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WOMEN TEACHING BETWEEN THE LINES: A STUDY ON SUBVERTING DOMINANT CULTURAL DISCOURSES OF RACISM, POWER, AND PRIVILEGE (WRITTEN AS AN ETUDE)

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Patricia Wies Long, B.A., M.A.

The Ohio State University

2001

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Brian Edmiston, Adviser
Dr. Cynthia Dillard
Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop

Approved by

Dr. Brian Edmiston
Adviser

College of Education
School of Teaching and Learning
Language, Literacy, Culture
ABSTRACT

Women Teaching Between the Lines is a co-participatory, feminist ethnography which explores the pedagogical praxis of two women activists in education as they grapple with dominant cultural discourses of racism, power, and privilege evidenced in a predominately white, affluent, suburban elementary school in the midwest. I chose this site because I wanted collaboratively to investigate (with a teacher of color) the ways in which these discourses operate in an environment of affluence and privilege where the majority of teachers are white women, thereby expanding Nieto’s (1996) assumptions that well-intentioned teachers who were “products of an educational system [with] a history of racism, exclusion, and debilitating pedagogy...put into practice what they themselves had been subjected to...thus perpetuat[ing] policies and approaches that [were] harmful to many of their students” (7).
Although important critical studies in education (Apple, 1999; Delpit, 1995; Giroux, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994) have consistently shown that the hegemony of a school's cultural discourses of power and privilege can have a deleterious effect upon the ways in which all students learn, little to no attention has been paid to the effect of such discourses on pedagogical practices. Since the majority of U.S. teachers in elementary and secondary schools are women, the majority of women teachers are white, and the majority of students attending these schools are children of diversity (Nieto, 1996), this study will make substantial contributions in filling this gap in the research.

This study extends two years of unpublished research on teachers and teaching (Long, 1999, 2000), in which pedagogical philosophies and practices were examined among white, female teachers in urban and suburban settings. The findings from these studies confirmed Nieto's (1996) conclusions by indicating that women teachers' lack of critical reflection on their cultural and pedagogical histories and practices, created classroom dynamics which often weakened cultural diversity, elevated racial and class bias, and situated teacher power and authority at the center of learning.
Dedication

To my (beloved) mother, Pete
(who always said good night three times)
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Before she begins, she wants you to know that it is in this space that you will meet Trisha Long. This is the place which she saved until last to write, and it is here that she wants to just talk to (some of) you. For those of you who actually read this (because it's your job to do it, or because you might have just been curious as she always is when she picks up any book), she would like you to know that the entire process which represents this study (and which you will read about in a matter of minutes) was filled with duality—that which was in her, and that which was embedded in the school where she researched (and which she will continue to reflect upon when she leaves this place and begins her new life as a teacher elsewhere).

What follows is her honest attempt to show how incredibly grateful she is to everyone who made this process possible for her—and in doing so, she knows how many people she has left out and begs their pardon for her (sleepy) oversight.

And so now the acknowledgments—in her own words, with her own voice (and with one citing and absolutely no footnotes)—will commence:
I never wanted to be a teacher. I wanted to be an archeologist. I dreamed of traveling great distances of desert with my brushes, and my camera, and my notebook, uncovering history, and thereby time. I wanted to be a dancer. I dreamed of whirling and spinning upon the grand stages in Moscow, and Paris, and Stuttgart--capable of flying through space like Nijinksy. I wanted to be a writer. I dreamed of having an affair with my (manual) Smith-Corona click-click-clicking—and plenty of hot, black coffee and cigarettes (lots of cigarettes) with blood-red lipstick stains piling up in the ashtray—as I composed my first novella looking down at the traffic below from the heights of New York's finest Flat Iron Building.

It was my mother who began the you-would-really-make-a-very-good-teacher mantra when I was in about the third grade, and her voice (like a vapor trail) followed me through grammar school, and high school, and continued until she and my father dropped me at the door of my first college in St. Louis, Missouri. I was fifteen (soon to turn sixteen) years old, and far (far, far) away from home. I knew I could declare my major and they could do nothing about it. I decided that cultural anthropology and performance arts were my fields of study. The Flat Iron Building and my Smith Corona would just have to wait until I grew tired of traveling. Teaching was never a consideration. Never. Not once did I think about it...until...

One day in the fall of 1996, I met an (extraordinarily) energetic, (delightfully) humorous, and (honestly) remarkable Irish man who told me
that perhaps, amidst my travels, and my whirlings, and my clickings and clackings of the typewriter keys, I had been a teacher (like my mother told me) all along. Now that took me by surprise...as did he. So I thank you, Brian Edmiston (oh Docktah, my Docktah) for a terrific ride. I thank you for your calming voice when I was ready to throw my computer out the window and stop all this writing; I thank you for all the (adviserly) rewrites you made me do (and for letting me argue about each and every one of them with you); and I thank you for not forgetting to pick up your e-mails and your phone messages during the last few months (when I needed to be tied to someone who believed that I could do what I have just done). Your support has been appreciated as I hope you know. Your friendship I will treasure forever.

To Cynthia Dillard, an inspiration in about a hundred ways. Thank you for your solidarity, your care, your nurture, and your delightful sense of play. Oh, and thanks for letting me steal some of your ideas for my classes too. I look forward to our future work together. Later we’ll have wine.

To Rudine Sims Bishop, I never really knew the delights of children’s literature until I met you (and now I couldn’t think of not checking those particular shelves at my favorite bookstore). Thank you for your calm, your care, for the way you always read (aloud) one book (every class) for your students to enjoy, and for making my days as your student so full (and enjoyable).
To Michael (MacMillan) Modern, not only is your art an inspiration, but how would I have ever understood the difference between that which I didn’t know and that which I now know (had your presence not been available). I thank you for your (steadfast) editing, your (kind) words of encouragement, and for letting me hear from Gramps and Scout (now and again).

Thank you to Terry Rogers and Peter Demerath (who ably took me through my Generals); to Jane Baker and Sharon Gentry and baby Samuel (Baker-Gentry) for checking in from time to time and letting me remember that life should have humor (as well as pathos); to Ambika Gopalakrishnan and Bala Rajasekaruni for your spiritual (and bodily) lifts, your many kindnesses, (and for being such good and trusted friends); and to my brother, Jim, my sister-in-law, Gin, my sister, Jean (and all my nieces and nephews, great and greatest), who were constant reminders of what “family” means.

And finally, to my Mardy-Sweetest, who kept me spinning in the universe when gravity was constantly trying to pull me down, it has been my distinct pleasure to have danced that particular dance with you this past year. I could not have done this without you...and I know you know that. Thank you for those four-to six-hour marathon phone calls from Chicago (and for barely interrupting me once); thank you for the (deep belly) laughs and the (anything but shallow) talks when I needed them (and as often as I needed them); and thank you (ever so) for making chocolate pudding (and
leaving the "crust" on for me), and for always filling my glass with ice at just the right level.

This has been a remarkable process, but for me, the process is always the thing. And my process with Rosario Rosalia Galarza (my dear comrade in arms) was a hard journey but an important one. It has made me a better and more committed teacher and researcher, and a more (culturally) aware person. For that I am truly grateful to her, and to the teachers and fourth-grade students at Ravenswood Elementary School.

Human beings...devise their life projects in time—against their own life histories and the wider human history into which those histories feed. They do so by means of language or a series of symbol systems that provide a mode of articulation, of ordering and expressing what is lived. To be aware of authorship is to be aware of situationality and of the relation between the ways in which one interprets one's situation and the possibilities of action and of choice. This means that one's 'reality,' rather than being fixed and predefined, is a perpetual emergent, becoming increasingly multiplex, as more perspectives are taken, more texts are opened, more friendships are made.

-Maxine Greene (1988)
VITA

October 12, 1949..............................................Born - New York, New York

1994....................................................................B.A., Humanities, Antioch University

1996....................................................................M.A., Education, The Ohio State University

1995 - 2001.......................................................Graduate Teaching Associate
The Ohio State University

1997....................................................................Graduate Research Assistant
The Ohio State University

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Education, Teaching and Learning (Language, Literacy, Culture)

Educational Drama
Dr. Brian Edmiston

Teacher Education, Research in Diverse Settings, and Multicultural Literacies
Dr. Cynthia Dillard

Language Arts/Multicultural Literacies
Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop
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FOCUS, NATURE, AND INTENT OF THIS STUDY

Typically, dissertations are written in a conventional format for an implied reading audience of academics in a particular field. Although my dissertation contains all of the elements of a conventional study, I have written this dissertation for an imagined gathering of six, white, pre-service teachers representative of the women I taught during my years as a graduate teaching associate at this university. It was through my on-going work with these teachers (my observations of, and reflections with them) that the idea for this dissertation took shape.

1 ...and it is my hope that this research will be both pragmatic and serviceable for anyone wishing to read it
Women Teaching Between the Lines: a study on subverting dominant cultural discourses of racism, power, and privilege is a co-participatory, critical (feminist) ethnography which explores the following research question: how might examining and interrupting dominant cultural discourses of power and privilege, promote a critical antiracist pedagogy in praxis?

I wanted this study to be co-participatory (that is, research which allowed me to engage with an on-site partner), so that I could see (and realize) the work from both my perspective (as a white woman/teacher/researcher) and my co-participant's perspective (as a woman of color/teacher/researcher, teaching in the school where the research took place).

I chose to write this study as an ethnography (as opposed to other forms of qualitative research), because my intent, as Geertz (1973) puts it, is to create the conditions that will allow the reader, through the writer, to converse with (and observe) those who have been studied (20).

I also appreciate the ways in which ethnography has broadened its base to embrace many "new" and "experimental" ways of writing up data

2 ... defined here as institutionalized Anglo-American ideologies or systems of belief
3 ...that is, teaching which promotes "action and reflection on the world in order to change it" (Freire, 1970/93, 33)
as narrative text or storying (Richardson, 1994; Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Denzin, 1997), and so wanted a form of writing through which I could continue to test the ways that my co-participant and I speak with one another (and the reader) simultaneously. As such, ethnographies are always dialogical—the site at which the voices of the other, alongside the voices of the author, come alive and interact with one another. Thus the voices that are seen and heard (if only imaginatively) in the text are themselves textual, performative accomplishments [which] have a prior life in the context of where they were produced (Denzin, 1997, xiii).

I chose critical ethnography, because I wanted a form of writing which would allow me to present to the reader, a text which not only grapples with the ways in which (overt and covert) racism continues to perpetuate itself in education today, but also one which does so being aware of its responsibilities in the field—that is, one which is “politically mediated\(^5\)

\(^4\) ...defined by Fontana and Frey (1994) as that which “relies on critical theory [that is, research which seeks to produce changes through praxis]... accounts for historical [and] social situations...and realize[s] the strictures caused by these situations and their value-laden agendas” (369). Giroux (1992) has also termed critical ethnographers “cultural workers” who attempt to broaden the political dimensions of cultural work while subverting existing oppressive systems (136).

\(^5\) ...which understands that “the power of the ethnographer to represent others is always involved” (VanMaanen, 1988, 4).
and which] irrevocably influences the interests and lives of the people represented [in the text]—individually and collectively, for better or for worse" (Van Maanen, 1988, 4-5).

Finally, I have also chosen to write this study from a feminist perspective. By that I mean the research has been purposefully infused with the four characteristics which Fonow and Cook (1991) list as "characteristics typical of feminist research:" (1) reflexivity (which allows me to be introspective and analyze the process as it unfolds); (2) an action orientation (which keeps the research focused on "emancipatory goals"—that is, those which can result in a transformation that can change the lives of women); (3) attention to the affective components of the research (which asks us to pay attention to what we're feeling/intuiting as well as what we're thinking); and (4) use of the "situation at hand" (meaning paying attention to everyday events which acknowledges the significance of daily lived experiences).

This ten-month study, which began in November, 1999, and ended (after the school year) in August, 2000, joins two women activists in education as we grapple with the ways in which cultural discourses of racism, power, and privilege are evidenced in a predominately white elementary school in a very wealthy suburb. Although most of the study
was conducted at the site, my co-participant (a fourth-grade teacher of color at the school) and I (a white graduate teaching associate at this university) often met off-site to process the data being collected.

What follows as the Prelude has three sections:

I. How The Reader Might Approach What They Are About To Read: (A) Why I chose pre-service teachers as my ideal readers (and the criteria I used to select them); and (B) My writing protocol (writing conventions) for this study: (1) How I designed the framework as musical metaphors, and (2) How I wrote the study as multiple literacy sites

II. On Summoning My Ideal Readers In Solitude And Semi-darkness: how I searched for (and found) my ideal readers (a before-writing this-dissertation reflection), and my first imagined conversation with them

III. On Developing A Theoretical Framework: toward understanding the ways in which dominant cultural discourses of racism, power, and privilege operate (what discourses are, how they have operated in history, and the ways in which power and privilege--as cultural ideologies--function as overt and covert racism)
ETUDE 2
PRELUDE

I. How The Reader Might Approach What They Are About To Read

Ethnographic writing...is understood as a choice among numerous alternatives. Ethnographers cannot stand above and outside what they study. When we produce what we call ethnography, our product can never be an accurate map because the processes of production make transparent representation impossible. We transform 'data' into an ethnographic text. Language sits in for life. We use words. We write. We take our audience into account. We worry about how our readers will interpret what we write, what they may think, and how they will feel (Ellis & Bochner, 1996, 19).

A. Why I chose pre-service teachers as my ideal readers (and the criteria I used to select them)

Written as a dialogue between myself and six young teachers, Women Teaching Between the Lines is an experiment in form and function--a way of writing for, and talking with pre-service teachers as "culturally-constituted readers" (Bennett, 1983, 125, as cited in Beach, 1993), who, like me, are white, privileged women in need of "develop[ing] a range of insights about [our] locations as white...teachers [so that we might become] more effective teachers overall" (McIntyre, 1997, 5).

At the time of this study, I was a graduate associate, teaching the first (of three) drama in education methodology courses. In my classes, pre-service teachers (grouped according to the grades they anticipated teaching)
were asked to examine their pedagogy through autobiography, and, further, use drama strategies to engage their students with curiosity, open-ended questioning, shared power, and imagination, in critically examining and interacting with fiction and non-fiction texts.

Using these university classes as a template, I chose an imagined **group of females** as my ideal readers (Riviere, 1960), because the majority of my university students were female, and I wanted "an actively mediating presence" (Fish, 1972, 70, as cited in J. P. Tompkins, ed., 1980), who, although younger than I, typically identified themselves as women wishing to make a difference in their profession.

I chose six teachers because six was the average number of students (per group) that I divided each class into the first day we were together. I always liked the idea (and so did the students), of their spending most of each class together in small groups, for it gave everyone the opportunity to support one another in a safe environment, while actively participating in their own pedagogical exploration (which is my purpose here).

Finally, I chose white pre-service teachers for three reasons: (1) they were in attendance as the majority of undergraduate and graduate students in my classes, and, as such, statistically represented the 88% (majority) of all teachers in the U.S. who are white (NEA, 1992); (2) they were "people who can benefit from thinking about their own lives in terms of other people's
experiences,” and, as such, might begin to shift the ways in which they have traditionally approached teaching and learning (Ellis & Bochner, 1996, 18); and, most importantly (3) there were noticeable parallels between my university students' “discourses of whiteness”—that is, “conceptualizing white as natural [or normal] rather than cultural...which eludes any recognition of power relations embedded within this category”—and the ways in which white teachers at my research site appeared to be similarly influenced (Nakayama and Krizek, 1995, as cited in Kincheloe, Steinberg, Rodriguez & Chennault, 1998, 45).

The combination of what I was encountering at the site (my first-hand observations, and my co-participant's accounts of racism, power, and privilege among white teachers there), coupled with my on-going observations of my white university students (their overall lack of sensitivity to students present from other countries or cultures; their written reflections about their practices with diverse students where poverty and lack of ability were often co-equally linked), confirmed my commitment to write for an audience of white, female, pre-service teachers who might begin, with me, “to recognize the importance of our own racial identities as determinants in how and what we teach, especially within the framework of multicultural antiracist education” (McIntyre, 1997, 5).
B. **My writing protocol for this study**

As principal components in the overall design of this study, I have used two writing conventions as the protocol: (1) musical metaphors as a structural thread; and (2) the text (taken as a whole) as sites for multiple literacies.

1. **How I designed the framework as musical metaphors**

I have arranged this ethnography as an Etude, with Prelude, Three Movements, and a Coda, "consciously infused with literary devices; and which rejoices in, rather than recoils from, the partial vision and situated knowledge of our own 'lived experience'" (Richardson, 1997, 67).

As such, throughout this dissertation, I have used music as "a guiding metaphor" (Richardson, 1997, 17) designed to be *heard* as well as seen, because musical dialogue (in one form or another) has always been a part of my *lived experience*. As a young girl, I loved to be read to (especially by my father, who narrated stories with deep, rhythmic baritone expression). When I was old enough to be an enthusiastic reader on my own, I would read many of my books out loud, so that I could hear the rhythm of the words as I voiced them.

As I grew older and spent (one) part of my professional life singing improvisational jazz, I continued to be engaged by the rhythm of voice as
instrument, and instrument as voice—where "one hears the instruments and the singers in conversation with each other...in call and recall patterns" (Gates, Jr., and McKay, et al, 1997, 56; Cordova, 1994).

Consequently, when I began to think about the structural design of this dissertation, I wanted to include musical references (as I have described them below, and as they occur in other parts of the text), to be seen (and heard) as a metaphorical thread which joins the narratives (called and recalled in dialogue) together.

"Etude" (the dissertation in its entirety), is used in its primary musical sense as a study for solo instruments (that is, the co-participant's and my observations, dialogues, and on-going pedagogical reflections), designed to heighten some particular aspect of the composition (that is, the ways in which dominant cultural discourses operate in an affluent suburban school among students and teachers, the majority of whom are white).

"Prelude" (a musical section introducing a theme), positions the study as a multi-layered dialogic work in which the reader is invited to actively participate in inquiry with the teachers/researchers.
The "Three Movements" (the main structure of an extended musical composition), represent my co-participant and my on-going collaboration as we explore and experience the power of a liberatory pedagogy (Freire, 1970/93).6

The "Coda" (a concluding musical section that is distinct from the main structure, but which is informed by the whole of the composition), positions the final analyzed data as a dialogue between my co-participant and I, which has the potential to both “deepen and enlarge our sense of a human community” (Ellis & Bochner, 1996, 18).

2. How I wrote the study as multiple literacy sites

In composing this ethnography, I have provided several ways for the reader to engage with the text: a) crossing disciplines; b) creating multiple literacy sites; c) playing with time; and d) engaging the reader in conversation.

6 Freire contends that a liberatory pedagogy has two stages. The first is making ourselves aware of the ways in which certain ethical principles, behaviors, beliefs, and views of the world, operate in oppressor/oppressed relationships (that is, through pedagogical reflection, examining how dominant cultural discourses are evidenced). The second stage involves expelling the myths created and developed by what is discovered, so that a new structure emerges (that is, by observing the interruption of these discourses in the teacher’s classroom, to explore how a more balanced framework for teaching and learning equitably might be implemented). “In both stages,” says Freire, “it is always through action in depth [on-going praxis] that the culture of domination is culturally confronted” (36).
a) **Crossing disciplines**

Throughout this study, I have drawn from more than one discipline or theoretical construct, often citing contributions from music, philosophy, art, literature, and the social sciences. I did this because I wanted to blur the boundaries between humanities and social sciences, "which continue to function as if knowledge could be divided neatly into separate domains" (Bochner & Ellis, 1996, 15-16). Although I make considerable reference to critical and feminist pedagogy in this dissertation (and consider myself both) I am, at the heart, a steadfast generalist who wholeheartedly supports crossing learning borders.

b) **Creating multiple literacy sites**

This dissertation is not written with a single narrative voice, but rather, represents meaning in multiple ways. As such, I have considered multiple (textual) literacy (Long, 1998b, 1999) by offering the reader more than one way of seeing, reading, thinking about, and interpreting the text. To do this, I used three devices (each of which is its own site for literacy): (1) footnotes as a complementary site to the text (taken as a whole); (2) parentheses (among other aspects), as personal "asides" to the reader; and (3) monophonic and polyphonic narratives (single-voiced narratives or
narratives with two or more voices), where my co-participant and I are engaging the reader in conversation (in which our voices can be heard alone and together).

In addition to the main body of the text, these literacy sites were intentionally produced so that I could engage readers in multiple ways of being actively involved with the text, and (therefore) being actively present with my co-participant and me, as we inscribed (Geertz, 1983, 31) "work that was both specific to [our] experience [as educators and researchers], but rooted in different locations and different perspectives"—that is, as women from differing cultural backgrounds and ideological experiences (hooks, 1997, xiii).

(1) My use of footnotes:

Within the three movements of this study (pps. 35-147), I have used footnotes as a collateral text, sometimes traditionally (as a place in which to reference and/or clarify a word or concept, or to cite an author), and sometimes conversationally (as a place in which I might provide useful information, or offer additional perspectives on the narrative). What I have purposefully not done, however, is lessen their power by making the footnote text smaller than the words which appear above them. In this respect, I have increased the font size of the footnotes to both raise their status, and position them in such a way that the reader will be constantly reminded of their presence and importance to the main body of the text.
Although the reader should feel free to read the text in any way which is comfortable, I would be remiss if I didn’t say that it is this writer’s intent to have the footnotes read, as they occur, and with equal emphasis to the entire text.

(2) My use of parentheses:

I use parentheses in the five ways I have used them since I was fourteen years old, when, having become seriously involved with Kenneth Patchen’s (1961) *Journal of Albion Moonlight*, I took up writing (parenthetically), as a way of life: (1) as an aside to the reader; or (2) as a space in which I can quickly define or explain a word or phrase; or (3) as a place where the reader can take a (short) breath; or (4) as my (not so subtle) way of saying there is more than one way of writing (and, potentially, reading) which might be going on here; but (5) most importantly, because I enjoy them as a visual device, I’m comfortable with them, and I just like the way they look on the page.

(3) My use of monophonic and polyphonic narratives:

As another visual (literary and research) device, I have created two types of narratives which draw their origins from music, are highlighted in the text, and can be read independent of the other literacy sites in this disser-
These narratives are my way of engaging the reader(s) in exploring portions of the analyzed data as illustrative "conversation." As such, they maintain "an affinity for lived experiences" (Denzin, 1997):

[They] become vehicles for the reproduction of a series of humanistic sensibilities that valorize the feeling, knowing, self-reflective individual. The texts are often records of or reflections on experience (202).

As experimental narratives, they push and extend the boundaries of the traditional, ethnographic model of textuality. ...The use of scene setting, dialogue, multiple points of view, composite character and scenes, and an emphasis on showing, not telling [links them to the new journalism where] the basic unit of analysis is...the scene, the situation in which an event occurs (207-208).

The first type of narrative, which I call a monophonic narrative—that is, having a single melodic line with little or no accompaniment—are either (a) narratives in which my co-participant is speaking to the reader recounting autobiographical or pedagogical information (always referred to as Rosario’s Narrative); or (b) narratives in which I am speaking to the reader—either called Ethnographer’s Narrative (autobiographical accounts), or Ethnographer’s Field Notes (dated first-hand observations, or pedagogical reflections on the data).

The second type of narrative, which I call a polyphonic narrative—that is, a narrative in which two or more independent but organically related voice parts sound against one another—is a narrative in which both
my co-participant and I are speaking to the reader simultaneously as one voice. This is always called a *Fugued Narrative*. I came up with the idea of "fuguing" narratives a few years back when I was experimenting with different ways in which I could engage in academic writing by blending (or fuguing) my words with another author's words to create a *composite word portrait*. I use the term "fugue" in its loosest musical sense—the act of merging various melodic phrases in order to hear a cacophony of tones—some harmonious, some discordant. In testing my ability to fugue my textual voice with that of my co-participant in this study, I am attempting to find a place in which to better hear both the tonal and atonal voices which are embedded there.

It is my intention that both the monophonic and polyphonic narratives personify and resonate strong participant identity and point of view (mine and my co-participant), and give us a dynamic voice in the research (alone and together) as we “talk” with the reader(s).

c) My play with time

There are some points in my on-going dialogue with the reader when I play with time—when I share an experience, or tell a story as if it were happening at the moment it is being written (and read), even though that moment happened a while ago. For example, in the next section (II: On Summoning My Ideal Reader...), I will tell about a particular night when I'm
sitting in a chair musing. This event (which is written to be read as if it occurred just before I began to write my dissertation), opens with, "Tonight, as I pause..." I use this play with time, throughout, because I want the reader to feel what I felt when it was happening to me. I want the reader to suspend their disbelief that it is this day, at this time, in this year (whenever now is that they are reading), and imagine that when an event takes place in the narrative, they are walking, or standing, or riding, or "just being there" with me in that moment.

d) Engaging the reader in conversation

This text was deliberately designed to permit me—as both a teacher and a researcher—to engage in an imagined conversation with the reader(s). As such, I have posed questions, or offered comments for the reader to consider as we move through the three movements of the study. The questions I ask (and the comments I make) are not (for the most part) rhetorical, but rather, ones which I hope the reader might spend some time reflecting upon. In this way, my dissertation has the potential to engage my reader(s) in actively participating with my co-participant and me, as we wrestle with what, how, and for whom dominant cultural discourses operate.
II. On summoning my ideal readers in solitude and semi-darkness  
(a before-writing-the-dissertation reflection)

Thinking, tangling shadows in the deep solitude,  
You are far away too, oh, farther away than anyone  
(Neruda, 1924).

Tonight as I pause in semi-darkness, attempting to locate my place  
(and the place of my reader) in this complex solitary web of writing—of  
moving from theory to practice and back again—it occurs to me that in order  
to begin synthesizing what I am at the edge of understanding in my research  
(for what I have uncovered thus far has been painful for me to see), I must  
somehow “inscribe my [teaching] voice into my writing” (Geertz, 1983, 31,  
italics mine), so that I might peel back those layers (upon layers) of data, and  
find an honest place in which to open a dialogue with my reader which also  
engages me in practicing (in my research) what I teach.

Although I am mentally prepared to begin the process (am I not?), I  
find the thought of it emotionally wearing, so I turn the lights down low  
and close my eyes. “Solitude,” says Octavio Paz (1985)—that feeling that one  
is alone in the universe—“has a double significance: on the one hand it is  
self-awareness, and on the other, it is a longing to escape from ourselves”  
(195).

It is easy to lose touch with others when we have entered into a self-  
imposed exile. It is harder, however, when attempting to escape from our-  
selves and avoid the inevitable—not to critically question our relationship
with the world (and our place, with others, in it). "To live," says Paz, "is to be separated from what we were in order to approach what we are going to be in the future" (ibid).

I have still not begun to write, but I am calmer now. I build a deeper nest in my favorite overstuffed chair, surrounded by books, notebooks, colored pens, and data in various stages of methodological undress. Reaching down into the recesses of my solitude, I begin to reflect. How can I write this dissertation in such a way that "instead of masking [my] presence, leaving it in the margins, [I] make [myself] more personally accountable for [my pedagogical] perspective" (Bochner & Ellis, 1996, 15). What do I want to say, and (most importantly), to whom do I want to say it? How can I find my ideal reader, or, as Bakhtin [1979/90] identifies it, the superaddressee -- "another kind of listener 'whose... responsive understanding is presumed... an invisibly present third party who stands above all the participants in the dialogue'" (135).

While my thoughts wander, I vividly recall teachers past (and present), who float by as black and white pictures of my ideal reader. There's Miss Hogan (in fifth grade), with her long white fingers and her long white nails who would let us draw with our eyes closed while she played a recording of Stravinsky's Firebird. Lovely...but too classical. There's Mr. Fowler (in ninth grade), who never sat in his chair, but always perched atop
the teacher's (or student's) desk while he read to us—Ferlinghetti, Kerouac, William Carlos Williams, e.e. cummings. Memorable... but a touch too revisionist.

As I begin fine-tuning these images—removing some, and placing others (for safe keeping) in my illusory ideal reader portfolio, I find myself being drawn to photo after photo (face after face) of university students I've had the pleasure of teaching (and learning with) over the last five years. Trying to get a fix on which students I might choose as a combined portrait, I start to pan my classrooms' past, narrowing the focus, until I can see only one group of young women in their early to middle twenties—the picture of you, my ideal readers, my superaddressees. You are the women I want to talk to; you are the teachers to whom I have something to say.

I look at my picture (now fully focused), and recognize you as you were on your first day of class with me—somewhat resistant to change, slightly distanced and fearful of what you might discover, and yet, curious and willing to move forward with me:

Our first class really surprised me. I learned so much about myself and everyone else here, and I really feel like maybe this class will help me to finally get past how scared I am to teach. Although it will be a big challenge stepping outside the bounds of what I am comfortable with, I am really excited about where we seem to be going this quarter (white, female, pre-service teacher, autumn quarter, 2000).
There are six of you gathered together, all smiling at me and the camera I've used to take your photograph. You are young, enthusiastic graduate and undergraduate students—pre-service teachers who are just beginning to carve a place for yourselves as classroom practitioners.

Many of you do not yet know what pedagogy means (you offer shyly), although you do have a clear vision of what your future classrooms look like, and the children who will populate them. I know this because on our very first day together, I asked you to write about that classroom, and your place in it, and you did so with great relish:

When people walk into my classroom, I want them to see a room full of colorful pictures, and posters of animals, and art, and children active, busy, and productive, and lots of books. My desk will not be at the front of the room but somewhere in the back, and there will be lots of space and lots of plants (a second white, female, pre-service teacher, spring quarter, 2000).

You are women who wish to teach in well endowed urban or suburban settings (you tell me), for these are the surroundings in which you have grown up, and the environment in which (you have been told) you will be the most comfortable. I understand this, because I, too, grew up in similar circumstances, encouraged to follow similar ends. Although I came of age in a different point in history—I am a fifty-one-year-old graduate student and you are (approximately) twenty-five years younger—we still
share a great many cultural beliefs which link us (positively and negatively) together.

You are white (and therefore, privileged) women, like me, whose "schooling gave [us] no training in seeing [ourselves] as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture" (McIntosh, 1988, 4). You (like me) were never taught to see our privilege "as an invisible package of unearned assets which [we] can count on cashing in each day, but about which [we were] 'meant' to remain oblivious" (ibid):

The high school kids I am teaching are rich kids from rich families. They haven't had any experience with people who are 'less privileged' or people who are culturally or racially different. That's why I agree with you that using Paul Fleischman's *Seedfolks* would be a good book to start with. Here are the questions I've come up with to ask them before they read the book so that they can use their prior knowledge to get started. I would really like your feedback on this as soon as possible. My questions are: *who lives in ghettos? and can these people make a better life for themselves?* (excerpt from a third white, pre-service teacher's e-mail to me on preparing her first classroom practice with a text, winter quarter, 2000, italics mine).

As we travel through these pages together (you and I), I will ask you to join me in exploring your personal and pedagogical philosophy through the lens of the stories I have collected with my co-participant, Rosario
Galzara (her chosen pseudonym) and our work together at Ravenswood Elementary School (my pseudonym for Rosario’s school, and the site where this research takes place).

We will examine who we are as women, as members of the dominant culture, and as white teachers who often operate from positions of privilege and power because we “were taught in classrooms where...teaching reflected [this] notion, [and] most of us learned to teach emulating this model” (hooks, 1993, 91).

Because the stories you will read about some of the white teachers at Ravenswood often center around the use of this model of power and privilege as “cultural permission not to hear the voices of people of other races, or [even to sustain] a tepid cultural tolerance for...acting on such voices” (McIntosh, 1988, 11-12), you may feel, as I did, uncomfortable or perhaps, at times, even a bit defensive. In spite of the fact that my intention is not to wholly unsettle you, it is certainly meant to bring to your attention how privilege and power can manifest itself in acts of (overt and covert) racism—acts which negatively impact us, and all the students whom we (will) teach (and from whom we might learn).

Perhaps you have not yet begun to critically think about your responsibilities as a teacher—to your students, to your colleagues, or to your
profession—but you are willing to risk it if the space in which you travel with me can be made safe. I assure you that it can be—not easy, but safe:

I thought it very intriguing that you asked us to respond to your comments on our reflection papers. Though I was a little afraid of what all your margin writing/comments meant in the beginning, your idea of giving us one-on-one support by talking back and forth through our writing came through loud and clear. I like to imagine that you were making a very specific point about power sharing. When we write papers, especially personal reflections, we’re putting something out there for your consumption which is almost never expressed in words. It’s a fragile balance, combining reflection with an assignment, because if we’ve put anything of ourselves in the work, we tend to take your responses rather seriously. What struck me about your approach was that there was no written grade, or verbal evaluation of our processes. The whole thing was conducted on all levels as an ongoing dialogue, rather than just a checkup on our comprehension, or worse, our grammar skills. What frightened me in the beginning of class—talking to you in a personal way—I now actually look forward to (a fourth white, female, pre-service teacher, summer quarter, 2000).

The work we will do as white teachers who read, interpret, reflect, and live in this study, will sometimes be disquieting for you. I know this because it has been (and continues to be) disquieting for me. Shifting the ways in which we have traditionally operated in the world can be painful—painful, but not life threatening.

So why do I ask you to join me in this study? I can think of two reasons: (1) because the stories you will hear represent real teachers, in real classrooms, interacting with real children, in a real school; and (2) as such,
they are important for us to reflect and act upon, not only because we need to consider who we are in relationship to the stories as they unfold (and the people in them whose lives, like the lives of our present and future students, are being/will be affected by our actions), but also where we are in relationship to these stories—and where our own cultural (and therefore) pedagogical culpability might lie, if left unchecked:

...Reflection on the flaws and inadequacies and even the modest successes of attempting this [work], will help us, deep in the seriousness of our critiques and criticisms, to come up for air to examine and find ways to encourage small-scale efforts (Macguire, 1993, as cited in McIntyre, 1997, 7, italics authors).

III. Developing a theoretical framework: toward understanding the ways in which dominant cultural discourses of racism, power, and privilege operate

The real issue is to understand one's privileged position in the process of helping so as not to, on the one hand, turn help into a type of missionary paternalism, and, on the other hand, limit the possibilities for the creation of structures that lead to real empowerment (Macedo, 1998, as cited in Freire, 1998a, xxix).

Seminal educators in the fields of critical, multicultural, and feminist theory have written about the harmful consequences of dominant ideologies (cultural belief systems) on issues of race, class, and gender (among them, Freire, 1970/93; hooks, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1994; King, 1994; Banks, 1988; Sleeter, 1996; Gates, 1991; Fine, 1992; Kozol, 1991; Lorde, 1982; Purcell, as cited in Banks, 1997).
Although many educational scholars have provided pivotal studies which clearly indicate that the hegemony of a school’s cultural discourses of power and privilege can have deleterious effects upon the ways in which all students learn (Nieto, 1996; Apple, 1993; Grant & Gomez, 1996; Giroux & McLaren, 1994; et al), little attention has been paid to the impact of such discourses on pedagogical practices, especially among white women (Delpit, 1995; McIntyre, 1997; Ashton & Webb, 1986, as quoted in Sleeter, 1996).

Since the majority of U.S. public school teachers in elementary and secondary education are women, the majority of women teachers are white, and the majority of students attending these schools are now children of diversity (Nieto, 1996; NEA, 1992), it becomes increasingly important for us (as white women in education) to examine the ways in which dominant cultural ideologies are evidenced as discourses in American history, as well as in our personal and pedagogical lives today.

Throughout this study, I will talk with you a great deal about dominant discourses of racism, power, and privilege (which were evidenced at Ravenswood Elementary)—and how many of the white teachers at Ravenswood (who are often brokers of these discourses), officiate in the school. With that in mind, you should know that (in Movement Two), I have separated these discourses into recognizable patterns, and refer to them using specific names—that is, the discourse of naming normal, (Freire,
1970/93), and the discourse of “dysconsciousness,” (King, 1991). But I also
want to be clear that whenever I talk about these discourses, I am always
(and only) speaking about the ways in which dominant cultural discourses
operate—defined here as ideologies or systems of belief that have historically
been held by white, European Americans as normative, or standard.

To help you frame an overall understanding of discourses as ideolo-
gies (how I reference them in this study), I offer in this section several
scholars’ works on dominant discourses (Mills, 1997, and her analysis of the
work of Foucault, 1972, 1981; Sleeter, 1995, 1996; Banks, 1988, 1997; Ashton &
Webb, 1986, as cited in Sleeter, 1996; and Peck, 1994, as quoted in Sleeter,
1996), and the ways in which these discourses operate as linguistic, socio-
cultural, and institutional archetypes.

Since the term dominant discourse carries a significant range of
meaning—“perhaps the widest range...of any term in literary and cultural
theory,” and yet “is often the term within theoretical texts which is least
defined” (Mills, 1997, 1), I thought it might be useful if I first framed the
term within a theoretical construct, and then unpacked its meaning as I
interpret and use it in this study (giving you on-going examples of the ways
in which these discourses often operate—or inform—most areas of
education).
In analyzing the work of critical theorist, historian, and philosopher, Michel Foucault on discourses, Mills (1997), affirms Foucault's (1981) position that when a cultural majority's beliefs or values are held up as the norm—when they are postulated as *absolute truths*, and, as such, are often accepted as unquestioned points of view, then these beliefs or values become institutionalized, and are consequently sanctioned as "regulated practice[s]" (Foucault, 1972), or dominant *cultural* discourses. Likewise, when cultural beliefs or values are not held by the majority—when they do not conform to what the majority perceives as normative—then these beliefs or values (which are in the minority) are often treated with suspicion by the majority, and can be devalued, disregarded, or summarily dismissed:

[Foucault] is concerned with the mechanics whereby one becomes *produced* as the dominant discourse, which is supported by institutional funding, by the provision of buildings and staff by the state, and by *the respect of the population as a whole*, whereas the other is often treated with suspicion and housed, both metaphorically and literally, at the margins of society (Mills, 1997, 19, italics mine).

"Discourses," says Mills, "structure both our sense of reality and our notion of our own identity" (15).

As an example of a dominant cultural discourse in education, Ashton & Webb's (1986) study offers numerous insights into the ways in which white teachers' life experiences (sanctioned as unquestioned institutionalized ideologies), might impact students of diversity:
The life experiences of most [white] teachers demonstrate their allegiance to the ethic of vertical mobility, self-improvement, hard work, deferred gratification, self-discipline, and personal achievement. These *individualistic* values rest on the assumptions that the social system ... works well, is essentially fair, and moves society slowly but inevitably toward progress (as cited in Sleeter, 1996, 29-30, italics mine).

Although we should not presume that teachers of color do not share in (and operate under) some of the same discourses as those which Ashton & Webb found among white teachers in their study, it should be noted that "the strong belief in individuality and individualism that exists within the [dominant] national macroculture, is often much less endorsed by some ethnic communities [who function] as microcultures [with] unique institutions, values, and cultural elements that are non-universal" (Banks, 1997, 11).

Dominant cultural discourses as ideology, argues Mills, maintain their power through institutional support which is omnipresent, and which often "have a profound influence on the way we think and act" (62). For example, as teachers, we are encouraged to perpetuate long held white, European, educational standards (Apple, 1993, 1996, 1999; Freire, 1970/93, 1998a-c; Giroux, 1997; Grant & Gomez, 1996; Banks, 1996, 1997; Sleeter, 1995, 1996), as "largely politically neutral and fair to all children" (Sleeter, 1995, 83). To the extent, then, that we honor these standards as authoritative *truth*—meaning, to the extent that we accept them without question or
reflection as the norm—we can remain indifferent about the values and beliefs which other cultural groups (not like our own) share, and continue being detached in our pedagogical lives (and the lives of our students), while “conferring tacit acceptance on the status quo” (Sleeter, 1996, 26).

Mills contends that Foucault (1972) does not believe these discourses “occur in isolation, but in dialogue—in relation to, or, more often, in contrast and opposition to other groups of utterances,” which (for Foucault) “are validated by some form of [historically situated] authority” (60-62).

Multicultural scholar, theorist, and practitioner, James Banks (1988) offers a cogent example of a nineteenth century American educational discourse of cultural power—one which is rooted in nativism (an 1860’s movement designed to stop new immigrants who were not white):

...Public schools, colleges, and universities usually perpetuate the dominant ideologies and values that are promoted and embraced by the powerful groups within society. Reflecting the prevailing goals of the nation as articulated by its powerful and economic leaders...schools and colleges promoted and embraced Americanization and blind loyalty to the nation, and also showed a distrust of foreigners and immigrant groups during the turn of the century and World War I periods (3-4).

Additionally, in his article, “Old Poison in New Bottles,” critical theorist and historian, Joe Feagin (1992), offers nativists’ four major themes as powerful cultural discourses which functioned as overt (and covert) racism in U.S. history. Although our language is now more “politically
correct,” you might want to notice how some of these themes still function as cultural discourses today: “that certain ‘dark races’ were intellectually and culturally inferior and should not be permitted entry; that people from ‘racially and culturally inferior groups’ could not completely assimilate into the dominant Anglo culture; that ‘inferior immigrants’ would take jobs and disrupt the economic conditions of Americans; and that immigrants would create serious government crises by corrupting the voting system and overloading school systems” (13).

Interestingly, in a 1992 interview for *American Heritage*, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. (author, historian, and special assistant to the president in the Kennedy White House in 1967), sees this time in history in a completely different light: “We’ve always been a multiethnic country,” says Schlesinger. “Americans have been absorbed by diversity from the eighteenth century on” (Schlesinger, as quoted in Smoler, 1992, and cited by Sleeter, 1995, 83).

“The ephemeral nature of whiteness as a social construction,” says Kincheloe and Steinberg, (1998), begins to reveal itself when we [also] understand that the Irish, Italians, and Jews all have been viewed as non-white[s]...at specific moments in [American] history (8-9).
Finally, as a more recent (historical) example of the ways in which dominate cultural discourses have influenced educational thinking and practices, I offer you this excerpt from conservative scholar and author, Allan Bloom's (1987) *Closing of the American Mind*—which still wields tremendous power and influence among right-wing educational policy makers today. In this segment, Bloom talks about affirmative action as the discourse of separatism (not conforming to dominant ideologies). In reading this passage, it might be worthwhile for you to examine the way in which overt racism is embedded in Bloom's language:

Affirmative action now institutionalizes the worst aspects of separatism. The fact is that the average black student's achievements do not equal those of the average white student in good universities, and everybody knows it. It is also a fact that the university degree of a black student is also tainted, and employers look on it with suspicion, or become guilty accomplices in the toleration of incompetence. The worst part of all is that the black students, most of whom avidly support this system, hate its consequences. They do not like the notion that whites are in the position to do them favors.

...Reason cannot accommodate the claims of any kind of power whatever, and democratic society cannot accept any principle of achievement other than merit. White students, as I have said, do not really believe in the justice of affirmative action, do not wish to deal with the facts, and turn without mentioning it to their all-white—or, rather, because there are now so many Orientals, non-black—society. Affirmative action (quotas), at least in universities, is the source of what I fear is a long-term deterioration of the relations between the races in America (96-97).
Such conservative discourses throughout history (like the nativists, and Allan Bloom's), have not only advanced dominant ideologies, says critical and multicultural theorist Christine Sleeter (1996), but also have greatly influenced the ways in which these discourses function in contemporary culture—often legitimating our (perceived) cultural rights, to the detriment of the rights of other cultures and ethnicities:

Whiteness has come to mean ravenous materialism, competitive individualism, and a way of living characterized by putting acquisition of possessions above humanity (31).

A. Summary of this section

Throughout this section, I have shared the ways in which dominant cultural discourses operate as language, as socio-cultural markers, and as institutionalized models. You have read examples of these discourses as they (often) disguise and maintain power, privilege, and racial bias under the mantle of absolute truth. And you have seen how such discourses behave similarly throughout periods of American history. The power of dominant cultural discourses as they impact all of our lives is enormous. But, in order to combat their harmful effects (that is, as they legitimate privilege and power, and promote racism), we must first understand how these discourses function in history (and, therefore, in our personal and pedagogical lives), and then figure out where we can go from there:
The power of discourses resides in their ability to impose constraints and win participants' consent to abide by them. Power relations are enacted within discourses via these constraints, and are exhibited in struggles for control over discourses as a 'mechanism of sustaining power' (Fairclough, 1989). When a discourse has achieved such social dominance that these constraints are nearly invisible (as is the case with the Western discourse of the individual, it attains the status of 'common sense' and 'will come to be seen as national and legitimate because it is simply the way of conducting oneself' (Peck, 1994, as quoted in Sleeter, 1996, 36, italics mine).

B. An overview of where we’re going next

In the Three Movements which follow (and which represent the foundation of this research), we will explore dominant cultural discourses of racism, power, and privilege: (1) through Rosario’s and my initial work on pedagogical autobiography (where we explore our personal and pedagogical history and place ourselves within the context of these discourses as they unfold; (2) through an exploration of the school as a cultural environment for learning; and through the stories which unfold in this environment as we name and discuss the discourses which we believe operate there; and (3) through the ways in which I observe Rosario interrupt these discourses in her fourth grade classroom.
Education takes place when there are two learners who occupy somewhat different spaces in an ongoing dialogue. But both participants bring knowledge to the relationship, and one of the objects of the pedagogic process is to explore what each knows and what they can teach the other (Freire, 1998a, 8).

Trisha,

This writing is painful. I've reread what I've said and it sounds so clee-shade (this invented spelling should get the emotions across to you), so I'm off to yoga for now and then will read Sonia Nieto for inspiration. Thank god for yoga. I hope it focuses me. How are you? Where are you? Why is this so painful? Call me. RG

“Crisis Central,” she answers as she picks up the phone. I laugh out loud. Did she know it was I who would be calling? Would it have mattered?

A (temporary) crisis has ensued and her e-mail prompted me to move on it with her, as she had done so many times this past year with me.
The crisis centers on her writing about herself as a teacher—how she feels that her words are disembodied, perhaps even forced. I know the feeling well, but I don’t say that to her. Instead, I remind her that she is a storyteller, and suggest that she remember one moment in her teaching which was a turning point. I tell her to tell me the story. She agrees, and begins to weave a rich tale of a school night (two years’) past when she first met with the parents of her fourth grade students—when the room was full “knees to chins,” and a caring dialogue was born from silence:

**Rosario’s Narrative**

I ask if anyone has any questions. Silence. I wait. Silence. I had just come from a school where parents...would bombard me with questions...come in armed with little spiral notebooks filled with them, but these people were absolutely silent. Not a word. So I cued them saying, ‘I can’t believe this is the fourth grade proficiency year and nobody has any questions. I’m just not used to this.’ I wait. Slowly questions start to come about when they would be held, etc. Nothing too interesting. Nothing too hard. I wait again. Then one woman timidly raised her hand and said in an accented English, ‘Well, I actually do have a question about my daughter. Well, maybe it’s a problem. I feel like she’s being teased and left out. I’m not sure if it’s because she is Asian American or because she is overweight. I don’t really know why but both are really hurtful for her and for me. Maybe could we just all talk about that? This is my biggest concern. It’s not the proficiency test, it’s about Rose being safe and feeling comfortable here.’ The room was silent, but it was a different silence. We’d stopped eyeing each other, awed by her courage to speak out, touched by the love she had for her Rose. Now we were ready to begin...
She is a remarkable woman, this woman in crisis. She is a remarkable teacher. Her name is Rosario (Rosalia) Galarza. She is my confidante, my co-conspirator, my model of excellence, and my friend.

Rosario is a tall, slim, dark-haired, middle-aged Hispanic American woman who still carries the traces of her indigenous heritage with honor, yet knows full well how to straddle two worlds simultaneously:

Rosario’s Narrative

I am a mestiza—a woman of mixed heritage, part indigenous, part Euro-American. I have learned to straddle cultures, languages, and values. I understand that reality has many faces. I am a mestiza of another sort as well—part elementary school, part university. I am most at home as I live and work among students and families energized and inspired. My teaching is grounded in a rich historical legacy of Chicano resistance that translates into a pursuit of social justice in both research and scholarship. I not only pursue social justice, but as my father taught me, I teach my students to actively name and fight racism, classism, and sexism.

Like Rosario, I am a middle-aged woman, but I am neither tall nor slim. Rather, I carry the most capacious (and, likewise, most uninhabitable) visages of my mother and father (and their mothers and fathers before them). I am a pale-skinned, blue-eyed (zaftig) white woman, fondly referred to in my family as “the mouth,” for I have a (well deserved) reputation of making my (often dissenting) point of view known (and heard), whether it was someone’s intention to ask my opinion or not. Growing up female in the 1950’s prepared me well:
As a girl child in the 1950's, I learned very early on how to play the gender game. I learned how to keep secrets (about my body and its curiosities). I learned how to 'conduct myself like a lady' and 'not make any waves' (although I never really mastered that last one except when my father was physically present). I struggled (as did other females during this time) with who I was in the world—where my place was, and whether (or not) my place could be more like my brother's place (which always seemed more independent, sure of itself, and allowed to have more adventures outside our neighborhood).

As I got older, the more vocal a recruit I became with my femaleness (as an issue of equity), the less I found that people (most especially white male people) would indulge me. In many circumstances, I was punished (made to feel embarrassed, almost fired from jobs) for wanting respect (as a human being), or equal pay (for equal work).

Unlike some women I knew, this did not make me more militant, but more tolerant (or at least more selective of the ways in which I did battle). It's not that I was loud and contentious, mind you (I'm actually quite shy). It's just that when I feel passionately about an issue, it's because I've put some thought into it beforehand, and I tend to speak up, and worry about the fallout later.

Rosario, too, is a passionate person—a daughter, a sister, a wife, a mother—a teacher of profound thoughts and deeds. She has been a teacher for nearly seventeen years, and, for nearly seven, an elementary school teacher in affluent suburban schools:

Rosario's Narrative

When I began teaching, I was committed to creating a place where children could examine and take pride in
their cultured, gendered, and racialized lives without fear of humiliation, a place that embraced diversity, reflection, critical thinking, and social justice. My students would learn what I had come to understand, that ‘knowledge is neither neutral nor apolitical, yet it is generally treated by teachers and schools as if it were’ (Nieto, 1992, p. 219).

My commitment to social justice stems from family, not my teacher training program. My teaching experiences have been with the children of the empowered and the affluent. For a long time I was not satisfied empowering the children of the empowered. Slowly, I realized there is an important job to be done with these children as well. I read the words of James Baldwin (1988):

‘... a price is demanded to liberate all those white children—some of them near forty—who have never grown up, and who never will grow up, because they have no sense of their identity.’

Suddenly I began to understand why I was teaching in suburban schools.

Unlike Rosario, I have been a non-traditional teacher (working out of store fronts, churches, and housing projects) for almost twenty years, and a traditional teacher for five. I began my pedagogic life as a young woman teaching parentless children in prisons, or on the street (who were neither energized nor inspired). My teaching is grounded in activism (first sparked during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960’s), which continues to guide me in the pursuit of equity in both research and scholarship.

Like Rosario, I came back to the academy later in life, because I believed I should “follow my bliss” (Campbell, 1975/89), and I knew my bliss
lay somewhere between teaching and learning. I wanted to teach and learn more because I believed I had some things to say about being a critical and caring educator. I still do. I wanted to teach and learn (more) so that I could explore (on a practical, as well as theoretical level) the intersection between who I am, and who others are in relationship with me (and that, I anticipate, will never weary me).

I began this study with Rosario having only met her a few times before—once at a conference where we shared a short (but energetic) lunch, and again, as Ph.D. students taking a (packed-to-the-gills) research course at the university. Although we didn’t know one another well, it seemed that every time we had spoken together, it was as long-time friends, and that left an impression on me.

When I lost my first research partner in this study (and you’ll hear a bit more about that later on), Rosario’s name came up as a possibility. “She’s a woman of color teaching in a mostly white elementary school,” said a colleague of mine who knew us both, “and you two seem to be moving in similar directions in your work, so why not give her a call?” I did. It was an auspicious beginning.

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7 Over several extensive interviews with New Dimensions Radio commentator and author, Michael Toms, the late Joseph Campbell (teacher, lecturer, author, scholar, and myth elucidator) said: “I feel that if one follows what I call one’s ‘bliss’—the thing that really gets you deep in the gut and that you feel is your life—doors will open up. ...If you follow your bliss, you’ll have your bliss, whether you have money or not” (24-25).
We began our work together by sharing (what I call) pedagogical autobiographies—our personal, cultural, historical, methodological (and, therefore, ideological) lives—as a place to begin exploring what Freire (1998a) refers to as “the gnostic cycle...the teaching-learning process [joined] together with the work of research:”

There is no such thing as teaching without research and research without teaching. One inhabits the body of the other. As I teach, I continue to search and research. I teach because I search, because I question, and because I submit myself to questioning. I research because I notice things, take cognizance of them. And in so doing, I intervene. And intervening, I educate, and educate myself. I do research so as to know what I do not yet know and to communicate and proclaim what I discover (35).

Rosario has helped me in continuing the gnostic cycle which we began together. She has encouraged me “to relax and not sweat the small stuff.” She has prodded me to continue to share openly. She has reminded me why I have come this far in my “bliss.” She says I am calming for her. I tell her that she gives me the courage to voice who I am and what I believe in—a part of me which has lain dormant for a number of years—a part of me which I hope to uncover now, with you.

It was a privilege to work with Rosario in her fourth grade classroom. She is a woman who purposefully chose to teach in a predominantly white,
affluent, elementary school, and the work that she has done, and continues
to do there, is compassionate, compelling, challenging, and reaches far
beyond the confines of conventional classroom pedagogy:

Rosario's Narrative

Other teachers here don't think this, but I believe that kids
have a great deal of knowledge, and part of my pedagogy
is to help them give voice to that knowledge. I also
believe that their knowledge is expressed in a lot of ways.
What I'm always trying to tap into is how kids 'know' in
ways that they can't necessarily articulate. So I use art a lot
[books, poetry, drawing, using the body, etc.] The kids in
my class are my co-researchers in that they are generating
knowledge, they are interpreting knowledge, and they're
doing this with me. In my classroom they get to name
racism, they get to look at power structures, and they get to
read great literature in the process. So how can that not
benefit them in the long run?

My work with Rosario is the story of Women Teaching Between the
Lines—not an end for me, but the dawning of what and how I wish to
continue to reflect, act upon, and transform my pedagogy in relationship
with others whom I teach (and from whom I learn) in diversity.

I am a woman who is no longer young. I stand by my experiences,
knowing that I have much to learn yet much that I have learned. I regret
nothing. I simply try to reflect upon that which I have experienced as
honestly as I can, and continue to follow my bliss.
These are my reflections. This is my recorded time with Rosario. At its end is my beginning, and it is here that I hope to find myself, and you, somewhere on the page. We shall have hope that both will be possible. And so our journey continues.
MOVEMENT TWO: ON DEEPENING THE WORK

Examining Dominant Cultural Discourses At Ravenswood Elementary
Through A Revisioning Of Diversity

Either you will go through this door or you will not go through.
If you go through there is always risk of remembering your name.
Things look at you doubly and you must look back and let them happen.
If you do not go through it is possible to live worthily, to maintain
your attitudes, to hold your position, to die bravely, but much will
blind you, much will evade you, at what cost who knows? The door
itself makes no promises. It is only a door. (Adrienne Rich, 1962/67)

Marcel Proust9 (1928) once said the journey of discovery begins not
with new visions, but with having new eyes with which to behold them. I
have always liked this idea, because implicit within it (in many ways), is the
key to exploring diversity. If we approach the multiplicity of the world using

8 My use of the word "diversity" is drawn from multicultural theorists’
James Banks (1997), Sonia Nieto (1996), and Christine Sleeter (1996), who
outline diversity as that which includes ethnicity, race, culture, gender
preference, social class, and ability (whether differently “abled” or not). In
this study, however, when I refer to diversity, I am almost always speaking
about the disparate ways in which the children of color are depriviledged at
Ravenswood Elementary because dominant cultural ideologies of privilege
and power are present and remain unchecked.

9 A French author and visionary (1871-1922) who had a profound effect
upon me in my youth, not only because he was an extraordinary weaver of
language, but also, because the language which he wove invariably turned
sentences into whole paragraphs (a tendency which I have also claimed as
mine own, although never as eloquently as M. Proust).
only the same "eyes" we have always used—eyes which (for good or ill) have become the fixed lens of our autobiographical histories; which carry our cultural and corporeal imprints; which have viewed ourselves in relationship with others in selective ways—then we have greatly narrowed our focus, and there is very little room for others' visions of the world to change the way in which we might see things. If, on the other hand, we use our eyes to vision the world with others—to explore who we are in relationship—bringing our historical (and physical) lenses with us, but widening the landscape to see other visions (other lenses, other histories) in other contexts, then our possibilities of revisioning (beholding with new eyes) are endless, and can empower us to meet people where they are, and not where we might wish them to be.

Paulo Freire (1997)\textsuperscript{10} wrote a wonderful passage in Pedagogy of the Heart which I always think of when I consider how I should respond to other people in my personal and pedagogical life—when I think about revisioning diversity (as a pedagogical process of action and reflection). I offer it here, to you, as one means of linking who we are, and how we might revision ourselves, in relationship with those who may not embrace the world in the same (cultural) ways that we do:

\textsuperscript{10} A critical theorist, educator, philosopher, poet, and political activist who has (more than any other writer I have read) been responsible for the ways in which I have positioned myself pedagogically, and in helping me prepare for (and write) this study.
I like being a person precisely because of my ethical and political responsibility before the world and other people. I cannot be if others are not; above all, I cannot be if I forbid others from being. I am a human being. I am a man, and not a rhinoceros... (p. 59).

**How I came to explore discourses of privilege and power which can upend diversity**

I first became interested in the ways in which dominant cultural discourses of privilege and power function as a host for overt and covert racism about three years ago, when I conducted a mini-ethnography in which I used the autobiographical and reflective writing of ten white teachers in my university class as my only data (Long, 1998a).

Although the research began as an exploration of the ways in which fear impacts pedagogy (fear of losing control, fear of being made fun of by students, fear of not being thought of as competent by colleagues, etc.), I soon discovered (what I believed to be unconscious) recurring language patterns in the teachers' writing (over and above fear), which clearly demonstrated discourses of embedded racism that were culturally driven. These discourses—similar in content to the e-mail you read in the prelude (p. 22) from a white teacher in my class who talked about "these people in the ghetto"—were so prevalent among the ten teachers studied, that I began to wonder to what extent I might find the same cultural discourses if I broadened my base to include pre-service teachers.
After two additional studies (1999, 2000) in which I (again) used my university classes as a barometer for examining how white, pre-service teachers’ lack of pedagogical reflection on these discourses (if left unchecked), might negatively impact the ways in which they would teach students of diversity, my findings coincided with what McIntyre suspected in her (1997) study, *Making Meaning of Whiteness*:

> When teachers’ positionalities, school curricula, and educational practices are left unproblematized and unchallenged, we run the risk of passively transferring unexamined knowledge, thus, reifying and maintaining oppressive structures that ensure the sanctity of the dominant group’s power, privilege, and ideology (117).

I began this (current) study with Rosario Galarza in November, 1999 (informed by my previous studies on teachers and teaching), because I felt I had only touched the “tip of the iceberg” in understanding how dominant cultural ideologies (whether consciously or unconsciously driven) might be negatively impacting students of diversity. Part of what I wanted to explore was how studying discourses of privilege and power might be differently evidenced if I co-partnered with a woman of color who taught in a predominately white, affluent school. I was also interested in exploring how I might place myself more wholly in the research. Here is what I wrote in my (November, 1999) research proposal as one of my personal goals for this study:
In terms of myself as a researcher, this study is also a renewed commitment on my part to reflect, share, and act in such a way that my ‘talk’ and my ‘walk’ (as a woman, as an educator, and as an ethnographic writer) are compatible and open to change. In this way, my shifting pedagogical praxis will become a springboard for the ways in which I observe, think about, feel, reflect upon, and dialogue with the teacher with whom I will co-partner.

To best understand the ways in which I started thinking about this study initially (when I began to consider the impact of dominant cultural discourses as institutionalized ideologies or systems of belief), I offer you next an overview of the structure of these discourses (or ideologies) as they might be evidenced in public schools (in general), and then move forward with my “first impressions” of Ravenswood Elementary (where, as an ethnographer, I observe and analyze the ways in which these cultural discourses might be manifesting themselves during my first visit to the site).

**How discourses operate within a public school structure**

Most public schools in the U.S. support similarly constituted discourses in education—that is, fixed and routinized ideologies which

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11 I use “public school structure” (as opposed to private school structure) because it is important for you to know that Ravenswood Elementary (although a well-endowed suburban school which operates within a district with a noticeably low population of diverse students and teachers), is still mandated by the state as a public institution, and therefore, still required to maintain public school guidelines and standards of operation in order to obtain federal, state, and local district funding.
(although historically derived from Anglo-American cultural ideals and values) still operate as a platform for “excellence” in education today (Giroux, 1997; Apple, 1996; Shor, 1992; King, 1999).

For instance, if we traveled from public school to public school in our state, we would find a fairly standardized system of curriculum (and department) guidelines for students, teachers and staff.¹²

We might also notice (from school to school) comparable mission statements (what the school values as education), vision statements (how the school plans to ensure what they value), and similarly structured school buildings (some better equipped than others) in which the school and its classrooms (with students, teachers, and textbooks) are housed and (additionally) guided.

These standardized discourses, says multicultural theorist, researcher, and practitioner, Sonia Nieto (1996), “represent what is thought to be important and necessary knowledge by those who are dominant in a society” (93).

¹² As an example, here’s what Rosario told me in an early interview about Ravenswood Elementary’s curriculum guidelines: “There’s the ‘official curriculum guidelines’ of the school, but you don’t necessarily have to read them because practically everybody in our district is teaching the same, and practically everybody’s teaching from those guidelines, so all you really have to do is just notice what people are teaching, and that’s the norm.”
But in addition to overt discourses which determine what is most important for students to learn, many public schools also sustain more covert cultural discourses or ideologies—those which Banks (1997) says “no teacher explicitly teaches, but...all students learn” (24). In this respect, dominant ideologies used as cultural hegemony (defined here as white privilege and power), can often send subliminal (but equally powerful) messages concerning how the school thinks and feels about people as human beings. Banks (1997) says that these discourses are

a powerful part of the school culture that communicates to students the school’s attitude toward a range of issues and problems, including [how they feel about] males, females, exceptional students, and students from various religions, cultural, racial, and ethnic groups (24-25).\textsuperscript{13}

For those of us who bring ourselves into the classroom each day without critically considering how our cultural discourses might be impacting our students’ cultural discourses (and vice versa), schools can become a place in which to reinforce our biases, calm our fear of losing

\textsuperscript{13} Rosario, in one of our many out-of-school conversations together, offered this example of how Ravenswood Elementary (as a predominately white, affluent school), promotes covert cultural monogamy: “Most of the teachers here operate under white, European middle class discourses. This is a school culture which values assimilation. Kids are welcome IF they play by the rules, wear their clothes, have their hair cuts, play their sports, and read their books. If they do all this, then the non-white kids can join the club...but not really. It never seems to happen. The kids who are not white here can do some things, but not come home to dinner, date, or be in the inner circle, you know? I have never in my life heard such ‘othering’ as I have heard here. It’s unbelievable—and it’s sad.”
control, and heighten our sense of authorship (that we are the manifest authority and our way is the best, and, often, only way in which to be in the world).

Consequently, the way that each school’s cultural discourses function (overtly and covertly) also deeply impacts and influences the ways in which we teach and relate to students, and the ways in which those students learn (Nieto, 1996).

My ten months with Rosario became a place in which to critically examine how, for whom, and in what context dominant cultural discourses (as ideologies) overtly and covertly function. They also became (for me) an (unanticipated) investigation into how I might be equally compliant in fostering these same cultural discourses as a researcher.

**My first impressions or, is this the discourse of “naming normal?”**

Ravenswood Elementary (the school where Rosario teaches), is nestled among a settlement of expensive, private homes, which (unlike most of the urban schools I have visited), creates a quiet (and relatively peaceful) environment all day long. This type of environment permits students (and, I would guess, their parents), a feeling of safety when they are at play (on the well tended grounds), or upon entering or leaving the school. As I drive up to the school, park my car, and look around, I get the impression that the children who learn here are not only well cared for, but
also have ample opportunity to live (for seven hours a day) in an atmosphere which is open, nurturing, protected, and which places its service in the best interest of each child who attends.

This impression does not end as I walk to the office through two (of seven) hallways in the school,¹⁴ and glimpse the incredible art work which lines them (all encased in beautiful wood and glass boxes), not to mention the access to flower-and-bench-filled pocket garden areas (in addition to the playground areas), in which (I imagine as I am walking by), students who want to relax, or play quietly with friends, might go.¹⁵ As a physical environment, Ravenswood Elementary could be identified as a “model of excellence”—one which not only meets, but also exceeds our expectations of what a good site for learning should be.

But upon closer reflection (later that night), I had some interesting (albeit) preliminary insights which differed from my original “first impressions.”

**A (not so) brief interruption**

Before you read the monophonic narrative (pps. 62-63), in which I draw different conclusions about my site experiences, I thought it might be

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¹⁴ where, I notice, there is no sound—not a peep—coming from any of the classrooms which flanks them

¹⁵ I'm not saying that the austere silence present as I move down the hallway is a good or a bad thing, but, rather, something which I take note of and (therefore) can question later on when I review my audiotape.
useful to stop for a moment and talk with you about how I move (as a researcher) from data collection, to analysis, to writing up the data—and, as a result, how I decided to move you (as the reader) from my first (positive) impressions of the school (which you have just read), to the dichotomy I found there when I completed my data analysis (my ethnographer's field notes, which you are about to read).

To do this so that you can see the process I use whenever I analyze data, I'll begin with the way in which I collect data (in general), and then move into the way in which I analyzed and reconfigured this data (twice) so that I could offer you the two (distinct) impressions I got on my first day at the site.

**How I collect data (my initial steps)**

As a researcher in the field, I always bring a note book (my research journal) and pen to write my observations, and I always bring a tape recorder to talk my observations. This method of using more than one means of data collection to best understand the environment in which the data is collected (a.k.a., "grounded theory"), involves "generating theory and doing research as two parts of the same process [while using] a continuous interplay between analysis and data collection" (Straus & Corbin, 1994, 273).

Using this method, I can collect data by making both written and spoken observations during the day, and then read, reflect, analyze, and
theorize as I review that data (in a more in-depth way) that night. The continuous interplay between analysis and data collection (which Straus & Corbin refer to, above) means that by collecting and (later) reviewing and analyzing the data each time I go to the site (a goal, not necessarily a reality), I am able to best discover nuances in the collected data which might have escaped me otherwise.

On my first day at the site, I both tape recorded and wrote down what I was experiencing coming to the school for the first time. From the time I drove my car through the town where Ravenswood is located, up until the point at which I reached the school office to sign in and get an I.D. badge—meaning, my observations as I drove to and parked at the site, my walk through the two hallways, and everything I noticed in between (until I got to the office to sign in)—I was alone and had my tape recorder running.¹⁶

Once I signed in and a staff member walked me to Rosario’s classroom (which was another of my observations, left out of the first impressions you just read), I spent most of the rest of the day writing what I was seeing (my first entry into Rosario’s classroom, what I noticed about her relationships with her students, etc.). When the students left for the day (and I had been

¹⁶ Understand that if, at any point in my journey from the parking lot to the office, I had met any people (and would have been obtrusive with my tape recorder), I would have turned it off and relied on my memory until I could get somewhere to write down what I had seen. Luckily for me (which is not always the case), I didn’t have to do that.
on-site for approximately two hours then), I did my first audiotaped inter-
view with Rosario (which you will hear about later on in this movement). I
also added some additional information (using my tape recorder) before I
went home that day. All of what I recorded (written and audiotaped notes)
became my first day's collected data. However, I did not analyze all of this
data the first night (as you will see in a moment).

In the next section, I want to talk with you about how I analyzed my
first "chunk of data" (my first impressions) at the site (Lather, 1998). You
should know that the process I use for data analysis (although I don't always
do it in the same order, and sometimes I combine elements) is (virtually)
the same process I use throughout this study (and one which I have found
extremely useful in the past). To synthesize this process before I take you
through it, I can tell you that I:

• read through the data multiple times to find frequent events and
  identifiable and/or noteworthy patterns;
• code, analyze, and write interpretive commentary using a specific set of
  questions (developed by feminist theorists' and researchers, Laurel
  Richardson, 1999, and Barbara Johnson, 1987);
• make evidentiary warrants (question the patterns I see)--Lather (1998)
  and Richardson (1999);
• create a structure and process for more in-depth analysis by reforming the
  patterns that I found (taking whole paragraphs and reducing them down
to two or three words);
• build a table or graph (if I have time) to further analyze the patterns
  which are emerging; and

17 Having done several qualitative ethnographies in the past, I know
how quickly I can forget details if I don't get them "down" right away.
• create a narrative or narratives in which I (and my readers) might "see" the data I collected in different ways—so that "narrative makes possible the understanding of people who are not present [and] creates the possibility of history beyond the personal" (Richardson, 1997, 31).

**How I read, coded, and analyzed data (my process)**

Later that night, I both read through, and listened to, everything I had collected about my *first impressions* at the site (leaving out my classroom observations and the three-and-one-half hour audiotaped interview I had with Rosario until I had time to transcribe it later in the week).¹⁸

As I read through the data, I began to sort (code), and analyze what I had collected. I did this by finding similar patterns in the data. In this case, the most obvious patterns I found were the binaries between what I first noticed (my general observations) versus what I *experienced* (my feelings having an affect on what I noticed). I then asked the following questions:

- What is going on here?
- What is this person saying?
- What are their actions?

(Richardson, 1999).

Since the "person" I was referring to was myself, I distanced myself by reading (and listening to) the collected data as if someone else had written/

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¹⁸ It is important to note that although I chose not to analyze my interview with Rosario (as part of my first impressions of the school), I had, indeed, begun to hear stories about the ways in which dominant cultural discourses might be operating at Ravenswood as (an unplanned) part of my first interview with her, and I know this impacted the ways in which I approached my initial data analysis.
spoken it. In doing so, I was able to get another (slightly less biased) perspective on the data.\footnote{Here's what I mean. Since it's impossible to fully distance ourselves from our personal biases (especially, in this case, when the \emph{person} I am talking about is myself), I always code and analyze the data as impartially as possible by reading "as if" I am another person, and then answering the questions (as I did above) in the third person. It gives me some distance and (often) offers me a different (and new) perspective.} Having asked these questions, here is what I wrote:

\textit{What is going on here?} A handicapped woman has come to her research site (a well endowed public school in a wealthy suburb) for the first time, and is struggling with what she notices (a beautiful, well-kept facility) with what she doesn't notice (easy access to the handicapped entrance; art work embracing both diversity and students' imaginations; office staff who are sensitive to her handicap and who appear open and communicative).

\textit{Pay attention to this binary. Synthesis/binaries evidenced:} charm vs. gracelessness; noticing vs. seeing; real (authentic) vs. fictitious (simulated?).

\textit{What is this person saying?} On one hand, this woman is saying that the school is really lovely and could be used as a physical model for other public schools in the state, and on the other hand, she is saying that there might be more going on at this school than "meets the eye" (binary again here). Her original perception of the school dissipates as she looks beyond
the surface of what is presented as the school's physical environment, and
begins to notice the school's (probable) culture being displayed and played
out.

Examples:

1) In taking note of the difficulty of gaining access to the
handicapped entrance, the woman wonders how many
handicapped students and teachers are present, and how
they navigate this entrance when the door is locked and
the buzzer doesn't work. **Synthesis/binaries evidenced:**
caring about vs. fulfilling statewide disability mandates.

2) As the woman notices the pronounced silence in the
hallways, she wonders whether this is a "quiet time" after
lunch, or Freire's (1970/93, 53) banking system of educa-
tion operating. **Synthesis/binaries evidenced:** I talk, you
listen vs. we all dialogue together; quiet as discipline vs.
quiet as time to rest and reflect.

3) In noticing the lack of diversity in the artwork, the
woman wonders whether this might be an indication that
multiculturalism is not a curriculum priority at this
school **Synthesis/binaries evidenced:** dominant culture
vs. "other" cultures; segregated vs. integrated curriculum.

4) In noticing that the artwork lacks the messiness of
children's hands, the woman wonders who chooses the
artwork on display and what their criteria might be.
**Synthesis/binaries evidenced:** perfection vs. authenticity;
good vs. "excellent."

5) In dealing with the office staff (feeling like an inter-
loper) the woman questions the way in which all visitors
to this school might be treated (and therefore, the ways in
which children and their parents might be treated if they
don't "play by the [school's] rules"). **Synthesis/binaries
evidenced:** conduct appropriateness vs. control; school
culture vs. home culture; individualism vs. group
autonomy in diversity.
What are their [this person's] actions? This woman seems to be more interested in noticing than in doing. Although she does try to engage a staff member in conversation about what she notices, once the staff member will not engage, the woman does nothing further and moves into the teacher's classroom (where her next observation will take place).

As you can see from the ways in which I analyzed the data thus far, the binaries which I noticed in my first read-through(s) of the collected data, had become more and more pronounced as I continued with the analysis. However, I should also tell you that at this point, I was really struggling with how to maintain balance with the data. Although I was present at this site to co-examine the ways in which dominant cultural discourses might be operating (and so it was not surprising to me that the binaries I found were looking more and more culturally driven), I was still obligated to balance my perspectives and try to see the data from more than just my point of view. In order to find a balance (if that is ever possible), I decided to read the data again, but this time affectively, so that I could (if nothing else) develop empathy about how difficult it must be to run a school day-to-day.²⁰

²⁰ Unfortunately (and I do regret this), I was never able to schedule a time when I could sit down with the principal of the school (our schedules somehow always conflicted), so that some of these initial impressions could have been resolved (one way or the other).
I moved back into the collected data and read it all the way through (including the data I had just analyzed), using (as a lens) feminist researcher, Barbara Johnson's (1987) four analytic questions: Why am I reading this text? What kind of act was the writing of it? What questions about itself does the text not raise? What am I participating in when I read it? Here are my notes from that third pass of the data:

1) Why am I reading this text? I am reading this text (again) so that I can (better) understand how the people who work (and teach) at Ravenswood might view issues of safety (the locked doors), classroom deportment (the quiet), and excellence (the art work). I am (also) reading to see if the binaries which I am finding are worth pursuing (in and of themselves) or might be kept on the back burner until I have some additional information. Note: I am still bothered by the lack of diversity in the artwork, and the way I felt when I was in the office signing in.

2) What kind of act was the writing of it? The writing of this text, although it started out to be factual, soon turned into an intuitive, emotional act. Once I stopped relying on my left brain and unleashed my senses (what I was feeling, hearing, seeing/not seeing and experiencing), the binaries came to the forefront. Question: How can I balance this with the school's point of view? What is the school's point of view (especially on the issue of diversity)?
3) What questions about itself does the text not raise? It doesn't raise any questions about what day-to-day life is really like at Ravenswood because I'm not at the site every day all day (should I schedule an all-day school session?). It doesn't sufficiently present the data from more than just my point of view (can I arrange to sit down with the principal, and, if so, will I be permitted to be honest or will I have to "cover" my questions?). And it doesn't take into consideration how the staff (who, let's face it were rude) might have been feeling today (it's just my first day...will this change on all the other days I am at the site?).

4) What am I participating in when I read it? I am participating in one person's (biased) point of view. Period. How can I change or shift this so that I have more balanced information? How can Rosario help me to do this? Can I observe other teachers? Can I talk frankly with the staff/with the principal?

Once I finished this process, I wrote two monophonic narratives: my "first impressions" of the school, and my ethnographic field notes (which follows). I did this so that I could present the duality I felt at the site on my very first day there. As you can see from the field notes, I have (as is usually the case in the beginning of my work), more questions than I was ever able to satisfactorily answer:
Efhtu^apker^s Field Notes: First Observation  
(30 November, 1999)

1:00 pm: As I pulled up to the school to park my car and find a handicapped space, I noticed that although there were at least seven handicapped spaces in the parking area, the door for handicapped access nearest the parking was locked, thus defeating the purpose of making the ‘disabled’ visitor walk less spaces to get to the school’s office (quite a distance from the parking) to sign in. Q: I’m wondering how many handicapped students and teachers are present at this school, and do they have some system for using this access if they’re entering the building after classes have begun (as I was)?

1:15 pm: As I moved through two hallways to the office, I noticed how quiet it was. Q: Is the silence due to the ways in which the school’s discourses operate—wherein the teacher talks and the students passively listen (Freire, 1970/93, 53)—or just the fact that it’s shortly after lunch, and this time of day might be reserved for quiet work?

I also noticed that all the glass display cases were filled with stunning artwork, but what was apparent to me (upon viewing more closely) was that the offerings (labeled as ‘student works of art’), not only lacked diversity in its content, but also were too ‘finished’ for elementary school children. Although the displayed work was (often) whimsical, and abounded in color, texture, and style, it was definitely not rendered (or sculpted) by children’s hands. It was almost as if the teachers prepared the essence of the work for the students ahead of time (to cut, or paint, or color, or assemble), so that the finished art would be viewed as ‘exceptional’ in some way—an aspect of school culture which I have (unfortunately) witnessed too much of. I missed the messiness (and spontaneity) of children’s imaginations at work here (where their construction almost oozes out of the classrooms and spills into the hallways). Q: I’m wondering if there is criteria used by the teachers to select the artwork which graces these hallways, or, if there is one art teacher, what her/his expectations might be?
1:30 pm: While I was in the office, I noticed that both the women who were staffing the desk stared at me, and then my cane—but said nothing. Although it's true that my cane is unusual (for it's a beautifully carved and painted walking stick from Mexico), I'm more likely to hear how interesting it is than to be stared at because of it. I found that their stares (and silence) made me instantly uncomfortable and on the defensive (something that I did not relish my very first day). I was immediately asked why I was there ('I am doing research at this school with Rosario Galarza'); was I expected at this time? ('yes'); and would I sign in and take an I.D. badge ('of course'). One of the staff members then walked me to Rosario's classroom, but walked so quickly that I had to remind her that I was disabled and she must slow down if I was to keep up with her. Although I tried to make conversation thereafter (for I was interested in knowing more about the locked doors, and her perception of the school), she would not engage in any conversation with me. I (again) felt uncomfortable and closely scrutinized. Q: I'm wondering if every newcomer is treated in this way, and if so, why? Was it because I was conducting research and the office staff suspected that the school might also be under close scrutiny?

Do my fieldnotes seem inconsequential to you? Did you wonder why I included them? Did you find yourself editorializing as you read—for example, “so what if the doors are locked? (they are locked at my school too); or, so what if the artwork was primed by the teachers? (I often provide
opportunities for my students to do the same); or, so what if the office staff were less than courteous? (maybe they were having a bad day).” All true. All logical. All palatable points of view. All questions I asked myself.21

But here’s the “so what.” As an ethnographer who entered this study to explore the ways in which dominant cultural discourses might be impacting a school’s (as well as teachers’) pedagogy, I needed to consider everything I was thinking about, feeling, and experiencing as I entered Ravenswood on my first day of the study. It was up to me to record, as accurately as I could, my actions (as well as my reactions), so that I might create an ethnographic picture, which, as VanMaanen (1988) says, acts as a portrait of diversity in an increasingly homogenous world...display[ing] the intricate ways individuals and groups understand, accommodate, and resist a presumably shared order (xiii-xiv).

Most importantly, it was up to me to share my impressions with Rosario—to see if what I was considering was insignificant, or an indication

My fieldnotes (like all other similarly structured observations in research), are (inevitably) self-opinionated ways of seeing and being in the world. Knowing this, however, does not excuse me from questioning how those whom I am observing might also view the world differently. In this respect, as researchers who wish to render a valid piece of work, we must consider more than one position as we question the collected data (our first impressions, the second-hand stories we hear, our first-hand observations, etc.), yet still remain true to ourselves and our positions as audible voices and inscribers of the text (Kvale, 1995). It’s always a delicate balance for me (to say the least).
of the ways in which these probable discourses of privilege and power (in this case, of “othering,” and benign neglect), might truly be operating.

When I understood that my first impressions at Ravenswood Elementary were not positive ones overall, I wrote the following as an overriding question from my first day’s fieldnotes (and I pose it to you now for your consideration): Is this the discourse of naming normal?

**The discourse of naming normal**

It was Rosario who, in speaking about the ways in which she had witnessed dominant discourses operating at Ravenswood Elementary, first defined Freire’s discourse of oppression (1970/93) as “the discourse of naming normal.” I have chosen to use Rosario’s term throughout this study, because I think it best synthesizes Freire’s ideas. I also think Freire’s thoughts bear repeating, not only because they are important for us to reflect upon, but also, as a way to introduce one aspect of his extensive collection of writings to those of you who might be unfamiliar with his work.

Freire (1970/93) speaks about human existence as “that which cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true words, with which men and women transform the world.” To exist in the human condition, says Freire, “is to name the world, to change it” (69, italics mine):
This transformation, however, is the right of everyone. Consequently, no one can say a true word alone...nor can she say it for another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words (ibid, italics authors).

When Freire talks about false and true words as the core of human existence, I believe he means that dialogue as a system of communication (that is, the myriad ways we can know, and interpret, and name the world), can produce effects which are both positive (true words that can create change or transformation in us if we really listen, see, and are open to one another), and negative (false words) that can create (and maintain) oppression if we cannot see, or hear the voices of others. In other words, how we talk and listen, reflect and dissipate, recognize and ignore, do and undo in dialogue with each other, determines our acceptance (or denial) of everyone's right to be heard. However, when true dialogue is capsized by privilege and power, says Freire, “between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them,”(69) then the discourse of oppression (or the discourse of naming normal) is present:

Oppressors do not perceive their monopoly on having more as a privilege which dehumanizes others and themselves. They cannot see that, in the egoistic pursuit of having as a possessing class, they suffocate in their own possessions and no longer are; they merely have (41, italics authors).
How we might reconsider oppression

Before you continue reading (and we start to unpack the discourse of naming normal at Ravenswood), I invite you to reflect with me about what it might mean to be an oppressor (as Freire defines it), for I think it might help you (it certainly did me), in deciding whether what I noticed at the site is naming normal or just careless oversight.

I believe there are many ways to perpetrate oppression. As white Americans, we don’t like (or often use) the word “oppression” (you’ll notice), because it carries with it a great deal of violent history—for example, our brutal treatment of Native Americans; or our atrocities against African and Caribbean people who were, for many centuries, physically, (mentally, and emotionally) enslaved in this country; or our lack of care about homeless and poverty-stricken White, Mexican, and African American “Oakies” as they traveled with all their belongings in their cars, or on foot, from Oklahoma to California when their homes had been destroyed by dust storms; or our cruelty towards Japanese Americans whom we placed (with virtually no belongings) in U.S. internment camps during World War II.

The list goes on and on.

If you are like me (having grown up white in America), it means that when we think about oppression (if we think about it at all), it is always in a
context which is not only historically and culturally distanced from us, but also made even more distant by what has been left out of our history books:

[A] glaring problem has been the emphasis of teaching American history through the eyes of the ‘important and powerful people’—through the Presidents, the Congress, the Supreme Court, the generals, the industrialists. ...History teachers often think they must avoid judgments of right and wrong because, after all, those are matters of subjective opinions. But it’s the areas of disagreement that are the most important (Zinn, 1994, 150, 154).

When viewed in a historical context which is culturally skewed, oppression was (and still is) seen (by most of us) as barbaric acts against humanity (and, indeed, they were), but ones that we had no actual part in, and, therefore, no direct responsibility for. For example, how many times have you heard people say, “that was a long time ago, and besides, things are better [different, changed] now,” or “we didn’t do it...somebody else [the government, the politicians, the police] did,” or “why are we still talking about ‘African Americans’ and ‘Japanese Americans’--why can’t we all just be Americans?”

Oppression viewed in this way (as a blameless, distanced event which occurred in the past) could (most often) be defined as: to persecute, enslave, conquer, domesticate, or overthrow. With these explications as our cultural markers (especially from elementary school on up when we are, supposedly, learning American history), it’s not at all difficult to see how our
presumptive discourses (which sprang from institutionalized Anglo-American interpretations) could anesthetize us. That is not to say that oppression only existed in past history (a long, long time ago), but, rather, that instead of interpreting and reacting to proscribed (and biased) information (that which has traditionally appeared in our history books), people have to be given the facts of slavery, the facts of racial segregation, the facts of the fight for equality. ...But that is still not enough—we need to be aroused emotionally as well (Zinn, 1994, 152).

Consider this: if we can challenge ourselves to reflect upon our cultural history of being oppressors with information that not only invites us to dialogue openly (communicate with true words), but also “become aroused emotionally,” then we might become better prepared to deal with how we are perpetrating oppression in the way in which Freire talks about it in the here and now—that is, as a grave injustice, “a crafty instrument for the domination of one person by another” (70).

Oppression viewed in the way that Freire describes it—in which one person from the dominant culture uses power and privilege to dominate another from a divergent culture—could (if transferred into a classroom environment of teacher with learners) mean: to coerce (control, restrict, or restrain), to cause pain, to disenfranchise, to make feel uncomfortable or unwanted, to unsettle, to bully, or to just plain ignore.
It seems to me that only when we know where we came from, can we have a good idea of where we might go. Oppression has many faces—not just the ones we wore in history, but the ones we perpetrate today through our power and our privilege. When we use power and privilege to demean our students, or their families, or our colleagues, then that is oppression, and that is also the discourse of naming normal.

*My first day at Ravenswood (continues)*

So now let’s go back to Ravenswood Elementary and my first day at the site. I have shared with you that although my first impressions of the school were favorable ones, once I reviewed the two sets of data I had collected (as a whole) “later that night,” I had many unanswered questions about the way in which the discourse of naming normal might be operating at the school.

Those of you who have had similar experiences in (predominately) white, affluent, suburban schools (such as Ravenswood Elementary), know that what I described in my field notes is not uncommon, and, in many ways, is also comprehensible. School staff, administrators, and teachers want visitors to see and experience the school in a particular way. They want visitors to understand that they value the safety of the children who learn
there, so they lock their doors to protect them during class time, and take
great care to make certain that anyone coming in to the school is supposed to
be there.

They also want visitors to know how deeply the school values what
their students produce, and the (possible) places in which they might
produce them, so they have displayed the most prodigious artwork, and
provided visitors (as they walk through hallways of birds, sea creatures, and
patchwork quilts), pleasant views of beautifully landscaped garden areas.

Although I could understand Ravenswood’s inherent vision (for the
aesthetic of the school was pleasing, to say the least), I could not help
wondering why, in such a (seemingly) picturesque and well endowed
setting, there (also) existed a binary of suspicion, distrust, and apprehension.
What other messages (albeit unspoken ones) did this send to other visitors
(like me) about how the school operates and how teachers are encouraged to
teach (and children are encouraged to learn)? In other words, “how is power
constituted, and how do we think about it?” (Apple, 1999, 3)22

As women who identified themselves differently, but whose pedago-
gical philosophies were well matched, Rosario and I started to “think about

22 In Michael Apple’s power, meaning, and identity, he asks his readers
to examine several questions in addition to the one just posed (above)
which I think are good to be mindful of: “Whose knowledge and ways of
knowing are considered legitimate or ‘official’ [here]? Whose knowledge is
not? Who benefits from the ways [that] education is organized [at this
school]? Who does not?” (ibid)
it” with our first interview in November, 1999, when we talked together about the ways that cultural discourses of power and privilege might be overtly (and covertly) operating and sustaining themselves as discourses of naming normal at Ravenswood.\(^\text{23}\)

We began by examining how power (and privilege) is constituted by first looking at and sharing what I called our “pedagogical autobiographies”—our personal, cultural, historical, methodological (and, therefore, ideological) selves—so that we could acquire “the ability to depict ourselves as actors in our own and others’ lives [thereby gaining] perspective and point of view” (Ladson-Billings, 1996, 181). In doing so, we moved into a deeper process which I call ideology-sorting—comparing, contrasting, and examining our cultural ideologies as we simultaneously explore how those

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\(^\text{23}\) My initial data analysis (which you just read), was my first indication about how the school (and its administration, teaching, and support staff) might be organizing education and knowledge at Ravenswood, and under which (and whose) discourses it might be operating. For me, the biggest question I had centered around issues of diversity, and the biggest issue was that the artwork lacked a broader cultural content. To me, this was an indication that perhaps, the school was more concerned with the appearance of, rather than the authenticity of, its (moderately) diverse student body. Since I knew that 97% of the teachers, staff, and administration at Ravenswood were white, I wondered (as you may have), if this was a dominant cultural discourse operating, or just plain carelessness.
beliefs (and practices) might play themselves out in our pedagogical lives).

bell hooks (1994) calls this a process of self-actualization and collective liberation."

When our lived experiences of theorizing [making sense of the world and our place in it] is fundamentally linked to processes of self-actualization and collective liberation, no gap exists between theory and practice. What such experience makes more evident is the bond between the two...that ultimately reciprocal process wherein one enables the other (15-17).

By getting to know one another as women of differing cultures, and then engaging in a process whereby we merged this knowledge and used it as a lens from which to explore how we might work together as research partners (as well as how we might look at issues of power and privilege at Ravenswood), Rosario and I were able to shift our points of view from the ways in which we understood our pedagogical knowledge (as power and privilege) in identifying the world individually, to the ways in which we understood our pedagogical knowledge (as power and privilege) in identifying the world (in relationship with one another, and the teachers and students at Ravenswood) in praxis:

As women and men, simultaneously reflecting on themselves and on the world, increase the scope of their

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24 ...reflecting on pedagogical knowledge

25 ...the transformation of that knowledge into action and further reflection. In both “self-actualization” and “collective liberation,” you can see how hooks’ notions have been greatly influenced by Freire’s (1970/93) ideas on liberatory pedagogy and praxis.
perception, they begin to direct their observations towards previously inconspicuous phenomena. ...That which had existed objectively but had not been perceived in its deeper implications...begins to ‘stand out,’ assuming the character of a problem and therefore of challenge. Thus, men and women begin to single out elements from their ‘background awareness’ and to reflect upon them. These elements are now objects of their consideration, and, as such, objects of their action and cognition (Freire, 1970/93, 63-64).

**Our process of self-actualization:**

**exploring the first stages of Freire’s (1970/93) liberatory pedagogy**

As with many feminist ethnographies which blend the passion, experiences, observations, and reflections of women from differing cultures and/or points of view (Behar, 1996; Boyce Davis, 1994; Cisneros, 1984, 1991; Hurston, 1935/93; Lorde, 1997), Rosario and I intended to be as aware as possible of sharing our pedagogical voices throughout this study. Our dialogues as narrative storying (Denzin, 1997) grew into a “day-by-day process of self-invention...[where] both the past and the future [became] raw material, shaped and reshaped by each individual [in the present]” (Bateson, 1989, 28).

Because we had both (separately) spent a number of years authoring our own ethnographic narratives on power and privilege (as women of particular cultures, as feminist activists, and as educators), we brought our points of view into collaborative play as we considered how we were observing, hearing, feeling, and thinking about overt and covert discourses
evidenced at the school. As such, our personal and pedagogical histories became a combination of autoethnography (use of the first-person voice as it intersects with another's life/culture), and reflexive ethnography (the complications of positioning ourselves and being positioned in the research) (Ellis & Bochner, 1996, 30).

What follows is my second piece of analyzed data as a process of self-actualization (gathered between late November, 1999 and late January, 2000), where I place my voice (alongside Rosario's) to be “more fully present in [the] work, more honest, more engaged” with Rosario as my research partner (Richardson, 1994, 516).

Here, I took pieces of Rosario’s autobiography and pieces of mine (both written separately), and connected them with portions of our first (audiotaped) interview. I then positioned each segment in such a way that you can see the similarities and differences of our pedagogies. In so doing, I was attempting to create an autoethnography in which I “allow another person’s world of experience to inspire critical reflection [of my] own” (Bochner & Ellis, 1996, 22-23):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rosario’s Narrative</th>
<th>Ethnographer’s Narrative</th>
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<tr>
<td>I grew up as the oldest daughter of six children. In the town where I grew up, I am seventh generation Anglo-American</td>
<td>I grew up as the youngest daughter of three children. Both my mother (the daughter of German immigrant artisans), and</td>
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on my mother's side. My father was an immigrant from Ecuador. He came to this country when he was 17- or 18-years-old to study.

Although my father was a lawyer and my mother was a teacher, we lived among the blue collar workers—glassworkers from the glass factory, farmers, migrant workers...lots of migrant workers, and some professionals. I grew up on the River, really...my mother's parents' house overlooked the River and it's a big part of our town. The town comes right down to it and the River is always featured as a site of beauty.

We lived near our grandparents and we saw them all the time, and my cousins too. My grandparents had this old quarry and they got a railroad station and moved that down in front of it...that was the quarry house. And they had goats and ponies and rabbits and lambs and chickens and ducks. And so we swam in the quarry. We swung out on the ropes and built rafts and we had rowboats and we took the lambs for rides in the rowboats...it was idyllic growing up with all those generations there, you know? Big family picnics and cook-outs and corn roasts...

my father (the son of Scotch-Irish farmers), were white. My father moved to the town where I grew up when he was 16 years-old, because tenant farming in the south could no longer feed his family.

My father (who wanted to be a doctor) and my mother (who dreamed of being a painter), married when they were 27, and settled in our town at the end of the Great Depression. I grew up there on a short leash in a long block lined with maple trees, and boulevards, and front porches where all the neighbors—mostly white middle class folks...teachers, business(men), contractors, and one (retired) mortician—talked together on summer evenings.

I grew up within walking distance of my father's mother (Blanche), her single daughter (Izora), and my mother's three sisters (Rosie, Helen Florence) and their parents (Boniface Amos and Jenny). Because I was seven (and nine) years younger than my siblings, I learned well to play alone, or to amuse myself with adults (who were plentiful in my family). I especially loved sitting in my Aunt Rosie's back yard where my elderly uncles would gather, and where I would roll cigarettes while they (all) told stories about riding the rails to St. Louis to get work, or to see the World's Fair. Growing up white in the 1950's
But I also belonged to my father's family, a hybrid typical of Ecuador, combination of indigenous and Spanish cultures. My father has my grandmother's Indian face and my grandfather's political passion to empower all people. Both have caused him many problems. The marriage that spanned two continents took its toll. I saw my father alienated from his adopted country and family because he never stopped telling his stories of racism. I watched my mother be excluded from my father's world because she was white. We six children were embraced by both families, but could not completely enjoy the welcome. Like Guillermo Gomez Pena (1988), I waged my own war 'in the fissure between two worlds...'

We had eight people in our house and one bathroom, and I shared my bedroom with my three sisters.

It was tight, but we lived there because my father was a socialist. Although my town was very integrated, they didn't like him—didn't like his type in my town. He was too dark, you know? I'm about right in the middle. Some of my siblings are lighter than me; some are darker.

in my home town, I lived in a world where childhood was meant a for day- (and night) dreaming.

The five of us (my mother, father, sister, brother, and I) lived in an old white clapboard house where my father and brother spent many late nights netting bats which (inevitably) flew from the attic into the bedroom which my sister and I shared (until she married). My mother (Pete) was a closet liberal, a clandestine inventor, and an inveterate storyteller. My father (Gordon) was a highly ethical, politically conservative businessman (man) with a propensity for whiskey (neat), dancing (smooth), and reading (avidly). I miss them both both more than I can say.
In [school], I saw half a face—many of us did. By trying to establish and share my dual identity, I was constantly embattled. Teachers knew me as part of the dominant culture. I was part of that culture [on my mother's side], but I was more. I also belonged to my father's family. When the 'Mexicans' (as they were referred to, even if they were born in my home town) were ostracized in school, I suffered. I knew, even if no one else did, that they were part of who I was. By not being more assertive in defending them, I felt guilty for betraying my father, and ashamed of my fears. I wanted teachers to know I was part of who the 'Mexicans' were, but I dreaded the humiliation.

The classroom I yearned for was one 'where the students were not alienated from their homes, their communities, and their cultures' (Ladson-Billings, 1994). My teachers thought they were doing me a favor by accepting me as white. My teachers thought they were superior to me and competent in their adult understandings. They tacitly taught me to avoid the land mines that surrounded issues of race and culture. Unlike the Mexican migrant workers' children, I did not force them, not even momentarily, to examine their practice. I mastered the lessons. I did not threaten their 'hegemonic desire for control' (VanMaanen, 1988). I obeyed the rules. They did not recognize me as the enemy. I was camouflaged in standard English, the 'language of conquest and domination' (hooks, 1994). I was not too dark, but there was rarely a place for me (or anyone like me) to express our culture except in terms of failure or success.

In school, I learned to wear camouflage. By blending in, I could survive. I learned the patterns of warfare, avoiding mines and dodging bullets, but it was not always easy with my family. My younger sister refused to stand up for the Star Spangled Banner at school functions, exposing my cover. She understood better than I that to be white was at the expense of my father and the dissolution of his
culture. But I was ashamed that my father and sister were not pursuing my goal to assimilate. My own cowardice filled me with shame. My war raged on.

Unlike Rosario, I grew up holding full-time membership in the Anglo-American culture. When I looked at my classmates and my teachers, or skimmed our picture books in school, I always saw a mirror image of myself reflected back, and that, to me, was growing up "normal." I never considered any other way of being in the world, because I didn't know there was any other way. Although I had an occasional reminder from my teachers to stop talking, I never had one day of school where I felt disenfranchised. Not one. I have no memories of children who felt humiliation for having to disavow parts of their heritage, because there were no children of color in my elementary school...not that I was aware of. I never had to straddle cultures, or languages, or values, for mine was the language, culture, and value tacitly accepted as the American way of life:

*Ethnographer’s Narrative (continues)*

Until I was twelve, I had never spoken to a person of color. And if the porter my father had tipped so heavily to take care of me on the train (bound for Alabama where my newly-married sister lived), had not deposited me in the changing room instead—where several young black women sat talking together with their babies (and me) at their heels—I never would have. It’s not that there were no people of color in my town; it’s just that no one lived in my neighborhood. And since it never came up in school, or with my family, I never thought about it. I never thought about it...until I was twelve.
How the process affected me (a second interruption)

I want to stop for a moment, and take you back to a year-and-a-half ago when I gathered up my (preliminary) eight weeks' worth of collected data and read it all the way through for the very first time. I do this because I want you to understand what I felt as I read (and re-read) Rosario's and my initial work together—our (separately) prepared pedagogical autobiographies conjoined with our (first) audiotaped interview. I also want you to be a part of the process I went through as I began to analyze and reconfigure the data to produce the monophonic narratives (you have just read).

What struck me when I first read Rosario's autobiography was her description of seeing "half a face" in school (for this was a portion of her work which she didn't voice in our first interview together, but something that she had previously written and given to me to read). It took me completely by surprise. I wonder if it struck you similarly. To me, the idea of seeing "half a face" was both potent and distressing, for embedded in that phrase, I first began to see how (as white teachers) we can often pressure children (who must navigate between two worlds) to choose sides.

Let me explain what I mean. If you go back and re-read the narratives of our growing up years (and you should know that Rosario and I are about the same age), you will also notice that although we share some similarities
--we both had (what we considered) interesting and positive early years outside of school--our emotional histories (which I think of as our cultural imprints) were remarkably different.

For example, to Rosario, school was a place in which she had to constantly pivot (straddle) between two worlds (that of her mother’s “whiteness” which was accepted and preferred among her white teachers at school vs. the guilt and shame she felt for “betraying [her] father...when the ‘Mexicans’ were ostracized.” Wedged between her dominant (public) self and her “othered” (private) self in school, she lived (what she calls) “a dual identity,” and which W.E.B. DuBois (1903/89) refers to as double-consciousness:

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness...two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one...body (5).

Not only did Rosario have to endure the emotional confusion and fear which accompanied this double-consciousness--her wanting to assimilate, and yet having feelings of regret for not standing up with the “Mexicans” at the “expense of [her] father and the dissolution of his culture”--but also, in “the tension between the personal and the collective” (McIntyre, 1997, 94), she had teachers who continually pushed her into their
cultural discourse of whiteness—who “tacitly taught [her] to avoid the land
mines that surround[ed] issues of race and culture,” thereby forcing her (by
saying nothing) to take a side:

Rosario’s Narrative (continues)

My experience in school was what Adrienne Rich (1989, as cited in Rosaldo) described:

‘When someone with the authority of a teacher...describes
the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of
psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and
saw nothing (p. ix).’

During the process of analyzing these first pieces of autobiographical
data, I paid particular attention to both Rosario’s and my (edited as well as
unedited) voices. By this I mean, I used my first audiotaped interview
(conversation) as a guide to check our written autobiographical voices
(which had been carefully crafted over time) against the raw (candid,
improvised) voices of our first dialogue together. Although this process was
extremely beneficial to me, it wasn’t until I engaged in the final steps of
writing up the analyzed data, deciding how it would look to visually
represent the narrative that was unfolding, printed it out, and actually saw it
on the page (as you did) that the impact of what I had reconstructed hit me.
The visual (and therefore ideological) impact of the reconstructed data on this researcher

When I read through what I had reconfigured as a tangible, visually-present piece of data, here is what I saw (felt, understood). The power and privilege we (implicitly or explicitly) wield as white teachers, can give us permission (as I believe it did with Rosario’s teachers), to disconnect emotionally, thereby preventing us from seeing and being affectively (empathetically) present when students feel marginalized, or misunderstood, or left out. If we can (and do) disconnect emotionally, (as part of our pedagogical privilege), then we never have to take responsibility for our own actions, or implicate ourselves in any way. What we do (as teachers) is, then, always disconnected from who we are (as human beings):

No one, male or female, Black or White, has just one identity. How we come to understand our multiple identities provides opportunities for understanding and investigating their intersections (Ladson-Billings, 1996, 179-80).

The realization of my own duality as a researcher with “multiple identities” in this research— that is, seeing myself not only as a careful teacher who actively fights racism, and a feminist who understands what it means to be “othered”— but also (on the other side), seeing myself as a

26 ...and which you will read (about) momentarily in my January 20th Field Notes
culpable white woman who should take responsibility for how she might be
wielding power and privilege at the site—so upended me that I wrote (what
follows) as my first reflection of the analyzed and reconfigured data:

_Ethnographer’s Field Notes (following data analysis)_

**Reflection #1: about the process**

20 January, 2000

Having just read my newly-formed narratives (which I
have been struggling with for at least two weeks now,
trying to place them together in such a way that the reader
will feel the impact of what I felt in doing this work), it
occurs to me that throughout this process, I have found
myself both unable and (I suspect) unwilling to fully place
myself into these narratives (which I hope to do now).

So let me start with this. The emotional pull I felt from
reading Rosario’s accounts (especially of her time in
school), was stunning. My first impulse was anger (that
Rosario’s teachers could hurt so many children without
being aware of it). My second impulse (being a good
‘liberal’) was to shift anger into commitment: to vow that
I would continue to work against situations like this ever
happening in my (or anyone else’s) classroom. Although I
certainly think this is something to attend to, I realize
(now) that I had (once again) given myself way too much
power to effect such holistic changes entirely on my own. I
should, rather, continue (as I have been doing for the past
three years), to work on my own pedagogy, maintaining,
as Freire (1998a) says, ‘constant vigilance over ourselves so
as to avoid being simplistic [inconsequential], facile
[trivial], and incoherent [dislocated]’ (51).

That being said, if I am to be attentive in the ways that
Freire suggests, then the one thing that I did _not_ do (as my
third impulse) was to reflect on my _own_ culpabilities as a
white teacher (thereby locating myself in my own
research). While I have been intellectually (and authori-
tatively) present, I have managed (thus far) to remain
emotionally distanced from this work. For example, how
might I be using the data I’m (now) collecting (with
Rosario) to ‘point the finger’ at Ravenswood teachers, and avoid those areas where I might be equally liable in using my power and privilege? Could I be operating under a dominant cultural discourse so embedded that I can confidently assess other white teachers’ motives without ever assessing my own? If so, how can I become more conscious of using my understanding of the ways in which cultural discourses of privilege and power function as racism to interrupt my own complicity?

If I truly believe (and I do), that we must first understand the ways in which cultural discourses operate in history, in order to be better informed about the ways in which they might be operating for us now, then the fact that I am a white teacher (operating under a dominant cultural discourse of privilege and power just because I am white) has to be equally scrutinized.

As I come to realize the work which lies ahead for me, I find myself being torn between wanting to include this reflection as part of my data, and wanting to sweep it under the rug, because it makes me feel ashamed for not having been honest—with myself, with Rosario, or with the newly-collected data on white teachers at Ravenswood (who are fast becoming the focal point of this study).

Around the time of my January 20th reflection (above), I was reading Kincheloe and Steinberg’s (1998) article entitled “Addressing the Crisis of Whiteness.” When I came to a section entitled, “Ball of Confusion: The White Identity Crisis,” I found myself (located on the page) exactly as I had written about it in my reflection:

As Whites gain consciousness of the racialization of their identity, some feel guilty about their association with a group that has perpetrated racial oppression. Such shame can be immobilizing to the extent that it interferes with the
construction of a progressive white identity that is psychologically centered and capable of acting in opposition to racist activity (10).

I bring this up now (as I write my dissertation) because it reminds me (again) of the process I went through as a result of analyzing and simultaneously reflecting on our autobiographical data. Because this process was difficult for me (as a white woman and as a researcher) I want you to know how I used it to change the ways in which I began to think about the research.

Since age 12, that is, in 1962 (when I spent my first summer in Alabama with my sister and witnessed overt abuse and derision leveled against southern blacks), I have taken great care to actively combat racism— that which sometimes occurred (implicitly) within my own family (where I felt compelled to vocalize my discordant point of view); or that which occurred (explicitly) on the street when I worked with gang members or runaways, or which occurred among the children and families I worked with in my social service days (when I connected Appalachian American families with African American families to dialogue together about the
conflicts they faced living in the same community). It was always (and only) a "black and white" issue for me. By that I mean, it was "cut and dried"--I knew what I had to do and I did it.

Even when (just a few years back) I completed research studies on white teachers, and began to understand the more subtle themes of racism—that lack of critical, cultural reflection often creates classroom environments which are authoritative, preferential, and which can marginalize the diverse students present—I was still able to disconnect myself from my self and my own culpabilities.

However, once I immersed myself in analyzing and reconfiguring our autobiographical data (at home), while continuing to collect new data (in the field), I began to have a methodological meltdown. I was no longer just "surrounded by data in various stages of methodological undress" (see p. 19), I was "getting ideologically naked" (Fine, 1992, 4).

By the end of January, 2000, I started to nudge (then push, then shove) myself (and this was not an easy thing for me to do), to shift my thinking, and critically reflect on myself as a teacher who still carries vestiges of dominant cultural discourses of power and privilege in her pedagogy. It was

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27 Here is one example of the ways in which dominant cultural discourses have affected our language. Also consider words like "black-balled," "blacklisted," a "black comedy," etc.
no longer a "black and white" issue. It was no longer "cut and dried." I had to look at each set of findings (from then on) through the lens of my own complicity. And it was painful:

**Ethnographer's Field Notes**
**Reflection #2: about the process**
**30 January, 2000**

Over the last week, my methodological ‘selves’ in the field (how I locate myself as a woman, as a member of the dominant culture, as an educator/researcher, and as a writer) feel like ‘they’ have moved from solid to liquid, and are sliding and slipping through my fingers.

Here’s what I’ve been thinking about. As long as my methodological ‘selves’ continue to behave in the same ways that they have traditionally behaved, I will continue to operate out of a cultural discourse which worked for me (and many young educated whites, like myself, who were political activists in the 1960’s and 1970’s). Here’s how that particular discourse plays itself out (and translates into a research setting): I talk to people about what’s going on (the problem); they tell me what’s going on (data collection); we share ideas (preliminary plan of action); we talk some more (continued data collection); I reflect on what I have heard (data analysis); I find a solution and then implement a plan to ‘fix it’ (conclusion).  

This cultural discourse presumed that if we (as young, white activists) had the power to do something for the good of humanity (and we certainly felt we did), then we should let our passions drive us and just do it. Not so. Although what motivated us into action was, indeed, to make the world a more humane (and just) place in which

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28 Obviously this is a simplistic account of how research is conducted, but I wanted you to understand the ways in which this particular cultural discourse had embedded itself in my life and my work (without my realizing it).
to live, we didn’t stop to reflect upon the fact that what we defined as ‘for the good of humanity,’ was not necessarily what was best (or needed) for everyone else.

Through my recent crisis of methodological identity, what I am finding out some thirty years later (and I have to tell you that this is sticking in my throat as I try to voice it), is that my methodological ‘selves’ (whom I have always counted on as fair-minded, justice-oriented, and feminist-based), have, in some cases, been ‘paternal,’ much as Macedo (1998a) describes it—that one must ‘understand one’s privileged position in the process of helping so as not to...turn help into a type of missionary paternalism’ (as cited in Freire, 1998a, xxix). Although my passionate, well-considered, and experienced positionalities (those which actively fight racism) still drive me in this research (and I like having those particular ‘selves’ around), I do (I have now realized) often sit in judgment of anyone who does not think or feel or act like me. In other words, I operate out of a cultural discourse which privileges me (as a heroine) over those whom I consider less ‘enlightened’ (who might need ‘rescuing’ from themselves, like the teachers at Ravenswood). Instead of looking at both our similarities and our differences (much as I did with Rosario when analyzing our pedagogical autobiographies as data), I summarily dismissed the white teachers at Ravenswood (as incompetent) and denied having anything whatsoever in common with them ideologically. And that is the worst kind of disconnecting (on my part).

What I am discovering is that my (methodological) playing field is not (ever) level. There is no such thing as balance (observing without being biased). Balance in research lay on a continuum (with truth and justice) somewhere in the nether regions of my imagination. I have, however, begun to learn how valuable it is to make a commitment to be honest with myself in the data, so that my thoughts (my opinions, and mostly, my guesses) are put ‘on the table’ along with everyone else’s thoughts, opinions and guesses. In looking at my own complicity, I can begin to feel more connected to the white teachers at
Ravenswood (as women), and therefore, more emotionally (and empathetically) connected to the data overall.

Once I collected, read, analyzed, and reconfigured the data (Rosario’s and my pedagogical autobiographies), and then reflected on what my (new) place might be (what you just read), I was brought to a deeper realization of what Behar (1996) means when she talks about the researcher as a “vulnerable observer:”

To assert that one is a ‘white middle class woman’...is only interesting if one is able to draw deeper connections between one’s personal experience and the subject under study. That doesn’t require a full-length autobiography, but it does require a keen understanding of what aspects of the self are the most important filters through which one perceives the world, and, more particularly, the topic being studied. Vulnerability doesn’t mean that anything personal goes. The exposure of the self who is also a spectator has to take us somewhere we couldn’t otherwise get to. It has to be essential to the argument, not a decorative flourish, not exposure for its own sake (13-14).

On finding an opening: a third interruption

I want to give you (and myself) a respite for just a moment. This is an intentional (although only temporary) rest—a breath, a slight pause—while we gather our thoughts before moving into the next phase of my telling of the research tale—that is, where Rosario and I explore the difference between a critical (multicultural) pedagogy and a pedagogy which maintains the status quo.
However, in this moment (right now), it is my hope that you will not take pause and read what follows as a "decorative flourish" (Behar, 1996), but rather, as my attempt (as a woman and a feminist) to show you what I value, and where I position myself in the world. As such, when I teach, or when I research, or when I write, I not only wish to be clear (and honest) about what I've done (where I've gone, and how I got there), but also give you feelings (as well as "thinkings") to consider in the reading of this text.

That being said, I'd like to (briefly) set this up by telling you that what you will see (next) is a polyphonic narrative which I fugued in 1997 with one of Octavio Paz' poems (1991, 485), "Entre lo que veo y digo" (Between what I see and what I say):

Between what I see and what I say,
between what I say and what I keep silent,
between what I keep silent and what I dream,
between what I dream and what I forget: an opening.

It slips between yes and no,
it slides and slithers between what I keep silent and what I voice,
it makes promises to keep silent what I say,
it dreams between what I forget and what I know.

It is not speech: it is an act.
It is an act of speech between an opening.

Do you see how often the word "between" occurs in the narrative? Do you also recall that the title of my dissertation is women teaching between
the lines? I bring this up because I want you to know that the choice I just made to show you this polyphonic (fugued) narrative was a purposeful one. Here's why.

I believe that the (personal and professional) work I have done (and continue to do) in my life, is most ideally situated (for me) when I move between the lines: when I navigate between being a woman (with a brain) and a woman (with a sex); when I teach between what my students may want to hear and what I may want to tell them; when I write between what is considered academically feasible and what (I consider) necessary to develop feeling (and telling) ethnography; when I research between what my question is (what I think I know) and what my answers might be (what I hope to find out). Reading, writing, thinking, feeling, and being between the lines is my ontology. It is what I prefer, what I understand, and what I live. Researching between the lines is my methodology.

I have always chosen qualitative research as my research of choice. I think this is most probably true because within qualitative research, there are so many (possible) ways in which to approach every aspect of the process. For example, you might remember that I talked in the first pages of this dissertation about why I chose to write an ethnography (as opposed to any other available form), or why I consider this study (in part) a critical feminist
study (providing me with the opportunity to combine the best parts of being a woman who is also an activist, with the best parts of being a critical pedagogue who is also a woman).

In their (1994) Handbook of Qualitative Research, Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (the editors) talk about qualitative research in this way:

it privileges no single methodology over any other...is difficult to define clearly...has no theory, or paradigm, that is distinctly its own...[and] does not belong to a single discipline (3).

I've always liked that description, because it frees me up (in thinking about and "doing" research), to function the way I believe we all function in the rest of our lives (as people who are multi-dimensional). I am a woman. I am a feminist. I am white. I am a handicapped person. I am an archivist, an activist, a critical pedagogue, an ethnographer, a teacher, and on and on and on--I am what we all are: multi-dimensional, not one-sided. In terms of the ways in which I position myself in the research then, it is always with an awareness that I have many ways of seeing and being in the world, and should (therefore) always use these multiple ways of seeing and being to inform what I am researching. I may not always do it quickly (as you saw when you read my last few ethnographic field note entries)--but I do trust that I will (eventually) come to a point of self-possession which I can (ethically) live with in the end.
In this study, my methodology is (primarily) grounded in four areas. The first is as a woman in research. Although, being a generalist, I have not tossed my methodological cap into any particular theoretical ring to date, I have (nonetheless) been captivated by feminist ideologies which approach research, and being researchers, in humanist ways: as living, breathing (and most importantly) feeling women and men who genuinely care for and about the people whom we observe, dialogue and question with, and write about:

The best feminist analysis...insists that the inquirer her/himself be placed in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter, thereby recovering the entire research process for scrutiny in the results of the research. That is, the class, race, culture, and gender assumptions, beliefs, and behaviors of the researcher her/himself must be placed within the frame of the picture that she/he attempts to paint (Harding, 1987, 153).

Second, my methodology is grounded as an educator whose pedagogy is, in many ways, tied to the basic tenets of drama in education. Although this ethnography does not (specifically) include the use of drama in education as a strategy for exploring pedagogy (as I have done in the past), it should be understood that the foundation of this methodology (inquiry, active listening, honoring what is said, shared power in learning, viewing

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29 Although it is Freire who always inspires me, it was my work with Brian Edmiston (1997) on drama methodology which gave me purpose and moved me, pedagogically, into my doctoral program.
the world from multiple and diverse perspectives), is always carried into my work in some form or another, and is certainly at the core of my pedagogical praxis:

Teaching [as excellence] demands that we give ourselves fully to the task at hand. To do this means that we must be complete and completely self-knowing. ...We need, too, to allow ourselves to be restless spirits—to be in the process of becoming. ...It’s the restlessness that, while confirming what is understood, leads onto the next mystery” (Heathcote, 1978, as cited in Johnson and O’Neill, eds., 1989, 23).

Third, my methodology is grounded in my awareness of how my privilege as a member of the dominant culture can often be used as a passport for keeping covert (hidden) discourses in hiding. As such, I have a responsibility, not only to examine, but also to share how my personal and pedagogical practices have been influenced by these discourses (and how my added experiences in and with diversity, have only strengthened my commitment to balance the ways in which privilege and power can become license for unconscionable acts of racism).

Last, my methodology is grounded in my academic writing. For the past few years, I have been experimenting with various genres of writing which best position me as an author who brings a relatively solid background in several disciplines of study. As such, I have found, especially in research, that writing ethnographies, and most particularly, writing “experimental” or “new ethnographies,” (Richardson, 1994, 1997; VanMannen,
1988; Ellis & Bochner, 1996), that which Richardson (1999) calls “writing in the ideology of doubt” (the author positioning herself as a non-authoritative knower and teller of the research data), has afforded me the greatest opportunity to develop “rich, thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1983, 6) of my experiences in the field. For these reasons, and (additionally) more selfish ones—I hope not to be among the qualitative studies which Richardson (1994), among other practitioners, have “abandoned half read, half scanned” (516-517), I have chosen to design this ethnographic study in such a way that writing about what I am seeing, feeling, hearing, and discovering in the field in “virtual time” (Langer, 1979, 258), will be one of my main methods of inquiry. As feminist ethnographer and scholar Laurel Richardson (1994) says:

"Writing is not just a mopping up activity at the end of a research project. Writing is also a way of 'knowing'-a method of discovery and analysis. By writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it. Form and content become inseparable (516)."

Returning to our next steps in the research process

Having explored the first stages of Freire’s (1970/93) liberatory pedagogy—that is, through our autobiographical reflections, making ourselves aware of the ways in which principles, behaviors, beliefs, and views of the world operate for us as oppressor/oppressed relationships (36)—Rosario and I
also examined the ways in which white teachers' cultural discourses of power and privilege at Ravenswood differed from her pedagogical practices.

Here's an excerpt from one of her reflections:

Rosario's Narrative
February, 2000

When I think about my pedagogy, I always have to think about what the purpose of education is, and I think my purpose is much different than everybody else's here. I think most teachers are into this mindset that we have to socialize kids to act white and middle class, or that we have to train them so they'll earn a good living. And I want them to do that. I mean, I want them functional too, you know, but I still think about Thomas Jefferson and the fact that he started public schools so that we could have a democracy in education.

I think one of my main purposes as a teacher is to work with kids so that they can understand the world and make meaning and have tools to make meaning and find their place in it, and survive in it—because it's cruel and it's hard. I think children have to know how to read, they have to know how to write, and they have to know how to critically think. They have to know how to do all these things, so that they can help make sense of their world—organize the world into knowledge, and find a system to put all this knowledge they have assembled into, and also find a system in which to create new knowledge. And I'm not just talking about academic knowledge. I'm talking about intuition, and curiosity, and caring about the world too. I'm talking about everything—all the ways we know the world. I don't want ultimate power over the kids. I want them to start learning how to practice power and use it so they don't abuse it—so they can take control of their education. And so I want kids to start figuring things out and problem solving, and testing theories, and have a place to test theories in our classroom. My main objective as an educator is not to teach so that the students can become thriving capitalists. It's more so that they can understand how, and why, they should vote for people.
We also began to link what we had learned from our self-actualization process (who we were as culturally-situated activists and critical pedagogues) to what we were noticing about the white teachers at Ravenswood (who they were as traditional pedagogues who maintained the status quo). Here is my February 29th reflection:

_Ethnographer's Field Notes_

29 February, 2000

Interestingly (but not surprisingly) all but two teachers at this elementary school are women, and all but three are white. Since my arrival at Ravenswood, I have had the opportunity to observe several situations in which white teachers have interacted with Rosario and her students. What I am noticing (as I observe these women's interactions), is that the teachers—like many of my university students—hold tight to culturally dominant ideologies which center on fulfilling curriculum guidelines, but have very little to do with teaching students how to think critically, question, interpret, or just be curious about themselves, one another, and the content (as it behaves in the world). They seem to move through content as if it were a ritual, and a ritual of repetition—of _rightness_—and not of making connections with all the children whom they are teaching (and from whom they might also be learning). This kind of teaching is what I call 'anesthetized teaching'—teaching which is immune to cultural (classroom) diversity, and any content which may not be proscribed in some way. Rosario calls this 'generic teaching' (in which the practitioner busies her/himself all day with the normative, but does not ever consider the students who make up the classroom culture).

So here's what I'm thinking about and questioning: what makes us anesthetized (generic) teachers, and how do we anesthetize ourselves, and our students—both in and out of the classroom? What do we have to consider, question, reflect upon, change (in ourselves), to bring us out of this
unfeeling, unthinking, unresponsive stupor? Freire (1998a) says that 'critical reflection...is a requirement of the relationship between theory and practice' (30, italics authors), so how can we reflect critically on who we are (as white teachers and learners) and do so in an environment which might also interrupt these discourses of power and privilege—one in which we do not remain so categorically dogmatic that our theorizing (in practice) turns into empty rhetoric and inertia?

As I continued my on-going process of reflection, analysis, theorizing, and dialoguing with Rosario over the next few months, I had many more opportunities to hear of her interactions with other teachers, as well as witness some myself. Gradually, I began to see (and further question) the ways in which culturally dominant discourses of naming normal might actually be operating at Ravenswood.

Our fugued narrative (which follows) is the result of Rosario’s and my continuing dialogue about the ways white teachers at Ravenswood use culturally dominant discourses of privilege and power to distance themselves (and their responsibility) with students, thereby furthering cultural and racial intolerance. *Is this because theirs is the discourse of naming normal?*

**Fugued Narrative**
*From February/March work, 2000*

White teachers at Ravenswood have never been asked to challenge themselves to reflect deeply about their cultural (as ideological) identity since they’re in the majority.
Because of this, they have never had to look at who they are since they already have the power 'to name the world' (Freire 1970/1993, 69).

They don't have to identify themselves as a member of a particular culture, because theirs is the dominant culture, and being white, for them, is the norm. Everybody else—the students and parents of color, or anybody who is identified as being outside the norm—can, therefore, be easily dismissed. They can be categorically 'othered,' and related to as outsiders. That's why white, middle class kids often do so well in schools like this one, because their culture (for the most part) matches the teachers' culture. 'Education...as a cultural and ideological practice is strongly connected to the maintenance and the possible subversion of unequal power' (Apple, 1999, 10).

When we use our power and privilege to subvert our understanding of other cultures present in our school or in our classroom, it is not necessarily always a conscious thing, but it should not be considered unconscious either, for being unconscious can signify a lack of culpability.

Rather, when we do not think about, and (therefore) do not approach the world as if others (not like us) are present (and present in equally fertile ways), it is the discourse of "dysconsciousness" which is operating.30

When we are dysconscious of the ways in which we impact students who may not look, or act, or live in the world like us, we are making a choice to excuse ourselves from any responsibility as well. When we do not consider

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30 It was Rosario who first introduced me to Joyce King's (1991) term *dysconsciousness*, as "a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant white norms and privileges...not [as] the absence of consciousness, but an impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking" (128, italics mine). Early in our work together, Rosario invited me to see that what I had considered (in the past) as an "unconscious" and, therefore, excusable way of talking about teachers' careless day-to-day exchanges with their students, might rather be a choice to remain dysconscious about the ways in which they use (and often, abuse) privilege and power in the classroom.
that for the students of diversity, it's hard to learn to straddle cultures on top of everything else they have to learn, dysconsciousness becomes one way of using our power and privilege as white teachers to deny 'the credibility of other perspectives, particularly those challenging comfortable, long held assumptions' (Gordon, 1991, 20, as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1995, 747).

Dysconsciousness, it seems, is a privilege of the majority. We can only be dysconscious about race and culture if we're white, we can only be dysconscious about class if we're middle class, we can only be dysconscious about gender preferences if we're straight, and on and on and on.

As you read Rosario's next narrative from March, 2000, I would ask you to consider (again) if what you are reading (and theorizing), about the white teachers at Ravenswood Elementary, fits within the framework of the discourse of naming normal. But before you do that, I'll synthesize this discourse once more so you can lens it through the story you are about to read.

The discourse of naming normal (as Freire originally proposed it, and as Rosario claimed and renamed it31) means that when members of the dominant culture (like us) see ourselves as normative—as living within the bounds of what we, as white, European Americans, have (culturally and historically) set as institutionalized standards—we feel comfortable enough to "name the world"—not only for ourselves, but also for everyone around

31 (i.e., examples of culturally dominant discourses operating)

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us (even though this might be a dysconsious act of naming the world). As such, if a school's cultural discourses of power and privilege\textsuperscript{33} are similar to our cultural discourses of power and privilege, it acts as a fueling agent for our cultural beliefs (our ideologies)—it makes what we do and how we are “normal”—and will greatly impact the ways that we teach and act towards all of our students. These dominant cultural discourses (as institutionalized acts of oppression), can then lead us (as white teachers who dysconsdously use power and privilege), to operate in our schools as if ours is the right and only way to perform pedagogically:

\textit{Rosario's Narrative}

\textbf{March, 2000}

Last year the music teacher, Miss Crocker, put on a weather musical—this little play about clouds, and rain, and snow and all the kids who were in the musical had lines to say. So the performance ends, and an African American mother who has two kids at our school—Dr. Bell—comes over to me and says, ‘Where are our kids in this musical?’ And I said, ‘Yeah, pretty conspicuously white, wasn’t it?’ And she goes, ‘WHERE ARE OUR KIDS? I pay taxes in this town. Where are our kids? Why don’t our kids have one speaking part?’ And nobody of color had a part—just all the white kids. So I knew Dr. Bell was going to do something about it. So there’s Miss Crocker with all the white parents and teachers, smiling, and laughing, and getting kudos for her work, and Dr. Bell goes up to the whole group and says, ‘Where are our kids?’

\textsuperscript{32} Freire (1970/93, 69)—and see also pps. 65-66 of this dissertation

\textsuperscript{33} as discussed in the beginning of this Movement, pps. 48-51
Why aren't our kids here? Don't tell me none of our kids couldn't have read those parts! Don't tell me that! Where are they?

Everybody was upset that Dr. Bell would even think to say those things to Miss Crocker, and Crocker's only response was 'they're not trying out.' So I said, 'Well, why aren't they trying out, do you think?' It never occurred to her to assume any responsibility. It never occurred to her to ask herself, 'is there something about me, and the ways in which I view the world, that alienates the children and parents of color at this school?'

I talked to a few teachers about it afterward, as well as the principal, but they all said, 'You know, Miss Crocker didn't do that intentionally. It was unconscious.' No, it was not unconscious; it was an act of dysconsciousness. It is a privilege of the privileged to be dysconscious.

So now that you have read Rosario's narrative, let me ask you the question again: is this the discourse of naming normal? Let's look at the situation (together) and see. It is clear that Miss Crocker was unaware of the deep (and negative) impact she made on Dr. Bell and her children (and other diverse students and parents who said nothing that night), when she dysconsciously omitted the children of color from the musical. However (and I believe this is a critical point), once Miss Crocker (and the other teachers, staff, and administration present) were made aware of this (obvious) omission (and its probable effect on all the children and families of diversity who attend and support the school), it was their responsibility to
reflect (together) upon what happened, and work towards changing the ways in which this discourse of naming normal was operating. But that's not what happened. Here's Rosario's follow-up to the story:

**Rosario's Narrative (continues)**

This year, the school was getting ready to do a Christmas pageant and I heard that Miss Crocker might not be including any children of color again. I was especially concerned about an African American boy in my class named Langston. So I went up to her and said, 'Miss Crocker, I want to encourage all the kids in my class. Does it matter if they don't read well, because some of the children in my class told me that they don't want to try out for the pageant because they don't read well.'

'Oh, no, no, no, no...' she said, 'it's just a few little lines. They can memorize them.' So she showed me the list of students who had been selected and I said, 'Where's Langston Perry on your list? You know we use drama in my class all the time, and the kids will tell you that Langston's the best one. He loves performing and he does it beautifully. He's not only really talented, but Langston needs this.' And she says, 'Oh, oh...well...maybe I should add him, because, you know, I was so hurt last year by the remarks that were made...'

So Langston Perry finally got a part, but he's going to be the token African American in the pageant. It is a privilege of the privileged to be dysconscious.

The teachers at Ravenswood Elementary are not an exception to the rule; they are not alone in modeling dysconsciousness (as overt and covert racism), or naming normal. Any one of us who grew up white (and
therefore carry our "invisible knapsack" of privilege because of it—have been liable in advancing these discourses at some point in our pedagogical lives. In this respect, I can offer you a personal example of my own privileged culpability (which happened not too long ago). When I first had the idea for this study, I knew that I wanted to co-research with a teacher of color, so that I could compare the impact of culture on pedagogy from more than one perspective (i.e., mine), so I began to speak to women whom I thought would be a good match.

In doing so, I spoke at length to a colleague (born in South America) whom, I assumed (from the things she said in our classes together), considered herself Latina. I had known this woman from the university for a few years, but in all the times we spoke together, I never asked her how she identified herself.

One night as we were having coffee at a local cafe, I mentioned that I was happy she was considering coming on board, because I really wanted to work with a woman of color—at which point she said, "but Trisha, I'm not a woman of color, I'm white." Although this woman subsequently decided

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Here, I refer to Peggy McIntosh’s (1988) metaphor of white privilege as the "invisible, weightless, knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, code books, passports, visas, clothes, emergency gear, and blank checks."

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she could not make the time available to co-research, I learned a valuable lesson: never assume anything. When I reflected upon this evening, I felt deeply embarrassed, and have often wondered (since then) if it was the time she couldn’t spare, or the fact that I had only bothered to make assumptions about her which made her withdraw from the study.35

Many of us (as white educators teaching in schools, colleges, or universities with diverse students), are often dysconscious proponents of naming normal through what I call assumed equability. That is, because of the ways we were raised and educated, we rest our pedagogy (and this is almost always implicitly rested), on culturally dominant discourses of privilege and power (those which can name normal) in education (and I paraphrase): there are bounded standards of (curricular, behavioral, and moral) excellence, and those standards should be met by all students (teachers, and administrators), using a specific set of guidelines which often applaud exhibition above interpretation, confirmation above contemplation, and the individual above group autonomy (Giroux and McLaren, 1994; Sleeter, 1996; Apple, 1996; Banks, 1995):

Since equality of opportunity is believed to be a given, it is assumed that [diverse] individuals are responsible for their own failure and are, therefore, made to feel that they

35 You can bet that when I sat down with Rosario (at the start of this study), one of the first questions I asked her was how she identified herself.
have failed because of their own inferiority despite the best efforts of dominant-group institutions and individuals to ‘help them’ (Cummins, 1993, 106).

I, most definitely, am a product of these cultural discourses. I was taught (from a very early age) that if I had the desire to get ahead, listened to, and respected the teacher(s) (and the rules), studied well, and was willing to work hard, school could be a place where I was guaranteed success and happiness. Operating within this discourse of naming normal through assumed equability, we (all) just took for granted that if the standards were true for us as members of the dominant culture—i.e., if we could, individually, meet these standards—then it was true for everyone else.

If (along the way), we had no direct experiences to teach us differently (and many of us didn’t), then these “truths” were carried with us (as one of our cultural imprints) until we found out otherwise. But for some of us, that otherwise never came. For some of us, diversity just means all people of all cultures rising up to meet the status quo; for others, it means we are all the same even though we are all different:

How [teachers] frame diversity and inequality (in their classrooms) results from their own experiences within particular racial, gender, and class locations (Sleeter, 1996, 76).36

36 In her “Analysis of the critiques of multicultural education,” critical scholar, Christine Sleeter, cites a particularly cogent example of the ways in which many white educators’ high regard for sanctioned education in the United States, prompts them to name it normal and “fair to all children.” I thought it might be interesting for you to see, first-hand, S. A. Balch’s (1992) argument (as representative of conservative white scholarship), so that you
In classrooms across the United States, the discourse of naming normal is still alive and well, and one of the primary ways in which we continue to promote it, is by using our power and privilege as white teachers to segregate students by "othering" them. We dysconsdously push students of every color, culture, gender, and ability (not to mention disability) into the margins, because they are not like us, or because they give us grief, or because they have a different way of seeing and articulating the world, or because we have been told by other teachers that "they' will never amount to anything anyway."  

might explore another way in which dominant cultural discourses operate as educational power and privilege today: "As the high road to social mobility, [U.S. schools] sustain equality of opportunity. As sharpeners of the mind, they prepare rising generations for the responsibilities of citizenship. As purveyors of cultural understanding and technical skill, they further assimilation, national community, and the increase of the country’s productive resources. As instruments for the discovery of new knowledge, they bolster expectations of material progress and ratify popular confidence in the powers of reason and science" (Balch as cited in Sleeter, 1995, 83).

37 This quote was excerpted from one of Rosario's stories about an in-service with teachers at Ravenswood at the beginning of the school year. During this same in-service, Rosario relayed another story in which the teachers were discussing Ravenswood’s low proficiency scores (the year before), and explaining to the new principal that the reasons for the low test scores were not their fault. Here's what she overheard from one of the white teachers: "I cannot teach in a classroom where the kids smell like they do. If we want to raise scores, give us better kids. These are not kids from our town. These are kids from the city." Although I don't want you to get the impression that all the white teachers' points of view are so overtly racist at Ravenswood Elementary, I do want you to see (and think about) the extent to which overt (and covert) racism exists in the school, both in and out of the classroom.
As white teachers, many of us move students (who are not like us) to the periphery of our classrooms (and their learning) and let them live there all year long. We ignore them. We discount their voices. And, most reprehensible of all, we encourage the students who do not have to live in the margins to do the same, by our language, our modeled behavior, and our dysconsciousness. Although it's perhaps not as overt as it used to be, it's still systematic segregation, and this way might just be as damaging in the end.

According to Grant & Gomez (1996), "students can experience a curriculum\textsuperscript{38} of cultural hegemony, racial prejudice, and social class bias without these being deliberately taught" (38-39). This can be conveyed (as Miss Crocker did) by allowing an unspoken (dysconscious) set of standards (of naming normal) to dominate--standards which "stem from Eurocentric, middle class cultural frames of reference" (ibid).

In other words, when we think of the ways in which we (as white teachers) perceive \textit{curriculum}, Grant & Gomez do not only want us to consider the content that we teach in our classrooms (that is, the standard

\textsuperscript{38} Grant & Gomez refer to \textit{curriculum} as "any rules, regulations, standards, guidelines, [or] norms which can have a deleterious effect upon a certain population of students" (38-39).
curriculum and its guidelines for appropriate levels of learning, as I discussed earlier in this movement), but also the unspoken curriculum “as experiences of learners [which] includes planned [experiences] (such as Miss Crocker’s pageant), and unplanned experiences” (such as Miss Crocker’s granted immunity when faced with Dr. Bell’s understandable outrage) (ibid).

They argue that “students learn from [both] formal instructional arrangements [and] informal structural arrangements, [as well as] social environments in which materials are presented and teaching-learning interactions occur” (ibid). All of these conditions for learning must be considered as coequal partners (contributing to our students’ total meaning making potential) if we are to critically examine, and act upon, the complexities (and far-reaching consequences) of the ways in which culturally dominant discourses of power and privilege impact our revisioning as pedagogical diversity. So here’s my question to you: how are we (you and I) complicit in maintaining a pedagogy which is explicitly (and implicitly) arranged under dominant cultural discourses of power and privilege? How do we name normal?

Here’s something we might consider. When we (as privileged and powerful white teachers), do not use our eyes to revision diversity—to critically think about and reflect upon our own pedagogy, and the ways in which that pedagogy might be marginalizing students (who have not been
included in school pageants, or class projects, or day-to-day dialogues with us or other students in our classrooms), it is the result of our privilege dictating what we consider “the norm.” As such, we:

need to deal with [our] concepts of whiteness and examine [our] own biases and prejudices, as well as the roles they play in oppression. These roles include not only individual acts of bias and discrimination, but also the over-privileged roles that are seemingly granted to whites in our society [McIntosh, 1988, as referenced in Sue, 1995, 653].

Maintaining privileged complacency is the discourse of naming normal. Accepting unbridled immunity is the discourse of dysconsciousness. Only when we are willing to take a long, hard, look at ourselves as privileged educators who “do not perceive their monopoly on having more as a privilege which dehumanizes others and themselves,” can we understand that pedagogical solidarity (how and why and for whom we teach, and from whom we learn), “requires a profound rebirth” (Freire, 1970/93, 41-43).

**On where we’ve been and where we’re going next**

In the first two movements of this Etude, you were invited to join Rosario and I as (together), we explored the first stages of Freire’s (critical)
liberatory pedagogy. In Movement One (On Finding a Starting Place), I took you (briefly) into who Rosario and I are as teachers, as critical pedagogues, and as feminist activists.

In this movement (Movement Two: On Deepening the Work), you explored (with us) dominant cultural discourses of power and privilege, as we reflected upon our own pedagogical autobiographies (those personal, historical, and pedagogical imprints which motivated us to teach), and then used these reflections as combined knowledge (in a process of self-actualization), to situate ourselves as critical pedagogues who wished to examine (and interrupt) the status quo at Ravenswood.

You also explored (with us) the ways in which dominant cultural discourses (as ideologies or belief systems) were evidenced (and manifested institutionally, publicly, and privately) among the white teachers at Ravenswood Elementary (through the discourse of naming normal and the discourse of dysconsciousness).

In this (second) movement, you saw how (as a white woman, activist, and researcher), I grappled with the ways in which I was culpable in dismissing any ideological (and emotional) links I had with the white teachers at

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39 In these two movements we made ourselves aware of the ways in which dominant cultural principles, behaviors, beliefs, and views have operated (for us, and the white teachers at Ravenswood) as oppressor/oppressed relationships (Freire, 1970/93, 36)
Ravenswood Elementary, until I finally found (in my own complicity) a place in which I could regard the white teachers as women, and not just distanced bodies who taught in the school.

In the final movement to this study (Movement Three: On Interrupting Dominant Cultural Discourses in the Classroom), you will see the ways in which Rosario and I explore Freire’s (1970/93) second phase of a critical liberatory pedagogy.40

As such, what you will read next are my observations (and analysis) of the ways in which Rosario continually interrupts (and subverts) dominant cultural discourses of power and privilege, to promote a critical, antiracist (multicultural) pedagogy in praxis in her fourth-grade classroom.

40 that is, expelling the myths created and developed by what is discovered so that a new structure emerges (36)
Teaching is an art form. ...The artistic medium of the teacher is the narrative; her teaching is a narrative enactment. When we teach we tell stories. We tell stories about our disciplines, about the place of these disciplines in the structure of human knowledge. We tell stories about knowledge, about what it is to be a human knower, about how knowledge is made, claimed, and legitimated. The stories that we tell are stories built on other stories; they work to forge continuity between our stories and those of others, to confirm community among ourselves and others, and to initiate others into our communities. In educational theory, we tell stories of teaching, stories that at once reveal, constitute, and confirm the values that give significance to pedagogical acts. These are stories in which we represent those whom we teach in their relationship to ourselves and in which we define nuances of the relationship, identity, power, and authority of individuals in their relationship to a community and its knowledge (Pagano, 1988, 252).

In his article "Multicultural Education: its effects on students’ racial and gender role attitudes," James Banks (1995) reviews a great deal of critical, feminist, and multicultural research on racism and negative gender attitudes among white students in every level of education. Of the many successful studies reviewed, Banks found that the most promising (that which created a pedagogical shift towards gender-sensitive and antiracist education), were those in which curriculum intervention as pedagogy was
used—that is, "a reciprocal interaction model [which, among other aspects] requires a genuine dialogue between student and teacher" (Cummins, 1993, 111). Here's a compelling example of one of Banks' findings (and I ask you to notice what year the study he refers to took place, and what little distance we have traveled in terms of successful interruption of racist patterns in our classrooms today):

That a 15-minute intervention influenced the racial attitudes of second-and fifth-grade [white] children four to six months later (Katz & Zalk, 1978), is the most striking finding of this research review. Most of the studies reviewed...consist of interventions of rather short duration. If a 15-minute intervention can influence students' racial attitudes, we can only surmise that the impact of a teacher and a curriculum with which a student interacts for over 180 days must be tremendous (625).

Likewise, in her ground-breaking book *Affirming Diversity: the sociopolitical context of multicultural education*, Sonia Nieto (1996) says that

Making racism and discrimination an explicit part of the curriculum can be a healthy and caring way to deal with these painful issues. Even young children can take part in discussions on racism and discrimination. Although many teachers believe that young children should not be exposed to the horrors of racism at an early age, they are overlooking the reality that many children suffer the effects of racism or other forms of discrimination every day of their lives. Making these discussions an explicit part of the curriculum, for all children, helps them deal with racism and discrimination in productive rather than negative ways (369).
As noted scholars in the field of multicultural education, both Banks and Nieto understand that in order to implement a critical antiracist pedagogy—that is, one which, at its core, interrupts dominant cultural discourses as hegemonic acts of oppression in our schools and in our lives—it takes courage, patience, tolerance, and a commitment to pedagogical praxis, while remaining (resolutely) open, flexible, aware, and honest in our relationships with our students (and ourselves) as we work to shift the status quo:

Rather than viewing the world through rose-colored glasses, anti-racist multicultural education forces both teachers and students to take a long, hard look at everything as it was and is, which also means considering the effects and interconnections among events, people, and things. Confronting in an honest and direct way both the positive and negative aspects of history, the arts, and science is avoided in too many schools. Michele Fine calls this 'fear of naming' and it is part of the system of silencing in public schools (308-309, italics mine).

One way that we can begin to take a look at these interconnections is by considering what makes a critical (antiracist) pedagogy critical. We can broadly define it (as I have done above); we can situate it in theoretical constructs (which I will do shortly); and we can dialogue about it (as Rosario teaching which promotes "action and reflection on the world in order to change it" (Freire, 1970/93, 33)
and I did for a number of months when we co-researched this study). But what does a critical (antiracist) pedagogy look like in a real classroom with a real teacher?

With that question in mind (and so that we can consider this together), I'd like to offer you my experiences with Rosario and her fourth graders as an exemplar of how a critical pedagogue considers “interconnections among events, people, and things” (ibid), as she interrupts dominant cultural discourses of power and privilege to promote an antiracist pedagogy in praxis.

To do this, I have analyzed Rosario's pedagogy through the lens of both James Banks' (1997) four levels (approaches) of integration in multicultural education—that is, contribution, additive, transformative, and social action (233); and Sonia Nieto's (1996) four levels of support in developing a critical antiracist pedagogy—that is, tolerance, acceptance, respect, and affirmation/solidarity/critique (353). In unpacking these two theorists' work, my intention is to build both a cognitive and affective framework in which we can begin to understand how a critical, antiracist pedagogy functions in a classroom (when it interrupts dominant cultural discourses of privilege and

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42 and which you heard excerpts from in Movements One and Two
I will begin with an outline of Banks' ideas, and then move into Nieto's, drawing examples from my analyzed data along the way. I will then end each section with my findings in this research.

**An analysis of Banks' (1997) four approaches**

In his article, "Approaches to Multicultural Curriculum Reform," Banks talks about four (basic) approaches “to the integration of ethnic and multicultural content” (232). These approaches—which move from lower levels of integration (Level 1), to higher levels of integration (Level 4), are:

**Level 1:** *The Contribution Approach*, which, says Banks, “focuses on heroes, holidays, and discrete cultural elements” and where the “mainstream curriculum remains unchanged in its basic structure, goals, and salient characteristics” (232-33).

**Level 2:** *The Additive Approach*, in which “content, concepts, themes, and perspectives are added to the curriculum... and is usually accomplished by the addition of a book, a unit [of study], or a course as ethnic content without changing...or restructuring the curriculum” (232-235).

**Level 3:** *The Transformative Approach*, wherein “the structure of the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspectives of diverse ethnic and cultural groups” (232). And finally,

**Level 4:** *The Social Action Approach*, an approach “where students make decisions on important social issues and take actions to help solve them” (ibid).

As you reviewed these four approaches, you might have noticed that the last two levels of approach—that is, the transformative approach and the
social action approach—those in which the curriculum undergoes a major structural shift, one which Banks (1997) says, enables students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from several ethnic perspectives and points of view...[while requiring them] to make decisions and take actions related to the concepts, issue, or problem studied... (237-239).

In analyzing Rosario’s pedagogy through the lens of Banks’ four approaches, there are a few things which you should kept in mind. The first is probably best explained if you look at the visual (Figure 1, below), which I reconstructed from Banks’ original schema. If you think about the four levels of approach as a continuum rather than a pyramidal construct—which is how Bank’s presents them in the literature (that is, where Level 1 is on the bottom and Level 4 is on the top)—you may be better positioned to understand where some overlaps might occur (as I was):

Figure 1: Reconfiguration of Banks’ (1997) Four Levels of Integration
Another way of thinking about this is, rather than viewing these approaches as levels we have to "cross" or "climb" in some fixed order to implement an antiracist pedagogy, if we view them (instead) as approaches in which boundaries can (and will) be crossed (because each approach will inform the other), you can see that at any point, it might be possible to position yourself (and your pedagogy) in several places at once.

Second, if you also think about the fact that none of these approaches are static—that is, none of them sit inside a curriculum "box" with a "how to" plan attached—but rather, are messy and fluid and change as the context in which the curriculum is taught changes (from teacher to teacher, special to special, event to event), it might also tell you that the word "curriculum" itself has very broad boundaries (that is, curriculum can have many different definitions attached depending upon who is teaching and what the context for learning is). For example, if you remember in Movement Two, Grant & Gomez (1996) distinguished between two types of curriculum: the formal curriculum—that which involves "product, content, program, and intended learning outcome;" and the informal curriculum as the "experience of learners"—that which "reports what actually happens to students whereas the others only indicate what should happen" (39).
Third, you should keep in mind that Banks' four approaches incorporate both teacher pedagogy and mandated school curricula. As such, we can position Ravenswood Elementary (overall) on the continuum (as a school which mandates a particular approach or approaches), as well as position some of the teachers (in addition to Rosario) who practice at the school.

That being said, let's now go back to the four approaches on the continuum and see where we might position Ravenswood, some of its white teachers, Rosario, and you (should you wish to do so):

![Diagram showing the four approaches on the continuum]

Figure 2: Repeated Figure 1

In the reconfiguration (above), Level 1 is the point at which most of us (as white teachers) first begin our journey into multicultural education. It is here (in the contribution approach) where many predominately white,
affluent schools (like Ravenswood), would (also) most likely situate themselves. By that I mean, the schools would mandate special times during the year when ethnic events (or celebrations) might occur as part of their standardized curriculum (such as a celebration of Kwanza, or Cinco de Mayo).

As teachers whose pedagogy is most often centered in this approach, we might, as Banks (1997) says, also add opportunities for students to read about ethnic heroes or heroines (such as Booker T. Washington, or Rosa Parks), as well as augment discrete cultural artifacts (such as music, dance, or food which are culturally derived) to our standardized (and, I hasten to add, Eurocentric) curriculum. But in the main, neither our approach nor our basic curriculum would be altered.

In terms of Rosario’s pedagogy, however, here’s what she did, starting with her first year at Ravenswood (and I’d ask you to notice as she’s speaking, the ways in which she implicitly and explicitly incorporates antiracist pedagogy into her curriculum):

Rosario’s Narrative

When I came into this school, I looked at their literature collection right away, and it was all white, middle class stories about a ferret that ran away...you know? All white, middle class stuff. All the authors were white males or females. So I looked at that first of all and then I started to...you know how they colorize movies? I always say I ‘colorize’ the texts. So I brought books in. We read Night John, we read Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes...
you know books which will teach my fourth graders that
white people are not the only people living in the
universe. The books some of the other teachers are
reading...well...they're pretty pathetic. Once in awhile they
hit upon a good one, but for the most part, it's not good
literature, you know? The books are not well written, the
content is flimsy, and the kids don't learn anything about
the world from them. And I try to talk to the other fourth
grade teachers about it. Like we have money at the end of
each school year, and so we talk about what new books we
want to get for the following year. And so we sit down,
and I say, 'You know, I think we need other people's
stories here besides white middle class stories.' And they
go, 'but our students are white middle class kids.'

In this public suburban school, the fact is that Ravenswood does have
children of color present. Although the percentage is low (35% of all
children enrolled are children of color), there are not just "white middle
class kids" at the school. The fact that the other fourth grade teachers (who
are white) dysconsciously omitted the students of color (in their discussion
with Rosario), is a sad reminder that we (all) have much pedagogical work
to do. It also tells me a great deal about whose knowledge is "official" at this
school (Apple, 1999, 3). In this respect (and in this context), the fourth grade
teachers (whom Rosario speaks about in her narrative) could be positioned
(at best) here, in the contribution approach. I say this because they do not
recognize, as does Rosario, that even if most of the students present are

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43 This percentage was given to me by Rosario as what the school
"officially" uses
"white middle class kids," those students (participating in a learning community with the students of color present), need to understand the ways in which the whole world (not just the white world) works.

If we move through the continuum and connect Level 1 (the contribution approach) to Level 2 (the additive approach), you can see that here, more ethnic integration might have either been mandated by schools, or teachers might add particular aspects of ethnic integration into their curriculum. However, multicultural education as "an idea or concept, an educational reform movement, [or] a process" (Banks, 1997, 3) would still not have been integrated into the curriculum overall.

Using this approach, we might notice "the addition of a book, a unit [of study], or a course to the curriculum [but] without changing... substantially [it's Eurocentric approach]" (Banks, 1997, 235).

As an example, I observed one teaching session with all three fourth grade classes, where the students (in being prepped for the proficiency tests), learned the levels of government through a "rap" song created by one of the white teachers at the school (whom I will call Mrs. Bennet):

Ethnographer's Field Notes
14 March, 2000

Mrs. Bennet arrives and Rosario introduces her to me as 'the teacher who has developed a unique way in which to teach students the three branches of government through music.' Rosario's irony, it seems, is lost on Mrs.
I sit behind Rosario's (unused) desk, piled high with papers, books, markers, plants, and assorted rubber bands (and where I often observe unnoticed), and watch as all the fourth grade students pour into her classroom—some sitting, some standing, some crouched together around the computer stations at one end of the room.

I look for Langston and Cassandra and Sandra and Kelsey and Bala [the children of color in Rosario's class], but I lose sight of them (temporarily) in a sea of (mostly) blonde-haired, light skinned, well-turned-out faces. I notice there are few children of color in this room. Mrs. Bennet, an extremely high-energy teacher, launches into her presentation. Before the 'rap' begins, she gives a mini lecture (replete with overheads) about the three branches of government. I find her language simplistic, and do not appreciate the ways in which she 'talks down' to the students present, but they don't seem to mind and I find that very interesting. Are these kids used to being treated this way? Is this the status quo? But back to Mrs. Bennet. She is an enthusiastic (albeit authoritative) teacher who seems to be after 'correct answers,' not why laws or formed, or how the legislature functions beyond making and decoding laws. The 'rap' she has created consists of chanted lines which end with rhythmic clapping. Here's one part of it:

Article One, Legislative Branch, makes the laws
(clap, clap, clap)

Article Two, Executive Branch, carries out the laws
(clap, clap, clap)

Article Three, Judicial Branch, decides the meaning of the laws
(clap, clap, clap),

and so on. She does not (apparently) notice that the African American children present (whom I have been watching as this 'rap' unfolds), appear less than enthusiastic about engaging in it with her. I wonder what they think about the fact that this woman has usurped a musical genre that is particularly representative of their culture?
Their faces (which are devoid of any emotion) give me no indication (but then I always remember what Rosario said about ‘having two faces’—the one she used at school and the one she used the rest of the time).

Mrs. Bennet is a woman with a mission and there is an assuredness about the way in which she teaches which says she knows this rap will work, by God. My impression is that Mrs. Bennet is a well-meaning woman. I have heard (from Rosario) that she’s a ‘seasoned teacher’ (meaning, she has been in the system for more than ten years), and that her pre-proficiency-test ‘rap’ is very popular in Ravenswood and with the school district.

After the session had ended, Mrs. Bennet told me that she was a musician (as was her father). ‘Music is just in our blood,’ she says. I wonder if she knows that this kind of music is probably not.

If we placed Mrs. Bennet’s pedagogy on the continuum (again, in this context of teaching and learning), I would say that her pedagogy would lie somewhere between the contribution approach and the additive approach.

One of the ways in which Mrs. Bennet understands (and therefore, contributes to) a multicultural curriculum, is to use what she feels passionately about (music) to develop what she, Ravenswood Elementary, and (apparently) the school district considers to be an integrated “multicultural” teaching tool (the “rap”). However, Mrs. Bennet, although having (cursorily) added an ethnic overview to her presentation, still has not considered the diversity of the children she is teaching the “rap” to, and still has not altered her Eurocentric approach to teaching. Mrs. Bennet, like many other white
teachers at Ravenswood Elementary, remains dysconscious and is still able to "name normal."

In contrast, when I observed Rosario's pedagogy, I found that (throughout my six months of observation in her classroom), she used every text possible (in every possible way) as an opportunity to integrate her fourth graders into a critical, antiracist, multicultural curriculum. Here is one (of many) example(s) I analyzed, in which you might note Rosario's nondiscriminatory practices in her classroom, for in reading "the same books," Rosario is deprivileging the stigma which is often attached to children with learning disabilities (where we "dumb down" the books that they read), or children labeled as "poor readers" (who are, way too often, dysconsciously dismissed in classrooms during reading time):

Rosario's Narrative

We all read the same books in my class, and Fay Malarkey [a white fourth grade teacher at Ravenswood] keeps telling me that everyone reading the same book is not going to work, and then she tells me how she does it. She keeps tellin' me how she does it and I keep tellin' her how I do it...and I'm thinkin' 'why does she keep telling me?' And then I think, 'Well, why do I keep telling her?' You know? And I said to her, 'I'm not gonna create a caste system in my own classroom.' And she says, 'Well, everybody has a right to read at their own independent comprehension level,' so I said, 'yeah...and they do. There are lots of opportunities here for kids to read alone, or with me [one on one], or in pairs, or all together...but that's not the only way we use reading or books in here.' I said, 'you know, we refer back to the people in our books all the time...all
year long. We people our lives from characters in books, and we have to have that common experience of having read the same book because we use them all the time as examples of how the world works. I mean, I have parents come and tell me that their kids are sick but they're coming to school anyway, because they don't want to miss out on the book we're reading. That should tell us all something, right?

When I began to think through the ways in which both the contribution and the additive approach function, it struck me (and maybe it struck you similarly), that in both these levels, dominant cultural discourses of power and privilege are still operating as the status quo (as monocultural education, but with a "multicultural" twist).

Having said that, it becomes more challenging to connect the first two levels (the contribution and additive approaches) to the next level (the transformative approach), for in this approach, Banks (1997) tells us, a school mandates its teachers (or teachers take it upon themselves), to shift the structure of the curriculum, so that students might

view concepts and issues from more than one perspective and from the point of view of the cultural, ethnic, and racial groups that were the most active participants in, or were most cogently influenced by, the event, issue, or concept being studied (237).

Here, says Banks, a teacher would achieve curriculum reform by infusing "various perspectives, frames of reference, and content...to extend students' understandings of the nature, development and complexity of
U. S. society" (237, italics mine). He gives several examples of what this infusion might look like in a classroom, the most inclusive of which is offering students the perspectives of Anglo revolutionaries, Angloloyalists, African Americans, Native Americans, and the British, when studying the revolution in the British colonies.

Sadly, I have no instances to share with you where I might position teachers at Ravenswood (aside from Rosario), within the transformative approach as Banks describes it—that is, using an antiracist, multicultural pedagogy with students to transform the curriculum. This does not mean that some of the teachers at Ravenswood don’t (periodically) cross the continuum and move into the transformative approach in some content areas, but rather, that in all of my observations at the school, and in all of the stories which Rosario shared with me over our ten months together, I could not find (in the data) any examples of the transformative approach being enacted as an integrated structural shift in the curriculum.

However, what follows is, I believe, an impressive example of what I repeatedly observed in Rosario’s classroom as critical, antiracist pedagogy—where she shifts the status quo from what has been traditionally represented in (mainstream) textbooks (that is, events which present a primarily Anglo-American point of view), to a balanced integration of perspectives. Here, you might want to notice that Rosario not only wants to offer her students
multiple (cognitive and affective) perspectives in American history, but also is willing to read, reflect upon, and critically choose texts which will best supplement a traditional Eurocentric curriculum sadly lacking in the Native American perspective:

*Rosario's Narrative*

I look at the curriculum goals I know I have to reach for the year, and then I 'politicize' the curriculum as we're moving towards the goals. I try to always bring in how power structures work when we're talking. So in terms of how dominant discourses operate in the textbooks, it's there in what it doesn't include. For example, I heard one of the [white] teachers here say 'We don't really need new social studies' books because history hasn't changed.' I said, 'Well history hasn't changed, but whose version of history should be told maybe should change.' I said, 'You know, maybe we need to hear some new versions.' I mean, if you look at the textbooks, what's not dominant ideology is only tokenism. If I want to give other points of view, I gotta bring the books in and add them to the curriculum myself...which I do. Like I bring in books on how we forced Native American genocide by reading Russel Freedman's *Indian Chiefs*. I read that to give the Native American point of view. It's so sad...kind of like reading Kozol's *Savage Inequalities*, you know? There's a story in there about an Indian chief who gnawed the flesh off his own hands so he could slip out of the white man's handcuffs and escape. That story always stays with me, and stays with the kids too. Unbelievable what we did to Native Americans, and how little of it we get in our history books.

As the last level of Banks' four approaches to "the integration of ethnic and multicultural content" (232), I will briefly review the social action
approach (and how it connects with the transformative approach), and then (once again) lens this approach through Rosario's critical, antiracist pedagogy in praxis. I will then end this (Banks') section with my findings.

In the social action approach (Level 4), Banks tell us that the school would mandate (which, as you might guess by now, is rare), or teachers would implement (which is equally rare), an ongoing plan of action in which students not only grapple with important social issues which might have an effect on them (now or in their future), but also take action to solve them (232). This approach,

which includes all the elements of the transformative approach but adds components that require students to make decisions and take actions related to the concept, issue, or problem studied...[is meant to] educate students for social criticism and social change and to teach them decision-making skills...[whereas] the traditional goal of schooling has been to socialize students so they would accept unquestioningly the existing ideologies, institutions, and practices within society and the nation-state (239).

As you might have noted from the (above) description, infusing the curriculum with these kinds of on-going challenges (for teachers as well as students) is what Freire (1970/93) means when he talks about praxis as being "action and reflection on the world in order to transform [or change] it" (33).

As part of Rosario's antiracist pedagogy in praxis, I offer you this last example of the ways in which a critical pedagogue implements a transformative, social action approach in her classroom. Here, I'd like you to take
notice of the fact that Rosario is committed to interrupting the dominant
discourses of power and privilege as they might affect all the students in her
classroom:

*Rosario’s Narrative*

It’s really interesting to start watching some of the kids question the ways that dominant discourses work in here. I think Sally [a white student] is questioning this a lot. Sally is interesting. She’s really creative, and she’s an amazing problem solver, but she thinks of herself as fat and stupid. I’m really working with her this year. I feature her so much it seems almost conspicuous sometimes. She does have trouble knowing where to put a period, or trying to figure out math, but she writes the most incredible poetry and just comes up with all these great solutions to problems.

Recently, the kids had to elect a student council representative and Sally said, ‘Mrs. Galarza, I don’t know if this is a good time to say this, but could we just talk about if we wanna...um... say that anybody who’s been one [a student council representative] before can’t be one this time, because other people want a turn?’ She said, ‘it’s the same popular people getting elected all the time and some of us never get a turn.’ And I said, ‘Yeah...we can talk about that.’

So we talked about it and the discussion was so interesting and fruitful, and then I said, Okay...we’re gonna vote,’ and Sally’s idea passed...by one vote...since we have 25 kids, it was 13 to 12. But Sally did not get elected, which was kind of too bad, and she was just so wounded. So I said, ‘You know what, Sally? Your idea got accepted.’ I said, ‘that’s probably more important than being a student council representative.’

It’s such a token little title anyway, but it does become so important, you know, in this world and in this moment. It becomes important for her to be elected. And that’s how
the dominant discourse of naming normal works, from electing a president to electing a student council representative. Kids learn how the world works, like it or not, by ‘living’ in this classroom. These kids do understand about popular kids holding the power, and what their responsibility is when they have power, in terms of being bullies with it or acting fairly with it. It’s incredible what they do know but never have a place to talk about it. So I provide that place as often as I can.

My findings from the Banks’ analysis

From my ten months at Ravenswood Elementary School (which includes my observations at the site, and the stories which Rosario shared with me, both on and off-site), most of the teachers who teach at Ravenswood Elementary (the majority of whom are white), would be positioned either below (lower levels of integration), or in the middle of the contribution level of Banks’ four approaches. Although it is my hope that there are teachers at Ravenswood Elementary who periodically move beyond these levels, I neither saw (nor heard about) any indication that this was true overall. Likewise, because Ravenswood Elementary mandates only the most minimal requirements for an integrated ethnic and multicultural curriculum as Banks (1997) defines it, the school itself would also be positioned at the level of contribution approach (at best). In terms of possessing a critical, antiracist pedagogy which considers “interconnections among events, people, and things (Nieto, 1996, 308-309), neither the majority of white teachers, nor the school, has progressed beyond the first level.
In contrast to this majority, Rosario has, in every case, moved between the transformative and social action approaches (levels 3 & 4) which signifies complete integration of ethnic and multicultural curriculum into her pedagogy (Banks, 1997, 232). Using only the examples in this section, it is evident that Rosario’s critical, antiracist pedagogy constantly reforms the traditional structures of mainstream, Eurocentric curriculum; provides a forum in which students can not only see and experience issues, events and themes from multiple (cultural) perspectives, but also take part in grappling with, making decisions about, and taking action on important social issues which do (now) and will (in future) impact their lives. Finally, as an antiracist pedagogue who critically considers “interconnections among events, people, and things” (Nieto, 1996, 308-309), it is clear that Rosario constantly (and tirelessly) interrupts dominant cultural discourses of power and privilege with her colleagues and in her classroom.

*Nieto’s (1996) four levels of support for implementing a critical, antiracist pedagogy*

In monocultural education, says Nieto, pedagogical practices are often intolerant of the students of color: “racism is unacknowledged... education is domesticating [and] reality is represented as static, finished, and flat” (358-359). School policies and (teacher) practices which support discrimination (implicitly or explicitly)—such as low expectations for students of color, or not using students’ language and cultural resources in instruction—remain
the status quo. "Only a sanitized and 'safe' curriculum is in place" (ibid). In multicultural education, however, a pedagogical practice which is critical (and antiracist),

values diversity and encourages critical thinking, reflection, and action. ...[It] acknowledges rather than suppresses cultural and linguistic diversity. ...Critical pedagogy is not simply the transfer of knowledge from teacher to students even though that knowledge may contradict what students had learned before. ...Rather, it reflects on multiple and contradictory perspectives to understand reality more fully. ...[It] uses the understanding gained from reflection to make changes...it also helps to demystify as well as demythologize some of the 'truths' that we have been taught to take for granted, and to analyze them critically and carefully (319-321).

Becoming a multicultural teacher whose pedagogy is rooted in critical and antiracist education, says Nieto, "means first becoming a multicultural person." This involves (at the very least) being continually open to "learning more--[that is], looking for books and other materials that inform us about people and events we may know little about; confronting our own racism and biases; [and] learning to see reality from a variety of perspectives" (352).

That being said, Nieto also reminds us that being a multicultural person is a process, and as part of that process we must "consider [the four]
levels of support which enhances a multicultural curriculum and how they might be operationalized, both in our schools and in our pedagogical practices as critical, antiracist pedagogy (353-354).

Level 1: Tolerance—School policies and (teacher) practices which challenge racism and discrimination are located here. No overt signs of discrimination are acceptable. Students and teachers begin to question the status quo.

Level 2: Acceptance—School policies and (teacher) practices that acknowledge differences are in place. Textbooks reflect some diversity. Curriculum is more inclusive of the histories and perspectives of a broader range of people. Students and teachers are beginning a dialogue. Students' experiences, cultures, and/or languages are used as one source of their learning.

Level 3: Respect—School policies and (teacher) practices that respect diversity are more evident. Ability grouping is not permitted. Curriculum is more explicitly antiracist and honest. It is "safe" to talk about racism, and discrimination. Students and teachers use critical dialogue as the primary basis for their education. They see and understand different perspectives.

Level 4: Affirmation, solidarity, and critique—School policies and (teacher) practices that affirm diversity and challenge racism are developed. There are high expectations for all students. Everyone takes responsibility for racism and other forms of discrimination. Students and teachers are involved in a "subversive activity." Decision-making and social action skills are the basis of the curriculum.

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You should be aware that I chose to present (here) one part of Nieto's comprehensive schema for examining both the characteristics and levels of what it means to be a teacher whose teaching is infused with multiculturalism. For a more in-depth look at this plan, see Nieto's (1996) book, *Affirming Diversity*, pps. 358-359, from which my explanations of her four levels (as regards critical antiracist pedagogy) have been drawn.
Perhaps in reading Nieto’s four levels of support, you were also reminded (as I was), of the ways in which tolerance, acceptance, respect, and affirmation, solidarity, and critique are complementary to Banks’ four levels of integration (on pages 119 and 121 of this movement). As such, if we now move back (visually) to that reconfiguration (my continuum), and map onto it Nieto’s four levels of support, you will notice that there are multiple ways for us to engage in developing a critical antiracist pedagogy (in praxis). You should probably also note that, as Nieto says, developing a critical, antiracist pedagogy takes time. It is a process (which requires both reflection and action), and not a product (which we can produce simply by using our schools’ curriculum guidelines as our only markers of success or excellence):

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![Diagram showing reconfiguration](image)

Figure 3: Reconfiguration (in which Nieto’s four levels of multicultural support are mapped onto Banks’ four levels of integrated curriculum)
In this reconfiguration (Figure 3), you can see that although we might position ourselves pedagogically in, say, the contribution approach (where we offer students opportunities to explore ethnic heroes or heroines, such as Rosa Parks), we can also operate (in the level of) acceptance with our students, and (at the very least), begin a dialogue about racism during the Civil Rights Movement, and how oppression might have affected and moved people, like Parks, to take action. In this way, we are not only moving toward developing a critical, antiracist pedagogy (which might move us into transformative and social action approaches as critically-conscious teachers and students), but also move us affectively toward an understanding of how our own experiences and cultures (as white teachers and students) might impact people who may not view the world as we do.

Using Figure 3 as a base, let's now go back and look at Rosario's pedagogy once more and see how we might use Nieto's levels of support to affectively examine what a critical, antiracist pedagogy looks like in praxis. At Level 1 (tolerance), it is clear that Rosario constantly challenges her students to name racism, and engages them in questioning the status quo. Here is an example of the risks she is willing to take to engage her students in experiencing, first-hand, the ways in which racism can operate in the world:
Rosario's Narrative
(the immigration story, or
subverting racism is not an easy thing to do)

Shilpa [our colleague from the university who is from India] came in last year and did this whole immigration thing with the kids, because I had this little girl from India and kids were making fun of her on the playground just because she was not like them, so I wanted to make the point that we are ALL immigrants. Jesus...give her a break...you know? So Shilpa made the kids into the immigration police and they were asking her [Shilpa] questions and they became such little Fascists. I mean, it almost went the wrong way, you know? It was amazing how quickly they turned immigration issues into racism...you know, ‘who are you?’ ‘why are you here?’ and ‘do you have any money?’

And you know, the same thing often happens when we’re reading stories. Like we were reading this story and I had them take on any character they wanted and write as if they were that character, and almost all of them chose the perpetrator, the really vicious one. And I said, “Why did you all choose that one?” And they said, ‘because we never really get to be that.’ And so I let them write as if they are the perpetrators in the book, and then we talk about it.

I’m not bringing in any old book and doing nothing with the content, you know? I’m politicizing the kids with these texts. They need to listen to the stories because it’s the real world talking to them as the characters in the books. They have to know whose voice is speaking... whose voice is this? Whose voice? Who is the protagonist? Who is the antagonist? Whose voice is speaking and why? We can’t afford to be dysconscious anymore.

In this example (above), Rosario could be affectively placed (on the continuum) at a high level of tolerance, and at the approach level, she
would still maintain a transformative approach—where she undertakes curriculum reform by infusing "various perspectives, frames of reference, and content...to extend students' understandings..." (Banks, 1997, 237). The question which we (all) should consider (at this point) is: would we be willing to do the same in our classrooms?

In Level 2 (acceptance), wherein the teacher and students begin a dialogue and where the students' experiences, cultures, and/or languages are used as one source of their learning, Rosario has already ranked high. As you might remember, on-going dialogue is an everyday part of her classroom pedagogy. Here's a story in which Rosario uses a social studies' class to dialogue about global news:

**Rosario's Narrative**

**Life in the Classroom**

Kids just have this incredible potential to learn anything you want and as much as you want, but we also need to broaden their scope of learning. For example, they have to know where places outside the United States are too. Like they have to know where India is. That came up in our social studies class the other day—where New Delhi was. I asked what continent New Delhi was on and the kids said things like Europe, and South America, and Africa. And I was shocked. I said, 'You know, there are about a billion people in this country, and you need to know what's happening to them. A million people were just made homeless with a typhoon in India.' And I said, 'You gotta know where that is.'

I really believe that the life stories that we hear as children shape who we are and how we think about the world.
and how we think about who's our enemy and what's worth dying for. Life does not just occur inside the U.S.... you know?

Again, if we explore Rosario's pedagogy affectively (using the example above), we can see that she is a teacher who asks her students to not only be aware of people outside their (immediate) scope, but also to consider the feelings that they must be feeling when tragedies befall them. In this way, Rosario's students begin to know about places around the world (like India) both affectively and cognitively. Curriculum then becomes a place in which the (current) history of other cultures and other peoples can be critically explored (and connections can then be made from the global to the classroom community). Here, Rosario would be at the high end of the acceptance level, and operating (again) from the transformative approach, for her work (in this context), has the potential to transform the ways in which her students view the world differently.

In Level 3 (respect), Nieto says that "students and teachers use critical dialogue as the primary basis for their education. They see and understand different perspectives" (359). As such, the next example is a clear indication of the ways that Rosario uses current day news to explore (with one young boy in her class) other ways of looking at the world:
Rosario’s Narrative
The Jeep “Cherokee” story: or hearing other voices in the classroom

A few days ago in class we were talking about the upcoming elections and the fact that the proposed commuter train [which was on the state ballot] would make it possible to link major cities in our state together. And I said, ‘You know, I think it would be really nice to have that train... just hop on a train and go to other cities in our state.’ I said, ‘the traffic’s terrible...you always have to wait in line when you’re driving a car.’

And so Joe [a white boy in her class] says, ‘That was the most stupid issue.’ He said, ‘My dad said that we could buy everybody in this country a Jeep Cherokee for the amount of money it would cost to build that train.’ So I said, ‘Well, you know, Joe, that may be true, but I think the issue is a little bit bigger for some people. For me, for example, it’s the issue of pollution.’ I said, ‘if we got everybody a Jeep Cherokee that pollutes the air, it would have an effect on people in other parts of the world.’ I said, ‘Do you know that people in the southern hemisphere, in some parts of South America and Australia can’t even expose their skin to the sun? They have to go out completely covered, and when the kids go to recess, they have to wear hats with a big beak and flaps that cover their shoulders because we’re drivin’ our big Jeep Cherokees, and so if the whole world lived like we live, right here in our town, we couldn’t breathe. So that’s why I’m in favor of the train.’

And Joe just... recoiled. And so I think that was his first inking this year that there’s something really different about me in relationship to his father and maybe his whole family...and that maybe I care about somebody else besides me and my Jeep Cherokee, and my convenience too. So then we talked about the fact that we may have to change how we live, because we’re poisoning ourselves. I mean, will the planet survive? Yeah...but will we survive on the planet...now that’s another question. So I try to give voice and support to every kid’s point of view, but I
also want them to hear that there's another way of thinking about the world, and I like tying that in with the news so that they can connect it to their lives, you know?

In this example (above), Rosario has a high level of respect for Joe (and also for his parents), but is still able to put forth another perspective for Joe to consider (as he reflects about the effects of the Jeep Cherokee on the environment). As an affective response, Rosario is both telling Joe there is another way to look at what his father said, and showing him that she (as his teacher) is passionate about using our resources well and not at the expense of other people in the world. Again, Rosario is exhibiting a high level of respect in a transformative approach (Joe will not easily forget her words to him, which were pointed but gently addressed, and this might very well change the ways in which Joe considers the world from that point forward).

In Level 4 (affirmation, solidarity, and critique), the teacher and her students take responsibility for decision-making. Social action skills are the basis of the curriculum. The last example I offer is one which I will talk about in my own words, for it's a classroom interaction that I participated in with Rosario. As you read this, I would ask you to consider how this example might be viewed as critical antiracist pedagogy:
The Elian Gonzalez Story, or making up your own mind

Rosario called me last night to ask if I would like to do something with her on the Elian Gonzalez story (which had just broken in the news that day). 'Yes, absolutely,' I said for I was eager to participate in working with her to present (my first) interaction with the children in which discourses of whiteness (stories as they were presented on the news and on television) might influence U. S. immigration policy (as to whether this boy should be sent back to Cuba or not).

I spent four hours reviewing various newspaper stories on the internet about the incident (so that I could present news from multiple perspectives). Included in the articles I brought with me today were several stories (written in Spanish) from Cuban newspapers in Florida (for I knew that Spanish was Rosario's second language and she could handle anything I brought in).

As the children were reviewing the newspaper articles (having been framed as reporters encouraged to get the story 'no matter what'), Rosario and I positioned ourselves as people in the story (for them to question). I (as Elian) could not speak English and therefore the children had to rely on my expression (and body) to convey my confusion. Rosario (positioned as an expert on cultural relations who knew both sets of families in Cuba and the United States) became an 'ambassador' whom the children could (and did) speak with (in-depth). Again I marveled at her ability to present information impartially and with such care that the children did not know where either one of us stood on the issue but had to make up their own minds.

After we took the children (methodically) through the story—she as the ambassador, and I as someone who could ask questions of the ambassador (in order to provide the
children with information they might not have gleaned from reading the newspaper articles I brought in), then had the children cast anonymous ballots on what should happen to Elian: should he stay in this country with his U.S. family, or be sent back home to his father and grandparents?

We counted the ballots as the children went off to the playground. Although the voting was not unanimous (by any means), it was the students' decision that Elian Gonzalez should be returned to Cuba and to his father. Interestingly, on at least ten of the ballots the following words were printed under the child's vote, 'this was really hard for me.'

In all my observations of Rosario's classroom, I especially looked forward to those parts of the school day when I might see what information she had brought in (from the "outside world") to expand her students' knowledge and understanding of what it means to see and be in the world from more than one perspective.

The Elian Gonzalez story was (to me) a perfect example of Rosario paying attention to the world, and acting on it immediately in her classroom. The fourth grade students in Rosario's classroom voted on this issue the day after it broke in the national news. What she offered her students in this example, then, was the continued opportunity to watch or read about a culturally-provocative story, with the (experiential and affective) understanding of the ways in which an emotional, complex, ethical problem (such as this one), gets resolved (and how much time it takes to resolve it).
Although this was not a direct example of taking responsibility for overt racism (as Nieto suggests for Level 4), it was, indeed an example of a "sub-version activity," in which the students were asked to use critical thinking and reflection skills to make "a really hard" decision. In this respect, Rosario should be placed (do you agree?) with high levels in affirmation, solidarity, and critique, as she uses the social action approach, "where students make decisions on important social issues and take actions to solve them" (Banks, 1997, 232).

**My findings from the Nieto analysis**

Using Nieto’s (1996) four levels of (multicultural) support as a foundation, I have found that Rosario’s pedagogy as an affective positionality for both critical thought and reflection, in antiracist education:

- engages students in questioning the status quo by creating a space in which they can bring whatever questions they have to the whole group for dialogue;

- challenges racism and discrimination whenever they are evidenced in (or out) of her classroom by using dialogue, storying, drama, etc., to construct knowledge which is gained by seeing (and experientially) being in the world;

- uses her own textbooks to reflect the diversity which is present in her classroom, as well as including a broad range of other people, cultures, histories, and perspectives;

- uses critical dialogue as the primary basis for her students’ education, and does so in a way which is sensitive to their opinions, yet asks them to consider other points of view;
• provides a forum in which students can make decisions (alone and together) about issues which will affect their lives, and does so without interfering into the students' reflective processes.

Summary of this movement

I believe it is true (as Nieto says) that developing a critical antiracist pedagogy in praxis will take most of us a good deal of time, but knowing this, we should no longer be comfortable remaining (as many of us have), within the boundaries of a contribution approach, with only minimal levels of tolerance, acceptance, respect, or affirmation/solidarity/critique being extended to our students (to our colleagues, or to ourselves).

Although I (by no means) wish to offer my findings in this movement as a template for how you (or I) might become critical, antiracist pedagogues, I do mean to pose these findings to you (as I did to myself), as a challenge, so that you (and I) might begin to reflect upon what it really means to be a teacher who has made a commitment to true multiculturalism in her classroom.
CODA: WHERE (I/WE) CAME FROM AND WHERE (I/WE) MIGHT GO

What words have smashed against these walls, crashed up and down these halls, lain mute and then drained their meanings out and into these floors? What feelings, long since dead, streamed vague yearnings below this ceiling light? In some dimension, which I cannot know, the shadows of another still exist. I bring my memories, held too long in check, to let them here shoulder space and place to be. And when I leave to find another house, I wonder what among these shades will be left of me (Maya Angelou, 1990).

I began this coda with the powerful words of Maya Angelou's "The New House." I chose this poem because as I was nestled (once again) in my favorite overstuffed chair (where I began this writing), reflecting upon where I have traveled, and where I might be traveling to when this study has ended, I had a few thoughts (which I'd like to share with you) about words (in general), and Angelou's words (in particular). So if you didn't read the poem (above), I'll wait here while you go back up and do so.

You see up there in lines six and seven where Angelou writes "I bring my memories, held too long in check, to let them here shoulder space and place to be"? In reading those words, it occurred to me (and maybe you'll remember my alluding to this back in the prelude), that when I first began this study at Ravenswood Elementary, I walked in the front door of that particular "house" (unknowingly) carrying my own cultural baggage of
power and privilege. Although I had been actively fighting racism in my personal and pedagogical life for a great many years (and thought that I had a fairly tight grip on the ways in which power and privilege play themselves out as dominant cultural discourses of racism), I was not prepared to find myself "located on the page" of my own research as a woman who had to claim liability in perpetrating those (same) discourses. Let me explain with metaphor (where I have traveled).

I can tell you honestly that I have always kept a nice (if modest), fairly clean, and (mostly) tidy house. It's not that I love to clean, mind you, it's that the things I have in my house are dear to me, represent the vestiges of my culture of whiteness (which, I have come to understand, can be a positive thing), are things that I am sometimes proud of (and sometimes not so proud of), but mostly are things which need attending to. Some of the things in my house are tangible (like my great Aunt Cap's writing desk and chair, or my Aunt Helen's wicker table, or my Aunt Zoe's diary from 1932, or my archives of old family photographs); and some of them are not so tangible (like my mother's stories and the way she grinned most unexpectedly, or my father's deep and melodious voice when he would sing or read to me, or the way my brother teased me, and taught me, and showed me how to suck life in).
My house and its contents (me with my tangibles and my intangibles in any space where I hang my proverbial hat), have heard (and said and written) words (as the privileged and powerful thoughts of others, and as my own privileged and powerful thoughts), which “have smashed against [the] walls, crashed up and down [the] halls, lain mute and then drained their meanings out and into [the] floors.” Some of these words were true words—those which have and will continue to transform and teach me (as I teach and learn from others), because “no one can say a true word alone.” Some were false words—the echoes of my whiteness as a cultural privilege when I spoke “for another in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words” (Freire, 1970/93, 69, italics mine).

When it’s time to clean my house (and I hasten to tell you that upkeep is difficult), I try to do a thorough job. I get out my vacuum, my cleaning supplies, I gate the dog, and I begin. I mop the floors, I vacuum the rugs, I dust and wax the furniture, I do my work. I even search out the spider webs in the top corners of my ceilings, or the dark recesses under the furniture where they always hide (which are the hidden places of my racism). I clean, I vacuum, and I brush the dirt away (I reflect upon my culpability and try to change the ways in which I look and act and position myself, in relation to others in the world). But like any house, you can’t just clean it one time and expect it to stay that way. You have to keep up the
process (keep working on what is hidden as well as what is easily visible) in order to make it livable all the time (and not just when guests come to dinner):

I bring my memories, held too long in check, to let them here shoulder space and place to be.

As with any piece of research, what we think we want to know moving into the field--our questions which are often too large and unwieldy; our plans which must remain flexible enough to change as our data changes; our theoretical and pedagogical positions which must shift to accommodate others with whom we collaborate--is not usually what we end up knowing. So we try and find a space (an opening) from which we might begin to think, and feel, and experience (and write) about what we do know--that is, who we are, what we might bring to the study, and how we might bring it--and then be prepared to move those intentions (those ideological blueprints) into a more temperamental environment (our research site), so that we can explore what we don't know, but wish to find out, keeping ever mindful of the fact that "just as there is no neutral education, there is no neutral research" (Freire, 1973, et al, as quoted by Lather, 1991, p.50).

Since I began this study with Rosario Galarza in November, 1999, I have found out a great deal: about myself, about Rosario, and about what it means to be a critical pedagogue who actively pursues an antiracist pedagogy
in praxis. I have been witness to the fact that what often might appear as benign neglect is really dysconsciousness operating. And I have come to know that just because we can name normal does not mean that we are entitled to immunity; it means we have to recognize how, why, and when we became anesthetized to the lives of those who may not look, or act, or name the world as easily as we can, and then do something to change it:

Becoming actively involved in working to dismantle racism will change a person’s life. It will change one’s relationships with other people, particularly other whites. It will change how one spends one’s time and energy, where one chooses to live, who one chooses to associate with [and] the stands that one takes on issues. (Sleeter, 1996, 26).

I would like to think that the kind of critical, antiracist pedagogy in praxis that Rosario and I have proposed in our narratives throughout this study--one in which we examine our historical selves, our purpose (power, and privilege) as pedagogical practitioners, and our potential for transformative compassion and tolerance in teaching and learning--will reap untold (and instantaneous) benefits in the classroom, as well as in our personal lives. However, I know this is not the case.

Despite all that Rosario is, does, and provides to her fourth grade students to build an integrated antiracist and multicultural curriculum (which, I can assure you, takes place all day every day in her classroom), the
fact of the matter is, institutionalized racism (as dominant cultural
discourses of power and privilege) is a very difficult thing to dislodge:

_Ethnographer's Field Notes_

12 May, 2000

I have come into Rosario's classroom today in the middle
of a session where the children are taking turns reading.
After the lesson (which was about twenty minutes before
their lunch time), Rosario said the students could choose
a partner and read their book quietly together. The children
began moving immediately and this is what I saw.

As I watched the students begin to partner, there was an
overt move (and I can't say this emphatically enough) on
the part of the white students, not to partner with the
students of color (something which I had never witnessed
in all my observations in this classroom). I must have
looked so surprised that Rosario came over and said,
'pretty shocking, isn't it?' 'Yes,' I said without taking my
eyes off the children as they continued to form pairs and
trios. The first child (literally) pushed out of the way was
Langston (an African American boy) who asked quietly if
he could be a blonde boy's partner and was told simply,
'no,' as the boy pushed past him and partnered with
another white boy. The second was Cassandra (an African
American girl), who started to approach several white
girls, then stopped when they turned their backs on her.

Watching this unfold with me, Rosario announced that
she could be someone's partner, and several of the
students of color (among them Cassandra and Sandra, a
Latina girl who does not yet speak much English), drifted
over to her table. I noticed Bala (an Asian Indian boy)
approach one of the white boys only to be told that he (the
white boy) wanted to work alone.

Langston then moved closer to me, but sat at a table by
himself. Kelsey (a bi-racial girl) drifted toward a table of
popular white girls (who ignored her standing there), and
ended up at a table of four boys (all white) where she tried
to engage them, and eventually engaged three of the four.
Langston then moved towards Rosario's desk and sat down, but facing me. Now Cassandra, Langston, and Sandra (all children of color) were sitting at Rosario's table, Kelsey was reading on her own with a table of four boys (who were reading together), and Bala was still walking the perimeter of the room, appearing to be lost and uncomfortable.

As the children began taking their places on the floor or at tables in the room, Langston kept seated with his hands on his face (and only responded when Rosario asked him direct questions). His mind seemed to wander. As I looked at Langston's little hands on his tiny face, it struck me that someone so small (who has only been on the planet for such a short time), does not deserve this treatment from the other children (who never seemed before to carry racism in their bodies as they were at this moment).

Although Rosario spoke about this in several interviews—how difficult it often was to undo what some of the teachers had done in previous classrooms—this was the first time I had personally witnessed a system of privilege and power (among the white students) so (seemingly) impenetrable that I wondered if it would ever go away, and it frightened me for all of them.

It is now ten minutes later. Almost everyone has settled into quiet reading in their chosen places. The white children (especially the girls) have gathered in pairs, but also in trios (even though Rosario asked them to finish their work with one partner). Bala has finished his work (it appears) and sits at the periphery of Kelsey's table watching the others. Although he tried twice to engage other students at the table, he was not successful. This was different from what I noticed last time (when Bala appeared to be accepted by the group). Is this new? I noticed that Kelsey has now engaged a single partner (one of the four boys) and has begun to also engage Bala to talk with them. Langston continues to be distracted and constantly looks my way. I smile. He does not respond. Cassandra has drifted to the end of Rosario's table, and
Rosario engages her. Kelseyiias now moved (temporarily) to a pair of girls, but cannot engage and turns back to Bala and the table of boys.

It is now five minutes to lunch time. Rosario’s next move (after she and I had quietly watched this thing unfold), was immediate and extraordinary: ‘Observe very carefully’ (she said to the children)—‘who’s with who and how people are grouped. Look at who’s with who and who’s not with who. I don’t want you to talk about it with one another, but I’m wondering if you’re noticing something about how the groups are gathered here.’ Sally (a white girl) says, ‘All the girls are with girls and all the boys are with the boys?’

As white teachers who have to come to grips with the fact that not only are our classrooms becoming more and more diverse (Nieto, 1996), but also the white children who are in our classrooms are continuing to maintain the status quo, we cannot continue teaching in the ways in which we have traditionally taught. We can no longer stand on mainstream, Eurocentric methods of teaching which honors (above all else) dominant cultural ideologies as the primary foundation for excellence, for if we do, situations (like the one I witnessed in Rosario’s classroom) will continue to be commonplace.

We cannot examine dominant cultural discourses (ideologies) of power and privilege unless we first recognize: (a) that they exist; (b) how
they exist (historically, personally, and pedagogically); and c) how they are a deeply embedded part of who we are (as products of institutionalized systems and standards of overt and covert racism).

We cannot interrupt these discourses of power and privilege unless we understand that, as white teachers:

• it is more than just important, it is absolutely necessary that we begin to reflectively examine how dominant cultural discourses of privilege and power both operate historically and impact our pedagogy right now;

• it is critical that we become honest (with ourselves) and aware of how our power and privilege (as the agency of cultural, institutionalized discourses) can perpetuate racism;

• it is imperative that we understand that by attending to power and privilege as dominant ideologies, we can also better understand how overt and covert racism might impact all the students whom we teach (and from whom we might learn); and

• it is essential that we make a commitment with our students to actively name and fight racism in our classrooms and in our schools every day in any way that we can by interrupting power and privilege and replacing it with an antiracist pedagogy in praxis.

I would like to think that what I have proposed above will reap untold (and instantaneous) benefits but I know that will not be the case. What I hope will happen, however, is that through participating in this study with me, you can begin to see (as I did) how implementing small (but purposeful and fully reflected upon) changes, day by day—that is, the ways in
which we resolutely walk in the door each morning with a clean slate\textsuperscript{45} (for ourselves and our students); the ways in which we personally (and professionally) dislodge our dysconsciousness; the ways in which we consciously use our language;\textsuperscript{46} the ways in which we steadfastly choose to show our students how we care about them; the ways in which we critically read, select, and teach an antiracist, multicultural curriculum (and encourage our students, as well as ourselves, to navigate the world with significance)—in other words, the ways in which we teach between the lines as well as on them, will give us (and our students, and colleagues) a taste of what might be possible when such a critical, antiracist pedagogy in praxis is embraced for life. Freire (1998a) says that

When we live our lives with the authenticity demanded by the practice of teaching that is also learning and learning that is also teaching, we are participating in a total experience that is simultaneously directive, political, ideological, gnostic, pedagogical, aesthetic, and ethical. In this experience, the beautiful, the decent, and the serious form a circle with hands joined (31-32).

\textsuperscript{45} that is, a fresh start—a renewed commitment to actively listen and participate with care

\textsuperscript{46} in our questions and verbal responses, in the ways in which we hold and use our bodies, as well as in other (perhaps more subtle) signings
A final conversation:
an antiracist pedagogy in action

T: Talk to me about how you evaluate what the kids are learning in your classroom, and I don't mean year-end evaluations, or formal evaluations, but how do you know when they're learning?

R: Oh, sure. Well...I listen to what the kids are saying. I think it goes back to my belief in the "collective." I evaluate the whole community conversation, because if that conversation is rich and meaningful and pertinent, then the kids—as a community of learners—will learn from it. I am always evaluating the group as opposed to individuals, and then I try to bring those individuals who may be struggling along with those of us who aren't. I also pay attention to who's talking and who's not talking. So it's not a one-on-one kind of evaluation that I do. And I think I'm different from other teachers in that I'm always looking at the group's knowledge rather than the individual's knowledge. What does the group know? What are they realizing? What are they noticing? And the conversation we have has to be an engaging conversation. You know? And that's what it is most of the time in here. We're engaged in conversation. That way, I know people are listening and participating. It's not about...you know, who is the main character, and what is the setting, where you just lose kids left and right. It's an engaging conversation about power relationships, or people being hurt. It's about power and the way that people use it to further oppression...those are the conversations that we have and that's what I evaluate.

TL: So part of your responsibility in terms of evaluating, is that you bring to the mix a certain kind of politicizing of whatever you're discussing, whatever you're reading, whatever you're thinking about. And that's what you're bringing in the door with you...and I know that you're purposeful about that.

RG: Yeah. I also try to give the opposing ideology. For example, when we're reading about the Holocaust, we always talk about lying. I say, "You know, there are some people who believe that you tell the truth even if the Nazis are going to shoot you dead. You are obliged to tell the truth at all times." And I say, "That is something that you have to decide with your families...about what it means to tell the truth. There are times when lying will always be bad, and that's when you
lie to save yourself at somebody else's expense." And the Jewish people talk about this struggle in their writing, you know, that lying to the Nazis is different than lying to your family. But I always say, "there are some people that think you can't even lie to the Nazis." And then if enough people get killed, those same people will say, "What's going on here...this is bad."

TL: Yeah, if "enough people did get killed." What...six million's not enough?

RG: [she laughs] Yeah...right. Anyway, I always try to get the kids to see all sides of the issue, and then I'll say...especially if it's an issue that I know their family feels strongly about but that I might not agree with...then I'll say, "you know, you and your family will decide about that, but we can talk about it here."

TL: You talk alot about modeling, so that's one of the things that you're doing is that you're modeling different ways of looking at the world. You're modeling the fact that it's not just "my way or the highway," you're modeling that there's this portion of the population who believes this, and there's this portion that believes this, and you have to figure out what it means within your family, and what it means for you in your life, but here are some of the things you might want to look at, or consider...which is what you did with Joe when he told you his father said he was a "stupid genius." So you evaluate based on the discourses which are coming up with the whole class as their composite voices...and then you look at the individual voices as they sit on the periphery and bring them in. So your whole idea is always autonomy, but autonomy in diversity.

RG: Yeah...you know, though, I think my whole practice is based on what I've learned from kids. Just how incredible they are and when they need voice...and I think what I've learned from them is: what is at their level. I mean, we can talk about national politics, but...

TL: I have trouble with that language. Teachers say to me all the time, "I have to talk to students 'at their level.'" And I don't understand that language, that discourse of "talking down" to someone.

RG: Yeah, I know what you mean. So let me say it this way...I learn what's important from them which may be more than how Ralph Nader is affecting this presidential campaign, and what's important to the
kids is their classroom democracy. It's their issues. I mean, they have to contextualize it for me. That's what I learned. What I learn from them is...they teach me what their context is, and what they understand. And, you know, Sally taught me that—I mean, I kinda knew this but... the election for their student council is much more important for them than the presidential election, or the mayoral election. They gave me their context, which I may not always understand. And every year it's different, you know?

TL: Right, which is the beauty of teaching, and the beauty of pedagogical reflection. This is not a static thing. It's always changing and the more we reflect on how it's changing, the more critical our pedagogy will become.

RG: Right.

TL: How do you ask your students to evaluate what they've learned from you? Do you ask them to evaluate what they've learned from you? You know, maybe I'm not talking about what "they" learn from "you" which sounds like that transmission model of education again...I'm talking about how often do you reflect with your students...?

RG: Well, you know what I ask them is...for example, at the end of...say, rocks, or at the end of, say, weather [two units of study], I will say to them, "Okay, I'm going to teach weather next year. What would you keep and what would you throw away?"

TL: Ummmmmm....that's really great.

RG: Yeah. And they tell me..."definitely keep this, this, this...and we hated this, this, and this." It was interesting because this year I did weather just a little differently. Fay Malarkey got all these books about weather—about tornadoes, and hurricanes, and floods, and blizzards...and how I did it with the kids is that they became a news casting team. Somebody was the anchor, and the anchor had to give the history of the storm, you know "This is the worst storm since Hurricane Andrew which devastated...blah, blah, blah..." So they had to find out the history. And then the weather person talked about how the storm is formed. They talked about how storms form on the equator. And then the on-site reporter interviewed the victims of the storm, and
the victims had to talk about how they got saved and what kind of
damage was done from the storm. So they all had their job to do, and they
all had to research, and then they had to bring it to the others.

TL: They did this in groups?

RG: They did it in groups, yeah...groups of five, and they each had a storm,
and then they each had these roles they took on, and then we filmed
it. So...Fay Malarkey's way of teaching weather was to read these books
and answer these complicated questions which she made up.

TL: So she's testing their competency...their ability. She evaluates by
testing. You evaluate by observation, listening, doing, dialoguing...

RG: ...Yeah, and what they can tell about how the storm formed. And you
know what? They really teach each other.

TL: That's what I love best about kids...when we let them do it, they
always teach one another.

RG: Yeah. It's like Katherine who is developmentally handicapped. She
works intellectually at about a second grade level. And the kids were
so compassionate and brilliant with her. And they had these codes....
so when she was being filmed, they would, like, make hand signals
[sign systems]...to help her.

TL: You know what I just realized....and I'm talking particularly about this
classroom. I don't know if this is a realization, or if I'm just wonder­
ing if this is true. And that's about the overt racism we saw in your
classroom in May. Now we know that this racism is the result of
what happens at home, and what has happened with some of the
other teachers at school, and we tackled it together immediately. We
worked with the kids and we all reflected together and so we named it
and dialogued about it. But in terms of your classroom culture, are the
children of color pushed to the margins in every case? Well...except
for Bala. But even that day in May he was dismissed by the white kids.

RG: He was on the outside that day...yep, yep...but yeah, in terms of
partnering and tattling, that's when I see it come out the most.

TL: But a little girl like Katherine is less...
RG: ...threatening?

TL: Yeah, because she needs help. So, in other words, if I’m a child of color in a classroom, one of the ways that I can get what I need is to always appear helpless, or not as smart as the white kids...you know? Which is my way of doing passive resistance isn’t it? So I’m wondering if what I’ve just said would be easier for them. If I were, say, Kelsey [a bi-racial girl who is trying assimilate] who just wants to get in to that popular group of white girls so bad...

RG: Yeah...burnin’ in the belly...

TL: Exactly. So I’m just wondering if I’m right about that. It’s just a notion.

RG: What if Katherine were black too. I mean, Katherine is the one they all helped. She’s very blonde, very blue eyed. I mean, is that why they’re willing to help her?

TL: I don’t know. See...it may be interesting to find that out...to just keep your eye on that and see if the kids of color shift over the course of the year and start exhibiting those traits that Katherine has exhibited.

RG: Yeah...right, right...yeah. I mean, she looks like them, and so then the white kids say, “let’s help her. Let’s bring her up.”

TL: So we just never know, do we...there’s no way to know why they respond so quickly to...

RG: They don’t know...

TL: Yeah, they’re not aware of it, that’s for certain. We know that from the way in which they responded in May when you asked them to observe the partners around the room and they said, “boys are with boys and girls are with girls.” Hmmm...I need to think about this more. It’s an interesting thing to keep in mind, though. I’m sure somebody in clinical psych. has done a study about this, right?

RG: Yeah...yeah.
TL: What's the most important thing you give your students—not just the ones this year, but every year—what's THE most important thing that you can offer to them, or that you give to the students you teach?

RG: I guess freedom. The time and space to voice their ideas. And then, after that, insight into how power structures work.

TL: So your first objective is to let them voice...to trust their voices. And then you map onto that the "real world" and their place in it...

RG: A consciousness...a consciousness-raising of the power structure in this world. I mean, because it is global. It really is global. But, in the context of the world, we could talk about, you know, how the Japanese committed genocide with the Chinese, but they're not that interested in that. They want to know about, you know, Wanda, they want to know about Shiloh [characters from some of the stories Rosario selected for the students to read]...and the Holocaust is...I mean, sometimes the Holocaust is a good forum, because there's enough distance. But then you gotta bring it back home. So, who are the Jews in this classroom and who are the Nazis?

TL: Wow...yeah, I get it. When we think about genocide in the 20th century, we have to also think about Rwanda, and Cambodia, and Bosnia...I think you can't think about genocide unless you include what's happening now and in recent history unless you consider how genocide really has worked—systematic genocide—what does that look like? Where has it happened in the world? At what times in history? So...I think, for me, teaching the Holocaust—and I've done it several times, and I was always dissatisfied with it at the end. And I think the reason is, when I finally reflected on what I had done (and how I had the kids positioned to think about it) I also thought, 'Wait a minute. I've got to include all these other countries, all these other people here.' So I did include Rwanda, and Cambodia, and Bosnia, as well as the Holocaust in WWII the last time I worked with the kids. We looked at genocide that has happened in the 20th century...and it made a difference. So you're right. You do have to bring it back home...or at least not leave it so distanced. It's important to be able to explore how we all carry the traits of the Jewish people and the Nazis as parts of our historical baggage.
RG: Right. I think that’s what I have to teach kids, and adults, and everybody, is “where am I complicit in this? What is my complicity? I am not innocent. I am never innocent.”

TL: I agree...and that’s a hard one, and something which I’ve struggled with as you know.

RG: Yeah, I do. It’s like we’re always saying, “Oh...those Nazis” and what part of us is a Nazi...you know? I mean, there’s a great quote from one of my past students and she goes, “Will the Nazis ever come to this state, and will they ever come to this town?” And I said, “They are here. They are in this school. They are probably in this classroom, so you have to figure out what being a Nazi means.” What does that look like to a fourth grader, you know?

TL: Exactly, because, as you said before, kids need to know how all kinds of power...good, bad, ugly, and indifferent works. For instance, I was doing a Holocaust study with 6th graders who were mostly African American kids in an urban school, and I was there for, like, six weeks. And one of the things that struck me—and this was something that came from them as you said before...it’s what they taught me—we were exploring the role of the Resistance in the war, and some of the students really wanted to see the Holocaust from the position of the Nazis in death camps. And they wanted to do that so that they could experience the feeling of that kind of power. So I thought, ‘All right, because I’m right here to keep this in check, let’s do this. If that’s what you need to experience, we’ll do that.’ So we did. And at the end, there was this really big boy whose name was George. He was this huge, heavy guy, and he was positioned as a guard at the camp. When we finished and were reflecting about it, George, who never said anything ever, said, “I really was torn. Part of me really wanted to kill the people who came in...the Resistance...and part of me really wanted to help them save the people in here, but I knew what I had to do and that was to follow orders. And that really bothered me.” And then he says, “I wonder if that was true of the real Nazis?” Now isn’t that a great question? I would never have thought to have asked that question. And so that opened up a wonderful ethical discussion about loyalty versus justice. These kids no longer conceptualized Nazis as “over there” in history... it was no longer...

RG: ...us and them...
TL: Us and them, exactly. So I guess maybe that’s what you’re saying, is that in any area, our responsibility is to do what I call “taking it off the page of the book and bringing it to life”...in some way by presenting all different kinds of ways of looking at the content we teach...through many perspectives.

RG: Yeah, and then the kids will contextualize it. You get this idea and then they create the context, and then you blend that. And then it’s rich. And then they get it. But you can’t...but textbooks don’t do it. The texts, I guess, that I use, are the kids. You know? The texts are their stories, their words, and so if I don’t give them voice first, then there’s nothing there. We don’t have that complete picture.

TL: You know Freire (1998a) talks about developing epistemological curiosity which promotes critical thinking in both the teacher and the learner simultaneously...so...how do you promote this curiosity in your classroom? [we both pause] I think you’ve probably already answered this, but...

RG: Yeah...I’m trying to think. Well, first of all, it’s kind of like you going in with Macbeth. You have to give them the stories about the world so that they get it...it has to be gripping. What you’re talking about with them and what you’re discussing and what you’re reading has to be gripping. It has to appeal to kids. David Booth [Canadian scholar and storyteller] said that he reads through hundreds and hundreds of books in order to find the ones that come to it...bam. He said, “I go in for a day or a week, maximum. So I have to have a text that grabs them right away.” So I only have a year with these kids, and so I have to get texts that grab them.....Nightjohn. Nightjohn grabs them. It talks about the brutality of slavery and some teachers say, “I would never read that to fourth graders!” And I say, “I would never not read it to fourth graders.” How can they understand generations of bitterness until they know the brutality of that place?

TL: Again, that’s how to approach history. That’s understanding and positioning yourself in history, and taking responsibility for that position in history, and bringing it forward.

RG: A white student of mine last year said, “I feel so incredibly guilty. This book makes me feel so incredibly guilty.” And I said, “I didn’t read it for you to feel guilty. I read it so that you can understand how many generations it is going to take for black people to get over this brutality
and to trust white people." And he goes, "Oh, okay. I feel better." I said, "Do you get that?" And he said, "Yes, I get that." And so I said, "that's why I read it, and I know people criticize me...people criticize me for reading this book to you." But I said, "If you don't get it here, you may not get it anywhere else." And I said, "Maybe it would be more appropriate if you were in sixth grade...or ninth grade..." but I said, "I'm not going to see you then, and I don't trust that someone else is going to tell it to you like it is. And here it is." Also, when we read *Nightjohn* Bala [an Asian Indian boy] came back and said, "We went home, I got that book out of the library, and my mother and I reread it." And she said, "This is a very important book." You need to read it. It'll take you an hour or two. I read it out loud in one sitting to the kids. So...you know, then they get curious about that. You know? They get curious about the power systems and the history...

TL: So you talk about it right then...

RG: Yeah...

TL: And do you reflect upon it later as well?

RG: We reference it all year. You know?

TL: That's what I thought.

RG: Yeah, well, you know, you and I both do that a lot with students. We carefully choose the books that we read and they have to be gripping, and they have to be politicized, and they have to be colorized.

TL: Yeah...it's so important.

RG: Right. And that's what makes the kids curious. If you read them all these namsy pamsy, life with Grandpa, zucchini beast...these silly little books all the time...you know...these nothing little books...you're not gonna people your lives with them, and you're not gonna develop any curiosity. You create this somnolence. You put them to sleep. And plus, it's too innocent. And we cannot afford that kind of innocence. There's no time for that kind of innocence. You know? As Audre Lorde says, "there's no such thing as racial innocence." There's either racial responsibility, or irresponsibility.
TL: And there’s nothing in the middle, because even if you say you’re in the middle, it means that you’re taking a stand, and that stand is to be blameless and innocent and...

RG: Right...and also complicit. And I refuse to be complicit.

* * * *

An open letter
(to the teachers at Ravenswood Elementary)

Dear Women of Ravenswood,

This is the letter which has been left unwritten (until now). These are the words which have remained unspoken, because they have been too hard for me to voice; or because I felt I could never find the words to tell you how I feel about the time I spent in your school; or because I felt that it was a lost cause--that my words would fall on deaf ears (and I was uncertain what to do about that). I’m not sure I am any more certain now (about the best way to start this letter), but I do want you to hear some things from me first (before you hear Rosario and my final fugued narrative to you), so that you might begin (as I am beginning) to understand the ways in which long-standing, institutionalized cultural discourses of power and privilege (those which we are aware of, and those which we might be unaware of as white women and educators) not only deeply (and negatively) impact all the children whom we teach, but also deeply (and negatively) impact our own pedagogical practices.
For me, this study represents (in many ways) a rite of passage. I say that because the reflective work which I did (and which I continue to do), to (purposefully) move myself forward in my teaching, was especially painful for me, in part, because I thought I had already "arrived" before the study began. One thing this study taught me is that we are never "there" in our reflective journey. But rather, if we continue to reflect on our pedagogy (and act on those self-reflections), the road we do choose to travel might also include the students, and families, and colleagues we may have marginalized (or "othered") in the past.

As with any study which has a starting and stopping place, there are so many things (in between) which I would like to have had the time to say to you: that I know I was not at your school all day every day (as you are) and therefore, cannot see the whole picture as you might envision it; that I understand how hard it is to look at our own complicity and recognize (name) when we are doing and saying things which are overtly or covertly racist; and that I empathize with the fact that we (none of us) were ever taught to recognize the (often insidious) ways in which cultural discourses can play themselves out in our personal and pedagogical lives, offering us positions of privilege and power that we never earned.

But knowing all this, I also know that if we do not begin to do the hard work which involves our moving from dysconsciousness to
consciousness about our own complicity, we will continue to perpetuate the status quo (which leaves behind those who do not look like us, sound like us, speak like us, worship like us, or see and live in the world as we do).

And as Rosario said so often to me, "we cannot afford to be dysconscious anymore."

This study has forced me to do an enormous amount of thinking and (most importantly) feeling about the work which lies ahead for me. What I hope for is that you will continue to read what has been written here, not as a test of your endurance, or as a means to ridicule you or the wonderful work you already do in your classrooms and in your school, but rather as an attempt to dialogue so that we might be able to build a future (together) in which our pedagogical (and personal) lives will be affectively (albeit) separately moved to action.

You (of course) will decide if any of what Rosario and I are about to offer makes sense for you. But do know this: these thoughts are offered to you by women who have begun the hard journey together, and it is our wish that you will choose to travel with us, rather than to sit (as we have been encouraged to do) on our own complacency:

*Final Fugued Narrative*

*August, 2001*

We are writing this to you because we understand how deeply we (all) care about the children at Ravenswood Elementary. We also know how hard it is to do the job we have (all) chosen as our profession—especially when
sometimes we become fearful that what we do is not (nearly) enough. But what is it that we really fear? Do we fear that we lack the skills to teach all the children in our classrooms? The courage? The wherewithal? Is it our fear of cultural empathy that makes us so afraid?

We know that seeing children alone on the playground, or hurt after being bullied on the bus, or ashamed after turning in a less-than-perfect project done at home without the benefit of parental help, moves us emotionally. There is no question that we are women who feel the pain of our students when we can see how much they suffer at the expense of others’ carelessness. But how can we shift these emotions into actions which help to heal the children who are hurting? In other words, where might the knowledge of such pain take us next?

Some of us may offer a hug for a quick fix, or ask the principal, or guidance counselor, or colleagues for help or insight. Others might choose to blame the parents for their lack of care, or simply ignore the situation because we assume it’s a chronic problem outside our professional experiences—‘it’s not our fault that these children are so (often) unhappy.’ But here’s our question to you: could some of these day-to-day situations be symptomatic of a larger pathology? Could our students’ pain be the fallout of institutionalized racism? Do we know what that kind of pain looks like? Do we know what it feels like? Do we know how it manifests itself? Could it be that we have decided to remain dysconscious about the children who may not look or act or behave the way we look, act, and behave? That we have chosen to name normal as the way in which we live our pedagogical lives? Is this something we can consider in humanistic ways?

It’s clear that as teachers we have a lot on our plates. We spend a great deal of our time making certain that the curriculum guidelines are being met; preparing our lesson plans; conferencing with parents; taking turns with playground duty; grading papers; diagnosing and remediating learning problems; settling classroom disputes; taking
(additional college) classes or workshops; and going to committee meetings outside of school, and staff meetings inside of school. So why should we add one more thing to our already overflowing plates?

Perhaps because the one thing we all need to add is what gives meaning to everything else—everything we do, everything we feel, everything we say—and that is that *all knowledge* (and therefore, all teaching) is culturally situated. For example, our teaching methods, our curriculum, our textbooks, our literature, the way we assess our students, our assumptions about what families should and shouldn’t be (should and shouldn’t look like) are all viewed through our own cultural lenses. They are all based on our own past experiences, and those experiences (if we’re really honest about it) have been predominately white and middle class, and do not often incorporate (or include) an openness, or even an acknowledgment that there are other people in our classrooms (and in our schools, and in the world) who are not like us. Perhaps it’s because we have become accustomed to our own voices—especially when our voices are culturally dominant and (when accompanied by the culturally dominant voice of the institution in which we teach) drown out the more fragile, less experienced voices of the children who may not look or act or live in the world like us.

If you believe (as we do), that ‘education is about providing [all people with] the means to ripen’ (Pagano, 1988/94, 261), then we are (all of us) bound together by an unspoken (unvoiced), unpublished, and (often) unacknowledged ‘promise’ to consider (to take to heart) why we have chosen this profession, and (as a result) reflect upon how we might give to ourselves and others a means by which we (all) might ‘ripen.’ The story of the art of teaching, says Pagano, ‘when it is practiced by women, and when it is practiced in the teaching of women, must begin by producing difference, by acknowledging what women know’ (272).
And what do we know? What moves our hearts to teach? What moves us to feel (as well as think) our way through each day with the children who are in attendance in our classrooms and in our schools? If we are unaware of this, we are unaware of all the people who make up our classroom community, and that is a sad reality which we need to fix—not later on, but right now, in this moment.

In his acceptance speech for winning the Nobel Prize for Peace, Holocaust survivor, educator, and philosopher, Elie Wiesel (1986) reminds us that 'sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy...wherever men, women [and children] are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe.'

So what are we asking of you (and of ourselves) in this moment? The kind of challenge which we are asking you to consider (to reflect and act upon with us) is not an easy one. It is not easy, it is certainly one more thing to add to your already full plate, but it is (most assuredly) necessary if we are to avoid situations like the one which happened in Rosario's classroom when the children of color were (literally and figuratively) pushed out of the way so that white children could partner with white children. Our challenge (at its deepest level) is to begin to understand our dysconsciousness and stop indifference in its tracks:

We challenge you to be courageous with us (for it takes courage to walk in the door of our classrooms each day with a renewed commitment to be honest about ourselves with our students, their families, our colleagues, and the school administration). We challenge you to make a commitment (with us) to be culturally careful and develop cultural empathy (for it takes commitment, and constant reflection on who we are walking in the door in order to make ourselves both cognitively and affectively available to all the children whom we teach, and from whom we might learn). And finally, we challenge you to reconsider (with us) the ways in which we move through each classroom day. We ask you to reflect (with us) and
shift the ways in which we might be complicit in causing pain to the children who may not look, or act, or live in the world as we do—the children who sit on the periphery because we do not invite them in, who populate our classrooms and our schools—the children whose pain may not be as evident as that which is so visible on the playground, or on the school bus, or with special projects, but who suffer pain which is just as harmful and equally damaging because of our indifference towards them and the fact that they may not look or behave in the world as we do.

‘In a way, to be indifferent to...suffering is what makes the human being inhuman. Indifference, after all, is more dangerous than anger and hatred. Anger can at times be creative. One writes a great poem, a great symphony, one does something special for the sake of humanity because one is angry at the injustice that one witnesses. But indifference is never creative. Even hatred at times may elicit a response. You fight it. You denounce it. You disarm it. Indifference elicits no response. Indifference is not a response. Indifference is not a beginning, it is an end’ (Elie Wiesel’s White House Speech, 1999).

What you have read about in this study, (and will hopefully give some thought to), and what Rosario and I have (just) challenged you to reconsider (in our last narrative written to you), has been prepared so that the work we did (and continue to do) will not go unattended. It’s important for me (as a white woman and educator) that you read what I have written in preparing, living in, and completing this study, because as white women in our chosen profession of teaching, we need to reconsider the ways in which we live our pedagogical (and personal) lives, and too, the ways in which this living impacts the students whom we teach (and from whom we
learn). I don't want you to dismiss this study lightly because it makes you angry, or because you can't see yourself clearly in it. This study was not meant to sit on a library shelf unhandled. It was meant to raise questions for you about your complicity (as it raised questions for me). I want you to take it to heart, for that is the spirit in which it was written, and that is the spirit in which it is offered to you now. This study is my blueprint for all of us who are white educators, to look at our own reflections in history, while being mindful of the ways in which dominant cultural discourses of privilege and power operate today, so that we can shift the ways in which we teach and learn in our classrooms.

I send you my very best, women of Ravenswood, knowing that the challenges Rosario and I have issued will not be easy ones, but ones which will not take as long as (perhaps) you believe they might, if you start to reconsider, right now (in this moment), that the next pedagogical journey you take should be your own.

It will not be simple, it will not take long.  
It will take little time, it will take all your thought. 
It will take all your heart, it will take all your breath. 
It will be short, it will not be simple. 

It will touch through your ribs, it will take all your heart. 
It will not take long. It will occupy all your thought. 
As a city is occupied, as a bed is occupied, 
It will take your flesh, it will not be simple.
You are coming into us who cannot withstand you.
You are coming into us who never wanted to withstand you.
You are taking parts of us into places never planned.

You are going far away with pieces of our lives.
It will be short, it will take all your breath,
It will not be simple, it will become your will.

- Adrienne Rich
“Final Notions”


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