find a job to support my Mom, so I try to find a job. I can’t find a job, its difficult because I’m Coloured. My mom she’s White and my dad dies; he’s Black. As a Coloured person in Durban I cant find a job because they wont accept a Coloured.

Student: What did you mean when you said before you weren’t White enough and now you aren’t Black enough?

Larry: It used to be if you are White you will get a job, and then there was a transition to where if you were Black you will get jobs. But nowhere was there anything that if you’re
Coloured you’ll get a job. It has always been difficult and if things don’t change it will always be.

Denise: Anymore questions?

-End of Play-

The Final play: Cross Roads

This play was written by students in the theater class of Upward Bound based on the topics that were discussed in the class.

Characters:

Ankh: ancient Kemet (Egypt) symbol which signifies life. It is often referred to as the original cross.

Darlene: tourist in ancient Kemet.

King Ptahhotep: Ancient Egyptian king.

Mary: African American Appalachian mother living in southeastern Ohio.

Donnie: Son of Mary, bi-racial.

Harry: Father of Donnie, Irish American.

Lela: European America living in an urban area.

Ariel: friend of Lela.

Scene 1

Setting: Kemet.

(On stage is an Egyptian pyramid at the back of the stage. Next to it is a camel.

The Ankh is covered in silver and is on a stand placed towards front stage)
Voice 1: I think diversity is a mixture of cultures and different teachings

Voice 2: Diversity for me . . . Well most people think it has something to do with different cultures, but it’s really not. It really just means difference. And I’ve learned a lot of things with difference. A lot of things have happened and people are not that really different from me. No one is me, so everyone I meet is different.

Voice 3: Diversity for me means the coming together of different races.

Ankh: Hey you there! Yes, I am talking to you. Do you know what I am? I am an Ankh. I hold a lot of importance to the people of Kemet. My angular top represents the womb of a woman and my bottom represents the reproductive organ of the man. Together they give life. That is what I mean; I represent eternal life.

Lx: On

*(Chuck and Darlene enter on stage. Chuck sits next to pyramid).*

Darlene: *(Walking around looking at the scenery on stage).*

Hi little boy *(looks at Chuck).* I come from a native land. *(Points at camel).* Wow! That’s a big dog or a weird looking horse. What’s wrong with its back? Why does it have that humpy thing? *(Picks up a shell puts it to her ear).* I can’t hear the ocean- what a rip off. *(Walks over to Ankh).* This has to be some sort of symbol from their culture. *(Walks to sphinx).* Is this a lion or a man? Hope he did not get it from his dad’s side of the family.
(Points to the pyramid). Who would pile a bunch of rocks in the desert? Sounds really foolish to me. (Shrugs shoulder, walks in front of Chuck). Here you go little boy (gives Chuck the shell). It does not work anyway. (Leaves stage).

Chuck: (Gets up, holding shell) This is our form of currency, a man can get rich off these. (Mockingly) I cant hear the ocean- mindboggling! (Looks at Pyramid). You know, I had a hand in building these, by the way it’s a PYRAMID! A bunch of rocks right?

The lions body represents strength. (Walks to camel, touches it then looks at audience). By the way my name is Ptahhotep, King Ptahhotep. The world’s first known genius. I know a thing or two about Math and Science. But she wouldn’t know what. (Leaves stage).

Lx: begin to lower

Ankh: One day something terrible happened to me. My homeland Kemet was invaded. The invaders took me, made my hand a stick, shortened my arms, and changed my name to cross. Now I live in a new place called the United States. I am not sure how I feel about this new place.

Sfz: Music

Scene 2

Setting: rural area in Ohio.

(Action takes place in the living room of a rural family. There is a center table and three Chairs).

Sfz: Appalachian music

(As music fades voices on diversity heard)
Voice 1: Diversity is having a diversity of different information; different ideas, even those you don’t agree with. Only by being knowledgeable can you have an idea of which one you support.

Voice 2: Diversity means different cultures and different people coming together. I’ve had a lot of experiences with diversity in the Upward Bound Program.

(Door slams, lights on. Donnie walks in and sits on chair).

Mary: (Hearing the door also walks in). Hi sweetheart, how was your day?

Donnie: Fine.

Mary: Are you alright?

Donnie: Yes.

Mary: (Becoming concerned). Want to talk about it?

Donnie: No.

Mary: Steve, look me in my eyes.

Donnie: (Looking at Mary).

Mary: You know you can talk to me about anything.

(Pause).

Donnie: Why does everyone treat me differently?

Mary: Different how?

Donnie: Well you are Black; Dad’s White, so people automatically assume I am different from them.

Mary: Steve some people they just don’t understand. Some people have a fear . . .
Harry: *As he comes on stage* Honey, I’m home. What’s for dinner (walks into room).

Did you hear *looks at Mary and Donnie and recognizes something’s wrong*. What’s going on?

Mary: Steve had a problem at school.

Harry *(Sits)*. Is this something I need to call the teacher or principal about?

Donnie: No!

Harry: What kind of problems are you having?

Donnie: I don’t feel like talking to you about it.

Mary: He’s been having racial problems.

Harry: What’s going on? What does that mean?

Mary: It’s because he is mixed.

Harry: You feel ashamed of that?

Donnie: Yes

Harry: Why?

Donnie: Well it’s not as though I know where I come from.

Mary: I have to go to the kitchen *(leaves)*.

Donnie: Neither one of you ever sat down and told me where I come from either.

Harry: *(Gets up and goes to shelf)*. I think it’s time I gave you something. It was passed to me by my father and to him by his father. *(He hands Donnie a cross)*.

Donnie: What’s this?

Harry: It’s a cross. It was given to our family by St. Patrick and we took it over here with us when we moved from Ireland. It was originally made of wood and we braided it with
silver that your grandfather found when he was coal mining. And we really appreciate the silver that went into that because he worked so hard in the coal mining business.

(Pauses)

He got paid very little. In fact what he did was so dangerous that they had to go in pairs. (Mary comes back and sits). That way if the ceiling was to fall in, one would get help for the other.

Donnie: Well I know one part about where I come from but what about the other?

(Looks at Mary).

Mary: Steve, when I look at that cross, I just don’t see the Irish cross; I see the Ankh – the original African cross.

Donnie: The Ankh?

Mary: Ah huh! Steve, let me tell you something. When my family came from the South and moved up here in Ohio they were looking for jobs to support themselves and their families. They received jobs as coal miners but they did not know that the other people living in the area were on strike. So when they received jobs they were automatically thought of as strike breakers or scabs.

Donnie: Hmm that’s messed up!

Mary: But they were treated in mean, disrespectful ways like you. But what was different was, they knew who they were inside and out so when people . . . Son, when I look at you I see that you’re gonna be somebody successful.
Donnie: Now that I know where I come from I guess it might make life more easier

( Everyone hugs).

Lx. ( get dimmer, lights off).

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**Scene 3**

*Setting: Community hall in urban area*

*Sfx: India Arie, followed by voices in a room*

*Lx: On*

(Lela is standing on stage facing audience. There are two chairs behind her, Ariel sits on one).

Lela: And the last order of business today is this, we have decided to adopt a logo. Not necessarily the sort of cheesy design we’re used to seeing on cookie boxes and credit cards, but a symbol that means something, that represents our beliefs and goals as a group. This symbol should help to turn away some of the negative rumors about our gang. People hear the tem “gang” and assume we’re a bunch of thieves, are drug addicts. They don’t trust our actions to prove that our gang is here to stand for something worthwhile! I know how some of you feel that adopting this symbol is a move in the wrong direction. That it makes us seem more like a money- grabbing corporation than anything else. But the fact is, we need this symbol, to mark our members, and to mark our deeds. We are- all of us- very different people. However we share similar ideas about our community and how it can be helped. This symbol will represent our common
ground. It will represent the fact that, despite our differences, we are all fighting for the same things. So, by our next meeting, let's all try to come up with some ideas.

(Lela sits, stage goes dark. A table is moved to the stage and three chairs are positioned around it. A shelf sits upstage behind the table with the cross resting on it. Table cloth and place settings are available on stage).

Sfx: car sound, car door slams

Lx: On.

(Ariel is on stage alone spreading the table cloth over the table. She has just set out three plates when there is a knock at the door. Ariel leaves everything in its place and answers the door).

Ariel: Hey there, how are you?

Lela: I'm good and yourself?

Ariel: I'm great thanks. I had the best time last night. I went to that new Italian place uptown for dinner, then some friends and I went to the India Arie concert at the amphitheater.

Lela: Sounds great! That's what I love about this city . . . there is so much to do . . . so much diversity.

Ariel: I know, it's great! (Pauses). So anyways did I tell you that I got Mr. O’Riley to join us for dinner tonight?

Lela: Really? That’s wonderful! I’ve been trying to get him to meet with us for months.

Ariel: I know. He has a really busy schedule, but I managed to talk him into stopping by.
Lela: He is going to be a marvelous asset to the gang! I’ve been reading up on his work with community safety. He’s accomplished so much! And God knows we need some help with safety around here.

Ariel: I know . . .

Lela: I mean, I thought things were looking up for a while, but it just seems we’re falling back into the same old patterns. I think people just get so caught up in trying to make a living they can’t even begin to think about crime prevention. But hopefully Mr. O’Riley has some ideas of how to motivate our community members.

Ariel: Yes, I hope so . . . you know . . . well I just hope he can have the same effect in a more urban setting that he’s had in these small towns.

Lela: Yeah . . .

Ariel: It’s just . . . well most country folk don’t understand the magnitude of the issues we deal with here. It becomes a bit too much for them.

*Lela nods in agreement, she notices the cross.*

Lela: Is that the cross you were telling me about?

Ariel: Yeah that’s it. I found it at the second hand shop. It was so remarkable you know? I mean, stuff like that is usually all busted up and covered in spray paint.

Lela: Well, it is a little rough around the edges, but it’s still so strong.

Ariel: I saw that too. It just seems like us, doesn’t it?

Lela: Yeah!

Ariel: Oh gosh, look at the time! I’d better finish setting this table. Could you give me a hand?
Lx: *(dim as they begin setting the table. Spotlight on Ankh)*.

Ankh: I lived with this really nice family. I was amongst their most prized possessions. They polished me every day and honored me greatly. They lived in a very rural area where there was warmth and love. Then once again I was stolen. I don’t know where the perpetrators went but I am happy I was rescued. I then moved in with a family in the urban area. I am so excited, they are about to change me into a symbol to unite the community. I can’t wait!

*(As they finish setting the table, the doorbell rings).*

Ariel: Well that must be Mr. O’Riley. *(She opens the door)*. Welcome Mr. O’Riley. Come on in, have a seat.

Lela: It’s so great to meet you, Mr. O’Riley.

Donnie: It’s great to be here.

*(They cross the room to the table. Donnie has an odd expression as he notices the cross. They all sit around the table).*

Ariel: So how have you been?

Donnie: *(Sighs)*. Busy, I’ve been trying to put together a petition about this school funding issue. *(He keeps glancing at the cross).*

Ariel: I’ve been following that. It’s becoming a big issue around here. Some of our schools are so poor they can barely keep us with the state requirements.

Donnie: Exactly, I just feel that with better funding, these kids can have more equality in their classes and extracurricular programs. Then, they could go out and do something with the skills they gain.
Ariel and Lela: I agree.

Donnie: I’m sorry but could I have a closer look at that cross?

Ariel: Sure.

*(Donnie stands and walks over to the cross. He picks it up, turning it over in his hands several times, inspecting every inch of it. As he does so he speaks).*

Donnie: It’s a funny thing . . . my family used to have a cross just like this.

Lela: Really?

Donnie: Yeah. It was stolen *(with the last word he glares accusingly at Ariel and Lela)*. In fact I think this is the same cross.

Ariel: What?

Lela: Like the exact same one?

Donnie: You bunch of low life thieves! Do you know how much this cross meant to my family? Do you know how devastated we were when it was lost?

Ariel: Wait, are you saying that we stole that cross?

Donnie: That’s exactly what I’m saying!

Ariel: Well I bought that cross at a second hand store.

Donnie: What right do you think you have to steal from innocent hard working people? Just because you sit on your lazy butts all day thinking about ways to make the world centered around you!

Lela: Whoa, wait a second! What right do you have to call us thieves and liars?
Donnie: You bunch of city thugs. My family works harder in a day than you have your entire lives and yet you take the things they hold precious.

Ariel: You are one to talk! You have no idea of the problems we face! The things we deal with on a daily basis! You just sit back in your cozy little home and enjoy being protected from everything!

Donnie: Just forget this, I’m taking my cross and leaving.

Lela: No, you’re not.

(Ariel and Lela each grab onto the cross. They and Donnie struggle for a few moments and suddenly all loose their grasp and the cross falls to the floor breaking into many pieces. The three stand and stare suddenly realizing the harm of their words and actions. They all drop to their hands and knees and begin picking up pieces muttering “I’m sorry, I’m so sorry” to each other).

Ariel: I’m so sorry . . . I don’t know what I was thinking (holds several pieces out to Donnie as if offering them to him) I had no right to fight like that. This isn’t mine.

Donnie (shakes head) Well it isn’t mine either. It belonged to my parents before me. And their before them. And their parents before that, most likely. All the way back to . . . who knows?

Lela (Quietly laughing) It’s kind of funny isn’t it? I mean we’ve all had this connection the whole time and we didn’t even realize it.

Ariel: Yeah I had worried that our differences would keep us apart you know? And we are here fighting over what we have in common.

(They all laugh quietly. There is a silent pause as they all reflect).
Donnie: Well, I guess it’s time we started putting these pieces back together.

(They gather around the table and reach toward the center beginning to put the pieces together).

Lx: (Begin to lower as the group begin the process).

Ankh: I am the sum total of my experience. I have straddled many lands. Kemet, Nigeria, Kenya, Italy, the Caribbean, Thailand and the United States. I am all of these: I am diverse. There are many differences but there are many similarities. We all have common ground; we are all different but the same. We are all one.

Voice: I think diversity is the blending of cultures and different teachings.

Voice: I think diversity is knowledge of different groups of people and ideas even if you don’t agree with them.

Voice: Diversity is learning from different cultures and different religions and bringing it together.

Voice: Diversity to me is the coming together of all races.

Sfx: Music of Brenda Fassie.

-End of Play-
APPENDIX F: LETTER TO PARENTS

96-2 Hudson Avenue
Athens, OH 45701
5/29/03

Dear Parent/ Guardian

I am seeking your permission for your child’s participation in my dissertation project during the Upward Bound Summer Program, 2003. This project will be carried out in the Theater Appreciation classroom and investigates how students respond and interact with the theater of Black women from Africa and the Caribbean.

This project is important since it helps in understanding issues of diversity within American society. Attached is the consent form and information regarding the project. Thank you for your support in this matter and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Denise Hughes
Theater Instructor,
Upward Bound Summer Program.