The Graduate School

Certificate for Approving the Dissertation

We hereby approve the Dissertation

of

Shirley Wade McLoughlin

Candidate for the Degree:

Doctor of Philosophy

_____

Director
Denise Taliaferro Baszile

_____

Reader
Dennis Carlson

_____

Reader
Richard Quantz

_____

Reader
Tammy Kernodle

_____

Graduate School Representative
Barbara Hueberger

Abstract

A PEDAGOGY OF THE BLUES

By Shirley Wade McLoughlin

This dissertation presents the conceptualization of a pedagogy of the blues as an alternative to the techno-rational approach to education. This conceptualization is derived from the blues metaphor in which distinct themes are identified and utilized in formulating and enacting a pedagogy of the blues. This pedagogy is presented as an embodied art of teaching whereby there is recovery of the self by the teacher and student, as opposed to the loss of self so prevalent in present day approaches to schooling.

The author grounds this work in the powerful early blues of African Americans, identifying specific themes representative of the blues metaphor that reverberate in the work of early blues artists. Starting with the historical roots of the blues, examining the texts of the blues and the lifestyles of early blues singers that embodied the blues, the author traces common themes from these sources. Next, the author presents the evolvement of the blues metaphor through various other forms of popular music in America, including examples from country music, jazz, rhythm and blues, rock, and Hip Hop.

The conceptualization of the pedagogy of the blues is framed within the identified themes of the blues metaphor. Grounding the pedagogy in the work of reconceptualist curricular theory and some elements of critical theory, the author also uses personal narratives and lyrics from popular music to help explain the theory and suggest application of this pedagogical approach in classrooms both in public schools and in higher education.

A PEDAGOGY OF THE BLUES:

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of

Miami University in partial

fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Educational Leadership

by

Shirley Wade McLoughlin

Miami University

Oxford, Ohio

2006

Dissertation Chair:

Denise Taliaferro Baszile, Ph.D

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank several individuals who helped me in the process of completion of this paper. First, I must thank Dr. Denise Taliaferro Baszile, who guided me through the mountain of information about this topic, who encouraged me when I most needed it, and who went over and beyond her role of chair in the amount of time and effort extended to me in the completion of this project. The friendship and compassion she extended to me as she steered me through difficult material are deeply appreciated.

Dr. Richard Quantz was also instrumental in helping this project reach completion. From his first “ok” when I hesitantly asked if I could write a paper about Bessie Smith, to his profound intellectual discussions regarding epistemological and ontological issues, he was a strong influence in this work.

I am grateful to Dennis Carlson for his ability to open up my mind to new ways of thinking about this topic. He was very supportive of me throughout the development of this project, and his encouragement helped bring it into fruition.

Dr. Tammy Kernodle provided me with much needed help. Her strong knowledge regarding the roots of the blues contributed significantly to this work, and her guidance in helping me understand this component was much appreciated.

This work would not exist if not for the deep love of music that was nurtured in me by my parents and grandfather. From constant singing in the kitchen with my mother and sisters to enjoying the jazz my dad played each night, from guitar lessons from my father to weekly piano lessons from my grandfather spanning over twelve years, these

roots helped shaped this work, and I thank them.

Finally, I must thank my husband, Jack, and daughters, Kate, Molly, and Maggie. They dealt with the periodic absence of a mother and wife as I was deeply involved in the writing. They listened to my ideas, checked my writing, and helped me clarify meaning in my work and in my life. They cheered me on, and supported me when I most needed it.

INTRODUCTION

It is ten o'clock in the morning, and I am sitting in my fifth grade classroom. I am seated behind my friend, Jan, and I look at the red silk rose she has in her hair. It looks so pretty to me. My mom never thinks of putting something like that in my hair. I think my hair is kind of ugly since she cut it, but she said it was cheaper than paying for a hairdresser. I have four sisters and a brother, and have only been to a hairdresser once. I wonder if Jan has ever been to a hairdresser. I look at her braids, and marvel that Jan doesn't need to use elastics to hold her braids in place. I wish that I could do that with my hair.

"Take out your math books and turn to page forty three." The voice interrupts me. My teacher is mean, and no one in the whole school wants to have her as a teacher. She has teased blonde hair with deep brown roots, and wears heavy eyeliner with light blue eye shadow that extends to her hairline. Her perfume sometimes makes me queasy; it is so strong. When she leaves our room, if one person is talking when she returns, the entire class has to copy a page of the dictionary for extra homework. Steven always ends up talking, and my hand hurts so badly when I have to copy all those pages.

I look at page forty three in the math book, and groan. More addition!!! Last year, my teacher let us do 'new' math, which was hard, but lots of fun. This year, it is the same old boring stuff that I learned how to do back in second grade.

"Do all of the problems on page forty three," she commands. Steven drops his book on the floor. "Steven! Pay attention! Be more careful!"

I start the first problem. There are three columns of problems, all three digit numbers to add. I hate doing this. It is so dull. I look at Jan's rose again, and think about the roses that grow at my grandmother's house. I wonder if I could talk my mom into picking one of them, and putting it in my hair.

"Shirley! Do your math!"

I look up at the teacher, and take a deep breath. "Miss Gold, I know how to do this. I've done it so many times before. Why do we have to do the same thing over and over and over again?"

"Do you get one hundred percent on all your math pages?" she asks.

"No, but they're mostly A's. I make dumb mistakes. I get bored. I ***know*** *how to add."*

"When you can prove to me that you can get 100 percent all the time, then we will have this discussion. Until then, you need more practice."

I pick up my pencil, and try to ignore the achy feeling inside, a mixture of anger, embarrassment, and helplessness. Seven and four is eleven plus six is…

Being a senior in high school isn't much fun. Tonight I am sad because I found out that Mike was dating Mary. I like Mike a lot. His locker is next to mine, and we have some great conversations. I secretly hoped he would date me, but I really don't think any of the cool guys will, because I have buck teeth, and my parents can't afford braces. I sit at my desk in my bedroom, and pull out my essay on the Hemmingway hero. I don't feel like writing about bullfighters right now. I don't want anything to do with boys right now. None of them are heroes to me. I almost feel like crying, but I don't want to. I turn away from the desk, and pick up my guitar. After I play a few chords, I tune the necessary strings. Then, my fingers slide up to the fifth fret, and I start singing "Black Mountain Blues." I laugh inside at the part that says "All the babies cry for whiskey, and all the birds…they sing bass." I sing especially loud and gravelly during what I call the 'mean woman' part…it makes me feel strong, in a different sort of way.

> *…I'm goin' back to Black Mountain*
> *Me 'n' my razor 'n' my gun*
> *Gonna cut him if he stands*
> *Gonna shoot him if he runs.* (Smith, 1993, p. 8)

After I finish the last verse, I play a little riff on the guitar, and then put it back in the case. I feel better, more relaxed. I don't feel like crying anymore. I open the door to my room, and then sit down at my desk. My father's music, Dixieland jazz, comes softly wafting up the hall from the living room. I pull out the essay, and start to write.

I open this work with two memories of my childhood, two experiences out of many that played a part in gently shaping me and guiding my path as I evolve as an educator. The memories were chosen with care, for their purpose is important. My wish is to present the reader with clear examples of how my 'self' was repressed by the techno-rationale approach to my schooling. In contrast, I present the way in which my 'self' was revived through the singing of the blues. I include the personal, strong feelings and musings that I can clearly remember today, thirty or more years later. I also describe how I learned to value these feelings and emotions through music, specifically, the blues, without receiving any acknowledgement of them in often dehumanizing classroom spaces, in my earlier experiences as a student and in my more recent experiences as a educator of pre-service teachers.

The dismissal of the self from school curriculum affected me personally as a student, and continues to affect me as a teacher, in that the techno-rational continues to be firmly entrenched in school curriculum today. The inner self of each student is not attended to in classrooms today, where scripted curriculum and teaching to the test prevails. As a caring teacher, it is difficult to navigate in such oppressive environments. Here can be found not only a dismissal of the self of the student, but also of the teacher. When a teacher is required to ignore or repress good teaching practices that acknowledge and nurture the individuality of each of her students, when a teacher anguishes over the struggle between what she knows in her heart should be done to help her students and what she is forced to adopt as a method of teaching, then the teacher experiences a loss of "self."

Thus, the problem I seek to address in this work is the loss of self due to the techno-rational regime in education. Freire (2003) describes this as the banking concept of education, whereby the teacher makes deposits of knowledge into the minds of the students, who passively store these deposits away. He states that in such environments

(a) the teacher teaches and the students are taught;

(b) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;

(c) the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;

(d) the teacher talks and the students listen – meekly;

(e) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;

(f) the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
(g) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the actions of the teacher;
(h) the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
(i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
(j) the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects. (p. 73)

There is no allowance for inquiry upon the part of the students, or any space for their creativity in this dehumanizing approach to education. There is no acknowledgement of the student's self within this framework. Moreover, when teachers are forced to adopt such styles of teaching, when teachers are required to carry out rigidly prescribed curriculum in such a manner as described Freire, then the teacher experiences loss of self as well.

As such, the techno-rational approach to education is dehumanizing because it fails to acknowledge the individuality of each student. It does not nurture the complete student, including the histories, the families, the culture, the spirituality, and the individual needs of her/him. Nor does it acknowledge the unique, creative and intellectual capacities of teachers working within such environments. Teachers are assuming the roles of technicians, dutifully performing tasks specifically proscribed with little, if any input from themselves about how their class full of vibrant, unique individual students could best learn. In addition, the techno-rational does not address how all of these components interact with each other and with other individuals within our society.

The purpose of this study however is not to simply critique the techno-rational, but to propose an alternative. What I attempt to develop in this work is a pedagogy that turns away from the techno-rational and attempts to recognize and nurture the humanity of students and teachers by integrating a blues metaphor with the strength of multiple perspectives on emancipatory pedagogy from such educators/scholars as Paulo Freire, Madeleine Grumet, bell hooks, and William Pinar. I will describe, through personal

narrative and reflection, the manner by which I have utilized a pedagogy of the blues in my own practice in higher education settings, and the manner by which it has enthused me to continue the refinement of my teaching practice.

The blues metaphor is grounded in a form of music made popular initially by working class Black females at the turn of the twentieth century, and has since become a common thread throughout much of popular music today. It is grounded in a form of music that transcends race, class, and gender, but strongly reveals issues related to all three of these. It is grounded in a music that resulted from the interaction between races. It is historically rooted in the strength and suffering of African Americans in this country, moving from these difficult beginnings of these African Americans to eventually encompass the suffering of all humans.

Yet, my development of a blues metaphor is not exclusively drawn from the traditional definition of the blues, i.e. the twelve bar songs derived from African American roots with the first two lines repeated, and a final rhyming line ending each verse. While the metaphor is initially grounded in this form of the blues, my use of a blues metaphor is based on varied sources of historical and popular music, across which there are common themes and common ways of meaning making that interlock various forms of popular music together with the blues, weaving a rich thread of historical interconnectivity between songs from varying sources. My search is for more than blues songs standing alone; it also ties in with the embodiment of the blues, the lives of those who sing and listen to the blues, and the interpretive nature of the blues, all intertwined and influencing what I describe as the blues metaphor.

Throughout this dissertation, I use fragments of verses from varying styles of music, which may presently be, or have been in the past, popular music. I selected these verses because I believe they are representative of the blues metaphor that runs throughout much of the music in our country, rooted in the African American traditions that came out of slavery. It is a rich metaphor, created and recreated by the interactions between oppressed groups of people and those who are of the dominant class. These songs represent the retelling of pain and suffering, yet they also can express how joy can be found in the midst of this. These are songs sung and enjoyed by people of many differing ethnicities, male and female performers, each with their own artistic

interpretation evident in the performance. Yet, I will argue, all of these songs have a commonality in that there lays a blues aesthetic within each selection, and together they support my understanding and use of a blues metaphor.

In conceptualizing a blues metaphor, I am drawn especially to the writings of Ellison and Murray and their description of the blues to help direct me. Ellison (1964) describes the blues as "an impulse to keep the painful details and episodes of a brutal experience alive in one's aching consciousness, to finger its jagged grain, and to transcend it not by the consolidation of philosophy, but by squeezing from it a near-tragic, near-comic lyricism" (p.78). I believe that this description is further developed by Murray (1996), who states that

> … the blues statement, regardless of what it reflects, what it *expresses*, is a sense of life that is affirmative. The blues lyrics reflect that which they confront, of course, which include the absurd, the unfortunate, and the catastrophic; but they also reflect the person making the confrontation, his self-control, his sense of structure and style; and they express … his sense of humor as well as his sense of ambiguity and his sense of possibility. (p.208)

I will argue that these aforementioned characteristics of the blues are also incorporated into jazz, country music, rock, and Hip Hop, and will use some of these characteristics to help build my definition of a blues metaphor.

My conceptualization of a pedagogy of the blues rests not only on an understanding of the blues metaphor, but also on the notion that pedagogy is the art of teaching. The understanding of teaching as an art is critical in my definition of pedagogy. Marcuse (2001) describes art as ideological in character, in that it opposes given society. He notes that “the autonomy of art contains the categorical imperative: ‘things must change’ ” (p. 238). In considering the art of teaching, the underlying theme of ‘things must change’ adds to the political, ideological component included within my definition of pedagogy. A pedagogy of the blues, then, is an embodied ideological art that values teaching as a performative practice. bell hooks (1994) notes that it is this "aspect of our work that offers the space for change, invention, spontaneous shifts, that can serve a catalyst drawing out the unique elements in each classroom" (p.11). When I consider these characteristics of pedagogy and my underlying assumptions about the blues

metaphor, a basic connection between the two becomes apparent. Thus, performative pedagogy, like the blues, is an embodied art form of which spontaneity, invention, and change are important components. As such, it has the potential to redress many of the problems created within the techno-rational.

Integrating the blues metaphor with multiple perspectives on liberatory education, I develop a pedagogy of the blues as an alternative to the dehumanizing, techno-rational approach to education that is so commonly encountered in today's public school settings. I will illustrate that this pedagogy provide a means of honest confrontation to the sad state of education today by confronting the power issues that have turned our public school settings into their present conditions, “the nightmare that is our present” (Pinar, 2004). I will describe the manner in which it can provide the opportunity for recovery of the self of the teacher and her students.

In chapter one, I discuss the methodological framework that guides both the content and format of my work. In chapter two, I develop a critique to the techno-rational approach to education. In chapter three, I elaborate on the blues metaphor by distinguishing it from feeling the blues, discussing its roots in blues music, extending its meaning in other forms of music, and then highlighting key themes that make up a framework for applying the blues metaphor to the art of teaching. In the final chapter, I describe the pedagogy of the blues, using the framework of key themes developed in chapter three to enhance clarification and understanding.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In developing the ontological and epistemological considerations for this paper, I essentially utilized a process which evolved, incorporating what scholars wrote about, what blues singers sang about, and what *I* knew in my core as truth. I read extensively, all the while listening to music, playing music on my guitar, singing alone in the car. The music that I tended to touched my *self*, and had components of the blues metaphor flowing through it, although, at the time, the blues metaphor was not clear to me – I felt it, I knew it, and while I could easily express it in a song, I could not express it within the context of a paper. Many of the texts that I read did not flow, did not delight me, but they did challenge me. I struggled to find connections between the pure truth that I knew, the truth I heard in the songs of great blues singers, and the truth and meaning that was sought after by dead White men with difficult-to-pronounce names. I caught onto slender filaments of connections, trying to thread my way through treacherous philosophical thought, but marveling at the interconnections I finally was able to make between the work of mostly dead philosophers, my self introspection, and the evolving idea of the blues metaphor.

This chapter reflects this process in many ways. The style in which I write interweaves personal narratives and reflections with the theoretical, allowing me to more fully conceptualize the interconnections between my personal truth(s) and those of other theorists, philosophers, and artists. In essence, I search my self, and through contemplation and understanding, connect my knowledge of self with the theoretical. I am not only theorizing about a pedagogy of the blues, but interwoven with the theorizing, I include examples from my educational practice and from my life that support my conceptualization. This is important because these examples serve to help me more fully develop and shape the theory with which I base my educative practice, and they also help clarify the concepts to the reader.

Ontological/Epistemological/Methodological Considerations

Before delving into specificities regarding methodology for my dissertation, I must take into account my own personal background and how I have considered and approached this quest for knowledge. At this half century point in my life, my

experiences as a nurse, an artist, a teacher, and a mother have shaped my quest in ways which are unique to me, and color my interpretations of what I consider to be the truth. I find it difficult to work this intensely in an effort to fit my innate and experienced knowledge into some patterns that were established predominantly by dead White men of European heritage, and yet it poses an interesting challenge. This is even more difficult since my research has historical groundings in Black music. To try to trace the philosophical underpinnings of the framework in which I approach my research back to some archaic, often narrow scoped White European male model can be paralleled to trying to trace the origin of Bessie Smith's "Dirty No Gooder Blues" to Gregorian chants. The sad part is that I can – I can trace her work back to Gregorian chants – but I must speculate in my attempts to trace her work back to the rich, complex panorama of African music, because it has not been acknowledged or valued by the power structures in our society as saved or valued "history" in its narrative story-telling, sung or performed format. I can more easily trace it back to Gregorian chants in part because Charlemagne, the powerful European emperor, was instrumental in using his military power to impose the universal practice of Gregorian chant (Attali, 1985), making music a political tool tied up with power. Truly, her music was a tool of tremendous power, with political implications as well.

Throughout my work as a doctoral student, I have found myself increasingly drawn to the ideas in cultural studies and the work of Black feminists, perhaps because of their strength and tenacity in dealing with the historically unjust marginalization of Blacks. I am also drawn to their questioning of hegemonic rules regarding scholarly writing, and incorporate some of their ideas into my own writing. Collins (2000) states "oppressed groups are frequently placed in the situation of being listened to only if we frame our ideas in the language that is familiar and comfortable for a dominant group. This requirement often changes the meaning of our ideas and works to elevate the ideas of dominant groups" (vii).

I am convinced that women use language differently than men. Lakoff (1994) notes that women's communicative style tends to be collaborative rather than competitive, and that women make more use of expressive forms more than men (p. 627). My writing has reflected this in the past, and continues to do so, often interspersing

reflective writing and narrative with the theory I am discussing. I suspect this is because it more closely reflects the way in which I attain knowledge, connecting the theory to lived experience.

These are how things are played out in my perception of the world. By tracing how I am evolving, and exploring the manner in which I choose to conduct and write about my research for my dissertation, I can place it both *his*torically and in my personal present. I can also share creative, often threatening directions taken by people marginalized by race, class, and/or gender when they are navigating through an oppressive milieu.

Texts of Truth

I shed tears with my baby sister.
Over the years we was poorer than the other little kids.
And even though we had different daddy's, the same drama
When things went wrong we'd blame mama.
I reminisce on the stress I caused, it was hell
Huggin' on my mama from a jail cell (Shakur, 1998b).

In describing my research on the blues metaphor, it is important that I clarify what I mean by texts, since these are what I am examining, critiquing, and interpreting. By texts, I mean the described, or personally seen and/or listened to recordings and performances of artists whose work I will be using. While I will argue the lyrics above are an example of the blues metaphor as represented in rap, I will start with the examination of what may be termed as authentic blues, that is, the songs, recordings, and performances of African Americans in the South in the late 1800s and early 1900s, beginning with selected works of early female vocalists, such as Memphis Minnie, Ma Rainey, and Bessie Smith. These were working class Black women born towards the end of the 19th century, some known as singers of urban blues, while others were known more as singers of rural blues.

I will also examine similar texts of Black male blues singers from the same time period, such as Leadbelly, Blind Lemon Jefferson, and Robert Johnson. This era and

work of blues artists will be my initial source for describing what a blues metaphor is, i.e., they will be where my initial grounding of this metaphor is located.

Texts of early jazz recordings will also be examined, searching for similarities with regards to underlying descriptors of the blues metaphor, that is, searching for similarities in composition, performance, style, etc., as compared to the earlier mentioned blues. Starting with artists such as Kid Ory, Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton and using descriptors of a blues metaphor, I will trace the presence and evolvement of the blues metaphor in the work of later jazz singers, jazz musicians, folk singers, rock performers, and Hip Hop artists.

Central to the difficulty in defining what I mean by texts with regards to these works of blues singers, jazz musicians, and later rock, and Hip Hop artists, is the nature of truth itself. This becomes particularly complex for two reasons. Firstly, I am examining an art form, which, by nature of being art, rattles the historical positivistic foundations upon which much of our society values as truth. Secondly, I believe that the art form created and performed by artists that I am studying cannot be successfully placed in dualistic historical categories of knowledge, such as Plato's *mythos* and *logos*. Instead, I believe they represent a blending of categories, an emergent form of truth. A discussion of the historical background from which some of my ideas regarding truth have developed will follow.

While the search for the meaning of truth is documented throughout European history, one particularly strong foundation of this search can be found in the cave analogy in Plato's *Republic*. It denotes a mythological representation of this search. Carlson (2002) suggests that in this specific analogy of Plato, knowing and knowledge are divided into *logos* and *mythos,* stating…

> *mythos* is all knowledge that is historically and culturally specific. Only through rising above one's culture, through scientific, mathematical, and philosophical attitudes is it possible…to rise above *mythos* entirely. *Logos*, then, defines itself as a truth untainted by myth…a truth knowable only from outside the cave of culture, desire, and personal interest (p.7).

Even in this early philosopher's analogy, the lines are drawn and sides are taken; specific ways of knowing and definitions of truth become preferred, for example, with

the “enlightened” truth being that which is seen from outside the cave. *Mythos*, which taints the truth, must be risen above, that is, it is beneath *logos*. Historically, the dominant power groups have established that the “enlightened” truth is the truth of worth. In fact, many would argue that this attitude continues in today’s society. Indeed, it can be argued that much of what our society values as truth today has been shaped by those in power (White males), who tended to favor empirically gained knowledge – knowledge obtained outside of the cave. Those who favor this manner of getting at the “real” reality suggest that it can be approached by only using methods that prevent human contamination of its comprehension (Lincoln & Guba, 2003).

On the other hand, Plato uses the cave as a symbol of a kind of feminine knowing, and a site of pedagogy that “mixes story-telling and ritual, that offers ambiguity rather than firm answers to questions" (Carlson, 2002, p.7). From the outset, in the cave analogy knowledge from outside the cave is the preferred, valued knowledge, and the knowledge from within the cave is the more feminine, less valued knowledge. I sensed a connection to this in an article by bell hooks. hooks (1990a) relates a story about returning home to visit her grandmother. She describes how her grandmother worriedly asked her how she could handle living so far away from her people. hooks shares how deeply these words affected her, and how her “silent response was tacit agreement that only misguided, confused folks would live away from their people, their own” (p.90). To me, I sense that hooks is describing in a *mythos* fashion about the yearning to return to the warm, welcoming fires that are deep in the cave, fires where families tell stories, rock their children, sing songs, and create art, as evidenced in those drawings found in the ancient caves of Lascaux. This is what I sense is a cave of knowing. Although this kind of truth is not endorsed as such by dominant powers, it is a pervasive truth that exists despite overshadowing by preferred objective models. It provides an alternative to the preferred *logos* described by Plato.

One direction I have taken in my research is to explore theories that look at language, not just spoken, but any text of communication, including art forms, as unifying producers of meaning-making in societies. It has drawn me to theorists who look at art critically as liberatory texts of truth. This research has also propelled me to the conclusion that within societies, there are preferred truths. These truths are, in part,

controlled and propagated by the dominating powers in a society. I recognize that in the society in which I live, there still remains a strong predilection towards the *logos* aspect of truth. Yet, there also exist strong theorists reifying truth as consisting of something outside of the binaries of *logos* and *mythos*, incorporating what might be classified as aspects of both. It is to these that I am drawn.

Personally, I am strongly drawn to this subjective framework of *mythos*, but I also cannot help but value the analytical aspects of *logos* as well. This has led me to search out other ways of knowing, ways that do not fit nicely into either *mythos* or *logos*, but instead involve the intersections between them.

I had an experience several years ago that exemplifies how I am positioned in this search for knowing. When I was pregnant with my second child, my husband, one-year-old daughter, and I rented a cottage for a week in July on a pond in rural New Hampshire. When we initially inspected it in April, the owner told us he had purchased it at a reasonable price because the previous owners wanted to rid themselves of it. It held sad memories for them because their granddaughter had drowned there.

During the first night we spent at this cottage, I had my sleep interrupted by a gentle tap on my foot, sending a feeling of pins and needles up my leg. I opened my eyes, and in the moon drenched room, a small figure of a little girl stood at my feet. She was shimmering, like the "Beam me up, Scotty" figures in Star Trek shows. I shook my husband awake – "Jack – do you see her?" She disappeared, and he did not witness what I had. After a while, my rapidly pounding heart slowed down, and I dozed off. Again, I was awakened by the uncomfortable touch, this time on my arm. I opened my eyes, and saw the little girl was now standing next to me by my arm. I whispered "Jack – she's here …" but by the time he woke, she had disappeared again.

Seven years later, I was chatting with a new teacher aide in my second grade classroom when she told me she used to spend summers at her grandparents' cottage on a nearby pond. We talked about its location, and realized it was the same cottage I had rented in the past. She looked surprised when I asked her if anyone had died there. She told me her cousin had. I described the small figure that had awakened me, including hair length and color, and she told me that was her cousin's description.

When I was awakened by this figure twice, my husband tried to tell me it was a

dream. I did not accept that, since he had not experienced what I had just experienced. I had just observed something strange, and was touched by something strange, outside of my normal realm of experience. At that time, I questioned what exactly was going on, wondering if it was the ghost of the little girl who had died, but I did not feel comfortable accepting that as truth. Yet, by talking about it with my aide, I felt as if I had further "proof" that perhaps this small figure was a ghost. The existence of ghosts is generally not considered to be part of "rational" thought. In fact, I often hesitate to relate this story, fearing skepticism. Indeed, as part of a society that values rationality, I found myself questioning whether I had seen a ghost. Yet in talking to my aide, I tried to gain corroborating evidence or proof, almost in a positivistic mode, to help explain what I saw when it seemed to be so irrational. I felt more confident in stating it was true that I had seen a ghost, based on a blend of personal experience, innate knowing, and corroborating evidence in the descriptions given to me by my aide. Truth, to me, was a combination of *logos* and *mythos* – I had the descriptive evidence from my aide regarding her cousin's appearance, the *logos*. I also had the innate, "felt" experience of knowing it was a ghost, the *mythos*. The overlapping and intertwining of the two brought me to the truth that I saw a ghost.

Trying to define the texts and performances of the artists and musicians I am studying also incorporates both *logos* and *mythos* – a blend of the two towards the establishment of truth. I can read the texts of their songs – both written words and/or notes on a printed page. Some might argue that this is a *logos* type of knowledge – examining concrete words and notes on a page, accepting them as true representations of their songs. Yet, within the European based octave scale with which these songs are represented, some may not be able to be actually represented because of their blue notes, that is, notes that stretch most commonly between the second and third intervals of a scale. Hence, it can be argued that these texts are not exact representations of truth.

Another manner in which I may try to reach the truth regarding the texts is by examining the performances. For example, I can read descriptions by an author who described Bessie Smith's performances using information he gleaned from interviewing chorus members of Bessie Smith's troupe. I can read an autobiography of Billie Holiday, albeit knowing a ghostwriter was used in writing this text. I can interview my father

about performances of jazz musicians that he attended. I can relate personal recollections of performances I have attended, and I can interview contemporary artists. Yet, many would argue that all of these approaches are fraught with problems in representing the truth from a pure “outside the cave” viewpoint. Interviews took place nearly fifty years after Bessie Smith's death, verbal and written descriptions based on old memories, and personal accounts could be different than the actual performances of Bessie Smith. Both my father and myself have perceptions of concerts we attended that are surely affected by our moods and conditions in our lives at the specific time we attended the concerts.

Reissman (1993) notes "human agency and imagination determine what gets included and excluded in narrativization" (p.2). In my writing of this dissertation, I am selecting parts of interviews and books and transpositioning them to help the dissertation read more smoothly. I must also consider that analysis of an individual's personal narrative involve the questions around truth or perceived truth in recollections, such as in my interview with Shemekia Copeland, a contemporary blues artist. This would also play a part, for example, in interpreting Billie Holiday's autobiography. Hence, this approach to examining the texts involves a narrative, less positivistic, perhaps more *mythos* type of knowledge.

I can also listen to recordings of artists' works, that is, their actual performance in recording studios. Standing alone, these, too, are not true representations of their actual performances in tents on the Black minstrel circuit, or in present day milieus. For example, when Bessie Smith did her early blues recordings, she was required to sing into a large conical horn, with the sound being transposed to a wax-like disc. She needed to repeat the songs over and over again, with no playback being available until a few days later (Albertson, 1985). Hence, her recordings are actually representations of her singing a song for a recording - audible representations that may have resembled how she actually performed songs on stage, but nonetheless, are not exact representations of her performances on stage. Her voice and the instrumental back up of the piano/band are not as distinct as they would have been live. I also pick up nuances in her singing on the recordings, where I sense sarcasm or humor in her performance of the lyrics, yet I cannot count this as truth in a *logos* type of knowledge, but instead, as a *mythos* type of knowledge, in what I think she is implying, and in what message I sense that she is trying

to communicate. The juke joints in the South where Memphis Minnie played, the dance halls where Billie Holiday performed, the concert halls where Shemekia Copeland sings, the small clubs where jazz performers play(ed), and intimate coffeehouses where folk artists perform(ed) all provide an interactive environment that colors the performances of these artists, creating different texts than those done in recording studios.

I argue that by examining all of these (i.e. recordings, descriptions and interpretations of performances, paper representations of music, personal recollections), a close approximation to what a true performance of might have been like can be reached. In looking at some of the early blues and jazz from a historical perspective, and the more contemporary Hip Hop works as a White, middle class female, I am lacking access to both concrete and intrinsic sources of information about the texts as they were written, sung, and performed. However, I can approximate what I believe these texts and what I believe their performance of these texts consisted of by using the aforementioned sources. I also utilize web site information, interviews, and recordings for the more contemporary artists as well to help with this process.

Aesthetic Texts

Pistol shots ring out in the barroom night
Enter Patty Valentine from the upper hall.
She sees the bartender in a pool of blood,
Cries out, "My God, they killed them all!"
Here comes the story of the Hurricane,
The man the authorities came to blame
For somethin' that he never done.
Put in a prison cell, but one time he could-a been
The champion of the world **(Dylan, 1989, c1976)**

Explaining truth when talking about art poses a considerable amount of difficulty. I believe a combination of a *mythos* and *logos* approach is more valuable to me, as a woman who has developed an appreciation and need for both forms of knowledge. Marcuse (2001) describes the difficult issues surrounding the reality of art, stating:

> the radical qualities of art…are grounded precisely in the dimensions where art *transcends* its social determination and emancipates itself from the given universe of discourse and behavior…the world formed by art is recognized as a reality which is suppressed and distorted in the given reality…the inner logic of the work of art terminates in the emergence of another reason, another sensibility incorporated in the dominant social institutions. (p.236)

Thus, using traditional discourses to try to describe the early blues, jazz, or even Hip Hop, whether emerging as a new form of art at the turn of the century or a few decades ago, might be considered an exercise in futility. These emerging art forms "emancipate" themselves from these traditional discourses. Nonetheless, the origins of the music upon which I am focusing developed in a country that was founded on White European patriarchal foundations, so exploring the interconnections between the more recent accepted philosophical stances of major theorists may help to gain a deeper appreciation for the subject.

This discussion, in itself, is not enough to satisfy what I am questioning. Looking at what these texts represented is also an important component of my research. I must argue that these texts represent some of the feelings, worries, cares, issues, concerns, and difficulties facing poor Black women, poor Black men, and other marginalized individuals and groups not only in the early twentieth century but through present day. Marcuse (2001) notes that "the truth of art lies in its power to break the monopoly of established reality…it communicates truths not communicable in any other language; it contradicts" (p. 237). I am arguing that the art form of the blues has historically communicated, and, through what I will argue as related artistic forms, i.e. jazz, Hip Hop, country, etc., currently continues to communicate truths that were not heard through the spoken words of poor Black women and men in the post-Civil War South, in the segregated "Big Band" era, in present day Harlem, in impoverished urban areas of past and present day America, or even among White middle class women today.

This common thread, what I consider part of the blues metaphor, runs through the artistic texts that I am examining. Consider the description of art by Murray (1996). He describes art as

> …the ultimate extension, elaboration, and refinement of the rituals that reenact

> the primary survival techniques (and hence reinforce the basic orientation towards experience) of a given people in a given time, place, or circumstance, much the same as holiday commemorations are meant to do. (p. 13)

I will argue that much as holiday rituals retain some of the old, but are reshaped throughout time, the basic orientation towards experience by marginalized groups that were reflected in the art form of the early blues continue to be reshaped in other forms of music today, through what I will refer to as the blues metaphor.

In examining the roots of this music, I consider the early blues of Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey that represented Black women's newly acquired freedom to choose sexual partners and to travel, and within this framework, also represented their struggles with misogynistic mates and dealing with social inequities The blues of Black men in the Mississippi Delta more often dealt with travel, as compared to female blues, since this was more available to them as compared to females, and there was a great influx of Black men to northern cities after the Civil War. I will argue that these and other authentic, early blues origins have spread to be sung and reinterpreted, influencing styles and manners of music by individuals from varying socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. Yet, from its very roots to present day, this art form and the art forms I will argue have been influenced by it, communicate truths that are/were not being communicated in the dominant society's language.

Language Texts

One time out in the Range Rover
(WOOP WOOP, WOOP!) Aww shit they pulled me over
….Speed limit 30 just doin 34
"Yeah son, where the gun?" It's at home wit tha dope
"Oh you a smart ass ha?" Nah that's my lil joke
"How bout I tow yo truck in?" Ain't no need to be provoked
besides everything up in here done been smoked
I ain't got nuttin but tapes and CDs
Pocket full of G's and two tickets across seas
So me and my boo can lay under the palm trees
Ain't no more questions then hand me my ID
You could tell he was pissed

cuz the Black man in the Black range
doin Black things wit his Black change
Doin the right thing, drivin his ass insane
And if I wasn't in his face he probably be callin me names (Nelly, 2000)

I consider the blues and related forms of music as forms of language, albeit different than the often implied meaning of language referring only to spoken or written texts. In an attempt to more fully understand the idea of languages (not only spoken or written, but also aesthetically created languages) as texts, I searched through the historical basis for many related philosophical stances. I found that the development of my ideas concerning communication and texts could be traced initially, albeit loosely, with the work of Durkheim. He argues that society is a reality in its own right. He describes a totemismic system created by man for man. This system constrains individuals much as they are constrained by properties of the real world (Harland, 1987). The social facts that make up the social reality exert a kind of "coercive power" over the individuals. Individuals in the society must learn skills to communicate with other individuals within the society, as well as learn the established rules for their social environment. Some of this includes learning to understand the local language (Benton & Craib, 2001), and taking part in ritual performance that constructs the social (Quantz, 1999).

However, arguments exist against Durkheim's theories, including his ideas regarding "social solidarity" requiring harmonious interlocking of units of social organization. Mol (1979) suggests that instead, these units of social organization intertwine and conflict. An example of this occurs in considering the culture into which Bessie Smith was born in the post-Civil War South. At this time, poor Black women in the South had aspects to their social organization that differed and, in certain areas, conflicted with the organizational structure of the more dominant societal structure of middle class White women. For example, Black family structure often consisted of matriarchal communities. White women tended to have patriarchal family structures; to this day, conflict occurs with regards to the effectiveness of matriarchal families as compared to patriarchal families. I agree with Mol's ideas regarding the intertwining and conflicting aspects of social organization as opposed to Durkheim's ideas regarding

harmonious interlocking units of social organization. I will move on to explore other theories, focusing on those concerned with communication.

Levi-Strauss explains social unity in terms of communication. He suggests that members of a tribe are linked together by a perpetual weave and shuttle of back and forth transactions. He states "…exchange – and consequently the rule of exogamy which expresses it provides a means of binding men together and of superimposing the natural links of the family …" (qtd. in Harland, 1987, p. 29). Drawing on the work of the Swiss linguist, Saussure, Levi-Strauss discusses how humans, both primitive and modern, construct signs and symbols from what are available to them in the world (Harland, 1987). Levi-Strauss first introduced the idea of *bricolage*, a concept that involved primitive people attaching meaning to basic objects in improvised combinations of connection that bring about new meanings to them, as a form of representation. This concept is later applied to youth subcultures in England by Hebdige and Clark (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson, & Roberts, 2000; Hebdige, 2001b). This area of signs, symbols, and representations is of particular import to me in researching the blues subculture in which blues artists and their contemporary counterparts (Hip Hop artists, country artists, rock, jazz musicians, and other related musicians) lived and continue to live. This is, in part, because I believe originally, the blues were representations, via their performance and their distinctive style with those bent blue notes, of the struggles and concerns of poor Black women and men. Likewise, the aforementioned alternative musical genres have distinctive styles of their own, yet, I argue, carry some underlying commonalties of the blues.

Saussure's work on linguistic structures has significant implications for my research. Saussure suggests first, the meaning assigned to words is arbitrary, and these meanings are maintained by convention only. Secondly, meanings of words are relational – no word can be defined in isolation from other words. Thirdly, language constitutes our world – it doesn't just record or label it. Meaning is always attributed to the specific idea or object in the human mind, and constructed and expressed through language (Barry, 1995).

If we consider that a word and its meaning are not inherently connected, this could explain why different societies have different utterances for the same thing. For

example, the word for a four legged common house pet is *dog* in the United States, *perro* in Spain, and *mbwa* in Swahili, all very different in sound. In addition, a word cannot be assigned meaning in isolation – its meaning is in relation to the words around it. For example, the word *cool* can be an expression of excitement, a kind of haughty attitude, or the description of air temperature.

As a system of relationships, language establishes, categorizes, and makes cultural distinctions through connections of similarities and differences. Moreover, Saussure also proposes that a parallel exists between the operation of language and the operation of all other signifying systems in a society (Turner, 1996). I have difficulty completely agreeing with the idea that a parallel exists between language and the operation of ***all*** other societal signifying systems, specifically returning to Marcuse's ideas about art breaking the monopoly of established reality (2001). Nonetheless, Saussure did critical groundwork in defining the role of signifying systems in societies, which deserves examination. He described semiotics as a system through which to examine these signifiers. Turner (1996) tells us

> semiotics allows us to examine the cultural specificity of representations and their meanings by using one set of methods and terms across a full range of signifying practices: gesture, dress, writing, speech, photography, film, television, and so on. A sign … the smallest unit of communication within a language system…must have a physical form, it must refer to something other than itself, and it must be recognized as doing this by other users of the sign system (p.16).

Signs are divided into two parts – the signifier (the physical form of the sign), and the signified (the meaning/mental concept of the signifier). In a series of essays, Roland Barthes (1973) exemplifies other signifying systems in a society, describing varied topics such as the French wine drinking, popular wrestling, and films. He discusses the way in which there become cultural attachments to the signified, and refers to them as myths.

I am fascinated with the ideas of signs and signifying systems. I think they are important tools in trying to understand and gain knowledge. I think they show possibility with regards to understanding the performance, singing, recording, and marketing of the music about which I write. However, I hesitate to fully embrace this idea, because of the

element of power involved here. As part of his work on signifying systems, Barthes created a formal system of five codes to analyze all fiction. As Barry (1995) points out, while this exercise may have been tongue-in-cheek, it seems presumptuous to suggest that five codes could be used to analyze all fiction. When considering my research into the lives and music of these various artists , I am uncomfortable with the concept of having myself, as a member of the privileged White class, analyze their lives and works relying completely on what I decide are the signified and signifiers. It is more distressing for me to try to consider what the cultural attachments are, because I am not part of their culture. While looking at their lives and works using these tools may suggest certain conclusions, I could not accept my analysis as truth, but instead, an interpretation of events using a biased lens.

Texts of Class

Nobody seems to want me
Or lend me a helping hand.
I'm on my way from Frisco
Goin' back to Dixieland.
My pocket book is empty
And my heart is filled with pain
I'm a thousand miles away from home
Just waiting for a train. **(Rodgers, 1997)**.

Another important keystone influencing the culture from which the blues emerged live was class. Early Black blues singers, White country blues singers such as Jimmy Rodgers (quoted above), and some contemporary blues and rap singers, grew up in communities where they often experienced and/or witnessed harsh realities of poverty. Class continues to be an influencing factor in the formation of subcultures (Hebdige, 2001a). hooks (2000) notes that in our present day society, “our nation is fast becoming a class-segregated society, where the plight of the poor is forgotten and the greed of the rich is morally tolerated and condoned” (p.1). Exploring theories that focus on class and power structures add another component to help attain a deeper understanding in my research.

Althusser adapted Marxist ideology to create a more complex version of power application within a society. While Marxist theory suggests that power is applied from one source, Althusser suggests it is applied through a complex web. He describes ideologies as starting points that are taken for granted – they are so ingrained, we do not even recognize them. An example of this would be that members of the ruling class typically believe they are members of the ruling class because of differences in abilities and skills as compared to those in lower classes. In effect, working class children actually can make it up into the ruling class, but only if they learn the language of power – the language of capital, exploitation, and the law (Harland, 1987). Althusser makes note that capitalism relies on *interpellation* – we are made to feel as if we are choosing, but in actuality, we have no real choice (Barry, 1995). This intertwines with Gramscian ideas regarding hegemony.

Gramsci utilizes the word hegemony in a way that reflects the ruling class's ability to exert a special kind of power over subordinate classes, having them in some ways willingly conform to its interests. The ruling class accomplishes this subordination through weakening, destroying, displacing, or sometimes incorporating aspects of resistance that are enacted by the subordinate classes. Hegemony must be won through balances between the classes, through the compromises made to sustain it (Hall & Jefferson, 2000). Gramsci saw popular culture as a source of considerable resistance to hegemonic formation (Turner, 1996).

My research focuses on the blues metaphor which emerged from an art form, the blues, which directly confronted oppression by the ruling class. I will examine performances, biographical data, and versions of music that I will argue inherently typify the blues metaphor, and, as such, also are representational of popular culture from the 1920s until the present. I am doing this to help me explore and unveil the interplay between classes, and the shifting and compromise of the dominant class to maintain their hegemonic power.

I am concurrently taking into account that art provides a unique medium for expressing issues related to class. Marcuse (2001) states

> "true, the aesthetic form removes art from the actuality of class struggle from actuality pure and simple. The aesthetic form constitutes the

> autonomy of art vis a vis "the given." However, this dissociation does not produce "false consciousness" or mere illusion, but rather a counter-consciousness; a negation of the realist-conformist mind. (p.237)

I argue that through the blues and related musical forms, artists are/were able to dissociate from the "given" and create a counter-consciousness that clearly negates the realist-conformist mind. When one considers the popular songs of the 1920s created by the dominant culture, representing domestic bliss in a patriarchal relationship for White women, Black women's blues presented a new form, a new sound, and new ideas about what life was like for poor Black women. It revealed ***their*** selves, not the proscribed values of the dominant society, but instead, a reality previously unexpressed in such a manner. It will be argued that this continues to develop and influenced country music, rock, jazz, Hip Hop and related musical genres, revealing a counter-consciousness in each that I will argue incorporates the blues metaphor.

The Blues as Texts of Race and/or Gender

This is not an erotic interlude
Keep in mind I move multitudes
The Asiatic Black woman, hardcore beat drumming
It's hard to keep a good woman down, so I keep coming
Blow for blow, I take and I get some
Still I rise in a civilized wisdom (Latifah, 1989)

A Black woman in one of my classes stated that there is no acceptable rationale for her to separate race, class, and gender from one another. She believes they are so closely intertwined with each other that she has to consider all three simultaneously. While arguments can be made opposing this idea, I have come to understand the rationale behind her conclusion. From her perspective, it makes perfect sense. Black women are concurrently fighting oppression regarding issues of class, issues of gender, and issues of race. The Combahee River Collective (1982) states

> we believe that sexual politics under patriarchy is as pervasive in Black women's lives as are the politics of class and race. We also find it difficult to separate race from class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously. …We feel solidarity with progressive Black

men….We struggle together with Black men against racism, while we also struggle with Black men about sexism. (p. 16)

My research includes aspects of cultural studies and Black feminist thought, in part because of the initial popularity of the blues originated by Black female recordings on race records, although Black male blues singers also did recordings, but after the genre was initially made popular by Black females. In addition, it is important to note that it is argued that the Black female blues tradition is a historical location of Black female intellectual tradition (Collins, 2000; Davis, 1999). I do realize that there are certainly components of blues that are not related to Black feminist theory, i.e. more modern blues singers, some Hip Hop artists, some jazz recordings, etc. However, these often do have components of sexuality, often implied and gender specific, and components of race, especially with jazz and Hip Hop.

I agree with my classmate's comment that race, gender, and class are intricately enmeshed for Black women. Cultural studies has been criticized for not making the study of race central to its concerns (Gilroy, 1984). Much of discussion around race in early cultural studies publications was centered on music (Chambers, 2000; Hebdige, 2000b, 2001b). These studies were often related to youth subculture, and the role music played in the establishment, identification, and meshing together of the members of the subculture. As mentioned earlier, expressions of popular culture such as music are excellent sites wherein to analyze subordinate class reaction to hegemonic powers.

Black music has been linked since times of slavery with a culture of resistance. This is an aspect of Black feminism, and also part of critical race theory. I am specifically interested in the beginnings of the “outlaw culture,” which can be traced to the slave song *Steal Away*. This song called the slaves to break the law in order to resist the oppression of slavery. The text of music was used by the slaves to present positive alternatives to oppression (Evans, 1995a). This carried on in the works of Black female musicians as well. Although Black women gained more freedom following the Civil War, the inaccessibility of political and economic freedom helped to create the blues discourse, thereby presenting African-American freedoms in more accessible terms (Davis, 1995a). Collins (2000) notes that traditionally, blues played a similar function in African-American oral culture as that played by print media for White, visually based media. The

blues…"was a way of solidifying community and commenting on the social fabric of working class Black life in America" (p.105). In addition, the blues provided Black women with a text through which they affirmed the self. Williams notes “the assertion of individuality and implied assertion – as action, not mere verbal statement – of self is an important dimension of the blues” (qtd. in Collins, 2000, p.112).

By examining the blues and related genres closely, knowledge regarding centered around concerns on gender issues may also be obtained. While not always the songwriters themselves, the performers often selected, interpreted, and performed songs regarding dealing with misogynistic or unfaithful mates as part of the blues tradition. This tradition is carried on in contemporary country music, such as in the Dixie Chicks hit song "Goodbye Earl." Although the singers are White women, the common thread of women dealing with abusive mates is evident in their work as well. They sing:

> Well it wasn't two weeks after she got married
> That Wanda started getting abused.
> She put on dark glasses, and long sleeved blouses
> And makeup to cover her bruise.
> Well she finally got the nerve to file for divorce.
> She let the law take it from there,
> But Earl walked right through that restraining order
> And put her in intensive care. (Linde, 1999)

In a much earlier but similar manner, Bessie Smith's interpretive performance of “Yes Indeed He Do” provided a scathing critique of male violence to women (Davis, 1999). A cursory glance of the lyrics might make the reader think she was condoning the violence:

> Oh do my sweet, sweet daddy love me?
> Yes indeed he do.
> Is he true as stars above me? What kind of fool is you?
> He don’t stay from home all night more than six times a week…
> And when I ask him where he’s been, he grabs a rocking chair
> Then he knocks me down and says it’s just a little love lick dear.
> I wouldn’t take a million for my sweet, sweet daddy Jim

And I wouldn't give a quarter for another like him.

However, even listening to her recording seventy-five years after it was recorded, I can hear her voice growl with some of the lyrics, and bubble with sarcasm. It is through this, and through the performance of the lyrics, interpretations, quality of tonalities, timing, bending of blues notes that the early blues performer has, in effect, used her music as a tool to have hard issues brought to the forefront. I argue that this continues today in alternative, yet related genres, as exemplified in "Goodbye Earl" (Linde, 1999).

Despite the frequent descriptions of difficulties with their mates that the original blues singers revealed, some of their songs also demonstrated the sense of great love that Black women felt for their mates (Collins, 2000). Included in these were songs about same gender relationships, for example, in the works Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey. Similarly, early Black male blues songs were about problems with unfaithful mates. John Rusky, former curator of the Delta blues Museum, notes " …the drama between men and women, the restlessness of the sexes, have always been a part of the blues" (qtd. in Gillis, 1999, p. 10). This is carried on by the big band jazz singers, rock singers, folk artists, and Hip Hop artists as well.

Like others, I consider that the music of early female blues artists could be regarded as part of a subculture of feminine resistance, an expression of gender and gendered relationships, and an expression of self assertion (Collins, 2000; Davis, 1995a, 1999). When I listen to the music of Beyonce, Shemekia Copeland, or Queen Latifah, looking at them from a Black feminist perspective seems appropriate as well, yet I am a White woman. Realizing that I am in my fifties, and critiquing Hip Hop as a middle class suburban mother of three daughters also raises issues. Indeed, even how I look at jazz and rock through a lens of middle class, middle aged suburbia might be questioned. This provides the segue to my next section.

Ethical Considerations

When I was in fifth grade, I lived in a middle class home that bordered the projects. My best friend was a Black girl who lived in the projects. I sensed some hesitancy from my mom when I asked if I could invite her up to my house to play. Ironically, when she did come, we played under the shade of maple tree with White Barbie dolls (the only skin color available in those days). At this same time in my life, the

television was filled with pictures of peace marches, of troubles integrating schools in the South, and of George Wallace vehemently opposing any moves to stop segregation. While my parents expressed horror about the ways in which Blacks were being treated in the South, I sensed I was subtly getting the message that some distance needed to be maintained between races, and I felt this was wrong.

My family became more aware of the problems that racism poses, especially after my sister married a Black man. I have a sweet bi-racial niece that I hope will grow up in a world that allows her to hear blues and jazz, both authentic and interpreted. I hope she recognizes the roots of them, even if she hears the “dominant” society’s interpretation of them first. I would like her to recognize how important those early artists were in shaping much of the music that is listened to today. Although I would love my niece to grow up in a society that was not racist, I know that this is an unrealistic dream. However, I think that there are ways to help myself and others in our society become less racist. For me, what has assisted in this process has been learning more about how racism is embedded into our daily lives, and how I automatically live my life in a position of privilege as a White woman.

I wrestle with the ethical implications of analyzing the many of these aforementioned texts primarily because I am a White woman. I also realize that I am trying to look at some of the artists' lives nearly fifty to seventy-five years after their deaths. I am using what might be considered artifacts (old recordings), music and lyrics transcribed into a European based notation, and interpretations of another researchers based on interviews many years after the deaths of many of these artists. For me, living in present day culture, to try to analyze these old texts as these were written, sung, performed, and lived is seemingly presumptuous. Looking at present day artists through the media and recordings and videos also poses difficulties. For me to say with complete certainty that what I am examining is unquestionably true representations of their performances is ludicrous. I must be aware that I am interpreting recordings, written music, and biographical data to approximate the truth, and to make raw interpretations from that. I also must position myself with regards to my age and race, especially as I am listening to and interpreting some of what might be deemed as 'more outrageous' music of present day youth.

Foucault tried to look at periods in past history through the eyes of those who lived in them. He tried to not use a retrospective focus, but instead look at things in terms of what was happening then, including knowledges that may seem bizarre to us in our present day, but were considered appropriate knowledges for that period (Harland, 1987). While this approach is fraught with uncertainties, it could alleviate some of the influence of my present day culture on examining older recordings. Many of blues texts that I will be examining were created when Black men and women were arguably even more oppressed than they are in present day. Perhaps mapping their way of navigation through the oppression will correlate to approaches used by contemporary artists who are marginalized by present day circumstances, weaving the thread of a blues metaphor through nearly a century of music.

Benton et al. (2001) note that there are nearly always issues of power in a research study. The researcher implicitly becomes the authority in interpretation of study. This must be considered both on a personal level, and also with regards to my sources of information. For example, some of the biographical data upon which I will base my research was done by authors who are in privileged positions, i.e. White, Eurocentric origins. Not only must I consider these implications power on our parts, but also consider the privilege that accompanies my race in our society. Because I am a White woman, I am in a position of privilege, and cannot understand fully what it is to be oppressed in the areas of race, class, and gender simultaneously. I will need to include frequent reflections as I write and conduct research, paying close attention to areas in which I may inadvertently misconstrue ideas or implications because of my privileged voice. Ethically, I think it is important to confer with Black men and women to assist me in identifying areas in which this occurs, and to guide me in my interpretations. I realize that this does not completely alleviate all subjectivity from my interpretations, but it clarifies the framework in which I intend to work.

There is an ethic of personal accountability in Black feminist epistemology (Collins, 2000). I think it is important that I consider this when I write about the Black artists. Honesty regarding my personal viewpoints should be forthright, even as a White woman. Issues with which I wrestle concerning race, feminist theory, and culture need to be addressed openly and honestly. I do not think there can be an absolute truth that can be

derived from my research – specifically, research on historical subjects limits one's ability to do so. Nonetheless, some knowledge will hopefully be gained. However, that knowledge must be situated within the framework of the researcher, and this must be explicitly described.

Looking at the nature of knowledge, and determining what is truth will always be an ongoing task for me. I am aware that scientific knowledge, *logos,* has been favored historically for centuries. Yet, *mythos* has quietly co-existed alongside the historically favored *logos,* a way of knowing often associated with females.

As a female researcher with a strong background in science, I am drawn to the somewhat positivistic nature of structuralists, but hesitate to rigidly apply codes, such as those proposed by Barthes, to analyze human social behavior and culture. There are times I value the *mythos* way of knowing as well. I believe it is best to have a combination of both – a look from outside the cave, and then, a careful attention to the knowledge gained inside the cave.

When considering the art form of the early blues, essentially a new way of understanding was created that I will argue continues in some forms of jazz, rock, folk, and Hip Hop. Marcuse (2001) notes that:

> art is committed to that perception of the world which alienates individuals from their functional existence and performance in their society – it is committed to an emancipation of sensibility, imagination, and reason in all spheres of subjectivity and objectivity…The world of art is that… of estrangement – and only as estrangement does art fulfill a *cognitive* function: it communicates truths not communicable in any other language; *it contradicts* (p.237).

The understanding of these truths hinges on many factors – the methods chosen for the study, the culture in which the researcher lives, the framework from which the researcher presents the material, and the class, gender, and ethnicity of the researcher.

I think it is important to have a specific discipline from which to conduct research. However, I must acknowledge the limitations of the chosen discipline and recognize the political nature of the discipline. In choosing to use a cultural studies approach to my research, I have a sense of more freedom – I can explore race, class, and

gender within that framework. I can utilize the earlier work of cultural studies theorists on text analysis to help me further understand the nature of my research.

Ethically, I must use caution in my research. As a White woman, I am looking at music grounded in predominantly African American history from a lens of privilege. While this causes an element of consternation in my choice of topic, I will approach it carefully, and be forthright about this conflict. Hopefully, studying this will help bring further growth and understanding about the powerful nature of the blues metaphor, and the lives and works of artists who embody it. From this, I hope to draw implications that reify the importance of consideration of utilizing the blues metaphor in creating an alternative pedagogical approach to education instead of the traditionally Eurocentric techno-rational approach so often seen in schools today.

Methods

To approach this project, I must first collect the texts which I plan to examine. My first step in this process will involve me reading/listening to available recordings and transcriptions of the works of early blues artists, with the intent of gaining a historical grounding in the subject matter, seeking to discover overarching themes in terms of subject matter. I hope to gain initial insights regarding the development of a description of the blues metaphor. As mentioned earlier, common themes of the early blues were sexuality and travel, which were relatively new freedoms for African Americans at that time. They also included topics centered around social inequities. I will try to categorize them by topics, and then set them aside for a while. The rationale for doing this is that I believe that the blues have a life of their own, and my interpretation of them my change as my moods, knowledge, or life circumstances change. I will then look at early Dixieland, moving to big band era, bebop, to present day jazz, searching for similarities and themes that parallel what I was discovering in the blues. I will continue forward with other forms of music that I sense may help me define the blues metaphor, i.e. country music, rhythm and blues, rock and Hip Hop. Throughout this review, I will be seeking evidence of what Ellison and Murray used in describing a blues aesthetic, i.e. "a set of uniquely American aesthetic principles and values that acknowledges the importance of African-American vernacular forms to mainstream American art" (Baker, 2003, p.2).

My next step will involve the literature review for the dissertation. My initial focus will be on biographical backgrounds of selected artists, to get a sense of grounding of their work. The environments in which the early blues women and men lived certainly impacted on their work, as well as how their work was received. There are several books published about the early blues singers. Some are more biographical than analytical, and I will start with these. Some of these include *Bessie* (Albertson, 2003), *Black Pearls: Blues Queens of the 1920's* (Harrison, 2000), and *Stomping the Blues* (Murray, 1989). With regards to the more contemporary artists, I must rely primarily on an interviews I can arrange, interviews available in public media, information from the internet and newspaper articles, and some texts, such as *Holler If You Hear Me: Searching for Tupac Shakur* (Dyson, 2001).

I will next revisit some of the mostly dead European philosophers' work mentioned in my methodology section, particularly Sassure and Levi-Strauss's work on language, and Barthes work, *Mythologies* (1973) as well. I think that juxtapositioning these between the biographies and next section dealing with more cultural studies/critical theory approaches may provide me with a historical grounding, and may help further my understanding of differing viewpoints depending upon time and place in society.

I believe that revisiting of the early cultural studies work of Hebdige, Hall, and Clarke (Clarke, 2000; Hall & Jefferson, 2000; Hebdige, 2000b, 2001b) will strengthen the background for my work. Following this, I will reread some of the work of Davis, Collins, hooks, and other Black feminists and African American theorists (Ani, 1994; Collins, 2000; Davis, 1995a, 1999, 2001; Shujaa, 1994; West, 2004) to gain further understanding of their perspectives and how they might relate to my conceptualization of a pedagogy of the blues. I recognize that it can be argued that these are theorists that have clear distinctions between each other's ideas, but there are also interconnections between them. I also believe that the nature of this dissertation requires some overlapping of theoretical camps.

At this point, I plan to go back to my initial sorting of the texts of blues and related genres to see if my insights have changed, or if I am able to understand more fully how certain songs provide quite different meanings either to myself or to some of the authors that I have read, understanding that I may derive different meanings from them

than I did in my initial listening to them. I will also begin to derive more complete idea of how I will describe a blues metaphor.

My final focus in the literature review will be in the area of pedagogy. First, I will try to ground myself in recognizing the injustices embedded in a Eurocentric curriculum, using the work of Ani, West, Shujaa, Freire, and hooks. Friere's work is a strong influence in my research, but I find that his work and ideas are further developed in ways that sit better with me in the writings of bell hooks, especially in her book *Teaching to Transgress*. I will also heavily draw from the work of reconceptualists, especially Pinar and Grumet, specifically focusing upon their work regarding understanding and impact of the self and its interrelationship with pedagogy. Because it can be argued that this research is intertwined with multicultural implications, I will explore the ideas behind insurgent multicultural education, and critical multiculturalism, focusing especially on the works of Sleeter, McLaren, and Giroux (Giroux, 2000a; McLaren, 2000; Sleeter, 1993, 2000).

Using the texts above as grounding, I will then begin to conceptualize a pedagogy of the blues. In this, I will be looking for questions that arise when listening to musical selections. In order to conceptualize such a pedagogy, I must ask the following questions:

* How and why was the blues tradition such a powerful space for Black working class women and men to find voice?
* Where is the blues tradition present in other genres of music? Related to this question is how has the blues metaphor developed?
* How do the blues represent adaptation, transcendence, and resistance?
* What are the underlying ideologies behind these texts?
* How are race, class, and gender issues addressed?
* How are the blues involved in the recovery of self ?

Having grounded my conceptualization in the theory I mentioned in the earlier portion of this section, I will then describe such a pedagogy. Included in the description would be my argument as to why I believe it could be an important alternative pedagogy in education that steps beyond the predetermined techno-rational approaches so commonly seen today, emphasizing it’s importance specific to the recovery of self.

A pedagogy of the blues leans more towards the *mythos* type of knowledge/truth rather than *logos* described by Plato, yet it is not rigid, and can move though the cave both inwardly and outwardly. This is exemplified by referring back to the opening vignettes. When I sang "Black Mountain Blues," there was a clear need for some gender affirmation in myself, although I sensed this more in a *mythos* manner. Today, I can look back at this time in my life more from a *logos* manner, critiquing the hegemonic forces that situated me in that moment.

I will also frame this pedagogy as an example of education that moves into an emancipatory form of education that could unveil injustices related to race, gender, class, and power within our present society. It is pedagogy that is grounded in the use of adaptation and transcendence, accompanied with resistance to create change. This pedagogy can lead to change, including giving voice to the marginalized, and encouraging the border crossings by teachers (Giroux, 2000a). It opens dialogue not only in the classroom, but also in the school and the community regarding social justice and the need for change. It could provide teachers and their students with invaluable tools to assist them in becoming strong members of our society that are committed to uncovering injustices and creating a more just society.

CHAPTER TWO

THE TECHNO-RATIONAL BLUES

When I think back
On all the crap I learned in high school
It's a wonder I can think at all
And though my lack of education
Hasn't hurt me none
I can read the writing on the wall.

(Simon, 1990, p. 46)

Introduction

In this section, I describe the techno-rational approach to education and its dehumanizing effect on students and teachers. Pinar (2004) states that "the first step we can take towards changing reality – waking up from the nightmare that is the present state of public miseducation – is acknowledging that we are indeed living a nightmare" (p.5). Hence, it is important that the presence of the techno-rational approach in today's , educational settings and its accompanying effects on students and teachers must be described.

However, throughout this and following chapters, I include personal narratives – some of situations I have experienced as an educator in higher education, some as observations in public schools, and some from experiences I have had with my daughters' education. It includes the personal, parts of my self that have helped me understand more deeply that impact of the sad state of public education. Pinar states

> if public education is the education of the public, then public education is, by definition, a political, psycho-social, fundamentally intellectual reconstruction of self and society, a process in which educators occupy public and private spaces in-between the academic disciplines and the state (and problems) of mass culture, between intellectual development and social engagement, between erudition and everyday life. (p.15)

As an educator, student, wife, and mother, I am situated in the in-between spaces described by Pinar. The narratives I include serve many purposes, in that they demonstrate examples of the theory with which I am grappling, they may demonstrate the

psycho-social components interrelated with the theory integration, and they may demonstrate my maneuvering between the spaces described above.

The Techno-rational

Since the Industrial Revolution, public education in our country has been increasingly drawn to the techno-rational, leaving a wasteland of disenfranchised young talent and potential scholars behind. This presents a dehumanizing effect on educators and students. So very often, students are considered not as uniquely diverse, independently thinking beings who can share their knowledge, and create knowledge in nurturing, warm educational spaces, but instead, are seen as the "raw material" (Kliebard, 1975), to be used by drone-like teachers to form a "useful product" by the end of their schooling. Likewise, the talents and individuality of vibrant teachers are squelched as they are forced to assume the role of the drone-like beings described by Kliebard, In today's educational environments, the No Child Left Behind policy places enormous emphasis on test scores, and revitalizes the already powerful techno-rational curricular approach to education. Students and teachers are becoming more and more shackled in humdrum, boring approaches to education that evaluate effectiveness by examining numbers and results of standardized testing instead of the evolving learning and humanity of the students as final indication of the "worth" of our schools, teachers, and students.

There are tremendous power considerations to be included in this discussion. Kliebard (1995) notes that "curriculum in any time and place becomes the site of a battleground where the fight is over whose values and beliefs will achieve the legitimation and respect that acceptance into national discourse provides" (p. 250-251). The dominant discourse leans heavily towards the technical approach which is best epitomized by Tyler's work on curriculum (Posner, 1998). Posner notes that in such systems, schooling is seen as production system, with a means-ends type of rationality as the guiding principle. Decisions regarding what is taught in schools and the manner by which it is taught are not made utilizing a democratic approach in which students, parents, and community have active and important voices. Their humanity and individuality, the core of their selves, are overlooked by those dominant voices/creators of curriculum who decide what is deemed important knowledge. This directly impacts

teachers and students, and especially those whose voices have historically been and continue to be silenced. Greene (1995) notes that

> when it comes to schools, the dominant voices are still those of the officials who assume the objective worth of certain kinds of knowledge, who take for granted that the school's main mission is to meet national economic and technical needs. Traditional notions of ways to efficiency feed into claims that schools can be manipulated from without to meet predetermined goals. The implication often is that for their own benefit, teachers and students are to comply and to serve (p. 9).

When teachers and students feel they have no voice in curriculum and how the curriculum is enacted, and when they reciprocally feel the lack of connection between the curriculum and their lives, the resulting environment is dehumanizing. Grumet and McCoy (1997) describe the importance for consideration of the teacher's self in her teaching. They state that "the bonding of private experience to public knowledge is…essential for good teaching, for situated within this connection in the love for the world that permits teachers to inspire their students with its wonder" (p. 10).

The effects of this dehumanization on students is becoming increasingly apparent. Marshak (2005) describes the effects of this dehumanization in education as the techno-rational approach to education continues to grow in strength. He states:

> …since 1983, the year of A Nation at Risk, our corporate and government leaders have labored incessantly to abandon all values in schooling except economic nationalism, personal wealth, and materialism. George W. Bush … is the purest manifestation of this idiocy: According to his No Child Left Behind crusade, the only value in education is test scores. No qualitative values matter at all. To the extent that we turn the lives of our children and youths into engines of economic nationalism and personal-wealth generation above all other values, we demean our children's potential as human beings. And we cripple the quality of their lives as children and teenagers because test score obsession and exclusive materialism generate real psychic injuries. (p. 35).

I experienced a confrontation with a dehumanizing curriculum whereby student worth was determined purely by test scores in my daughter's seventh grade 'accelerated' math class a few years ago. I include the following vignette because it gives examples of

my means of contending with the difficult situation as a person with a great deal of cultural capital in approaching the teacher. However, it raises issues regarding how those without my cultural capital would be affected. In addition, it demonstrates the loss of the self my daughter experienced in this situation, evidenced by her frustration and anger, as well as the impact of ignoring the individuality of students in this given situation.

It is October, and my daughter is wound tighter than the strings on my guitar sitting perched in a corner in my room. She has always experienced life a little more intensely and vulnerably than my other two daughters. As she has aged, I have introduced her to relaxation techniques, breathing exercises, using art and music as outlets, and the importance of exercise for her mental well being. She is one of the top swimmers in her eleven/twelve year old swim team, a position that requires swimming a minimum of 2000 meters during her regular 6 days a week of practice. This rigorous schedule has helped keep those anxiety demons at bay.

My daughter is at a middle school that has a gifted and talented program, and is a member of a "gifted" student team, which essentially tracks these students into advanced math and English courses. Hence, here at the age of twelve, she is being locked into the "expected" course selection for high school.

For the past three weeks, she missed two to three afternoons of swimming practice, because of Mrs. Rath's math assignments. My daughter is becoming an emotional wreck; every afternoon and evening, she is crying off and on during the two to three hours it takes her to complete the difficult, extensive homework. When I try to help, it becomes instantly clear to me that her frustration level is far beyond my ability in that complicated role of twelve-year-old's mother, to reach through the tangled web of emotions to get through to that pure, exciting sense of "aha" that can make math so delightfully fun.

I give up, and decide to play the heavy, telling my daughter that I have to call her teacher (she whines and moans, begging me not to), and I patiently explain why I feel I must call the teacher, and what effect I hope to gain from the discussion with her teacher. She is not a happy camper with this plan, but I sense some relief through those tears.

I begin some background work on how to approach the difficult confrontation with the teacher, and am helped by unsolicited sources; another parent has called me

whose daughter is a nationally ranked figure skater. She is encountering the same problems with her daughter - tears, missed skating lessons, and the development of a real hatred of math. I begin to formulate my plan, but I sense this could be a very problematical confrontation. I call a friend whose son is a year older than my daughter, and ask her about his experience with this teacher. She tells me that he developed what she suspects will be an intense, lifelong hatred for math after this class, that he spent hours crying each night as he worked on the voluminous homework, saying how much he hated that teacher, and how much he hated math.

I decide to pull all the weight that I can with this teacher, and formulate a plan to have her call me at my school - perhaps hearing from another teacher might soften the confrontation. I plan my approach carefully, write notes to myself, and wait for the call at 3:15 from Miss Rath. The page for me to pick up a call comes through the PA system, and armed with my notes and shaking fingers, I sequester myself in the small closet of a room where outside phone access is available for teachers at my school.

Me : Hi Mrs. Rath.

Mrs R.:Hi Mrs. McLoughlin - how can I help you?

Me: I'm having serious concerns about my daughter and her math.

Mrs. R: Her grades are quite good. You don't need to worry about them - she has an A minus average.

Me: That is a part of my concern. My daughter is an A student, and she is knocking herself out every night, spending a minimum of three hours to get through her math homework.

Mrs. R: Three hours? My goodness - that's too much time.

Me: I agree. I was wondering if she could be moved down to the general math class instead.

Mrs. R.: Oh no! She would be bored to tears in that class.

Me: Well, she is in tears every night as it is. Umm, I am in a doctoral program in education right now, and one of things that has come up in some of my classes is the problem with girls and math. My daughter absolutely hates math now, and feels like a complete failure. I don't want this attitude to become embedded in her.

Mrs. R.: Oh no, I don't want that either. I'm not sure what to do…

Me: Can you tell me why the kids have so much homework? Maybe we can find a way to get the same concepts and ideas completed in one problem instead of having them do 4 or 5 that are related to the same problem.

Mrs. R.: Well, here's how my classes go…we review the homework from the night before when the kids come into the classroom. If there are any problems that they are having trouble with, we go over them. Then, they are given their homework assignment for the evening, and they quietly begin to read the next chapter, and work on their homework problems at the end of the new chapter.

Me: So, essentially, you are not reviewing any of the material before the kids have to do the problems for homework? They have to figure them out on their own, based on their understanding of what they read in the chapter?

Mrs. R.: Yes. But it works well. We go over problem areas for them the next day.

Me: Do you think that it might help the kids by reviewing basic concepts they will need to understand ***before*** *they do the homework?*

Mrs. R.: This way works just fine. I have been doing it like this for years, and I have excellent results on the proficiency examinations.

Me: But, Mrs. Rath, I don't want to sound mean, but I have talked with other parents whose children are either in your class, or have had you for math in the past, and they, too, hate math as a result of their frustration. The mother of a boy in one of your prior classes still shudders when he thinks of that year with you - he carries this abhorrence of math with him today that was not there prior to taking your class. He spent hours every night crying over it.

Mrs. R: I didn't realize this. This is not my intention. But as I said before, my proficiency results are always very good.

Mrs. R: I'm not worried about my daughter doing well on proficiencies - she will. More important to me is my daughter's personal well-being. She is a pretty intense young lady, and she has typically dealt with this through regular exercise. She is a very good swimmer, and is missing two to three practices a week because of not having enough time for her homework. She spends a minimum of three

hours agonizing over math, and generally, one hour total for the remaining courses. Not only is she missing out on stress release she gains from swimming, sheis gaining much more stress with this approach to math. On the school's opening day, the principal said that students should not be required to do more than an average of one hour total of homework, and clearly, this is not happening.

Mrs. R: What do you think I should do?

Me: Well, how would it be if you have my daughter do the odd number questions, so she can check her answers in the back, and see if she is on target. She won't cheat, but it will give her some immediate feedback on whether she is grasping the concept.

Mrs. R: Yes. That's a good idea. Also, let's have her stop her homework as soon as she has been working one hour on it. But she cannot let other students in the class know of this arrangement. Do you think this is a good plan?

Me: We'll give it a try for her, but what about the other kids in your class? I know of at least one other student that is dealing with similar issues.

Mrs. R: Well, her mother should have called me.

Me: Like my daughter, her daughter is protesting against any parental intervention. I'll tell the mom she needs to do this though.

Mrs. R: Thank you. And please, encourage your daughter to talk to me should any more difficulties arise.

Me: I'll tell her to, but girls her age don't want to look "dumb" in front of other classmates, and they're so frustrated, they're afraid they may start to cry.

Mrs. R: I can't help them if they don't speak up.

Me: Well, let's try this approach. Thanks for listening.

Mrs. R: Yes, thank you too.

The outcome of that year with my daughter was that she dreaded that math class, but made her way through it without missing many of her swim practices because of homework. She no longer cried through her math homework, but her intense dislike for this teacher never left. Math continued to be one of her least favorite subjects throughout high school.

What was more disturbing to me, apart from my daughter's techno-rational blues, was that even in talking to Mrs. Rath, her teacher, even in sharing the personal, individual story of my daughter and the impact of the mode of teaching was having on her, even after sharing stories of other students that had similar problems, this teacher separated these personal stories from her curriculum. She chose not to learn from them, not even to question the impact of her teaching, and almost gave me the impression that these stories were anomalies, to be dealt with swiftly and effectively, annoying as they were. They were to be swept under the rug and forgotten. I was told not to tell other students that my daughter was doing adapted assignments - heaven forbid….that could cause dissension among the ranks. Mrs. Rath might then have to acknowledge the humanity of other students, and actively engage in the art of teaching. Meanwhile, she continued to derive her personal satisfaction of a "job well done," not by engaging the students and learning with them, and not by tailoring her class to meet their needs. Instead, she saw her sense of worth as a teacher and the efficacy of her teaching in terms of seeing her classes pass the math proficiencies. She saw her students not as individuals, but instead as numbers generated by the state of Ohio when the proficiency grades were returned. Unfortunately, this seventh grade math teacher did not change her approach to teaching, but I was pleased to learn that she retired a year or two after our conversation. Although I caught glimpses of this teacher's humanity in our conversation, I wondered when and why this teacher had "given in" and submerged her self beneath the intricate web of techno-rationality in her teaching.

Several scholars who focus on curriculum and pedagogy have supported the contention regarding the dehumanizing aspects of techno-rational approaches to education. Pinar (1975) described the dehumanizing effects of the technocratic approach to education as inhibiting the child's imagination, arresting development of the self, diminishing self confidence, promoting arguments and disagreements among peers, and hampering the student's ability to perceive aesthetically and sensually. Despite these admonitions against focusing on the technical, the trend in education continues to do so.

Although the aforementioned article by Pinar was written over a quarter of a century ago, his descriptions hold true in many of today's techno-rational schools. I will attempt to illustrate current examples of this dehumanization using some of his

descriptive characteristics. First, the inhibition of a child's imagination and effect on children's ability to perceive aesthetically can be clearly seen in the predominating curriculum of today's schools. Imagination and aesthetic growth are often areas that are developed through the arts. With the current valuing of math and literacy standards, parents and teachers are concerned of the implications with regards to the potential devaluing of the arts in schools (Chapman, 2004; Robelen, 2005; Whitfield, 2005). Concerns about test scores and funding issues deemphasize the importance of the arts, and sometimes result in the discontinuation of arts programs.

Secondly, the arrested development of the self has serious implications as well. Dewey (1990) states "… if we identify ourselves with the real instincts and needs of childhood, and ask only after its fullest assertion and growth, the discipline and information and culture of adult life shall all come in their due season" (p. 60). Yet, in today's schools, kindergarten students are being asked to become much more skilled in literacy and math as compared to even twenty years ago. We ask young, active students to suppress their natural need to explore and learn about their world, and instead, insist that they sit quietly while the teacher methodically attempts to engage them in scripted texts that are frequently of interest to neither teacher nor student. Marchak (2005) asks

> how many children in America today already go to school drugged, either so they can pay attention to all the boring, irrelevant data being fed to them or so they won't be so depressed by their lives that they can't function? Millions and millions, and more prescriptions every year." (p. 35)

Thirdly, the techno-rational approach also influences the moral and ethical growth in students, affecting their personal sense of self esteem, and their interactions with peers. Noddings (2002b) states that we "cannot expect that children will build their ethical ideals without help. Neither can we expect that, at some magic age, they will become fully rational and capable of summoning the moral law that is supposedly within us" (p. 216). Surely, these are aspects of education that are being inadequately addressed, if addressed at all in many contemporary schools, yet should be included very early in children's education, and throughout their time in schools. This undeniably impacts upon the character of individuals during and after their schooling, as well as with the development of self.

Learning to care for one another, and accepting the notion and actions associated with being cared for are key elements in providing safe and welcoming environments for learning. Providing a technical approach to education that ignores the individuality of each student, and treats each student's learning in exactly the same way as her/his peers, regardless of what is going on in her/his interests, talents, personal life, home, or community, does not foster or model caring.

Noddings (2002a) also writes that "insisting on the relational sense of caring ....brings us face to face with real moral life. How good I can be depends at least in part on how you treat me. My goodness is not entirely my property, and the control I exercise as a carer is always a shared control" (p. 89). The recurring incidences of violence within our schools cries out for the development of this community aspect to caring. Stevick and Levinson (2003) note that many of the school shootings and other random mass murders occurring within our present day society are done by White males either in schools or very recently out of high school, and these individuals are "often deeply involved with dogmatic codes of generalized hatred" (p. 324). While it can be argued that there are complex causes for the development of such extreme representations of lack of caring, a dehumanizing education could be one of many contributing factors. It is apparent that there exists a need for shared control over the development of caring in our schools, shared between the carer and the cared-for, yet this does not occur with the adherence to a techno-rational approach to education.

The dehumanizing atmosphere in schools impacts on teachers as well. McIntosh (2005) states

> I find that teachers suffer from the same confinements that their students do. Many long to repair the damage done to them by the requirement that they leave their whole selves at home each day, and teach from a very narrow segment of their perceptions and capacities, which too often means preparing students for standardized tests, and unspeculative, normative ways of thinking. (p. 30)

McIntosh further suggests that it may be easier to change teachers than it is change schools, once the teachers realize that they are recovering their loss of human breadth and longing to reshape the world.

Other scholars have also posed similar views about education. Paulo Freire presents strong arguments regarding the manner in which the techno-rational approach to teaching is dehumanizing (Freire, 1998a, 2003; Shor & Freire, 1987b). Freire (2003) describes dehumanization as marking

> …not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (through a different way) those who have stolen it…[It] is a distortion of the vocation of becoming more fully human…sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who have made them so. In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking their humanity, (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both (p. 44)."

Freire (2003) suggests that the means by which the oppressed may recognize their oppression and fight against it to restore their humanity is through education. However, he notes that the most commonly practiced forms of education are serving the goals and values of the oppressors, thereby being dehumanizing. He describes this form of education in terms of the "banking concept." With the banking concept of education, the teacher is the depositor, and the students as the depositories for her/his communiqués. Friere (2003) describes this perspective as when "knowledge is [seen as] a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves as knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (p. 77). However, he notes in this approach that "it is the people themselves who are filed away through lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system" (p. 72).

I believe that in many of today's schools, teachers and students are being oppressed by rules and regulations created by the dominant powers and regulated through administrative bodies. Delpit and White-Bradley (2003) describe contemporary examples of such forms of teaching. They note that

> in schools serving poor and African American children, there is typically little or no focus on developing the humanity, the integrity, or the thinking and leadership capacity of the children or teachers who try to serve them. They are rote, robotized, and ruled by outside forces. It has become more and more difficult to teach in ways that acknowledge that there are brilliant students before us who are

constantly engaged in critical thinking about the rules we construct and the behaviors we reward (p. 286-287).

I observed a class in a setting such as described above, whereby a teacher was complaining to me about her unhappiness with the reading program in her urban fifth grade classroom. Each morning, she was required to spend one hour, at a specified time, teaching from a scripted text that was geared for fourth grade reading skills. I had observed many of her students "sneaking" independent reading time during science class, holding library books in their laps to secretly read a few more pages in some novel that they were clearly enjoying. It was obvious that independent reading was a favored activity by many of her students, and one that could be utilized to develop a reading curriculum that captured their interest while simultaneously improving their skills. When I asked the teacher how the administration justified making all the students in her class sit through that fourth grade scripted text, even if they were reading at a fifth grade level or higher, she told me that the administration assumed that since the majority of the students were 'behind' in reading, they would use the fourth grade text. She also told me that her and other teachers' adherence to the scripted text and allotted time for teaching the text was closely monitored by unannounced "drop-in" observations by a reading program administrator who checked on this program throughout the school district. The teacher's frustration was obvious, and the oppression of the teacher and her students within this setting was almost palpable.

Alternatives to this type of pedagogy are described by Freire (2003). He writes about a humanizing pedagogy, a pedagogy of the oppressed, as an alternative to the banking concept of education. It is a problem-posing pedagogy, in which the “teacher is no longer merely the one-who-teaches, but one who is himself [or herself] taught in the dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow…” (p.80).

Inherent to Freire's ideas about a humanizing pedagogy is the presence of dialogue between students and teachers. He suggests "that to teach is not *to transfer knowledge* but to create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge" (1998a, p. 30). How can a teacher learn from students or help them begin to construct their own knowledge if they are required to sit silently and have the teacher deposit her or

his little gold coins of wisdom into the depositories of their mind, especially when they may even have that knowledge already, or are thirsting for a different kind of learning? How can we morally justify the dehumanizing experiences that are part of the daily lives of students in such settings, where they are rarely allowed to talk in the classroom, in the lunchrooms, or walking down the halls? At the aforementioned site where I was observing, recess was not allowed for any of the classes, because the administration decided too many fights were breaking out between students during this unstructured playtime. I wondered why the administration did not explore a possible correlation between the dehumanizing effect of their pedagogy and these fights.

These issues and the underlying power dynamics that are present in such classrooms become even more disturbing when considering that often, in such environments, the teacher is "depositing" knowledge that is clearly that which the dominant culture determines is important for the students to know. Eisner (2002) describes the importance of the "null curriculum," i.e. that part of curriculum that is not taught. He stresses the need for examining what is not being taught, and the implications there within. In critiquing the techno-rational, in looking at its dehumanizing aspects, we must ask, as Marshall, Sears, and Schubert (2000) ask

> …where are voices of African descent, voices of Latina/Latino origin, voices of Native or first nation people? Where are the voices …of singers and storytellers who create the curriculum of popular culture …of those ignored or cast aside or devalued because of illness, disability, sexual identity, religious views, place of origin, ethnicity, appearance, custom, or belief? (p. 4).

Freire (1994b) emphasizes the need for educators to situate their teaching in areas that are important and relevant to the students' lives. This can be a step towards stopping the silencing of those unheard voices. He states that the educator

> must begin with the educands' 'here' and not with her or his own…the educator must keep account of the existence of his or her educands' 'here' and respect it….This means, ultimately, that the educator must not be ignorant of, underestimate, or reject any of the 'knowledge of living experience' with which the educands come to school." (p. 58)

This approach connects education to the self, of the students and of the educator. It allows the educator to deeply consider the way in which she can best address the education of her students. It reinforces the need for the teacher to reflect autobiographically upon her values and experiences that have shaped her teaching. Grumet and McCoy (1997) note the importance of having these reflections shared and critiqued, to help deepen the understanding regarding the assumptions these reflections embody.

Programmed and scripted texts are written and taught with disregard for the individuality of students and for the great diversity from classroom to classroom and from school to school. They do not start with the students' "here" but instead, with the "here" of the dominant powers, sometimes far removed from the cultures and lives of the students and the teacher. So very often in our present educational settings, students with the dominant society's cultural capital are much more likely to succeed, frequently because of our blatant disregard for individual knowledge and living experiences of those students who are not part of the dominant culture.

The techno-rational curriculum put forth by the dominant society frequently has little, if any, relevance to the lives of the students, especially those who are members of marginalized groups in our society. When taught using the banking concept of education, students are given a narrow view of what the teacher/administration deems is important, "correct" information. The pervasive "teaching to the test" approach has even deeper implications. Eisner (1994) argues that if students are given repetitively reinforced lessons in which the idea that a question has only one correct answer, they will associate being right with knowing the lone correct answer to the question posed by the teacher. He argues that this approach does not support intellectual pursuits of multiple perspectives, speculation, risk-taking, and so forth. With the demographics of our country becoming increasingly diverse, it is essential that students and teachers are encouraged to develop expertise in seeking out multiple perspectives, and in understanding that there is often more than one correct answer to questions. It is essential that educators espouse a humanizing pedagogy that supports voices often silenced in our schools and in our society. Even for educators with the best of intentions, Freire (1994b) urges that they acknowledge that they are offering their reading of the world which is just one of many

readings, some of which may be antagonistic to the one being presented. In doing so, other voices can be welcomed, and encouraged.

hooks (1994) furthers the argument against the techno-rational in education. She describes the disjointedness she experienced as a child when forced to leave Black schools and enter predominantly White schools because of racial integration. Her description of her experiences in Black schools indicated that education was a practice of freedom, embracing the entire student, with teachers knowing each student's family and home life. Here, the intellect was nurtured. She describes her experience in White schools after integration as a polar opposite. For it was here that "knowledge was suddenly about information only. It had no relationship to how one lived, behaved… we soon learned that obedience, and not a zealous will to learn, was what was expected of us" (p.4). She further describes such education as a practice of domination by her teachers, and not the practice of freedom that she had experienced in her Black schools. In essence, she describes how dehumanizing the technocratic and racist approach used in many White schools was at the time, and how each student's unique self was oppressed within the White schools.

hooks (1994) vision of a humanizing education rests on her conception of an engaged pedagogy, a way of teaching that allows anyone to learn. She states

> our work is…to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin." (p.13)

She suggests that a classroom where such learning is occurring may often have laughter erupting as ideas are exchanged, and reciprocity and respect are in place. She fully encourages her students to become critical thinkers engaging in multiple locations. Underlying many of hooks' ideas is a belief in the importance of the teacher being always open to learning herself. Engaged pedagogy requires both teacher and student to become risk takers.

hooks (1994; 2003) frequently looks towards Buddhism and the work of the Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh in her development of pedagogical ideas. Thich Nhat Hanh (2001) states

> … when we are attached to views, even if the truth comes to our house and knocks on our door, we will refuse to let it in. To inflexibly embrace a view and regard it as fixed truth is to end the vital process of inquiry and awakening." (p. 124)

It is critical that the teacher does not take the 'easy way out' by maintaining old ideas, lessons, and approaches to learning, but instead remains open to learning and change.

hooks (1994) parallels Freire's concept of praxis, i.e. the need to have action along with reflection to create changes in the world, with engaged Buddhism espoused by Thich Nhat Hahn. Engaged Buddhism focuses both on practice and on contemplation. hooks suggests that Hahn's ideas provide a more holistic approach to teaching, not only emphasizing the mind, but also the spiritual and the physical, with all three joining in unity. This provides an engaged pedagogy of freedom, allowing the professor and the students to regard one another and exist as " 'whole' human beings, striving not just for knowledge in books, but knowledge about how to live in the world" (hooks, 1994, pp. 14-15).

The techno-rational approach to education does not address the spiritual side of teacher or student, often leaving them caught up in a sense of restlessness, or feeling that something is “out of kilter” causing them to search for “something else” (Oldinski & Carlson, 2002). Ionnone and Obenauf (1999) state

> the subject matter curriculum is still caught up in the scientific management movement …But in spite of these models, we sense something is incongruent … Besides this, we are being asked to do more than in any other time in American history…And we become more confused because we are aware of the incongruency within ourselves, we are longing for something more, something that gives us meanings as teachers and also gives meaning to our students. (p. 738)

This incongruency is the result of lack of attention the spiritual well-being of the students and teacher. Fisher (2001) defines spiritual well-being as the quality of relationships that individuals have in one or more of the following four domains:

* Themselves (meaning/purpose/values in life).

* Others (quality of relationships related to morality, culture, and religion)
* The environment ((beyond just care to a sense of awe/wonder, and perhaps notion of unity with the environment).
* Some-thing-One beyond the human level (ultimate concern, cosmic force, transcendent reality, God, or faith) (p.100)

While some might argue that the spiritual cannot be addressed in some school settings without impinging on First Amendment rights, certainly elements of the first three categories could and should be acknowledged and nurtured. Yet, this is rarely done in school settings or in higher education settings, for there are implicit power considerations in doing so. Dillard, Abdur-Rashid, & Tyson (2000) note that

> it is one thing to have open and passionate dialogue around issues of spirituality and education while walking down the halls of ivy. It is quite another to come out of the hallway, into the "legitimate" spaces such as classrooms and scholarly research journals, and present spirituality as a legitimate topic at the discourse table…Given the reward structure and cultural milieu of the academy, spiritually minded academicians have often received the implicit message to hang their spirituality outside the doors of the university and to pick it up again (if they are still inclined to do so) on the way out (p. 449).

Some students and teachers are from cultures where spirituality is highly regarded and an integral part of their cultural norms. Ignoring their spirituality might be seen as an act of violence (Dillard, Abdur-Rashid, & Tyson, 2000). Ultimately, regardless of the definition of spirituality, it is deeply interconnected with the sense of self of the students and the teacher.

Similarly, the techno-rational rarely engages the physical in education. I was reminded of this when I recently spent a day as a substitute teacher at a school where I had formerly worked as a kindergarten teacher. I was teaching algebra to seventh and eight grade students, many of whom had been in my class as kindergartners. The topic was word problems, with trains leaving stations at various times and speeds. My directions from the ill teacher were to have the students read the chapter, and then do the problems at their desks. Students came in, dropped enormously heavy, book filled

backpacks on the floor next to their assigned seats, and I told them their assignments. They quietly opened books, and started to read. The atmosphere was stifling. The sense of frustration was palpable. Where were my vibrant students who, as five year olds, actively engaged in math, who verbalized questions and theories, who manipulated objects to help solidify concepts? I couldn't stick with the "assigned" approach to teaching. I started talking with the kids about the problems. I told them I could never figure out those problems until I was about thirty years old, but when I finally did figure them out, it was really cool. I told them I would try to help them, but told them that I understood how these types of problems could be so discouraging. We drew pictures, scribbled numbers and letters across the chalkboard, laughed, and expressed frustration. I had kids around my desk, books in hand, working one-on-one to unlock those puzzling problems. Instead of having each student working at assigned seats, carefully attending to task, like little automatons, I engaged their physical beings. I regretted not having more time to plan approaches to these lessons, for I would have made that style problem be more relevant to their lives, and involved more concrete, physical experiences. Nonetheless, by getting them away from the monotony of sitting before an open text, eyes glued to what they were reading, and moving only in getting their pencils moving to try the problems, I seemed to sense a glimmer of those delightful, bright students I knew as kindergartners.

The techno-rationality that permeates pedagogical approaches in today's schools does not address the whole student or teacher, her life, his culture, or their communities. Engaged pedagogy such as that described by hooks (1994; 2003) requires a reciprocity between teacher and learner, a commitment from the teacher to work towards self actualization, a holistic approach to learning that combines the mind, the spiritual and the physical, and an acknowledgement of the inherent knowledge and realities that each student brings into the classroom. It picks up the pieces left behind by those approaches that look at students not as teachers unto themselves, but empty vessels into which the teacher will deposit knowledge. A student is not viewed as raw material to become a finished, useful product, but instead, a source from whom all may learn, while the individual student grows as well.

The techno-rational approach to education is dehumanizing, in that it devalues the

spiritual and physical aspects essential to humanity. It is intricately involved in the appalling loss of self of students and teachers working within such milieux. Thus, what I propose is a pedagogy that seeks to both recognize and nurture the humanity of teachers and students, as complex human beings. This pedagogy will be developed through close attention to the origin of the blues, through the development and specificities of the blues metaphor, especially with regards to the recovery of the self, and finally through conceptualization of such a pedagogy and the implications it may have in teacher education.

CHAPTER THREE

Tracing The Blues Metaphor

Introduction

The blues. We all have had them; we all have lived them with them. We use the term in the vernacular - "I have the blues today" or "I woke up kind of blue this morning." Their name denotes a color connection, a cool, relaxing color, the color of the sea or the sky, things that surround us, and yet are separate from the day-to-day actualities of our lives, while at the same time being integral to our existence. I do not personally tie them to the color blue. Indeed, when I have the blues, the world looks flat and gray. But when I sing the blues or listen to the blues, the color and shape of life creeps back into my world, angry reds, rejoicing yellows, peaceful blues and greens, dancing forth in sometimes intricate, sometimes simplistic, fluid lines of being. And, so very often, I seek out the performance, whether personal or recorded versions of blues songs, to add the color back into my life when it does feel flat and gray.

Murray (1989) describes the blues, not the music but the feeling, in an eloquent manner. He states that

> sometimes you forget all about them in spite of yourself, but all too often the very first thing you realize when you wake up is that they are there again, settling in like bad weather, hovering like plague-bearing insects…you know they are there because you feel their presence in the atmosphere once more as you did the time before and the time before that; because everything, which is to say time itself, has somehow become heavy with vague but dire and disconcerting forebodings of impending frustration leading to perhaps ultimate doom. (pp. 3-4)

So what are these things called the blues? How can they be defined? Where did they come from? Where is their place of origin? How are the feeling called the blues related to the music of the blues, for the blues as a musical genre and the feeling of the blues are so closely intertwined. As Murray states, "no matter how they came to be there…, the main thing about them is the botheration they bring, and your most immediate concern is how to dislodge them before the botheration degenerates into utter hopelessness" (p.5). The musical genre of the blues is a way to work towards this

dislodgement of that woeful feeling. However, although feeling blue, depressed and bothered is evident in the blues metaphor, my conceptualization move beyond feeling blue, or expressing feelings of being blue, to embracing a way of life that dislodges those woeful feelings.

The aforementioned questions are important, and must be examined in the process of conceptualizing a blues metaphor. Arguably, a blues metaphor is present in art forms such as literature and dancing. However, I have chosen specifically the art form of music, because it is a part of every day life in our society, and it has historically exhibited the ability to transcend cultural boundaries and differences (Apple Hill, 2005), which are clearly important considerations in today's schools. Since the blues genre was developed and made popular by African Americans shortly after the Emancipation, it is necessary to consider the historical background of the African American peoples in our country, since these origins also play a role in this distinctive music genre, whether through vestiges of West African musical styles, or through communication patterns and styles that were developed during slavery times. The first part of this chapter will explore these issues, delving into the historical roots of this music. The second portion of the chapter will examine the emergence of the blues genre, using texts, descriptions of performances, and lifestyles of some of the performers as important components of the discussion. In the third section, I expand on the blues metaphor by showing how the various elements in traditional blues music exist in multiple music genres. Included in this discussion will be examples of the presence of the blues metaphor in jazz, country, rock, R&B, and Hip Hop. The intent will be to validate the importance of it in the core of the being of our society as evidenced in its integration in our music, and how it can be used to transcend some of the injustices in our educational system, and, accordingly, our society.

In the final section of this chapter, themes in the blues metaphor will be identified, with the intent of developing a framework useful for envisioning a pedagogy of the blues. The use of metaphor is an important step in constructing this pedagogy. Kliebard (1982) describes two important assumptions to be made about metaphor. First, he suggests that human thought fundamentally uses metaphor as a vehicle of understanding, interpreting and organizing our world. Secondly, he warns us that "metaphors are no more infallible routes to truth and righteousness than they are necessarily treacherous side roads that are

irrelevant or an impediment to straightforward and logical thought. Metaphors are, quite simply, not only universal, but inevitable" (p. 13). He further suggests that most theory has grounding in metaphor, although not all metaphor can be thought of as theory.

The purpose of establishing the blues metaphor is to work towards a deeper understanding of the complexities of humanity and how we might better take such complexity into consideration in thinking about our selves, and the organization, performance, and interpretation of education.

Before the Blues

They heard the breeze in the trees
Singing weird melodies
And they made that
The start of the blues

And from a jail came the wail
Of a down-hearted frail
And they played that
As part of the blues (Henderson, DeSylva, & Brown, 1924).

It's a clear night. Far from city lights, the stars are so crisp, so deep, that as you look up towards them, you cannot help but sense the massiveness of the sky and the tiny part your being plays within the universe. Time seems to be in a kind of stand still. You are bone weary from a day of hard work, from emotional ups and downs with causes too numerous to mention, but the soft sounds of the nighttime birds and the rhythmic lapping of gentle waves against the shore call to you. You begin to tap a rhythm with your feet, and start to sing a slow, sad song.

This scene could occur today, in our country, in Africa, nearly anywhere on earth. It could occur at any place in time actually. It is a human experience. The mood I hoped to express in this description could be transposed to city landscapes as well, with streetlights, traffic noises, and nearby club music adding to the texture and mood. But can

we trace aspects of this mood, this urging, this setting, to the development of the blues? If so, where, and when did it begin?

The next sections of this work will describe, albeit briefly, some of the early influences of the blues, specifically from its early African origins, through slavery, to the emergence of the actual blues form in the early 1900s. I believe it is important to note the historical precursors to blues because they play an important part in the shaping of the early blues, and subsequent forms of music also shaped by the blues. In addition, these aspects also suggest how the blues and its related counterparts, i.e. jazz, country, rock, and Hip Hop, have occurred in part as a result of the interaction of Black culture with White culture/dominant culture. This supports my suggestion that the blues cross cultural lines. In addition, it provides support to my suggestion that there is a universal component to the blues metaphor. Furthermore, elements contained within the historical underpinnings of the blues, in West African civilization and in the slavery subculture, will be later used in the formulation of characteristics of the blues metaphor.

Some elements in the blues can be traced to West Africa. Palmer (1981a) discusses how the earlier slaves were taken from Senegambia, an area of Africa with a rich history of strong, domineering empires. However, by the 1600s, it had split into smaller areas of turmoil. Often slaves were traded by kings and princes that had more than enough slaves of their own, although slave traders also occasionally resorted to kidnapping. As time progressed, the slave trade drew from areas south of Senegambia, moving down the West African coast.

Music was an integral part of peoples' lives in Africa. For example, *jalis*, that is, tribal singers, were responsible for passing along the history and tradition of their villages through half spoken/half sung monologues in West Africa. Their means of singing can be linked to the blues, for they expressed rising emotion through falling pitch, much as flattened 3rds and 5ths are used in blues and jazz (Knight, 2001).

Music in West Africa was also communal, used to ward off evil spirits, involving entire communities singing and beating complicated rhythms on drums. The contrasts between African and European music are described by Ani (1994), who notes that "in Africa, the cultural priorities and values demanded a communal musical form in which there was no real separation between 'performer' and 'audience': a participatory

experience for everyone involved" (p. 213). The actual form of African music supported this participatory nature. Call and response was often used. Hocketing, used by the pygmies and Bantu group, had intricate one and two note parts, encouraging the musical conversation (Palmer, 1981b).

Although most of the music was communal, shepherds were still known to play lonely flutes to their flocks, and hand pianos and other instruments were sometimes used for entertaining an individual (Palmer, 1981b). Blues performances are often communal, with give and take going on between the performer and the audience. Yet, there is also the popular image of a blues singer sitting alone, consoling herself/himself singing and playing the guitar, while their plaintive song echoes into the lonely night.

An important aspect of West African music was drumming, with the inclusion of intricate rhythm patterns. The complexity of these patterns varied depending upon the specific group and their location. However, specificities such as these, especially between groups, changed once the slaves reached the Americas. Blues singers are often accompanied with instrumental backups consisting anywhere from a solo guitar to a complete jazz band. The intricate rhythms often heard in these accompaniments and, at times, in the blues melodies themselves, are reminiscent of the rhythmic drumming that characterizes West African music.

The continuity in maintaining the cultural traditions, including music, that were specific to individual African groups changed drastically when the Africans were seized for slavery. The hardships that were endured, and the mixing and separating of individual Africans from their various groups impacted on the shaping of the blues.

So very often, when I had read of American history from the White person's perspective, the depth of horror that slaves endured was glossed over. The nature of the manner in which it was presented, and, of course, my own orientation as a White woman, had not helped me to see slavery as involving incredibly strong African and African American individuals that were able to survive and endure such hardships. As with much of the way in which history is presented, I was not encouraged to actually think about the slaves as individuals, living and working in such abhorrent situations, while at the same time creating communities where joys and sorrows were shared. I was distanced from this historically and racially, though I recognize that my race played an abhorrent role in the

institution.. Yet, now, when I think of African American friends of mine, and realize that it was only about four generations ago that their great, great grandparents dealt with these hardships, it becomes more real, and more horrifying. Despite their hardships, their culture grew and endured. I feel it is important to include summary of some historical aspects of slavery, albeit clearly incomplete. I realize that this representation does not, in any way, get to the heart of what slavery was, but perhaps the reader will take pause and remember that this is a discussion concerning a portion of our history in which actual people, who cried, who toiled, who rejoiced, who grieved, and who loved, were enslaved. I hope that this discussion will assist in understanding how elements of this history impact upon the blues as a form of music, and as a way in which subjugated voices were, and continue to be heard.

Once the captured Africans began the journey on the slave ships, relatively few slaves completed the voyage. From the beginning of the slave trade in the 1600s until its end nearly three centuries later, there were approximately 35 to 40 million slaves taken from Africa and placed in horrific conditions chained together in the crowded area below deck on the slave ships. These trips might last from weeks to months, and the unhealthy living conditions caused much disease and death of the Africans. While statistic estimates vary, Oakley (1997) suggests of the 35 to 40 million slaves, approximately 15 million survived the trip across the ocean. The highest incident of death occurred within first fourteen weeks of their capture, with some dying on the tortuous trip through Africa to the slave ships, some in the barracoons (where they were held until they boarded the ships), and some on the voyage (Drescher, 2001). Once they reached this country, they were frequently separated from family, friends, and their group members, depending upon where they were sent to work.

Early in the slave trade, slaves were sent to the West Indies, for "seasoning," a period of time that might range from three to four years. During this period in the Caribbean, they were subjected to much disease and mistreatment. However, despite this, as the number of slaves increased, a vibrant Creole culture developed, drawing heavily on their African heritage, especially with regards to family, foods, music, and story telling (Conniff & Davis, 1994).

Often, when a dominant culture tries to erase the culture of those who it is dominating, it does so by destroying its language, including its music. For example, Irish harp music was suppressed in Ireland for many years with the British oppression, and the bagpipes could not be played in Scotland for similar reasons. Gaelic was not allowed to be spoken. Often, for the dominating culture to maintain their stance as "superior" over those they oppress, education is the tool to achieve this, which included religious, secular, and/or public education. Occasionally, dominating cultures will use lack of access to education as a means by which they may maintain their positional superiority (Tuhiwai Smith, 2002). In addition to the oppression occurring by the very nature of slavery, these types of oppression occurred with slaves as well. Access to learning to read was vehemently denied. Engaging in playing the drums, a form of their native music was denied in some areas. In many instances, members from the same West African groups were separated from members of their group. And yet, the strength and tenacity of these Africans and their descendants built a vibrant culture, a culture of resistance with strong roots in their African heritage, having elements within it created by the interaction between these oppressed people and the oppressors' culture.

When the slaves left the Caribbean to work primarily in the Southern colonies, there were some influences from the Creole culture of the Caribbean present. However, the Caribbean slaves were not able to self sustain their population until late in the slave trade, in part because of disease and overworking. The Creole culture was therefore more of a presence once the Caribbean slaves were able to self-maintain their population. In contrast, after slaves were seasoned and sent to North America, they eventually became a population that was self sustaining. By 1740, most Blacks in North America were born in North America (Conniff & Davis, 1994).

African American culture in North America evolved and was shaped by interaction with the White culture, and through interactions with those of the same groups or nations, i.e. those speaking the same African language. Conniff et al. (1994) describes this cultural transfer, stating

> African cultures and their African American derivatives in the Americas changed constantly through their own internal mechanisms and their borrowing from other cultures. Language tended to change very slowly, almost imperceptibly from

> generation to generation. Religion and philosophy evolved even more slowly, for tradition had great significance in both. Aesthetics (art, music, dance, fashion, cuisine), however, shifted as rapidly as tastes change. (p.58)

Recently, there have been increased archeological excavations of slave quarters in locations such as Williamsburg, The Hermitage in Tennessee, and other plantations in the South. This work gives clues into the lives and culture/subculture of African American slaves. For example, the presence of storage pits under the woefully small living spaces has been interpreted by some scholars as possibly providing a link to the slaves' African heritage, for some African groups used storage pits in their own homes. Other scholars suggest that the pits were a form of slave resistance. Within the pits, slaves perhaps stored pilfered items, valuables, and items that closely resemble spiritual tokens from African cultures (Samford, 1996; Singleton, 1995). This suggests that even when the White slave owners allowed their slaves to learn about Christianity, albeit in a very restrictive sense, the slaves maintained links to their African spirituality. Some of the influence of West African spirituality also becomes evident in blues lyrics written many years and/or generations beyond the original slaves who were taken from Africa (Rudinow, 1994).

Slave resistance definitely appeared in the music they sang and performed. Their music was a blending of different cultures, with a strong influence of West African culture. Ellison (1989) describes what was occurring in African music during that time period, stating that

> most constant of all, however, was the African musician's commitment to meaningful lyrics that reflect every human response to life, from common daily experiences to more abstract problems. During and after the slavery period, music in Africa was an integral and functional part of life, and a song was composed to enrich every occasion and emphasize every mood. (p. 2)

Similarly, the slaves in America created songs for varying parts of their lives, among which the most well known are work songs, field hollers, and spirituals. Many of these songs included a call and response pattern, whereby there is a lone vocalist who sings a line, and his words are responded to by the congregation/group of other singers in

unison. Descriptions of each of these types of music will be included, since all of them may have had either major or minor influences on the blues.

It is difficult to describe work songs because there are only a few written descriptions of these, written primarily from a White European perspective. When reading these descriptions, it is difficult to wade through the obvious bias towards European based music, and to imagine the songs purely, without the obvious racism often depicted in the comments of the observer. Alan Lomax was an individual who was perhaps most instrumental in actually recording many of the original performers of the blues and related African American music, letting the performances speak for themselves. Unfortunately, by the time he was recording in the 1930s, work songs had generally faded away, except in prisons where they were often heard in chain gangs (Wald, 2004). Johnson and Johnson (1954) describe the work song accompanying such chain gang work as follows:

> the 'swing' of these songs is governed by the rhythmic motions made by a gang of men at labor…there is always a leader and he sets the pace. A phrase is sung while the shining hammers are being lifted. It is cut off suddenly when the hammers begin to descend and gives place to a prolonged grunt which becomes explosive at the impact of the blow. Each phrase of the song is independent, apparently obeying no law of time. After each impact, the hammers lie still and there is silence. As they begin to rise again, the next phrase of the song is sung…There are variations that violate the obvious laws of rhythm, but over it all can be discerned a superior rhythmic law. (p.32)

Both this example and other work songs included rhythmic call and response patterns. Other work songs described by Whites in earlier times were often boat songs (Epstein, 1977), and it is believed that many of the Anglo sea chanteys arose from African styles (Wald, 2004). These connections can be discerned in Dave van Ronk's version of "Leave Her, Johnny" (Van Ronk, 1992). This rhythmic, no-nonsense song is nestled between his gravely voiced, harsh version of "Bed Bug Blues", and playful "Yas-Yas-Yas," both of which are classic blues. Although distinctive in style, the musical connection between this song and the blues on the rest of the CD are clearly apparent to the listener. I cannot help but wonder if some of this mixture of cultures occurred when

the harshly treated crew of slave ships, which sometimes included slaves, was exposed to West African musical influences.

From my White perspective, I thought that the work songs were intended to help ease the difficulties in attending to the work that slaves were forced to do. However, Douglass (2003) presents a different perspective, stating that slaves were more or less expected to sing while working.

> *'make a noise'* and *'bear a hand'* are the words usually addressed to the slaves when there is silence among them. This may account for the almost constant singing heard in the southern states. There was, generally…singing among the teamsters, as it was one means of letting the overseer know where they were, and that they were moving on with the work. (p. 44)

As with the blues, there were probably multiple meanings behind the purposes for these work songs, some of which might be subversive, as there were with the spirituals which will be discussed later. Perhaps they provided a manner by which the slaves were able to adapt, and even transcend the intolerable conditions they experienced, allowing them to ignore some of the pain of their toiling and their lives as they sang and created music.

Another form of music sung by slaves was the field holler. Field hollers were frequently heard in the Delta region, where there might often be quite a distance between one slave and another. The Delta region was not widely settled prior to the Civil War (1926; Davis, 1995b, 1995c; Wald, 2004). Although actual recorded evidence is not available for the original field hollers of slaves, it is assumed that the workers on the fields were relatively isolated. Davis (1995) suggests that the field holler was the form of music by slaves that could be directly traced to African music, noting "whether in Senegal or in the Delta, a holler would be answered by a worker elsewhere in the field"(p. 33).

Lomax (1993) describes hearing hollers in the mid-1930s when he and his father were engaged in making their recordings. These hollers may have evolved from the early hollers of slaves, for the description of them sounds similar to those of earlier written witnesses of the original hollers. Lomax (1993) describes the Delta hollers as having a distinctive style as compared to hollers he heard in the Southeast, where the Black folk songs would

> tend to be short-phrased, to conform to a steady beat, and …be performed by groups. By contrast, Delta hollers are usually minory solos, sung recitative-style in free rhythms, with long embellished phrases, many long held notes, lots of slides and blue notes, and an emphasis on shifts of vocal color. (p.273)

Wald (2004) distinguishes hollers from other early Black music, noting that

> the hollers were not performance music, in the way that blues or jazz were, nor were they communal music like work gang chants or church singing. They were more like a musical way of talking to oneself, and often were sung alone in the fields, driving a mule, tending cattle or doing other isolated work. (p. 74)

Spirituals were a third form of music sung by the slaves. While the spirituals were often based on Old Testament imagery, frequently the religious implications and the actual words of the songs were used as subversive communication between slaves, especially with regards to paths towards freedom. Examples of this include *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,* and *Wade in the Water,* both of which included lyrics that were coded instructions to help slaves escape to freedom (Sturgis, 2004). Evans (1995b) opens her essay on outlaw culture by including a verse to the spiritual “Steal Away.”

Steal away, steal away, steal away home to Jesus;
Steal away, steal away home,
I ain't got long to stay here.
My Lord calls me; He calls me by the thunder,
The trumpet sounds within my soul,
I ain't got long to stay here. (p. 502)

She writes that "by stealing away, slaves took it upon themselves to subvert, by means of deceit, theft, and disruption, the oppressive institutions of the prevailing social order" (p. 502). Careful examination of the above lyrics show how there could be encoded texts within such words. The elements of double entendre and hidden meanings in lyrics in the blues may have roots from these spirituals. These spirituals represent slaves’ adaptation to the culture in that they utilized elements of Christianity that they were taught into their own slave culture. The spirituals also demonstrate that the slaves were able to transcend the suffering and other inhumane aspects of slavery; they rose above it in their resistance through encoded texts assisting in escape.

The manner in which these extra meanings came about could be rather spontaneous. McKim (1969), a minister collecting spirituals during the Civil War, asked a slave how these songs were created. The slave replied

> "They make them, sah…I'll tell you; it's dis way. My Master call me up and order a hundred lash. My friends see it and is sorry for me. When deh come to de praise meeting dat night dey sing about it. Some's very good singers and know how; and dey work it in, work it in, you know; til dey get it right; and dat's de way…
>
> *No more driver call me*
> *No more driver call me*
> *No more driver call me*
> *Many thousand die!*
>
> *No more peck of corn for me*
> *No more peck of corn*
> *No more peck of corn for me*
> *Many thousand die.*
>
> *No more hundred lash for me*
> *No more hundred lash*
> *No more hundred lash for me*
> *Many thousand die!* (p.2)

The relationship between the typical AAB verse of the 12 bar blues and the verse of this song is apparent. This suggests that blues and spirituals shared some of the same structural components in their verses (Barlow, 1989). Indeed, they often both expressed an extreme sense of sadness, perhaps best demonstrated by DuBois' reference to spirituals as sorrow songs (Du Bois, c1997), as well as provided a means to adapt to the harsh, inhumane circumstance in which they were forced to live.

When instruments were used to accompany these early forms of music, they often showed a West African influence, improvisation with the available materials, and use of European based musical instruments. Again, this indicates elements of adaptation upon

The part pf the slaves. They also used hand claps and foot stomps to provide rhythm, with or without drums. Quills, traditional West African cane instruments, may have been the precursor to the harmonicas often heard in the blues of yesteryear and today (Barlow, 1989). Even banjos were derived from Africa, directly related to an instrument, called a *halam* or *konting*, played by the Wolof peoples of West Africa (Davis, 1995b). Wald (2004) notes that when the French ballroom fad was popular in antebellum years, the dance orchestras were often made up of slaves who had learned how to play European music as well as read music as well in some instances. Hence, with the mixing of European cultures, Creole/slave culture, and West African culture, many influences helped to shape the blues as a music, and create what has evolved into the blues metaphor.

The Early Blues

The blu-u-ues
Is a low down shaking chill…
Mmmm-mmmm
Is a lowdown shaking chill
You ain't had 'em, I
Hope you never will…(Johnson, 1969, p.225)

Let's briefly return to the concept of the blues as that morose, pervading feeling of gloom. The development from a word that describes this feeling into the eventual appellation associated with the emerging form of music in the early 1900s is well described well by Murray (1989) who makes note that some individuals looked at the blues as a spell placed upon them, referring back to the voodoo culture. He writes that

> most people, however, seem to feel that you might as well try to deal directly with the blues in the first place as become ensnarled in the endless network of superstition and intimidation upon which voodooism is predicated…Whiskey, gin, brandy, vodka, wines and other alcoholic beverages and concoctions are also traditional antidotes…against the pernicious effects of the blues. And so are narcotics. But the age-old ways of dispelling the ominous atmosphere that comes with the blues… is that artful and sometimes magical combination of idiomatic

> incantation and percussion that creates the dance-oriented good-time music also known as the blues. (pp. 16-17)

Murray's comments suggest that the performance of and/or listening to the blues serves as a means to transcend the suffering occurring as part of living. So exactly where and when did this enduring music first appear? This cannot be pinpointed, although its rhythms, its moans, its response to the audience in a community atmosphere, and its use to take away some of the pain of life has roots in those earlier forms of music from Africa, and from the slaves and sharecroppers in the United States prior to and shortly after the Civil War. There are innumerous accounts regarding where and when the blues began, with people like W.C. Handy mentioning that he heard the first blues at a railroad station, and Jelly Roll Morton saying he first heard it in whorehouses in the Storyville section of New Orleans (Oakley, 1997; Wald, 2004). Regardless of the actualities as to where the music first was heard, there are certain factors that are generally agreed upon regarding its emergence. Davis (1995b) notes that

> the blues has from the very beginning been an activity reserved for stolen moments - and to a point many of its first performers were men exempted from picking cotton by virtue of blindness or some other physical handicap or wastrels for whom music was a way to avoid back breaking-labor. (p.2)

While I cannot agree with her naming someone who is avoiding back breaking labor as a wastrel, especially considering that such a person was all too frequently placed in such a situation because of the oppressive societal climate in that time period, I will agree that perhaps some intelligent performers may have seen singing the blues as an appropriate alternative to the hard work of share croppers. Nonetheless, the early blues were sung throughout the South, with variations in styles, in accompaniment, and in performance occurring depending upon the performer and his/her location. In an interview with Wald (2004), Honeyboy Edwards summed up the origin of the blues. He said

> when the people were slaves, they'd holler 'cause it make the day go long and they wouldn't worry about what they were doing, and that's what the blues come from. Then in the twenties, like, they named it the blues, with Mama Rainey and all, Ida Cox, Bessie Smith, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Lonnie Johnson. (p.10)

Yet there are other images we might consider when searching for the origin of the blues. Picture the lone Black man W. C. Handy (1957) described on a railroad platform. He describes him as

> a lean loose jointed Negro ... His clothes were in rags, and his feet peeped out of his shoes. His face had on it some of the sadness of the ages. As he played, he pressed a knife on the strings of the guitar…accompanying himself on the guitar with the weirdest music I have ever heard" (p. 74).

This is another picture of the blues musician, different from the elaborate sets, costumes, and performances of blues queens such as Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey. Yet, even these elaborations have their roots in similar venues. Palmer (1981) tells of how Gertrude "Ma" Rainey described her initial reaction to this new form of music called the blues as weird. In 1902, when she was working in a vaudeville style tent show, she heard a young girl outside of the tent singing "a 'strange and poignant' song about how her man had left her" (p. 44). Rainey and the members of her troupe had never heard such music prior to this, and worked this song into their act, with tremendous response from the Black audiences in the rural areas where she entertained. Because of this response, she started to seek out other examples of these songs, and although at this early time, they were not labeled the blues per say, they were enormously popular.

Both men and women sang the blues early in the twentieth century, where it gained popularity in rural settings, at parties, in juke joints, etc. However, it was the women who initially brought it into popularity not only to the Black audiences where they sang in tents throughout the rural South, but also to the White members of society, through their recordings, and, sometimes, their performances (Albertson, 1985). In examining the roots of this music, the topics of the early blues songs of Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey that often represented or were related to Black women's newly acquired freedom to choose sexual partners and to travel, and within this framework, also represented their struggles with misogynistic mates and dealing with social inequities (Davis, 1995a; Frazier, 1950; Richter, 1975). The blues of Black men more often dealt with travel as compared to female blues perhaps because travel was more available to males as compared to females. Historically, there was a great influx of Black men to northern cities after the Civil War, in search of better ways of lives.

These and other authentic, early blues origins were spread, sung, and reinterpreted, influencing styles and manners of music by individuals from varying areas of the South. Distinctions occurred between the rural country blues of Ma Rainey and early blues of Memphis Minnie, the blues of those men and women from other parts of the South, and those who fled the South for urban settings such as Chicago. As their ability to travel was available, musicians drew not only from the styles of those who lived nearby, but also from those they encountered in their travels.

Some argue that one of the richest sources for authentic blues was in the Mississippi Delta, a relatively undeveloped farming area prior to the Civil War. This is an area of land from roughly southwestern Tennessee to Mississippi, bounded by the Mississippi River and the Yazoo River. There exists a hotbed of blues singers from this area. Singers/guitarists from this or nearby areas include such greats as Charlie Patton, Robert Johnson, Son House, and Skip James. Memphis Minnie started in this area, but ran away to Memphis when she was in her early teens (Garon, 1996). As the blues revival came about in the 1960s and 1970s, many of these original blues singers, such as Mississippi John Hurt, were rediscovered after spending years playing around locally, and working odd jobs.

It is important to recognize the context in which this type of music, the blues, developed. This should include what was happening musically, as well as society-wise, since music is not created in a vacuum, and often reflects social issues (Attali, 1985; Hebdige, 2000b, 2001b). Much like the music by the slaves was influenced by interaction between peoples from various parts of West African music and by European style music and instrumentation, the blues were influenced by the these aforementioned musical influences as well as the types of music that were popular in that time period. These included ragtime, cakewalks, and minstrel show tunes. Palmer (1981) suggests that many of these tunes were picked up from the tent shows that were common throughout the South, and that these songs were very similar to White “country style” songs. These songs were sung unaccompanied, like many of the precursor slave songs.

Charles Peabody (1904) presented an ethnological glimpse into the music of African Americans in 1901 and 1902. He was engaged in some archeological excavations in northern Mississippi, and had between nine to fifteen African Americans working for

him. During this time, he was exposed to many forms of their music, including Methodist hymns with unhappy strains, and ragtime style songs. Of interest with regards to precursors to the blues were some short songs Peabody heard, sometimes consisting of only two lines of poetry related to the day to day life of the African Americans, or improvised upon when an interesting subject appeared. Peabody (1904) describes most of these type of songs as hard luck tales (very often), love themes, suggestions anticipative and reminiscent of favorite occupations and amusements. Some examples of the words and some of the music are –

> *They had me arrested for murder*
> *And I never harmed a man"* (p. 149).

Peabody also describes lullabies sung by a Black woman to her child, and music sung by a worker with his mule as having components that were "genuine African music" (p.151). This suggests that the music that was being shaped and created by the African Americans in this early part of the 1900s was a result of the interactions between the culture and music of Africans, the culture and music of slaves, and the culture and the music of the Whites (i.e. through minstrel shows, and exposure to classical music and European instruments on the plantations). This was a rich, fertile environment from which sprung some elements that were influential in the development of the blues, gospel/church music, and jazz.

Since the early blues reflected the way life was for African Americans at the time this musical form was emerging, it is important to examine the historical context of African American life during in this time period. Living in the early twentieth century society that was dominated by White males was not easy for African Americans. Albertson (1985) noted that employment options for African Americans in the South consisted primarily of ill-paid manual or domestic labor or jobs in minstrel shows (p.24). Although African Americans were technically emancipated, they were still enslaved economically by these conditions. However, there were three areas where their personal status had been transformed. Davis (1995a) states

> …first, there was no longer a proscription on freely chosen individual travel; second, education was now a realizable goal for individual men and women; third,

> sexuality could be freely explored by individuals who could now enter into autonomously chosen personal relationships. (p. 235)

The interplay of some of these factors impacted on the role of marriage in the African American communities in the early 1950s. Pinderhughes (2002) notes that marriage between slaves, as an institution, was outlawed in some states prior to their emancipation – therefore, marriage did not have a strong start as an institution for African Americans in the United States. Another factor affecting marriage occurring in the early 1900s was that a large proportion of the Black male Southern population starting moving to the North in hopes of improving their economic situation, leaving the women behind to face separation and desertions by their spouses. Hence, the African American family in the South did not always conform to the dominant standard of the White culture of that time. Frazier (2002) notes that African American parents of children were often unwed, yet they provided for the socio-economic needs not only of their own children, but of others that might be incorporated into the amorphous family group (p. 150). He also indicates that the extended family and maternal grandmothers often cared for the needs of children whose fathers had left (p. 151). African American women had the freedom to choose sexual partners, but were sometimes left to care for the children who were the result of these unions, as partners moved north leaving them behind.

These societal factors impacted on the blues, as did the history of slavery and the music heritage that African Americans had experienced up until this point in time. Davis (1995a) states that the inaccessibility of political and economic freedom helped to create the blues discourse. She notes that in both male and female blues, travel and sexuality are pervasive themes.

Another capitalistic factor came into play by the 1920s, which solidified the popularity of African American music, blues and jazz, as well. This was the installment loan. Albertson (1985) notes that the White middle class was on a spending spree in the early 1920s. Victrolas were invented, and suddenly, music could be heard within one's home. College students, as tradition breakers, started listening to a new kind of music, jazz. Around this time, record companies quickly saw the potential for making jazz records, initially recorded by White musicians, replaying Black hits. However, it wasn't long before a new phenomenon was developed, the race record. These records were

recorded by Black artists, advertised in Black press only, and, in the North, sold only in Black music stores.

These records brought African American blues music to the society as a whole. While TOBA, the Theater Owners Booking Agency, started out many young Black artists on the careers by setting up tours for their acts, records allowed these artists to be heard by those who were unable to hear the artists in the tent shows (1992). In fact, Ma Rainey was barely known outside of the South (where she played widely on a minstrel circuit), until she made records for Paramount in 1923 (Harrison, 2000). When Bessie Smith released her first record in 1923, "*Down Hearted Blues*," it sold 780.000 copies within six months. She was Columbia records number one artist, making 29 recordings within the first year of her contract.

Yet, with all this success, as the lyrics to their songs suggest, there existed great difficulties for these early blues queens. Harrison (2000) writes that "the monotony of the clickety-clacking train wheels, the cramped sleeping quarters, lousy food, haggles over wages, loneliness, and other hardships were temporarily forgotten as the whiskey flowed and the music played" (p. 33). Indeed, the parties sometimes got out of hand, with partying reaching limits whereby the police were called in.

These early blues women were recording artists who sang and sometimes wrote songs that presented the lives of working class poor, a side that had heretofore never been as openly expressed. Often backed by a chorus and a band, they performed throughout the cities of the South, and sometimes their interactions with the audience created new songs. For example, shortly after a flood, some women who were victims of the flood begged Bessie Smith to sing them a song about it. Within two weeks, she had written "Back Water Blues," and recorded it later for Columbia Records (Albertson 1985).

While they were not always the writers of their material, their selection of material and their performances presented some raw hard facts about the injustices of the society. For example, shortly after the African American soldiers returned from fighting in World War 1, there existed tremendous difficulty for some of them in attaining jobs. Bessie Smith recorded "Poor Man Blues," drawing attention to this inequity.

Mister rich man, Mister rich man, open up your heart and mind (3x)
Give the poor man a chance, help stop these hard, hard times

While you're livin' in your mansion, you don't know what hard times mean (3x)
Poor working man's wife is starvin', your wife is living' like a queen.

Please, listen to my pleading, 'cause I can't stand these hard times long (3x)
They'll make an honest man do things that you know is wrong (Richter, 1975).

The female blues performers lived what might be called audacious lifestyles for that time period as well. Ma Rainey lived on the road most of her life, with a traveling minstrel show on the Black tent circuit. She was relatively unknown in the North until she recorded, but she carved out a career and a reputation as a hard working, hard drinking woman with a heart of gold, thus entitling her the name of "Ma" Rainey. During one of her post performance parties after a date in Cincinnati, the police were called in to break up the raucous partying. There was a rumor that she kidnapped Bessie Smith, but, in fact, they had a warm relationship.

During the 1920's, Bessie Smith's public persona epitomized her subculture. She lived a flamboyant lifestyle on the road, at one time owning a bright yellow railroad car. She drank heavily before, during, and after performances during Prohibition. She visited brothels, and partied at bootlegger's establishments when on the road. She broke the rules of convention in sexual matters, not remaining faithful to her husband, sometimes having affairs with other men, and sometimes with women in her chorus. She had loud, violent, sometimes public fights with her husband. Her blues songs and performances went along with her revolt against society. In "Pinchbacks – Take Them Away," she warns girls not to fall into marriages with exploitive men they would end up supporting, suggesting that working men might be better (Davis, 1995a). This might be considered good advice for African-American women in the South, for they were often left behind with children when their partners deserted them for better jobs in the North.

Bessie Smith sang about keeping sexually satisfied and about drinking, both major components of her lifestyle on the road. She sang songs empowering Black

women, telling them either through the lyrics themselves or through the delivery of lyrics, not to let their troubles get the best of them. Even in her songs about domestic violence, Davis (1995) suggests that she delivers the lyrics with such irony and humor, she made "in all likelihood, a conscious attempt to highlight…the inhumanity and misogyny of male batterers" (p.249). Her songs openly displayed issues that went along with living in a racist, patriarchal society, where Black people were often destined to be poor. Clearly, these songs related to the realities in her life and in the lives of others in that time period, and presented a means of transcendence above the suffering, as well as presenting a form of resistance, in that they were not keeping quiet about issues that had not previously been so blatantly revealed through a popular culture format.

The music that Black blues queens were singing differed from the White female stereotype of the period, that consisted predominantly of songs about idyllic love, albeit with very patriarchal limitations. Their lifestyles and attitudes differed greatly. For example, the role of damsel in distress waiting to be rescued probably would not have worked when Bessie Smith, by herself, confronted Ku Klux Klan members trying to collapse her tent – her show of indignation and shouting of obscenities confounded them, and hastened their retreat. Bessie Smith "took charge" of her career when she learned her manager, Clarence Thompson, was essentially cheating her. She did not quietly try to break her contract through legal channels. Instead, she punched him, and pounded on him until he released her from her contract (Albertson, 1985). She questioned White societal norms, and she fought against the constraints of patriarchal conditions both in White and Black society. She was in charge of her own troupe, and her own career. She was committed to survival. She was part of a subculture within the entertainment industry that created many economic opportunities to African-Americans, both then and now.

A less widely known performer perhaps because of her less renowned recording contracts was Memphis Minnie. Biographical data from the 1900s is difficult to substantiate, especially of Black families. Often, birth certificates are absent, or more than one exists, with differing dates on them. However, it is generally accepted that Memphis Minnie was born just before the turn of the century, the oldest of thirteen children. She was given a guitar at the age of eleven, and quickly became well known for her skills on guitar. She left her home in northern Mississippi for Memphis at the age of

thirteen, where she acquired the reputation of being a very tough, incredibly talented blues guitar player and singer. Traveling alone as a young Black teenager in the early 1900s required a toughness and tenacity probably never dreamed of by most of the White dominant society members. It was rumored that she was exceptionally good with a knife, which helped her survive in the harsh world within which she lived.

Memphis Minnie is an unusual early blues singer, because she fell into a category of blues dominated by males (Tribbett, 1998). The early blues can be, and often is, divided into two camps, both of which are usually gendered. Garon and Garon (1992) describe these as either classic more vaudeville style blues (female), as opposed to country blues (male). The classic, vaudeville style blues was made popular in the 1920s by blueswomen and recording artists such as Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Ida Cox, Trixie Smith, and Rainey. These artists often performed throughout the Black minstrel circuit, using T.O.B.A. (Theater Owners Booking Association) as their booking agent, playing primarily in major cities throughout the South, and in a few large cities in the North. Country blues tended to be depicted as male, incorporating solo guitar or harmonica players, much like that archetypal lone singer at the railway station described by W.C. Handy (1957). Garon and Garon (1992) suggest "given the gendered nature of "country" and 'classic' labels, dismissals of classic blues as 'adulterated' forms of 'real folk blues' have clear sexist overtones and emerge from a patriarchal perspective that sees 'fathers' rather than 'mothers' as the founder of the blues" (p. 43). While Memphis Minnie often played guitar alone and served as her own back-up with her guitar, she was similar to the 1920s classic blues women in that "through her life, her work, and her songs, (she) engaged in resistance to class, racial and gender-based oppression; she lived her life fiercely, independently, and 'in your face' (Tribbett, 1998, p. 43)


(Georgia Women Honorees, 1993)

Consider the representations of the Blues queens of the 1920s and early 1930s. The picture of Ma Rainey, who many credit with beginning the popularity of the blues, we see her broad smile, heavily made up eyes, a a headdress typical of the period. This is a differing

image than Handy's lonely singer at the railway station. However, when I look at Ma Rainey's picture, I see sadness in her eyes.

When I examine the picture of Bessie Smith, I see a picture of a wildly successful woman who is bedecked in a manner fitting for a woman given the title Empress of the Blues. This picture is an example of one of her ornate costumes, although many were more ornate. In addition to her great voice and showmanship, she was known for these outstanding costumes and showy styles in performances as well as in her public and personal life.

(At, 2005)

These flamboyant women had recording contracts for race records, records marketed specifically to the Black population. At the same time, hard hitting, gritty country blues were being sung by the likes of Memphis Minnie. Although these type of blues were commonly considered a male domain, Memphis Minnie created her own space within this difficult environment and earned the respect of many of her male counterparts. not show the glamour and glitz to the extent seen in the

(Blue Front Artist, 2006)

The photographs we can find of bluesmen do women's photographs. Nonetheless, their photographs represent successful, accomplished men. For example, the photograph of Robert Johnson shows a sharply dressed, attractive man playing his guitar. His hand positioning on the guitar neck suggests a high level of expertise, yet he looks relatively nonchalant.

(Blues News, 2005)

In the photograph of Blind Lemon Jefferson, we see a bespectacled man wearing a suit and tie, and, like Robert Johnson, he

is posing with his guitar. The visual image of bluesmen were often very handsome and well dressed, and their songs included broad hints regarding their sexual prowess. Of interest is that of the two photographs of the women who were known for their performances as vocalists, i.e. Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith, are represented in more elaborate costumes. Memphis Minnie, Blind Lemon Jefferson, and Robert Johnson, the three individuals who were known especially for their guitar expertise, although their song lyrics were also well received, were photographed in less elaborate clothing, with the men wearing perhaps what they might wear to church, although Memphis Minnie's outfit is slightly less sedate.

(Asticia, 2006)

(Chicago Defender, 1929, p.10)

The representation of women in blues record advertisements in *The Chicago Defender* the image the lifestyle and performances that these artists depicted. For example, the representation of Bessie Smith on the left, retrieved from *The Chicago Defender* presents sexual double entendres, much as many of her songs did. The image shows Bessie Smith in a low cut gown, with background lines suggesting steamy heat emanating from her body. The drawing is cropped right beneath her breasts replaced with the words "Hear Bessie Smith cook this pair of broilers."

Other Chicago Defender advertisements have her wearing an ornate, exotic headpiece, and a lavish dress, giving her a more regal appearance. Still others, such as that on the following page depict a woman that could be representative of a White or Black woman, appearing sad as she sits in a natural setting with a train leaving in the distance. The woman appears to be dressed in a sedate outfit, as compared to

some of the costumes blues performers typically wore when performing, and the viewer is led to imagine that this woman is missing her man who is most likely leaving on that train.

(Chicago Defender, 1929, p. 8)

These representations in race record advertisements often mirrored the public persona developed by both the male and female artists through their songs, performances, and lifestyles. Both male and female blues artists were often known to have multiple sexual partners, and would sing songs unabashedly extolling their own and their partner's sexual prowess. Performances often were suggestive, and at times erotic. Davis (1995b) describes such a performance by Bessie Smith. She states

> "the story goes that Smith would occasionally pick out a man in her audience and 'walk' him – that is, fix him with her eyes and give him the impression that she was singing only to him, until he left his seat and started up the aisle in a trance, heeding her siren call.(quote p.77).

Similarly, Memphis Minnie drew attention to her own sex appeal. Garon and Garon (1992) report how when Memphis Minnie was on stage, she would sit with her skirts scooted up her legs. One fan even reported that Memphis Minnie too would single out one fan, occasionally sitting in his lap as she sang.

Memphis Minnie's lyrics would reflect sometimes frank, sometimes veiled sexuality, and a sense of empowerment within this sexuality. Consider her lyrics in "I'm Talking About You" (Minnie, 1983). She writes

You can quit me-

Do anything you want to do.

Someday you'll want me

And I won't want you.

You's a man

Running from hand to hand.

You can get you a woman-

I got another man.

You will mistreat me

And you won't do right

You can take it on back

Where you had it last night.

Well you can't be mine

And somebody else's too.

I ain't gonna stand

That way you do. (p. 194)

Murray (1996) notes that while often, the implications of the female blues singers complaints about an empty bed drew responses from males in the audience as willing occupants, the implication is always present that "the bed is empty not because there is none who is willing, but because by her standards, a good man is hard to find" (p. 204).

The blues were a representation of an expression of power that had been oppressed in times prior to their appearance. This has been discussed widely by Black feminists (Carby, 1986; Davis, 1995a, 1999). Carby states that

> the consideration of women's blues allows us to see an alternative form of representation, an oral and musical women's culture that explicitly addresses the contradictions of feminism, sexuality and power… The women's blues of the twenties and early thirties… is a discourse that articulates a cultural and political struggle over sexual relations; a struggle that is directed against the objectification of female sexuality within a patriarchal order but which tried to reclaim women's bodies as the sexual and sensuous objects of women's songs. (p.12)

This frank discussion of sexuality not only included topics concerning heterosexuality, but also brought forth topics within homosexual contexts, as seen by in

the lyrics of songs by Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey. Both women were known to be bisexual, and the lyrics to some of their songs suggest this. For example, in her song “Jail House Blues”, Bessie Smith sings

Thirty days in jail with my back turned to the wall
Turned to the wall
Thirty days in jail with my back turned to the wall
Turned to the wall
Look here Mr. Jail Keeper
Put another girl in my stall. (Smith, 1983, p. 52)

The lyrics of Ma Rainey were more explicit and less veiled regarding her sexuality, although she too utilizes encoding. In her song “Don’t Fish in My Sea”, she sings

…He used to stay out late, now
he don’t come home at all (x 2)
I know there’s another mule
been kicking in my stall.
If you don’t like my ocean,
Don’t fish in my sea (x2)
Stay out of my valley
And let my mountain be. (Rainey, 1969, p. 47)

When considering Ma Rainey’s lyrics, it is important to note that some were written by her, while others were written by different songwriters. All were performed in her distinctive style. A large portion of her repertoire included songs regarding relationships ‘gone bad’ with men. However, her bisexuality is put to the open in the lyrics to *The Prove It On Me Blues* (Rainey, 1991), where she sings

Went out last night
with a crowd of my friends,
They must have been women
'cause I don't like no men.
Wear my clothes just like a fan,

Talk to gals just like any old man

'Cause they say I do it,

Ain't nobody caught me,

Sure got to prove it on me.

As mentioned earlier, subject matter of the blues was often intertwined with the new found freedoms that African Americans achieved after emancipation, i.e. the freedom to travel, and the freedom to choose sexual partners. This migration to the north impacted on the family structure of Black families, and led to gender related problems. Hamilton (2000) notes

> of all the tensions provoked by migration, none were stronger than those around sex. In cities across the North and South, migration generated highly visible and novel social formations…rooming houses full of unattached Black women, …vibrant communities of Black lesbians and gay men….The salacious sex of the early blues emerged from this context, inextricable from sexual politics…power struggles acted out in a context where power for anyone was in short supply (149)

Some of the results of these power struggles were the strong voices of these blues singers, often holding nothing back, singing with sorrow, with humor, and offering solace to themselves and the audience. Some of the humor and strength noted within the lyrics were derived from the symbolic meaning of many of the words. Double entendres abound within the texts, and often they are related to sexuality. Garon (1996) describes the symbolism in the blues often using Freudian style interpretations of the lyrics. He suggests that symbols of sexuality abound, and uses the references to snakes in the lyrics of both Blind Lemon Jefferson and Memphis Minnie as examples of the use of symbolism. In her song "Stinging Snake Blues", Memphis Minnie (2003) sings

Ummm. wonder where my stinging snake has gone? ,

Ummm, wonder where my stinging snake has gone?

I can't see no peace since my stinging snake left my home.

Blind Lemon Jefferson also refers to snakes in his song, "The Black Snake Moan." He sings

Hmmm, Black snake crawlin' in my room
Hmmm, Black snake crawlin' in my room
Some pretty mama better come and
Get this Black snake soon. (Jefferson, 2002)

The extensive use of symbols, or codes, in blues music follows the music tradition of enslaved African Americans. Evans (1995a) describes the tradition of escape songs by African American slaves as

> a series of codes embedded in music and sung by slaves to alert each other to the time for escape from bondage to freedom. Slaves sang these songs under the very noses of their captors who were unable to hear in the music any force that would undermine their authority. (p. 502)

Baker (1984) describes the code in the blues as strongly interconnected with cultural signifying. He suggests that from lyrics to the manner in which guitars growl can reflect a form of blues' "coded signification" (p. 6). He furthers this idea describing the frequent representation of the blues singer, such as that lone singer at the railway station, a site marked by transience, and the intersection of many crossing tracks. He writes that

> the singer and his production are always at this intersection…singer and song never arrest transience…instead, they provide expressive equivalence for the juncture's ceaseless flux…Like translators of written texts, blues and its sundry performers offer interpretations of the experiencing of experience...The singer's product, like the railway juncture itself (or a successful translator's original), constitutes a lively scene, a robust matrix where endless antimonies are mediated and understanding and explanation find conditions of possibility. (p.7)

This discussion of the historical precedents of the blues serves to create the grounding from which the blues metaphor, and, later, the pedagogy of the blues, will be developed. It has been my intent to illustrate how powerful the blues expression was, especially in allowing subjugated voices to no longer be ignored. The blues were a language/art form through which poor black women and men were able to adapt and to resist the dominant society's restrictions specific to race, class and gender. Indeed, at times, they were able to transcend, through the blues, the oppression they experienced living in such environments.

Throughout these early blues, specific themes begin to emerge, and these themes begin to shape the framework of the blues metaphor. An example of one of the prominent themes in early blues songs was the portrayal of pain and suffering. In songs about the devastation of floods, the heartbreak of unfaithful lovers, or the painful realities of living in poverty, these men and women openly represented this suffering in their performances and recordings.

Some early blues songs had themes that were playful, and demonstrated the performer's ability to have a good time despite the existence of suffering. Whether singing about how well her sister Kate could shimmy, or asking for a pig foot and a bottle of beer, the performer would sing about partying and other sources of enjoyment that existed amidst oppression.

Many of the early blues songs described issues regarding sexuality, sometimes frankly, and sometimes with thinly veiled double entendres. The theme of sexuality was evident in lyrics, in mannerisms and in styles of clothing evident in performances, and frequently in the popular culture depiction of the artists in that time period.

Themes regarding class were also emerging in the early blues songs. Sometimes, the stark contrast between the working class and the upper class were blatantly presented in the lyrics.

Travel was a common subject in the early blues. Trains were a relatively inexpensive means of travel, and contributed greatly to the migration to northern cities. Blues singers would sing their men leaving them by catching northbound trains, or would sometimes sing about catching those trains themselves to escape their troubles.

The early blues songs often had autobiographical themes in them. Many were written in the first person, described personal experience with heartbreak, with incarceration, with misogynistic mates. They also connected to the present, taking on differing meanings depending upon the time, place, and mood of the performer and the person who is listening to the performance. With their rich, poetic wording and use of double entendres, meanings shift and change depending on where these individuals are situated.

Perhaps one of the strongest themes that began to emerge in the early blues is a sense of truth, of calling it like it is. The nature of this early work is steeped in

truthfulness, about how life was for those marginalized members of society in the early 1920s and 1930s. They described the joys, the sorrows, the pain, and the intimacies of varying aspects of their lives, as they lived in the oppressive environments of that time period.

I suggest that many of these themes that emerged in the early blues become the heart of many alternative forms of popular music in our country. Certainly, problems with lovers and dealing with pain and suffering are themes that are easily recognizable in other forms of music. I also suggest that themes regarding finding joy in the midst of oppression, and autobiographical components are present in other genres as well. Certain alternative forms of music also clearly represent truths through their music that are not revealed the dominant society. The presence of these themes will be explored in the following section.

Tracing the Blues Metaphor in Alternative Forms of Music

Since its inception, the blues have powerfully influenced and shaped the direction of music in our country, and, it could be argued, in other countries as well. The following sections will highlight musical forms/genres through which I sense elements of the blues run strongly. These themes are part of the blues metaphor, which I will more fully describe and develop in the following sections of this chapter. I acknowledge that it may be argued that blues elements are most likely present in musical forms that I have not mentioned; I am focusing on genres wherein I perceive the blues themes, and the blues metaphor as clearly resonating.

The Blues Metaphor in Country Music

Every time I see that lonesome railroad train

Every time I see that lonesome railroad train

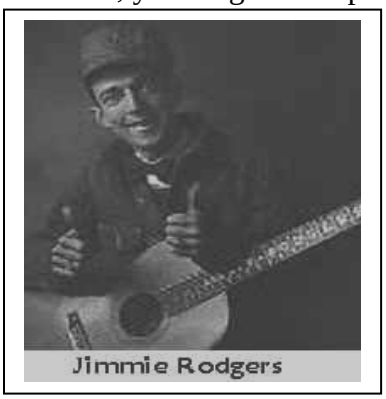
It makes me wish I was going home again. **(Rodgers, 1992)**

At the height of the popularity of the blues, a phenomenon was occurring in the field of country music, which could be described as the beginning of this musical genre. Issues concerning class were being openly brought forth with the emergence of country yodelers, such as Jimmy Rodgers. While recorded musical history tends to frame this almost exclusively as a White form of musical expression, there are indications that

yodeling as a form of music was not exclusive to White Southerners in our country, but reached a universal core of humanity. Plantanga (2004) comments about yodeling as a broad musical genre, suggesting its ability to assist the yodeler in transcendence from the concerns of his life. Plantanga states

> …there is another side to yodeling, a soulful, incantatory side – steeped in the ancient cowherds' prayer…it's entangled in the vast, psychogeographic conflation of yodel, geography, and spirituality…the place where chord intervals are created allowing the yodeler to find harmony within him- or herself. (p.10)

Yodeling has precedents in not only in European mountainous regions, but also in Africa. Indeed, yodeling is incorporated into performance of the Baka in present day Africa (Bundo, 2001). The connections between yodeling and its popularity as a White form of music and connection with Black forms of music can be exemplified by examining the works of popular White country singers in the early twentieth century.



(***Striking a chord: Railroads and their musical heritage***, **2006**)

Jimmie Rodgers was well known for his blue yodels and country songs, but he also sang blues songs as well. Despite an early death from tuberculosis, a disease from which he suffered throughout most of his career, he was prolific with regards to the number of songs and recordings that he produced. In addition, he was the first country singer to make a recording with a Black instrumentalist as a backup; these were extremely segregated times, yet his work includes Louis Armstrong playing cornet on Rodger's song "Blue Yodel Number 9," and the Black Mississippi bluesman, Clifford Gibson (Mcwhiney & Mills, 1983).

Even the popular representation in images and photographs of Jimmie Rodgers crossed between those of popular Black male blues singers to the railway man that he was in his twenties. In the following photograph, he was dressed quite sharply as were the Black bluesmen so often in their publicity photographs. However, in other

shots like the one on the previous page, he is dressed in a railway worker's uniform, matching the subject matter of many of his songs. Still others show him in a broad brimmed cowboy hat, matching another description of him as the singing cowboy.

(*Jimmie Rodgers,* 2006)

Black singers who were known for their blues singing were also known to yodel. Tommy Johnson, a well-known Delta bluesmen, made a test pressing for Paramount records that consisted of two versions of a cowboy yodeling song, complete with the flat picking style typified by Jimmie Rodgers (Wald, 2004). While recording studios generally reserved recording these Black artists as blues singers only (Wald, 2004), some White artists were advertised in *The Chicago Defender* as yodelers. Interestingly, the depictions of these artists were as Black men, either in Black face, or sketched as Black men (Columbia, 1928; Vocalion, 1929). This was obviously tied to the marketing strategies of the White record producers trying to glean as much profit as possible from their race record market.

Beyond the yodeling, country music also shared similar subject matter and themes with traditional blues. Bessie Smith was singing Black Mountain Blues, and suggesting violence as a way to resolve a broken heart, singing

I'm goin' back to Black Mountain,
Me and my razor and my gun.
'Back to Black mountain,
Me and my razor and my gun
I'm gonna cut him if he stands,
I'm gonna shoot him if he runs (Johnson, 1989)

Jimmie Rodgers puts forth a similar sentiment in "T for Texas", singing

T for Texas, T for Tennessee,
T for Texas, T for Tennessee
T for Thelma, that gal made a wreck out of me.
Gonna buy me a pistol, long as I am tall,
Buy me a pistol, long as I am tall,

Gonna shoot po' Thelma,

*Just to see her jump and fall***.** (Rodgers, 1977)

Much of Rodger's music was written in traditional AAB format, like many blues. Often, the themes in Rodger's music paralleled traditional blues themes, with railroads and traveling, sexuality and the accompanying heartbreak, and issues concerning class and poverty addressed. For example, he sings about the hobo life – hopping on trains without enough money for a fare.

I walked up to the brakeman

Just to give him a line of talk.

He said if you got money

I'll see that you don't walk.

"I haven't got a penny.

Not a nickel can I show."

"Get off, get off, you railroad bum!"

And he slammed the boxcar door. (Rodgers, 1997)

Even as the genre of country music progressed after the initial work of Jimmie Rodgers, themes continued to abound regarding sexuality, class, and the day-to-day experiences of living as relatively poorer individuals in this society. This genre of music has blues themes and elements of the blues metaphor threaded throughout it, as artists like Jimmie Rodgers embodied this as well. Porterfield (1979) supplies a thorough biographical account of Rodger's life. He notes that Rodger's short lived six year career was splattered with hard times, in areas of finance, health, and initially, romance. During the early part of his career, he worked on the railroad, but needed to give it up when his tuberculosis worsened. When not able to work on the railroad, he focused more on his entertainment career. Within the six years between 1927 and 1933, he recorded songs, many blue yodels and plain blues, many his own compositions. He described the hard times, but beneath these words, and in the sometimes mournful, sometimes joyful lilt of his superb recordings, we hear the underlying strain of the blues metaphor, that persistence at continuing the journey despite the troubles, despite the inequities. We hear a sense of hope, a sense of promise, and we hear some hard issues brought out in a straightforward manner, in the form of a song, or in the assuaging yodel of this father of

country music. We hear the humanity from someone who accepts the past, but is living in the very moment, all the while putting out that consistent sense of hope towards the future.

Since the introduction of country music to current times, it has continued to present a slice of life of a part of our society's culture that is not represented in mainstream America. The blues metaphor is contained within its texts.

The Blues Metaphor in Jazz

At roughly the same time that the blues were emerging as a form of expression born from the African American experience, jazz was emerging as well. It has blues themes and elements of the blues metaphor throughout it. Like the blues, it was born around the turn of the twentieth century, with African American artists as the primary performers.

Jazz was not purely created from the heritage of recently emancipated slaves. West (1994) describes jazz as an example of a hybridization , a type of cross–fertilization of a variety of different cultures, something that occurs usually under conditions of hierarchy. He notes that while jazz is considered a symbol of American culture, there would be no jazz without European instruments and African polyrhythms. Much like the blues emerged from roots of African American songs created during slavery, a time when White and Black culture intersected and clashed, so too did jazz emerge.

Perhaps one of the richest environments for the intermingling of different cultures was in New Orleans, which, unsurprisingly, was a hotbed for jazz in its origins. Jelly Roll Morton (1999), known as an excellent jazz pianist and composer and the self proclaimed inventor of jazz, describes New Orleans as a city that "was inhabited by maybe every race on the face of the globe and, of course, plenty of French people" (p.18). He describes that within this city, ragtime was rich, and music was created on whatever was available, including Kress horns, which were inexpensive cardboard horns with wooden mouthpieces. Morton describes the presence of many 'bad' bands he referred to as spasm bands, that is, bands that

> played any jobs they could get in the streets. They did a lot of ad-libbing in ragtime style with different solos in succession, not in a regular routine, but just as

> one guy would get tired and let another take the lead…None of these guys made much money – maybe a dollar a night or a couple of bucks for a funeral. [but] even the rags-bottle-and-bones men would…play more low-down dirty blues on Kress horns than the rest of the country ever thought of. (p.18)

These beginnings, or precursors to jazz, paralleled the blues in that they were being created by the poor and disenfranchised, the oppressed in the society. Welch (1999) noted that although "…blues and jazz express a 'telling criticism of American life,' they also express an affirmation of life, a way of creating and living in the face of ambiguity and limits…Jazz reduces 'the chaos of living' to form." (p. 18-19). She further states that

> in jazz and in the blues, we find the power and pleasure of 'virtuosity in the face of limits' the power and joy of holding together seemingly intractable oppositions (suffering, rage, hope, and determination), all without illusions of simple or final answers. (p. 20-21)

The manner in which jazz ties in with the blues metaphor is described well by Dizzy Gillespie. Chico Freeman described a conversation he had with Dizzy Gillespie, in which Gillespie was asked "what is jazz?" Freeman continues

> Well, Dizzy answered the question right away. He said jazz is the search for truth. And, as soon as he said that, the light went on, and I added, 'and truth is what *is* – not what was or what will be. Truth is in the moment. To play who you are or what you are at the moment…and there's a certain serenity that comes from simply being who you really are. (qtd. in Welch, 1999, p. 24)

The unique tie-in to the present, to where the listener and performer are situated at the precise moment of the performance of jazz is also occurs with the blues. In her autobiography, Billie Holiday (1956) describes listening to a favorite blues song at a local whorehouse. She describes that one time, the song might fill her with joy, while another time, the same song might fill her with deep sorrow. The blues metaphor strongly connects to the present, the moment. Miles Davis (qtd. in Murray, 1999a) describes his jazz in a similar way, contrasting the location where it is made to the sound that is created. He states

> any time the weather changes, its going affect your whole attitude about something…a musician's attitude is the music he plays. Like in California, out by

> the beach, you have silence and the waves crashing against the shore. In New York, you're dealing with the sounds of cars honking their horns and people on the streets running their mouths…California's an outside thing and the music that comes out of there reflects that open space and freeways, shit that you don't hear in music that comes out of New York, which is usually more intense and energetic (p. 373).

This parallels the concept in the blues metaphor regarding the present. There are times that I personally listen to Miles Davis, and find the music incredibly soothing; it caresses my soul. Yet there other times that the same selection of music fills me with deep sadness, for I am almost overwhelmed by the underlying suffering that created that moment when Davis was able to express himself through the music. How I react to the music depends upon the moment, the present, and where I am situated in my life at that instance, and where my thoughts lie. Yet, listening to the music pulls up emotions that I may not have even been aware of when I first started listening to the music.

Simone Schwartz-Bart (1982) uses a metaphor of suffering as a horse. She warns that "if you ever get on [that] horse, keep a good hold of the reins … behind one pain there is another. Sorrow is a wave without end. But the horse mustn't ride you, you must ride it. " (pp.50-51). Welch (1999) furthers this metaphor, noting that "the blues is the music of 'riding the horse of suffering, and not letting the horse ride you'" (p. 125). One of the classic images of an early form of jazz, Dixieland, is that of the ritualistic New Orleans funeral. A slow, somber piece of music is played as the traditional procession winds its way through the streets of New Orleans, leading the deceased to his/her final resting place. However, once the body is laid to rest at the cemetery, the pace of the music picks up, and a more joyful, almost hopeful music accompanies the procession away from the cemetery. Whether listening to the slow, sad strains of the band during the funeral procession as it winds its way to the cemetery, or listening to the more upbeat intermingling of instruments as they leave the cemetery, the suffering is heard, yet it does not defeat. As the mood changes leaving the cemetery, the word is out, through the call and response of the instruments, through their call to the community around them that yes, life is suffering, but they are not going to allow 'that horse' to ride them. They transcend the suffering and pain of their loss through their expression in their music.

The blues do not ignore the past. Welch (1999) notes that in the blues, the pain of the past is acknowledged, but not with nostalgia. The Dixieland jazz heard in the funeral procession to and from the cemetery exemplifies this attitude, the attitude that expressed in the blues metaphor. Without a spoken word, the ritualistically slow march to the graveyard solemnly acknowledges the harsh reality of the pain suffered with the loss of the loved one. Yet the upbeat music played on the trip leaving the graveyard exemplifies the continuance and importance of moving forward, without regrets.

Murray (1999a) summarizes the parallels and distinctions between the blues performers and jazz performers. He describes the spontaneity of a blues performance at its peak during the call and response moments in, usually, live performances. He notes that blues musicians "improvise, and in the process, they elaborate, extend, and refine" (p. 310). In live performances, the blues musician is actively involved with engaging the audience. However, Murray notes, in jazz performances such as those by Charlie Parker, there was a

> primacy of playing…sometimes it was as if the only audience beyond themselves that counted was other musicians, whom they were not nearly so interested in entertaining as impressing and being one-up on…No blues idiom musicians were ever so recital oriented. They wanted audiences that would give them undivided attention, not dancers out to have their own good time. (Murray, 1999a, p.312)

Yet, Murray suggests that underlying these distinctions between the blues and jazz is a cohesive attitude that interconnects the two modes of expression. It is these cohesive elements that make up what I am referring to as the blues metaphor. Murray writes that these musical forms present

> a statement about confronting the complexities inherent in the human condition and about improvising or experimenting or riffing or otherwise playing with (or even gambling with) such possibilities as are also inherent in the obstacles, the disjunctures, and the jeopardy. It is also a statement of perseverance and about resilience and thus also about the maintenance of equilibrium despite precarious circumstances and about achieving elegance in the very process of coping with the rudiments of subsistence. (pp. 312-313)

Jazz, like the blues, had themes of sexuality and travel. Like the blues, there were specificities concerning race within the early jazz as well. Like the blues, jazz was tied up with sexuality and, ultimately, travel. Storyville, a section of New Orleans, was a hotbed for jazz with Sidney Bechet, King Oliver, Kid Ory and Jelly Roll Morton getting their starts there. Even Louis Armstrong delivered coal there as a child, and was, undoubtedly, influenced by the rich strains of jazz that swelled out of saloons and bordellos. Yet, Storyville may have been the most integrated neighborhood in the South, with White madams running Black prostitutes and Black madams running White prostitutes. White women could be found trying to pass themselves off as octoroons, women who were one eighth Black (Powell, 2002).

Jazz presents the listener and the performer with a primarily non-verbal language of hope, tenacity, and forthrightness. These are themes in which the blues metaphor is heavily infused. Whether we listen to the stark suffering and knowledge expressed in the honest tones of a Billie Holliday, or in the plaintive wails from the horns of Charlie Parker, their lives are affirmed. Moreover, they reach us, the listeners, wherever we are situated with ethnicity, race, or class, and we connect to the humanness and plight of the human condition heard in the texts of these forms of music.

The Blues Metaphor in Rock and Roll and Rhythm and Blues

All you people, you know the blues got a soul
Well this is a story, a story never been told
Well you know the blues got pregnant
And they named the baby Rock & Roll (Waters, 2006)

As I started to write this section, I kept wavering back and forth between keeping rhythm and blues and rock and roll together as a unit, or separated, as two separate subsections. I did not want to be disrespectful of the African-American heritage of rhythm and blues, but I also realized some of the most famous early rock stars, such as Chuck Berry, were from this heritage of rhythm and blues. In addition, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame includes these differing genres within its walls.

I am also uncomfortable in making these distinctions as well, since even today, many genres “crossover” to other. This is, in part, to the racist historical past of these distinctions. Brackett (1994) suggests that this practice of labeling “crossover” music has

historical roots that are intricately tied with record company profits. He notes that the recording industry organized popular music around divisions, which were originally "race," "popular," and "hillbilly." These divisions were aligned with demographic aspects as well. Brackett (1994) notes that *Billboard*, the music industry weekly with the famous Top Forty hit list, began publishing marginalized genre hit lists between 1939 and 1942. He states

> …(t)he assumed mainstream for pop audience was northern, urban, middle or upper class, and also White. The charts for marginal musics also assumed an audience – African American for race and R&B, rural southern White for hillbilly, folk, and country and western (p.277)

The term "rhythm and blues" became widely used in the early 1940s to describe the different style of Black music that was emerging at the time. In 1949, *Billboard* magazine switched the chart name of race records to rhythm and blues, reflecting the changes in style as well as the changes in marketing occurring in the industry (Barlow, 1989). As the music industry expanded in the 1960s, soul music and Motown were also included under the umbrella of R & B. The music reflected the interaction of the Black society with the White society in the culture of the United States.

Despite the evolution of music within the Black community, many of the themes were similar to those in the original blues. Many of the R&B lyrics were centered around interactions between genders, as were many blues songs. In her research on soul music, Maulktsby (1983) states

> through their texts, soul singers not only discussed the depressing economic and social conditions of Black communities, but they offered solutions for improvement and change. The intense and emotional nature of songs performed by these musicians captured the new spirit, attitudes, and convictions of Blacks that later altered the social, political, and economic structures of American society. (p.51)

Early blues songs included themes concerning oppression, and these included topics concerning prison and jail. This theme was built upon in Sam Cooke's "Chain Gang" (1965). Stewart (2005) describes how this mid-60s hit was "a stark reminder of

how the criminal justice system operates as a system of social control" (p.202). Cooke sings

All day long they work so hard,
'Til the sun is goin' down,
Working on the highways and byways
And wearing, wearing a frown.
You hear them moanin' their lives away.
Then you hear somebody say

That's the sound of the men working on the chain gang,
That's the sound of the men working on the chain gang.

Can't ya hear them singin'
Mm, I'm goin' home one of these days
I'm goin' home see my woman
Whom I love so dear.
But meanwhile I got to work right here...

All day long they're singin', mm
My, my, my, my, my, my, my, my, my work is so hard
Give me water. I'm thirsty.
My work is so hard. (Cooke, 1965)

As I listen to this piece now, it is more chilling and easily seen as a social protest than when I heard it when it first came out. As a teenager, I did not think of the implications of race that were underlying this work, unspoken, yet now, to me, so very obvious. Yet even then, its stark, swinging rhythms caught my young ears, with the words relating the cruel reality of the chain gangs of that era to me, a world I had never thought of in the sheltered New England city of my childhood. Sam Cooke acknowledges these harsh realities of chain gang members, while concomitantly exuding a sense of hope, of not giving up, as he looks towards the day when he gets out of jail. Hence, through the use of this song, the singer adapts to the harsh reality of working so hard on

the chain gang, making the work fall into place with the rhythmic swing of hammers to the beat of the song, much like the old work songs of the slaves did the same.

Similarly, Otis Redding's "Dock of the Bay" exemplifies some of the blues thematic ideas as well. He writes/sings

I left my home in Georgia
Headed for the 'Frisco bay.
'Cause I've had nothing to live for
And look like nothin's gonna come my way…

Sittin' here resting my bones
And this loneliness won't leave me alone
It's two thousand miles I roamed
Just to make this dock my home

Now, I'm just gonna sit at the dock of the bay
Watching the tide roll away
Oooo-wee, sittin' on the dock of the bay
Wastin' time (Redding, 1968)

Redding reiterates the theme found in so many early blues songs, of traveling when the feeling of the blues hit hard. He also presents this feeling of the blues with rich visualizations and representations of getting through the day even when "there's nothin' to live for." Yet, despite this statement of having nothing to live for, he describes watching time passing, life going on, with no sense of ending it all, in a final act of hopelessness. It is rather eerie that he recorded this last song just a few days before he died at the young age of twenty-six, while traveling, in a plane crash (Schwartz, 1992; "(Sittin' on) the Dock of the Bay.," 1988).

As with most musical forms, it is difficult to recognize exactly when a particular genre came into being. Rock and roll is no exception. Its roots in Black music, especially the blues, has been noted by several scholars (Davis, 1995b; Markle, 2003; Santino, 1982). In fact, at first, the term "rock and roll" could not be used on radio programs,

because it was taken from Black vernacular as a term referring to sexual intercourse. Hence, even the name of this type of music was drawn from Black origins (Santino, 1982). As mentioned earlier, it was and continues to be difficult to clearly distinguish between where rock as a separate entity quite different than rhythm and blues, since both forms of music occupied slots on Billboard's popular music charts (Ostlund & Kinnier, 1997). However, there exist certain artists/rock groups that typify the rock genre, yet are also tied to strong blues roots. Among these are The Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, and Janis Joplin.

Structurally, rock and roll is quite similar to the blues. In my naiveté, I discovered this shortly after my daughter purchased an electric guitar. I was trying the instrument out, stretching my repertoire. I tuned her electric guitar to a Rolling Stones CD I was playing. To my surprise (and embarrassment that I hadn't figured this out earlier), nearly every song used the same three chords that are so frequently used in traditional blues. When I slapped a capo on the guitar to facilitate key changes, I easily kept up with each song, never struggling to determine a tricky or unusual chord change.

Besides merely following similar chord progressions, rock music shares much more with the blues. Price (2002) states

> although the blues remains an independent tradition, the blues aesthetic is at the core of much of the best rock music produced in the past half century. At the heart of the blues are ideas of truth and sincerity that transcend mere musical style. The central aesthetic of the blues throughout its varied history has been a powerful expression of truth…(p.443)

The blues informed the music of many rock groups, including that of the Rolling Stones, but the manner in which they sang greatly differed from the bluesmen and women who sang, as many would say, the authentic blues. In an article about the Rolling Stones 2005 tour in the United States, Herbert (2005) describes what he senses is the distinction. He writes

> the Stones really did love the blues, and they promoted the old blues masters. But the Stones' own music was a different story. They took the blues and wrung out the grief and sadness until all that was left in most cases was the fun…When the Stones, in "Jumpin' Jack Flash," sang, "It's too much pain and too much

> sorrow," they sounded like the happiest guys in the world. "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" sounds like the temporary disappointment of a frat boy on an off night. While entertaining, those kinds of pieces are a long way from the sound and feel of Robert Johnson singing, "Li'l girl, my life seem so misery," or Muddy Waters begging, "Baby, please don't go."…The Stones learned enough from the blues to lift their best work above the level of the rock 'n' roll mainstream. (p.21)

Despite Herbert's critique of the playfulness of the Stones' performances, a sense of playfulness and/or sense of hope despite troubles are recurring theme in their lyrics. If the listener uses an imaginative amnesia regarding their White, British male backgrounds (albeit it not upper class), imagines their electric guitars as "unplugged," and time turned back a few decades, the listener might discover that their texts as rock musicians have other connections with the original blues. Beyond the structural similarities in their music as compared to the blues, it is fairly obvious that the Rolling Stones were, and continue to be flamboyant performers, just as the early blues women were (Albertson, 2003; Harrison, 2000). Herbert (2005) asks the reader

> who among the teenyboppers shrieking for the Rolling Stones during their first American tour in June 1964 could have possibly imagined that some of their grandchildren would be shrieking for the Stones with the same levels of delirium in 2005, more than 40 years later? (p.21)

He attributes this to their showmanship.

The similarities go beyond this, too. The blues are connected to the present, affecting the listener and the performer wherever they are personally located at that particular time when she/he is listening and/or performing. Hebdige (2000a) uses a phrase from "Mother's Little Helper" to discuss the Rolling Stones' disdain as members of a youth subculture, specifically targeting amphetamine usage among middle aged women. Jagger sings

What a drag it is getting old
Kids are different today,
I hear every mother say
Mother needs something today
To calm her down… (Rolling Stones, 2002)

When I listened to that song in my teens, I was too naive to even recognize what Mick Jagger was singing about – I remember empathizing, as much as a rather egocentric teenager could, with my mother when she was struggling with the reality of losing her youth, and I thought that was the meaning of these lyrics. I thought it must be a drag getting old. Moving forward to as I write this section today, I am limping around the house because I ran two miles without stopping yesterday. I haven't been running too much, and I feel like dragging my left leg behind me like Quasi Motto, for it hurts that much. Today, in the present, the words "what a drag it is getting old" take on different meaning to me, as I am sure they do to the Rolling Stones. In addition, as a parent of three daughters in their late teens and early twenties, I know in a way I did not know in the past, that kids *are* different today.

The music of Jimi Hendrix, a rock musician who died early in his career, had many influences, but the blues were among the strongest. Miles Davis (qtd. in Price, 2002) noted that "… Jimi Hendrix came from the blues, like me. We understood each other right away because of that. He was a great blues guitarist" (p.442). B. B. King acknowledged that Hendrix was a great musician, and that although Hendrix's music was based in blues, it went beyond that (Price, 2002). Perhaps some aspects of the blues metaphor can be seen in the words he created in his final piece performed at Woodstock, as he improvised, singing

500,00 halos…
Outshined the mud and history
We washed and drank
In God's tears of joy
And for once…
And for everyone
The truth was not a mystery

…as we passed over and beyond the walls of nay
Hand in hand as we lived
And made real the dreams
Of peaceful men

We came together… (qtd. in Henderson, 1995, p. 217)

These words suggest past suffering, suggest struggle, and more emphatically, suggest a strong sense of hope.

Janis Joplin, another rock star who died young, was heavily influenced by the blues, specifically Bessie Smith. She and the daughter of Bessie Smith's maid split the cost of a gravestone for Bessie Smith two months before Janis Joplin's own death. Coincidentally, Joplin's death occurred exactly thirty three years after Bessie Smith's burial (Braziel, 2004). A folk singer of the 1970s, Dory Previn, sang about this topic in her song "A Stone for Bessie Smith." She writes

Isn't it a pity
Shakes you to the bone,
She bought a stone for Bessie Smith.
She bought Bessie Smith a stone
She bought it for her gravesite
On a temporary loan
But she forgot she had not paid
For her own. (Previn, 1998)

Janis Joplin, like Bessie Smith, was bisexual, and the lyrics to some of her songs, like Bessie Smith's "Jail House Blues" allude to this. She sings

Don't you know when you're loving anybody, baby
You're taking a gamble on a little sorrow, but then, who cares, baby
Cause we may not be here tomorrow. And if anybody should come along
And is going to give you a little love and affection
I say "Get it while you can."
(Joplin, 2000)

Her work and her life opened areas still not frequently frankly discussed in her era, that is, issues of sexuality and the human condition (i.e. gambling on a little sorrow).

While some may argue that she is not singing true blues, her music does contain elements of the blues metaphor within it. The poet Sterling Brown distinguished between blues songs and the feeling blue. He described blues songs as

being full of consciousness of the ugly situation. They talk about it with

> irony; they talk about it with fortitude; they talk about it in good humor at times – they're not being fooled…. The blues are not despairing, but the blues are not surrendering…To me the spirit of the blues is the blues but not despondency. (qtd. in Rowell, 1998, p. 290)

I sense that this description applies to many examples of rhythm and blues and rock, a few of which were mentioned in this section. Much of the music in this genre was grounded in the early blues, much presented an ironic, yet not despondent view of life and suffering, and much was honestly stating reality, without being fooled by whatever hegemonic influences were present in society.

The Blues Metaphor in Hip Hop

I see no changes wake up in the morning and I ask myself
Is life worth living?Should I blast myself?
I'm tired of bein' poor & even worse I'm black.
My stomach hurts so I'm lookin' for a purse to snatch.
Cops give a damn about a negro,
Pull the trigger, kill a nigga – he's a hero.
Give the crack to the kids – who the hell cares?
One less hungry mouth on the welfare.
First ship 'em dope & let 'em deal the brothers.
Give 'em guns, step back watch 'em kill each other.
It's time to fight back. That's what Huey said.
Two shots in the dark now Huey's dead.
I got love for my brother but we can never go nowhere
Unless we share with each other.
We gotta start makin' changes.
Learn to see me as a brother instead of two distant strangers
And that's how it's supposed to be.
How can the Devil take a brother if he's close to me?
I'd love to go back to when we played as kids
But things changed, and that's the way it is (Shakur, 1998a)

The blues metaphor runs deep through a recent form of Black musical expression, Hip Hop. Started as an authentic voice for impoverished, urban, Black youth,

it has evolved to become one of the most popular forms of music among America's youth, crossing race, gender, and class lines. While it has been argued that many artists have 'sold out' to record companies, gearing their music and subject matter to that which will sell the most records, it still remains a strong force in the music industry, and in American culture.

The term Hip Hop currently can be used to define a style of music, which might be distinguished from rap in terms being less spoken and more sung, yet still authentic voices of Black urban youth. Yet this distinction is not always clear – rap music is also considered a part of the broader genre of Hip Hop. Aldridge & Stewart (2005) note that

> according to many Hip Hop aficionados, Hip Hop culture consists of at least four fundamental elements: disc jockeying (DJing), break dancing, graffiti art, and rapping (emceeing)…Hip Hop has encompassed not just a musical genre, but also a style of dress, dialect, and language, way of looking at the world and as aesthetic that reflects the sensibilities of a large population of youth…(p. 190)

In this section, I will refer to Hip Hop specifically as a broad musical genre which incorporates rap, and when referring to Hip Hop culture, it will be specifically stated. Within the musical genre of Hip Hop, there lies a great deal of diversity, not only with regards to the subject matter of the music, but also with the lifestyles and performances of the artists as well, leading to arguments concerning authenticity of certain artists' works, and the effect of commodification upon the art form.

From its inception, rap has evolved, much as the blues and other previously mentioned genres of music did as well, shaped by the interaction of the marginalized Black urban youth with dominant culture. Smitherman (1997) notes that "rapping about their pain and the violence they live with has rescued several rappers from 'thug life' and given them legitimate, productive careers" (p.21). This connects to the concept of adaptation, resistance, and transcendence through music, as described in previous sections. Yet, in leaving their life on the streets, in becoming successful recording artists, often Hip Hop artists are criticized for 'selling out' to the dominant society, for no longer having the authenticity to speak for those impoverished members of the society who are still intolerably oppressed.

Dyson (2004) notes that the beginnings of Hip Hop are frequently traced to the Bronx in New York, yet it has roots in Jamaica as well, drawing from dance hall music with multiple influences. Early Hip Hop presented a courageous, forthright picture to mainstream America describing young Black males' lives in impoverished urban settings, a picture not often seen by mainstream America, although elements of it were revealed in the disastrous handling of Katrina victims. With stark visual images, driving complex rhythms, and remarkable fluidity of language, the message of rappers cannot be ignored. An early Hip Hop release by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, entitled "The Message" presents the grim reality of this life. They state

> *…It's like a jungle sometimes, it makes me wonder*
> *How I can keep from going under.*
> *Broken glass everywhere,*
> *People pissing on the stairs, you know they just don't care.*
> *I can't take the smell, can't take the noise,*
> *I got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice.*
> *Rats in the front room, roaches in the back,*
> *Junkies in the alley with a baseball bat.*
> *I tried to get away, but I didn't get far.*
> *A man with a tow truck repossessed my car...* (Fletcher, Glover, Robinson, & Chase, 1994)

These lyrics present the truth about what life is like in the impoverished areas of urban environments. It presents the suffering that accompanies such life.

From Hip Hop's early beginnings in Bronx to present day rappers, Tupac Shakur is one of the best known since the emergence of this genre. Dyson (2004) describes him as "a transcendent force of creative fury who relentlessly articulated a generation's defining moods – its loves and hates, its hopelessness in self destruction" (p. 307). Some might say that Tupac's background typified that of many urban rappers. He grew up in an urban setting, in an impoverished, unstable home, with a mother who had a devastating drug addiction. He spent time in prison on questionable rape charges. He read an extensive collection of books, although he was a high school drop out (Dyson, 2001).

His music was gritty, honest, and at times, shocking. Hip Hop artist, Big Tray Dee notes that the songs of Tupac

> wound up in my head because they would grow on me, and I would see where he was coming from. I had to get that feeling or be in that mood to really relate to what he was saying at that particular time, on that particular song. He showed me how he created music through his heart and through his spirit, showing me that you had to have a certain vibe and continuity. You are not going to appeal to everybody. (qtd. in Dyson, 2004, p. 306)

Tupac's music presented the truths of living in his world. Like the blues of old, his lyrics hit hard with brutal honesty, often blatantly present issues that the dominant members of society failed to acknowledge.

Hip Hop music and culture, much like the blues of old, presents a form of resistance to dominant society. Smitherman (1997) notes

> rap music is not only a Black, expressive cultural phenomenon; it is, at the same time, a resisting discourse, a set of communicative practices that constitute a text of resistance against white America's racism and its Euro-centric cultural dominance. (p.7)

Tupac's "Letter to the President," presents such a discourse of resistance, in a chilling political statement critiquing the policies of Bill Clinton. He writes

…Dear Mr. Clinton, shit
It's gettin harder and harder for a motherfucker
To make a dollar in these here streets
I mean shit, I hear you screamin' peace
But we can't find peace
'til my little niggas on these streets get a piece
I know you feel me 'cause you too near me not to hear me
So why don't you help a nigga out? Sayin you cuttin' welfare
That got us niggas on the street, thinkin' who in the hell care?
Shit, y'all want us to put down our Glocks and our rocks
but y'all ain't ready to give us no motherfuckin' dollars
What happened to our 40 acres and a mule fool?

We ain't stupid

Think you got us lookin' to lose

Tryin' to turn all us young niggas into troops

You want us to fight your war

What the fuck I'm fightin for?

Shit, I ain't got no love here

I ain't had a check all year

Taxin' all the Blacks and

Police beatin' me in the streets peace. Still I rise.

Fuck peace… (Shakur, 1999)

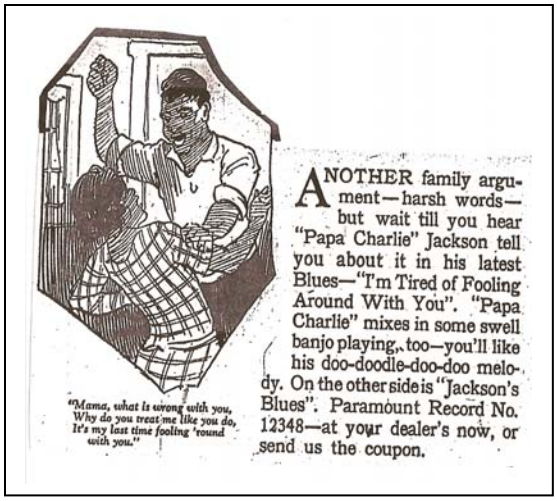
This rap essentially addresses the same issues that Bessie Smith sang about in "Mister Rich Man" (see p. 96), when she addressed the issue of Black men returning after fighting in World War I, to the same oppressive climate they had left behind. Issues of race and economic oppression are specifically addressed. It is disheartening to realize that these issues still exist, as they had in the early 1900s, and that alternative means of communication, i.e., artistic expression, are still needed to get the dominant society to listen.

Stevie Wonder acknowledges the power of rap in its ability to express pain. He states "I learn from rap…Listen hard, and you'll hear the pain. Without feeling the pain yourself, you'll never understand. And what we don't understand, we can't change, can't heal" (qtd. in Smitherman, 1997). When rap is listened to carefully, the pain being expressed cries out and the need for healing becomes urgently apparent, as does the need to bring about change.

There are clear parallels between the blues and Hip Hop, not only in content matter, but in cultural aspects as well. Dyson (2004) notes that the stock characters created in the blues culture, ranging from the bad bluesman to the lover man parallel the characters of pimp, hustlers, and gangsters common in Hip Hop culture. He further notes That "the rhetorical marks and devices of blues culture, including vulgar language, double entendres, boasting and liberal doses of homespun machismo, link [blues]…to Hip Hop, especially gangsta rap" (p.425). Much as the blues were shunned by many as

the Devil's music, so too is rap criticized for its contents and culture that are associated with it.

One of the arguments about Hip Hop is the frequent use of mysogynistic lyrics of male rappers, and the representation of women in their videos. As mentioned in prior sections, this occurred as well in the blues, and presented differing viewpoints regarding this. While early blues singers did not use videos, representations in advertisements presented similar images, such as Papa Jackson's record advertisement to the right.



(Chicago Defender, 1926, p. 7)

The Hip Hop group City High had a hit in 2004 that provided an interesting twist, offering a female perspective on this. The first verse is sung by a male, and this verse is answered by a female.

Saturday night I was at this real wild party
They had the liquor overflowing the cup
About five or six strippers trying to work for a buck
Then I took one girl outside with me
Her name was Loni she went to junior high with me
Said why you up in there dancing for cash
I guess a whole lots changed since I seen you last
She said

What would you do if your son was at home
Crying all alone on the bedroom floor
'Cause he's hungry
And the only way to feed him is to
Sleep with a man for a little bit of money
And his daddy's gone
Somewhere smoking rock now
In and out of lock-down

I ain't got a job now

So for you this is just a good time

But for me this is what I call life…(City High, 2001)

Much like the early blues records put out on race records, or like early jazz recordings, Hip Hop began to become more widely listened to by non-marginalized or less marginalized members of society, often beginning with the youth of a society. One of my teenage daughters listens to a lot of rap. I asked her to clarify what attracted her to this style of music. She explained that she liked the angriness of the music, and the way the beat rolls off. This daughter of mine is heavily into feminist theory, so I asked her about how she manages the misogyny that is present in some songs. She told me that there were some songs that are too hard for her to handle, for the misogyny is too graphic. However, usually, she just likes the sound and generalized emotion that the songs create, without getting into specific lyrics although she knows the misogyny is there. Interestingly, when I asked her to talk to some of her female college friends to come up with a list of songs that address gender issues, they mentioned "No Scrubs" by TLC. TLC sings

I don't want your number (no)

I don't wanna give you mine and (no)

I don't wanna meet you nowhere (no)

I don't want none of your time and (no)

I don't want no scrub,

A scrub is a guy that can't get no love from me,

Hanging out the passenger side,

Of his best friends ride,

*Trying to holler at me***.** (TLC, 2005)

As I researched these lyrics and listened to the song, I laughed to myself. I suspect it is rare for any woman of any race not to identify with the message of the lyrics, not recalling an incident of getting unwanted attention from some strange male as she is merely walking down the street. This song, like many of the blues, addresses issues of gender that cross lines of race and ethnicity, and exposes the truth in a forthright manner.

Admittedly, this brief discussion of Hip Hop culture does not begin to effectively discuss other important aspects of this music, including White artists' appropriation of the style, exploitation of the artists by record companies, and the evolving nature of the music since its first appearance. Yet all of these aspects of the music are paralleled by similar occurrences when blues and jazz emerged. The selected lyrics and discussion in this section were intended to clarify the means by which the blues metaphor runs throughout this art form. Through the honest lyrics, the truth about the lives of urban youth is revealed. Their suffering, anger, and, at times, rage, comes through, but there simultaneously exists some hope, and a sense of still be able to have a good time despite the oppression. This interconnects with the concept of resistance (to dominant culture), adaptation (through materials used to create music, through development of specific subculture identity), and transcendence (through effecting changes in lives through the music).

I have described the presence of blues themes in alternate forms of music, themes that form part of the framework for the blues metaphor. These genres of music often developed in subcultures that were oppressed by the dominant society members. All of the genres expressed elements of suffering as well as a sense of joys at times. I agree that it can be argued that other musical genres also expressed suffering with a sense of hope, ranging from the Ninth Symphony by Beethoven to songs of protest by Woody Guthrie and other folk singers. My intention in this section was highlight specific genres that resonated with elements of the blues metaphor, while accepting that in other genres, the blues metaphor may resonate to others as deeply as these did to me.

Developing the Blues Metaphor

I will start this section with a story, autobiographical in nature. As I have been delving into understanding and communicating exactly how to define the blues metaphor, I have found that including autobiographical segments has assisted me with deeper understanding both of the theory I am attempting to espouse, and of the interaction between my private and public life. Grumet (1997) addresses this notion, noting that

> any writing or reading of our lives presents us with the challenge that is at the heart of every educational experience: making sense of our lives. Autobiography becomes a medium for both teaching and research because each entry expresses

> the particular peace its author has made between the individuality of his or her subjectivity and the intersubjective and public character of meaning. The wound that haunts our consciousness by severing our private lives from our public world may begin to repair itself, at least on the level of text, as the languages of both worlds and their ways of being mingle in educational theory and practice. (p. 323)

Much as I used playing the blues to soothe wounds that occurred in both my private and public live, so too do I use autobiographical narratives regarding the blues to help bridge gaps between the sectors of the private life and research and educational theory.

One evening as I took a break from writing, I pulled out my guitar, and began reintroducing my fingers to the idea of developing calluses. I warmed up with a little riff that I often used in the past, and recalled that I learned it at a coffeehouse back in 1976 in a "Song Swap and Jam" that I attended regularly. As I limbered up my fingers, I began to wonder what had happened to a fellow guitarist, Brad Litwin, who had taught the riff to me. In the 1970s, in addition to playing around with the guitar, he worked as a luthier, a guitar maker, in the basement of a barn that was converted to a coffeehouse in Brattleboro, Vermont. Every Wednesday evening, a group of musicians, myself included, would gather chairs in a circle at that coffeehouse, and share songs among one another. On the weekends, we often attended concerts at the same coffee house, enjoying performances by Dave Van Ronk, Utah Phillips, Bill Staines, and other well-known artists. On weekdays, Brad spent his time in a shop beneath the coffeehouse, where he created tangible, musical works of art, including a collapsible guitar that Leon Redbone was interested in purchasing, a piece that I believe was exhibited in the Smithsonian for a while.

I set down my guitar, and decided to look Brad up on the internet, and was surprised to see that he is a fulltime blues musician now, focusing on the blues of the 1920s and 1930s. We connected with email, and I explained to him that in years past, I was a nurse who came up to that coffeehouse. He wrote back, exclaiming "My goodness! If that's not a blast from the past... You used to sing "I've Got The Blues For My Baby Down By The San Francisco Bay," if memory serves" (Litwin, 2004).

On the day following this email communication, my twenty-year-old daughter called me from college to say she found an old tape of me singing and playing the guitar

from the 1970s that she hadn't ever heard. As she described it to me, she said there was a really funny song about stealing chickens and cows. I could not recall this song, so she brought me the tape a few days later. As I listened, I was surprised to hear my then younger fingers dance across the strings in a delightful rendition of what I would guess was a country blues song from the early 1900s. I cannot recall how I learned this song, and can't find the lyrics for it on any lyric search engines. A month after recovering this song, I played it for my brother, a serious folk/blues record collector, but he had never heard it, nor could he remember hearing me play it in years past. Like the blues of old, it was part of an oral tradition – perhaps I learned it at that song swap, or perhaps from an old, long lost record. Nonetheless, within about a half an hour after hearing my daughter's uncovered tape of the old song again, I pulled out my guitar, and my fingers were slowly reawakening to the intricate patterns of playing in the song. The lyrics are as follows:

Well, hat's in the fire,
Turkey's fryin' in the pan.
Rooster's on the rooftop
Grabbin' all the chickens he can.
And I'm knockin' rocks
Down in the Knoxville Slam.

'Cuz I stole me a chicken
Got me ninety days,
Got me two fried eggs
And a nice warm place to stay.
I never cared
For them chickens anyway.

Me and the judge
We just couldn't seem to agree
As to who got the chicken,
And who got the jailhouse key.

He ate all the evidence,
So the jury had to set me free.

Well, I'm through stealin' chickens.
Next time I'm gonna steal me a cow.
'Cuz you can milk it, you can punch it,
You can even ask it how.
I never cared for them chickens anyhow.

As I played the song, my hands moved more slowly, and I adapted certain riffs to my aging fingers. However, my voice had a differing timbre to it as compared to the recordings. It was not as pure as my voice was on the tape, but it was richer. It reminded me of the difference I had noted in Bonnie Raitt recordings. This is connected with the idea that in the very nature of the blues is a realization that the public persona and the private persona are closely intertwined. This interconnection can be heard in the recordings Bonnie Raitt. When I bought Bonnie Raitt albums in 1972, I heard an alto voice that wailed out lyrics accompanied by some hard core blues slide guitar. There was a sweetness to her singing in these recordings though, almost like a little girl trying out walking in high heel shoes, long before she was ready to really take them on. Yet, when I listen to Raitt's more recent releases, I hear a deeper, richer, more soulful voice, that is, one that has really 'lived' the blues. While her earlier work was good, it seems almost fluffy as compared to her present day releases.

Certainly, Bonnie Raitt has lived the blues in the years between her early recordings to the present. She represents one of the more successful contemporary White female blues artists. Supporting the idea that blues music is an embodied text that gives voice to the silenced, she states that "the blues come from such a deeper place, and come from being mistreated and not heard" (qtd. in Wild, 1998). Her singing was influenced throughout the years by her friend, John Lee Hooker. However, she attributes one of her best life lessons to have come from him. When he was once asked about Bonnie Raitt, he had replied "Boy, she's in it so deep, she's never going to get out of the blues alive" (p.2). Bonnie Raitt said that comment:

> chilled me to the bone, because there have been times that I lived the blues in my heart and in my lifestyle so deeply that I got into it almost way too much, and there is some dark stuff that will pull you [down], whether it's addiction or picking the wrong men over and over again (p.2).

I sense that her living of the blues has shaped her voice into the richer, more soulful, genuine voice that it is today. Perhaps my life experiences have shaped my voice as well, changing it from the pure soprano of my early twenties that I heard in the recording of the chicken song to what it is today as I sing the chicken song.

The chicken song still resonates with me. When I look back to why I learned this song thirty years ago, I suspect I did so because it was funny, not only in the lyrics but in the actual instrumentation of the song. Secondly, I suspect I learned it because the strum/finger-picking style was an achievable challenge for my level of guitar playing, and lastly, because it was within my vocal range. However, when I try to play it now, I am deeply appreciative of the text as it stands a representative of old blues, and as a text that most likely was learned from another blues singer. It is part of a vocal tradition, describing in a somewhat humorous way the inequities of a person's life in Tennessee sixty to eighty years ago. Yet it touched me at the age of twenty-three, and it more deeply affects me today.

The second aspect of this tale lies specifically in the area of the way blues songs have been intertwined in my life, taking on different meanings and purposes as I, a White middle class woman, have journeyed though the past thirty years. For example, I learned "San Francisco Bay Blues" when I was about seventeen years old, because I loved the way it combined a strong, relatively easy-to-play guitar strum with the blues in a rhythmical piece. I liked the strum because it mirrored a strum I had learned from my father when first taking up guitar. My father always played a country style flat-picking strum that he had learned off of old Jimmie Rodgers country blues 78s. In the late 1930s, my father had actually performed songs using these strums as a teenager in Boston clubs. I was drawn to "San Francisco Bay Blues" not only because of the strum, but also because of the hard driving rhythm. I also liked the way my voice felt as I sang it. It pulled something from me that wasn't expressed in the old English folk ballads that I sang in a high soprano.

I haven't played "San Francisco Bay Blues" in years, primarily because it became commodified and overplayed when Eric Clapton included it on his "*Unplugged*" album (Clapton, 1992). However, to Brad, my old folk-singing peer, that song was an identifier; he related it to me, and used it to help recall exactly who I was after receiving my e-mail nearly thirty years after we played together. To me, it was part of an oral tradition that was started when I would sing along with my mother and sister as we washed and dried the dishes for our family of eight after evening meals. This tradition continued with my father as he joined in our songs on car rides, and it was nurtured in me as he taught me how to play the guitar with his twangy, country songs.

Although I am referring to my history as a White person, I sense that this kind of relationship to music can transcend my race, class, and gender, and have interconnections with even the early blues. I have worked for years upon my style of guitar playing, starting with country standards such as “Streets of Laredo,” moving to quiet strums such as those utilized by Joan Baez in her early works of English ballads. I started to change my style when I bought a book on finger-picking styles for the guitar. This book had songs by Etta Baker, Elizabeth Cotton, and Mississippi John Hurt. With some effort on my part, I began to have the ability to start to learn a greater variety of songs and guitar playing styles on the guitar, and started my connection with the blues. My vocal style changed over time as well. I moved from singing hit parade songs from the 1930s and 40s with my family, to classical voice lessons, to mimicking the growl of old-time and contemporary blues singers, incorporating all of these influences into my style. I have used my music to assuage me in very troubling times, when other forms of communication were not effective. Murray states "beneath the idiomatic surface of your old down-home stomping ground, with all of the ever-so-evocative color you work so hard to get just right, is the common ground of mankind in general"(Murray, 1996, p. 11).

How does this relate to the development of a blues metaphor? I believe there are several components in my story that do support my ideas about it. I will utilize them in an effort to better explain the blues metaphor.

One of my intents in this chapter was to reveal how the blues metaphor and related themes evolved throughout time, as different artists in different genres embodied it, interacting with the societal changes in their lives and performances. In fact, it could

be asked if the blues metaphor existed before the blues as an early musical form was made popular, as a philosophical approach to the human experience. This becomes a chicken or the egg type of argument, since it would be hard to prove, or even speculate which came first. Nonetheless, as these themes of the blues metaphor were identified and traced throughout the various musical genres, they evolved much like the music itself, while still maintaining connections to the blues of old. It should be noted that there are themes that do not apply directly to my conceptualization of a pedagogy of the blues, such as elements regarding sexuality. Many of the themes were interwoven throughout this chapter, but those from which I draw for the pedagogy of the blues will be specifically identified in the remaining portions of this section to help clarify the grounding for the upcoming chapter.

Truthful - The blues metaphor is truthful. It presents truth, as evocative and changing as it may be, depending on time, place, and personal interpretation. It represents the reality of experiences that have been suppressed by the techno-rational discourse.

The chicken song was truthful. The singer was forthright in stating she/he stole a chicken, spent time in jail, had a corrupt judge, and had future plans to steal a cow. In other words, the singer did not hold back – she/he told it like it was, not worrying about withholding information that might be incriminating or considered unsavory by members of dominant society.

The truths that I gleaned from the song as a young woman are different than what I get from it today. As a young woman, I thought of it as a story about the hard times the singer experienced, probably several years before I had been born. I viewed it isolation from the society in which I lived. However, as I sing it as an older woman, I sense truths in a broader sense, such as how corrupt judicial systems still impact severely upon the lives of marginalized individuals, and how unfair it is that jail might offer more comforts in life to some individuals than existence outside of prison. Hence, the truths expressed in the song are differing depending upon the time, place, and situation of the listener.

Painful – The blues metaphor represents the painful part of existence. Artists openly correlated the existence of this pain to their subjugation as marginalized members of society by the dominant society. By honestly and openly representing suffering, the blues metaphor asserts this condition, this suffering, as part of all our humanity.

Murray (1996) describes this universal element in the blues, stating

> ….I do not hear the blues as a simple lamentation by the one who has not loved wisely and not at all well; and certainly not any species of political torch song. I hear the music counter stating whatever woe (or worse) the lyrics might present for confrontation of the human condition. (p. 15)

Certainly there is a subtly stated element of suffering evident in the chicken song. Breaking rocks while incarcerated in a Knoxville prison certainly involves elements of pain and suffering, I am sure, even more so if done during the summer heat.

Critical – The blues metaphor views issues from a critical perspective. While the dominant discourses in our society cleverly avoid or work around these issue of race, gender, sexual preference, and class, the blues metaphor puts these issues on the forefront. Through lifestyle, through lyrics, and through performance, the artistry that is representative of the blues metaphor embodies attention to these issues, and brings them to the forefront of our consciousness. It heightens our awareness of issues we often ignore, either intentionally or unintentionally.

As I look at the meaning behind the chicken song, I recognize the critical component to the lyrics. Although sung in an playful manner, the underlying corruption of the judge, and the ineffectiveness of the judicial system are revealed. Ninety days were served for a crime for which there was no evidence because the judge ate it. Furthermore, rehabilitation certainly did not occur following the incarceration, for the singer was formulating plans to steal a cow when he got out of prison.

Hopeful – Within the blues metaphor, regardless of the degree of suffering, there exists an underlying sense of hope for the better, despite the conditions of the present and past. The process of naming the suffering and injustice, the process of acknowledgement of truths that are suppressed by dominant society interplay with the ability to have hope amidst the pain,

Often in blues songs, the element of hopefulness becomes apparent in that the singer describes future plans. This assures the audience that the singer is not giving up, but instead looking towards tomorrow, thinking that it will bring better times. This element often appears in the last stanza of songs, as it does in the chicken song, where the singer informs us of future plans, i.e., stealing a cow. The singer even rationalizes why

the cow would be a better choice than the chicken that got him in so much trouble. There are plans being formulated to improve the singer's life.

Hopefulness is also expressed by the perspective of the chicken song. The singer is not stuck in the mire of injustice – she/he tells the audience about it, simply and concisely, and then moves onto the next topic. All this is done to an upbeat accompaniment of rapid strumming of the guitar.

Playfulness – Although the blues metaphor acknowledges the suffering, there can co-exist a sense of joy, an ability to find joy amidst the sorrow. There is often laughter, smiles that acknowledge wisdom or knowing, and the ability to find fun in the midst of difficulty present in the performers of the genres embodying the blues metaphor.

I believe that he playfulness of the chicken song drew me to it at first, not only in the wry humor expressed though the lyrics, but also in the playful guitar accompaniment. The playfulness of the blues may often be its initial allure, that is, the way in which it grabs the attention of those who might even be considered the oppressors. The blues are a strong part of the life of my former folk singing buddy, Brad, who, as a White middle class Jewish male, has become a full-time musician, and tells me "I've been performing full time for about a year and a half, now. Don't think I could be happier" (Litwin, 2004). I suspect it is the playfulness of the blues that are contributing towards his happiness.

Yet, there is something more to be uncovered here – the pleasure derived from playing these songs, fiddling around with the tunes and the picking styles, and so forth. Murray (1999b, p. 109) states

> as for the ritualistic significance of the essential playfulness involved in blues musicianship, it is the effect of the very process of improvisation, elaboration, variation, extension, and refinement, (or just plain fooling around, for that matter) that makes sport of and hence serves to put the blue demons of gloom and ultimate despair to flight. (p. 109)

Hence, not only the songs themselves, but the performance of these songs also contributes to the playful component.

Autobiographical – The blues metaphor, while grounded in the past, connects to the present, to the here and now of living. It connects to the performer and to those listening to the performance, in a community of give and take during the performance. It

is individual, connecting to the very soul, but through that connection, it interconnects beyond the individual. It connects through understanding, through reaching to the core of our shared humanity. This is a key element in the autobiographical component of the blues, that is, the manner in which it connects to the individual's life, whether it is the performer or the audience member.

In my narratives about the chicken song, and my narrative about the "San Francisco Bay Blues," I related examples about how these individual songs have had connections in my own life, and in my interaction with others. The songs have taken on differing meanings as my life progresses and my depth of experience broadens. I connect them not only to my own personal experiences, but also to a broader sense of humanness.

This element was further exemplified by Bonnie Raitt in her description of those times in her past when she was so deep in the blues, she worried she would not find her way out of them. Her music was intricately woven into her life and lifestyle. Yet when I listened to her recordings from this time period, I connected to them in more lighthearted ways, for that was where I was situated in my own personal lifetime.

These are the major components of the blues metaphor upon which I will base the pedagogy of the blues. The blues metaphor has been shaped in the hauntingly strong voices of early blues singers through to the impossible to ignore, often poetic verses of modern day rap. Yet interlaced throughout all these genres are strands of the blues metaphor, knitting these voices and these art forms together as important fabrics of our society.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Pedagogy of the Blues

I want somewhere to go

But I hate to go to town.

I want somewhere to go,

To satisfy my mind.

I would go to town,

But I hate to stand around.

(White, 1969, p. 239)

Introduction

My daughter enthusiastically entered the education field, with high hopes of becoming a wonderfully creative art teacher who could make a positive impact on children's lives. Her roommate, another education major, also was looking forward to her student teaching experiences and her future career as an educator. Both of these girls are strong feminists. I was saddened, but completely understanding, when my daughter, now a senior, told me that both she and her roommate are seriously considering looking for another field in which to work after graduation. They are overwhelmed with the present condition of education, the devaluing of the arts, and the overwhelming attention to test scores. They do not feel as if it is an environment in which they could thrive.

One of my pre-service students in student teaching seminar brings up the topic of "specials," those classes that occur outside of the core classroom, i.e. art, music, physical education, library and/or computers, which are offered on a bi-weekly schedule at this student's school. "Shirley, do you know that they just added an extra five minutes to all of our specials? That means my teacher loses ten minutes with her class each week!" The expression on the student's face clearly indicates dismay. When I talk to her about the importance of these subjects, she agrees that they are important, but that it is already impossible for her teacher to fit in all of the required curriculum in her core classroom.

When beginning to write this introduction, I spent a few moments trying to think of real life examples of why a pedagogy of the blues is needed in education today. One

example quickly led to another, and then to another, and I had to stop the ideas flowing – there are far too many examples I could add to the above three. Instead, I hope to convey the necessity for change in the educational climate that is currently immersed in the *feeling* called the blues. That feeling of the blues pervades educational environments, affecting the students and teachers in public school settings, and affecting those of us who teach pre-service teachers in higher education settings. It can only follow that to remediate that *feeling* of the blues that permeates these environments, a change is needed. That change is envisioned through the sense of hope embodied in a pedagogy of the blues.

I write including examples of the problems of the dehumanizing effects of the techno-rationale approach to education in public school settings and in higher education settings, yet overall, I must focus the recovery of the self as the emphasis of the pedagogy of the blues, for it is the loss of self in the techno-rationale approach that is most deeply disturbing. If we consider what Pinar (2004) states is the purpose of public education, then the need for recovery of self becomes more apparent. He states

> the point of public education is not to become 'accountable,' forced through 'modes of address' to positions of 'gracious submission' to the political and business status quo. The point of public education is to become an individual, a citizen, a human subject engaged with intelligence and passion in the problems and pleasures of his or her life, problems and pleasures bound up with the problems and pleasures of everyone else in the nation, on this planet. (p.247)

I believe that this description applies to both teachers and students, in that within educational environments that are engaged in a pedagogy of the blues, the teacher and the students are interconnecting with one another, and learning from one another, effecting a reshaping of all the individuals engaged within such a learning environment.

In this final chapter, I will conceptualize a pedagogy of the blues, using the blues metaphor as its grounding. I suggest the pedagogy of the blues as an alternative to the dehumanizing techno-rational approach to education that overwhelms schooling today.

The pedagogy of the blues provides hope for change in the dismal environment of public education and higher education by teachers and students alike. It creates a sense of possibility in environments where creativity is suffocated by the overwhelming attitude

of getting that end-all one correct answer on all of those oh-so-important tests. It allows students and teachers to envision a difference in learning, in teaching, in living, and ultimately, in shaping a more just society, as they develop deeper understanding regarding the interconnection between themselves, their personal and public lives, and the world, through their evolving understanding of their selves and the interconnection they have with one another, with their communities, country, and the world.

The basic purpose for schooling in our country for the last one hundred years has primarily been to produce members for our country's work force (Pinar, 1992). The evolvement of the techno-rational approach to education led to "a variety of accountability models, management by objectives, teacher-proof curriculum materials, and state-mandated certification models." (Giroux, 11985). Certainly, the culture of our society has changed within the last one hundred years, but in terms of successful implementation of innovative, transformative approaches to curriculum, the field sadly stagnates. If anything, it has become more techno-rational.

As our society changes, so too should our approaches to schooling. With globalization and information access creating pervasive effects upon our lives, and as students' classrooms become more diverse in areas of race, class, and gender, the need for rethinking curriculum becomes increasingly apparent. Consideration must be given to the importance of connecting academic knowledge to the individual. Pinar (2004) suggests that educators must begin " teaching not only what is, for instance, historical knowledge, but also suggesting its possible consequences for the individual's self-formation, allowing that knowledge to shape that individual coming to social form" (p. 249).

Educators must closely consider questions regarding what knowledge needs to be taught, what knowledge is of worth, and who decides these answers, with the understanding of the tremendous power implications embedded within these questions. Moreover, educators must attend to the understanding that through their curriculum, they are helping shape their students into beings that effectively shift between the sectors of individual public and private lives. Through the curriculum, the educators can help students more deeply understand the importance of the interconnections between these public/private spaces, and how this understanding helps the students become better

citizens and human beings. Moreover, through the careful consideration and/or critique of curriculum, through their own reflection and through their interactions with students about the curriculum, the teachers' own selves are being shaped.

Pedagogy as the Art of Teaching

A pedagogy of the blues addresses issues surrounding knowledge with an underlying attentiveness to the importance of recovery of the self, and connecting the curriculum to the self. I use the word pedagogy as a descriptor of the art of teaching.

There are two closely intertwined aspects to my understanding of the word pedagogy; teaching is an *art* and it is a *performative art.* Anderson, and Gallegos (2005) describe performance as

> the strategic and often aestheticized engagement of bodily activity with the intent of knowing through doing and showing…a displayed enactment of ideology and enfleshed knowledge – influenced and motivated by the politics of race, gender, power, and class in the forms of…ritual, spectacle, resistance, and protest. (pp. 1-2)

The teacher and students are engaged in sharing and demonstrating knowledge, learning, and the process of teaching through the performance of these rituals and crafted performances within the educational environment. The roles of teacher as the teacher, and student as the learner may, and should fluctuate, with the teacher often learning and the student serving as the teacher. Through this milieu, cultural influences shape the manner by which the educational drama unfolds. Alexander (2005) notes that

> the classroom is a space of social and political negotiation, a tensive site with competing intentions…These intentions focus upon the performative processes of education and the struggle of teachers and students to either gain or retain the authority of their own understandings as imbued by, with, and through differing cultural insights and experiences. (p.59)

This suggests that through carefully attending to self reflection as new knowledge is obtained from other cultural insights and experiences, the student and the teacher are able to develop further understanding of self within its public and private being.

The framework of this performance of teaching is not a typical Euro-centric performance, whereby the audience is a passive partaker of the artist's talents, but the

performance is instead, a communal interaction whereby the performer and the audience partake and communicate throughout their time together with roles shifting, having audience members sometimes take the lead and influence the direction and the interpretation of the performance. The teacher is not only the performer, but instead, students may step into roles that they have practiced or may ad lib, while the teacher partakes of their performances.

There simultaneously exists the important component of art in my definition of pedagogy. Marcuse (2001) states that "the inner logic of the work of art terminates in the emergence of another reason, another sensibility, which defy the rationality and sensibility incorporated in the dominant social institution" (p. 236). Incorporating this into the performative aspect of teaching allows the envisioning of a pedagogy that breaks the established hegemonic order of society through education. By looking at teaching as an art, the process of educating is seen more clearly in terms of its potential for creating change. Eisner (2006) states

> teaching well…depends on artistry. Artistry is the ability to craft a performance, influence its pace, shape its rhythms and tone so its parts merge into a coherent whole. Artistry in teaching depends on embodied knowledge. The body plays a central role; it tunes you in to what's going on. You come to feel a process that often exceeds the capacity of language to describe. (p.45)

A pedagogy of the blues connects these descriptors of pedagogy with the blues metaphor. The blues metaphor is interwoven and enacted in the art of teaching in learning, with introspection and knowledge of self as the starting point for interrogation of dominant societal values and order and open acknowledgement of the issues regarding race, gender, class, culture and power.

A pedagogy of the blues looks and feels different than the type of education so prevalent today. One of the distinguishing characteristics is in the incorporation of testimony in the daily work in the classroom. Teachers and students relate their personal experiences to the educational setting, interpreting them and relating them to the content with which they are working with intent for deeper learning and understanding to occur as these stories are shared. In essence, they are sharing their *selves* and elements of their private interpretation of experience and knowledge of the way of the world. This idea of

testimony is not just a narration of a loosely related tale such as that which might be shared over a cup of coffee, but instead is what Taliaferro Baszile (2006) refers to as critical testimony. She describes this as "the stories …of educators who approach teaching as activist work, who understand the importance of working within and against traditional teaching and learning practices and who are willing to share those struggles as insight and inspirations for others" (p. 5). These testimonies present ideas in far more effective forms than traditional education insofar as connecting the student and teacher to the process of their learning.

To use critical testimonies is an essential component of working within educational environments that are essentially controlled by members of the dominant society. To teach and learn within such spaces, especially as marginalized members of society, requires deep reflection and consideration of appropriate manners in which to best approach issues, especially those of social justice.

Taliaferro Baszile (2006) describes three objectives that are met through the use of critical testimonies. She notes

> first, such testimonies reflect the everydayness of oppressive mindsets and practices and some of the concrete ways in which they take a toll on lives…Secondly, critical testimonies challenge the dominant epistemological paradigm by again not seeking to prove a theory, but by embodying the process of theorizing…Third, the epistemological shift toward theorizing reveals the 'voice' of the author and thus the ontological dimensions of Being constituted within one's lived experience of the contradiction. (p 5-6)

By being given examples of real life instances, examples they may have witnessed but not recognized, students are better able to recognize the impact of oppression as a tangible reality. They may begin to examine aspects of their *selves* in manners new to them, and begin to deepen their understanding of the relationship between their *selves* and the public world. This could potentially lead to changes not only in their private thinking, but eventually to their public behavior and actions.

In a pedagogy of the blues, critical testimonies may be given by students and teachers, with learning occurring that often far exceeds that which could be gained though traditional models of education or by merely reading a textbook. By adding the

element of personal narratives with connection to and/or alongside creation of theory and personal interpretation, a deeper connection is made within the context of the class, and interconnections and deeper understanding of differing perspectives arise, strengthening the community built within the classroom as well as the depth of understanding personally and through the community of the classroom. Moreover, these testimonies allow the teacher to openly discuss the often present discomfort of successfully navigating in the world where dominant society rules, while simultaneously resisting the injustice and oppression existing within such a world.

Grumet (1992) states that "a teacher must be able to recover and narrate her own story, and she must figure out how it is similar to and different from others' stories…she must be able to gather up both accounts and read them against the cultural and convictions that constitute their common ground of knowledge" (p. 5). In a pedagogy of the blues, both teachers *and* students are engaged in these readings of their own personal stories.

A Pedagogy of the Blues

In the following sections, I elaborate upon the six themes of pedagogy of the blues. I do so by situating each theme with a representation of the blues metaphor, elaborating on the theoretical underpinnings, and, most importantly, using critical testimony. These testimonies may be personal narratives, examples I have gathered through my practice of teaching, or through student discussion in class, yet all help me more deeply understand the theory with which I am grappling, and will hopefully deepen the understanding of the pedagogy of the blues on the part of the reader as well.

Some of these narratives may be fairly obvious in relation to my own personal development of understanding of issues, while others may exemplify the growth of some of my students. Regardless of where the growth appears to be situated, all of these experiences described in the narratives have helped me in defining my self, and in deepening of my personal understanding of the world as I know it. They have helped me reframe my approach, and have given me more insight as to how my performance of teaching impacts on students and others as I evolve through my engagement in a pedagogy of the blues.

Also included within these themes and narratives are examples of adaptation, resistance, and transcendence through the use of this pedagogy. There were, and continue to be times in my teaching when I get frustrated, angry, and discouraged in working within such techno-rational environments. However, through this pedagogy, I am able to adapt when necessary, resist in effective manners, and transcend the dehumanizing effects of the techno-rational.

Truthful

I take a shot of Henessee now I'm strong enough to face the madness.
Nickel bag full of sess weed laced with hash,
Phone calls from my niggers on the, other side,
Two childhood friends just died, I couldn't cry.
A damn shame, when will we ever change
And what remains from a twelve gauge to the brain?

(Shakur, 1995)

It was President's Week, and as field supervisor to twenty-five pre-service teachers, I had watched innumerous lessons extolling the virtues of our white forefathers. I entered a first grade classroom, and sat to watch one the pre-service teacher read a story from the childrens' library on Thomas Jefferson. I paid closer attention, hoping that my lessons about incorporating cultural awareness and issues concerning race into the curriculum might actually be enacted in the discussion following the reading. The book talked about how Jefferson was a great president, how he helped to write the Declaration of Independence, and how he helped to assure all men were free. I cringed at the use of the word men, and cringed again at the idea of ***all*** *men being free, thinking back to my trip to Monticello, and suffocating horror of the presence of all the slave quarters. The pre-service teacher went on, talking about how Thomas Jefferson and his wife had a beautiful house built, and named it Monticello. The remainder of the book continued to describe how Jefferson helped our country free. I was sadly disappointed by the brief discussion with students after the book was read. There was not one mention of the use of slaves by this president.*

I tried to be patient when I conferenced with the pre-service teacher after the lesson. I asked her if she had ever been to Monticello. She had not. I asked her if she

thought that there were any ways in which she could have demonstrated to the students the weaker side, the less heroic side of Thomas Jefferson. She thought for a moment, and said no. I brought her back to the page in the story about Jefferson having his house built. I asked her if there was anything she could add to that, and again, she looked perplexed, and said no. I then asked her who actually built the home, and she stopped, with the "aha!" look, and said " Oh! The slaves!" We talked about the importance of including these topics within discussions, and we talked about the reasons she did not. Unfortunately, she was teaching in the manner in which she had been taught about presidents. I also sensed her discomfort at having to change this approach, and bring up a side of Jefferson that has not been widely revealed as important by dominant society. However, I think (hope) that she recognized that by this omission, she was not presenting a true representation of history to her students, and the need for honesty was far greater than the comfort she felt by sticking to the traditional story.

A pedagogy of the blues is truthful. To the educator, this represents the challenge of uncovering, revealing, and accepting truths that are suppressed by the dominant society, and incorporating these truths into the curriculum. This involves several components, including creation of an environment of trust within the classroom, where stories, viewpoints, and concerns can be shared It involves continual reflection and openness to understanding that truths may differ from person to person depending upon their backgrounds, culture, and lived experiences. It involves diligence towards careful deconstruction of traditional curriculum and pedagogical models to uncover hidden or distorted truths.

This is not an easy accomplishment, and for many of us, involves teaching in a manner that we have never witnessed before. Many of us and our students are all too familiar with the backing concept of education, whereby the teacher is the all-knowing, and the students are mere receptacles for her/his knowledge (Freire, 2003). We have all sat in boring lectures where the authoritarian, 'all-wise' teacher droned on and on, rarely considering the personal stories, dreams, and hopes of her/his students. In present day schooling, this idea of a banking concept has morphed into something insidiously more dangerous. With the proliferation of 'teaching to the test,' and required usage of scripted texts, the all-knowing authority is removed far beyond the classroom, and the students are

being taught material that has been deemed ‘knowledge of importance’ by those dominant members of society who have the power to enact laws and curriculum standards while remaining far away from the reality of the lives of the students. The teacher and the student are being filled, like empty vessels, with the knowledge that those in power feel should be taught, with only the truths that the dominant society deems as important being included, and the truths of the marginalized in our society being either buried or distorted.

Critical to exposing these truths is creating a classroom that is focused upon dialogue. Dialogue is an essential component to towards uncovering truths, and uncovering and analyzing our own personal truths. As educational sites become increasingly diverse, the opportunity to learn other truths becomes available. Giroux (2000a) suggests that

> …educators and cultural workers… treat schools and other public sites as border institutions in which teachers, students, and others engage in daily acts of cultural translations and negotiation. For it is within such institutions that students and teachers are offered the opportunity to become border crossers. (p. 199)

Often, students form their ideas regarding other cultures from families and friends from their own cultural background or from depictions in popular culture, through advertisements, television shows and new reports. Obviously, these sources are fraught with problems regarding accuracy. However, when students are working with students from different cultures in their school settings, opportunities are created to deepen their own personal understanding. Pinar (2004) states “…who we are is invariably related to who others are, as well as to whom we have been and want to become” (p.30). Within educational spaces where dialogic education is practiced, students can begin to situate themselves within this diverse realm and begin to contemplate their past, present and future.

Integral to the process is the need for students to connect knowledge being taught to themselves. Instead of teaching subjects as estranged bodies of knowledge, teachers must allow the students to locate their learning and relate to it autobiographically (Pinar, 2004). As students from diverse backgrounds begin to connect their learning to their own lives in differing manners and as dialogues are opened, new awareness emerges in the

form of truths perhaps never imagined within the oppressive classrooms where the banking concept of education was practiced. Freire (2003) states that

> only through communication can human life hold meaning. The teacher's thinking is authenticated only by the authenticity of her students' thinking. The teacher cannot think for her students, nor can she impose her thought on them. Authentic thinking…does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication. (p.77)

By encouraging students to relate their newly acquired knowledge to their own lives, and to further build upon it by the act of relating it to their own lives, then truths become more apparent, to teacher and to students.

hooks (1994) further develops this idea, with her conception of an engaged pedagogy. She notes that she "entered classrooms with the conviction that it was crucial for me and every other student to be an active participant, not a passive consumer" (p. 14). Within her classrooms, the role of teacher and student are fluid, with students often taking the role of the teacher in their dialogue, teaching all in the class through their relating of personal experiences and truths.

hooks (1994) notes that within her classrooms, students and teachers share, and students are not asked to share or take risks that she herself would not take. The issue of trust is important, and these concepts help to build trust. At times, resistance may occur towards active engagement in the classroom, and this may be related to trust/distrust. hooks (2003) ascribes this to "a fear of being found personally wanting" (p. 107). She suggests that to prevent this from becoming a barrier to open, honest discussions, we must accept and understand the essentiality of each one of us engaging in self critique and critique of others. However, she suggests that we steer the critique of others in manners that encourage their own, self motivated personal critique. Through this, we are allowing each individual within the classroom community to further develop and understand their sense of self. Throughout this process, trust is established, truths are revealed, and community is built.

As shown above, a pedagogy of the blues draws from the ideas of many theorists in establishing the underpinning of truthfulness. It is truthful in that students are encouraged to connect learned knowledge to their own lives to make sense of it and to

self critique. Through the dialogic approach and through engaged discussions of students and teachers from varying cultural backgrounds, a larger realization of truth can be envisioned. Freire (Shor & Freire, 1987a) states "dialogue is a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and remake it" (p.99). In honest dialogue, the teacher and the students reveal their take on reality, and in doing so, everyone learns. Individuals engaged in dialogue reveal their conception of truth in their own lives. By carefully attending to the expressed truths of others, the students and the teacher remake their own reality, reshaping it with newly learned truths obtained in the dialectic process. They are more easily able to identify and challenge areas of oppression by members of the dominant society, especially in the area of curricular mandates. They begin to see curriculum as a cultural artifact, that its terms are part of a political and cultural discourse. Moreover, they begin to see the connections between their own personal experiences and the formal curriculum (Grumet & McCoy, 1997). This provides the beginnings for reshaping some of their established truths, and formulation of new truths.

Instead of passively accepting given curriculum as truth, a pedagogy of the blues interconnects the curriculum to the selves of teacher and students, and their personal truths. This is an adaptation to the dehumanizing effect of the banking concept of education – it attends to the student's personal being as well as that of the teacher. It also is resistant, in that the students and teachers are not actively agreeing to follow the mandated curriculum exactly as written. It allows students and teachers to transcend the techno-rationality of their environment, and develop a deeper awareness of themselves and their interconnection with others on a school level, in their communities, and globally. A pedagogy of the blues provides a refreshing alternative to the "nightmare of the present" (Pinar, 2004).

Painful

> *Like I said, things used to get a little rough in them days. Not that they don't these days, but back then, they wouldn't think no more about killing a Negro than they would about killing a chicken. I became more acquainted with lynchings than I was with hanging up my socks…*
>
> *I had a first cousin to get lynched. His name was Robert Lee Hatchett. He was just about 18 years old. A bunch of white boys was drinking one Saturday night,*

> *and Robert Lee was coming home and they killed him and laid his body on the railroad tracks for the train to run over. But the engineer stopped. The white boys went home and went to bed and nothing was ever done to them….*
> *I never wrote songs about nothing like that, though. I didn't do it then, and I won't do it now. It just get on my nerves. I can think of other things to sing about. It's so much of that kind of thing happening every day, and I just don't want to make no songs out of it.* (White, 1969, pp.473-474)

I walked into an urban school the second day of my volunteer time. There was a class of young African American students walking silently down the hall, hands held crossed in front of them in an unnatural position. Their expressions were very somber. I immediately compared this line of students to my walks as a kindergarten teacher down the hall in my predominantly white school, with a trail of kindergarten students behind me pretending they were butterflies one day, little mice another, secret agents another day…Teachers at the school in which I volunteered were predominantly white, and the students predominantly black. The students before me looked as if they are tied together by invisible chain, hands kept immobile by invisible bonds. I was deeply disturbed. Later, I checked the web site for this school, and noted that its rules for behavior emphasized that when walking in the hallway, all students would walk with their hands crossed before them, with no talking allowed. Other rules noted that students would be allowed to go to the rest room once in the morning, and once in the afternoon, with their class as whole. Only in an emergency would they be allowed to use a hall pass. If students needed to go more frequently than the stated two times, a medical note was needed from their doctor.

The second element in the blues metaphor that is incorporated in the pedagogy of the blues is that it acknowledges pain and suffering. This is interconnected with the idea of representing the truth, yet perhaps because of societal models of stoicism, confessing about suffering is often omitted. However, in doing so, we are, in fact, omitting a truth regarding our lives, for to be human means to suffer (Bstan-dzin-rgya-mtsho & Cutler, 1998). As compassionate human beings and teachers, we strive to alleviate others' suffering. Moreover, we are interconnected through the experience of suffering, regardless of the cause, and may, in fact, deepen our compassion for one another through the shared human experience of suffering,

Acknowledgement of suffering is intertwined somewhat with hooks' concept of confession being an important part of dialectic teaching (hooks, 1994). She reminds us

that within the spaces where students are asked to share and confess, so too must the teacher, and through this process, teacher and students are empowered. Within these confessions, there sometimes exists the recognition of and acknowledgement of pain. hooks (1990b) critiques people who write about oppression and domination while maintaining a distance from the pain, treating it just as a 'discourse.' She writes

> I remember the pain because I believe that true resistance begins with people confronting pain, whether it's theirs or somebody else's, and wanting to do something to change it. And it's this pain that so much makes its mark in daily life. Pain as a catalyst for change, for working to change. (p. 215)

We live in a racialized society; people of differing races and ethnicities tend to congregate with those who are of the same ethnicities or cultures. It is best to learn of the Other through making connections in settings where cultures meet one another. Giroux (1992) suggests these sites include schools. In educational settings, students and teachers meet regularly and learn academic material, but they also are afforded the opportunity to connect with individuals outside of their own culture. Within these spaces, as trust is established, the revelations and confessions about experiences connect individuals together. The description of painful experiences, that may have initially distanced the person experiencing the pain from Others, can serve as a starting point for healing. There can be interconnections built upon the commonality of the human condition of suffering that crosses boundaries of race, gender, and class.

My own insights into my ignorance regarding issues of race were revealed to me through an honest discussion occurring in one of my post graduate classes in which the professor utilized engaged pedagogy. As a White woman who grew up with predominantly White friends and went to schools that were predominantly White, I have a racialized view of how our society functions. After watching the Southern Peace Marches in the 1960s, I, like many other White people in New England, thought that except in perhaps a few backwards communities in the South, the problems around race were essentially resolved. I didn't think that blatant racism occurred very much. However, in this postgraduate class, a black woman confided that she was frequently followed around in stores because people assumed she would be shoplifting because of her race. In my naiveté, I was astounded. She later described an incident that disturbed

her. She lived in a large housing development with upper middle class to upper class homes. Her husband was a successful business owner. She became very upset when two young White boys from the neighborhood came to her door, and asked her if she could get them her husband's autograph. They had assumed that the only way she could afford to live in such a home would be because her husband was a professional athlete, like some of the other black families in the neighborhood.

These confessions were eye opening to me, and I deeply appreciated her sharing this with me. I had never considered that someone would actually think that this woman would be a shoplifter – it was clear that this was a racially motivated assumption. I was never followed around in stores, and I dressed a great deal shabbier than she did, so I doubted it was related to class either. This deeply saddened me. These discussions also revealed to me the racist assumption that black people only succeed in entertainment or sports. I had not ever considered this, in my personal ignorance. hooks (1994) states that White women should not expect black women to unveil their racist attitudes, but that the White women should work on uncovering these attitudes themselves. If this woman had not started me on the journey of evaluating my own racialized attitudes, I would most likely be continuing to function under the veil of White privilege, ignorant to the harm, pain, and suffering that such unawareness maintains.

I sense that acknowledgement of suffering might be helpful to people of the same race, gender, or sexual orientation as well. I had an unsettling conversation with my sister, who lives in New England, concerning topics of race. When I was trying to explain to her about White privilege and about the marginalization of people of color, she told me kindly, but in a definite "big sister" voice that not all black people feel that way. I have been pondering this conversation for a while, reflecting upon it, and trying to put myself in various positions to understand it. I wonder if it is connected to Gramscian ideas of hegemony, whereby the oppressed are not aware they are oppressed. I have black friends who do not seem concerned about racism. I wonder if it is because they have lived with it so long, that sometimes, it fades into the woodwork, or if they choose not to talk to me about it, because of my whiteness. I sense it may be the latter, for I have found that as my relationships have grown stronger with some of these friends, their outrage has been revealed more often. Yet, there are times when I feel it is necessary for White people to

talk about racism among White people, and people of color to engage in conversations about racism with people of their own ethnic background. Similarly, when I have classes comprised of predominantly one gender, and issues regarding gender privilege arise. It has been my experience that when I engage in conversations about marginalization due to race or gender, in classes comprised of all White students or same gender classes, the "confession" aspect is easier; talk flows more freely. This is not to say that there is no value to dialogues and confession around the issues of injustice in mixed groups of both dominant society members and non-dominant members. It is important to continue engaging in these topics regardless of the class composition. I have experienced less open engagement of topics in mixed groups, but in reading reflections of students from the dominant groups, I frequently read about new insights that they have acquired following such discussions. This suggests that in such classes, alternative modes of communication must also be made available to students.

hooks (1990b) reflects upon how historically, Black women have created "homeplaces," ranging from slave huts to wooden shacks. These were spaces where Black people could affirm one another and in doing so, heal many of the wounds inflicted by the oppressive dominant society. Within these spaces, Black people had the opportunity to grow and develop, and have their weary spirits nurtured. These were spaces whereby they could transcend the harsh realities of their lives interacting with the racist public. These spaces represented a community of resistance, and, I suspect, within these spaces, acknowledgement of suffering was an integral part of the healing of the many wounds caused by racism, and of transcending above the pain. I wonder if through a pedagogy of the blues, we might someday reach a point where spaces in school classrooms become communities of resistance against the suffering and injustices students endure. A first step towards this goal is to assure that these sufferings must be acknowledged and discussed within the classroom spaces.

Freire (2003) attributes suffering of the oppressed as being related to their inability to take action. He states "when their efforts to act responsibly are frustrated, when they find themselves unable to use their faculties, people suffer (p. 78). If students are being taught in the same rote manner, regardless of their background and abilities, if teachers are not allowed to create lessons and engage in pedagogy that best meets the

needs of *each* of their students, then suffering occurs. If students do not have a say in what they are learning, in how it relates to their own personal lives, and the manner in which gain knowledge, then there is pain. If students are being lined up like automatons, when their normal bodily functions are controlled by the issuing of only two bathroom passes per day, then suffering exists. If students and teachers are not allowed to give voice to this pain, to have safe spaces where they can discuss it and name it, the oppression continues.

Resistance begins with the naming of this pain, with the acknowledgement of the suffering, for this brings empowerment to those oppressed. It begins with the introspection of students and teachers to seek out the existence and source of this pain, and to transcend it. Pinar (2004) describes the relationship between the interconnection between the public and private, and the sharing of autobiographical as part of this process, using the slave narratives as a historical underpinning. He discusses the interconnections

> between the subjective and the social, the private and the public…evident…in those African American autobiographical practices…To speak from subjectivities of black suffering required attunement to the public sphere as it was experienced in the private. Such autobiographical testimony required a 'double-consciousness' to remind oneself and others that this world was not *the* world, that everything could change, and that someday everything will change. (p.250)

Within classrooms engaged in a pedagogy of the blues, dialogue and confessions about the realities of our suffering exist, and through the use of these dialogues, the interconnections between the public and the private, the social and the subjective become apparent. The development of the double-consciousness evident in the early African American autobiographies was, in part, an example of adaptation with transcendence, a way in which the suffering was acknowledged but not allowed to be overpowering.

A pedagogy of the blues names pain and suffering. It acknowledges that "it's not education that shapes society, but…it is society that shapes education according to the interest of those who have power"(Shor & Freire, 1987a, p. 35). The interest of those who are in power is most often unjust, and an important step in the resistance against this injustice is the acknowledgement of the pain caused by this oppression. This involves the

naming of the pain and the sharing of this suffering, the understanding of the interconnection of the public and private, and transcendence over the pain, that is, not letting the suffering completely overtake the individual and/or group.

Critical

Come round by my side and I'll sing you a song.
I'll sing it so softly, it'll do no one wrong.
On Birmingham Sunday the blood ran like wine,
And the choirs kept singing of Freedom.

(Baez, 1964)

I struggle from semester to semester to try to create ways in which I can help my students understand that we do not live in a just society. As an early childhood teacher, I frequently have classrooms composed of White females who have not had much exposure, if any at all, to critical pedagogy. I try to get them to introduce the idea of oppression by connecting it to their lives as women in a male dominated society. Surprisely, I sense resistance from many of them, a sense of "oh – that was all taken care of in the 60s with Women's Lib." They are not even cognizant of how their choice of a career field has most likely been molded by societal assumptions regarding gender roles, that their salaries are affected by this, and who will most likely be their bosses are affected by this. To help begin their awakening, I assign a project of looking at the popular representation of women and men on television. I ask them to critique the roles of women and men in commercials during programs typically watched by males, such as football broadcasts. They are then to critique the roles of men and women during shows typically watched by females, such as soap operas or the Lifetime channel. They write reflections after this, and so often, I sense the beginning of outrage at the objectification of women during the football game commercials, and at the role of expert housecleaner during the soap opera commercials. I am also relieved to see their outrage at their former naiveté. Almost all of their reflections indicate dismay that they had never noticed the differences in assigned gender roles prior to this assignment. In following classes, we begin to discuss the reasoning behind these popular culture representations of women. We continue to build

on these beginning understandings of hegemony, and add race and class to the discussion of power.

A pedagogy of the blues is a critical pedagogy that interweaves issues of race, class, and gender, and other areas of marginalization and injustice throughout the curriculum. It is a critique of power relations in our society.

One component of the pedagogy of the blues is critically approaching the curriculum that is taught, trying to uncover dominant voices and subjugated voices within it. While ideally, I would like to think that schools were democratic institutions that helped students become effective individuals working and thriving in a democracy, this is sadly not the case in today's schools. Pinar (2004) states that "the organization and culture of the school are linked to the economy and dominated by 'business thinking' (p.27). This approach has insidious implications. Giroux (1998) highlights the increasing influence of the corporate in our schools, warning about its effects on students and on the manner in which curriculum is enacted. He notes

> …no longer representing a cornerstone of democracy, schools within an ever-aggressive corporate culture are reduced to new investment opportunities, just as students represent a captive market and new opportunities for profit…Such education promises a high yield and substantive returns for those young people privileged enough and have the resources and the power to make their choices matter – and it becomes a great loss for those who lack the resources to participate in this latest growth industry. (p. 13)

As schools become more corporate, and fall victim to the ugly side of capitalism, issues of class become manifest themselves. Students are given "the not-so-subtle message that everything is for sale – including student identities, desires, and values" (Giroux, 1998). As poorer urban school settings try to operate on limited budgets and meet the needs of an often impoverished population of students, a short distance away the more affluent communities in the suburbs win "Blue Ribbon Awards" from the federal government for excellence in education.

Evidence of the corporate environment in my daughter's school was all too obvious to me, especially when comparing the school my daughter attended in a suburb to a school in which I volunteered in an urban setting. My daughter's new high school

was constructed with an entrance consisting of a large atrium with comfortable chairs and a gas fireplace. Only the most recent of technological advances were allowed in the classrooms – teachers were not allowed to use transparency projectors since they were not the most current form of technology. Meanwhile, students in the urban setting where I volunteered were using eight year old science textbooks, with no imminent plans for updating them. When I chastised my daughter for writing inside her three year old Spanish textbook, she told me her teacher had told them to write things in it, since they were giving these old books away to needy school districts that could not afford new textbooks. The teacher told them that if they wrote comments inside their text, it might help the students who would use the books later. The contrast between attention to the corporate in the very structure of my daughter's school with its gas fireplace and cushy chairs and attitude of superiority when compared to the urban school that had difficulty gaining enough funds for textbooks in the urban setting was problematic. It was one example that exposed the uneven power dynamics in public education today.

Giroux (2000b) suggests that schools are public sites that can serve as an introduction to how our society's culture is organized, especially with regards to issues of power as to which culture is deemed important and worthy, and which cultures are not. Teachers must critique power dynamics that operate within their schools, community and in the society as a whole, and help their students develop the abilities to do the same. This process can begin as teachers and students identify injustices within their schools, and work towards social justice within schools. Giroux (1989) describes two tasks for teachers working towards this goal. He notes that they must first recognize

> the assymetrical relations of power, through the knowledge, codes, competencies, values, and social relations that constitute the totality of schooling as a lived experience. Second, teachers need to construct political strategies for participating both in and out of the schools in social struggles designed to fight for schools as democratic public spheres, that is, as places where students are educated to be active, critical citizens willing to struggle for the imperatives and principles of a meaningful and substantive democracy (pp. 145-146)

Teachers must, in turn, work with their students through these students' personal sets of experiences to help them develop skills to recognize the power relations at play in

schools, especially with regards to race, class, and gender. Giroux states "if you believe that schooling is about somebody's story, somebody's history, somebody's set of memories, a particular set of experiences, then it is clear that just one logic will not suffice"(Giroux, 1992a). Within these spheres of diversity present in today's schools with the interactions between dominant voices and subjugated voices, students are empowered through the use of their personal experiences as sources of agency and as referents for critique (Giroux, 1989).

This again suggests the importance of students and teachers examining their *selves*, and how their views and attitudes may be distorted. Through the sharing of personal stories and experiences, a deeper appreciation for the need for change can be developed.

Inherent to this is the mixing, the fluidity of boundaries between teacher and students. This is critical to the process. hooks (1994) states

> when education is the practice of freedom, students are not the only ones who are asked to share, to confess. Engaged pedagogy does not seek simply to empower students. Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow, and are empowered by the process. (p. 21)

This practice within the classroom should not be constrained to within the four walls of the school. Giroux (2000b) notes that critical examination of power must not be practiced only within schools, but also within the wider community. As students and teachers become empowered through their knowledge of self, and move towards deeper knowledge regarding the cultural workings of society, they must transform this knowledge into action, making changes not only within themselves, but also in their schools and within their communities, creating more democratic spheres imbued with social justice. When Pinar (2004) describes the importance of the inextricably tied together aspects of the public and the private, this parallels the ideas of taking those truths developed and revealed within the privacy of the classroom spaces, and applying the lessons learned to the public wider community.

Teaching students to critique society starts within the classroom and is molded by the manner in which we engage the students. In a pedagogy of the blues, the classroom is

a space whereby teachers are activists who utilize critical testimonies to help themselves and their students in the process of rethinking their worlds (Taliaferro Baszile, 2006). In such classrooms, the teachers are problem posers, helping their students "develop their power to perform critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves, [coming] to see the world not as a static reality but as a reality in progress" (Freire, 2003, p. 83). It is sometimes a slow process that does not move along perhaps as quickly as we like, but we try to instill in our students the passion to continue to critique power structures within our society and work towards transformation of the society. Perhaps in our first interactions with students, in our first classes, our effect may merely be that the students' view of the world is shaken up and may never be the same, for embedded values, prejudices, and ideas must suddenly be reconsidered. But hopefully, over time, this form of teaching continues to have an effect on the lives of ourselves and our students. hooks (2003)states that

> the democratic educator …seeks to re-envision schooling as always a part of our real world experience, and our real life. Embracing the concept of a democratic education we see teaching and learning as taking place constantly. We share the knowledge gleaned in classrooms beyond those settings thereby working to challenge the construction of certain forms of knowledge as always and only available to the elite. (p.41)

An essential part of this process is uncovering our students' eyes and our own eyes with regards to specificities of issues of race, gender and class first within ourselves, and then within school curriculum. Curriculum is a racialized text (Pinar, 2004; Pinar et al., 2000). We present a White curriculum for the most part to our students. The depth of this was once again revealed to me when I visited the Underground Railroad Freedom Museum in Cincinnati, Ohio, where I learned that there exist receipts for the rental of slaves used to build the White House and the Capitol in Washington D.C. In all of my education, this was never revealed to me, although I certainly had many classes that discussed the building of these national buildings. In omission of texts representing voices other than White voices is all too prevalent in schools. Freire (2003) notes that "for the oppressors, 'human beings' refers only to themselves; other people are things" (p. 57). Certainly, the histories and contributions of oppressed groups to our society has

been buried much as if they were mere "things," while the accomplishments of White men receive loud plaudits throughout the curriculum in our schools.

Pinar et al. (2000) describe curriculum as gendered text, noting the importance looking at the relationships between gender and the curriculum. He states that we must

> subject the curriculum and it discourses to feminist analysis, radical homosexual or gay analysis,…and gender analysis…which are concerned with the unequal ways people are regarded due to their gender and sexuality, and the ways we construct and are constructed by the prevailing system of gender. (p.359)

The gendered aspect of curriculum is very apparent when I visit elementary schools, and all too frequently see all female staff changing their curriculum to meet the requirements of the predominantly male administrative dictates. This has historically been the pattern in schools, and presents a model to the students with men being in positions of power, and women in subservient roles (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2000).

Grumet (1988) describes absence of acknowledgement of women's voices in teaching. In noting that while women represent the majority of staff in public schools,

> nevertheless, our experience in this work is hidden . You will not find it in the volumes that record the history and philosophy of education…in teacher education texts or administrative handbooks. …Its absence is not a mere oversight…(p.xi)

Grumet discusses how although she was drawn to the issues of social justice, she felt silenced, noting that that experiences related to children, bearing, delivering, and nurturing of them, were absent as was "the language of the body, the world we know through our fingertips, the world we carry on weight bearing joints, the world we hear in sudden hums and giggles" (p xv). I sense this is the feminine, the knowledge from within the cave, which is such a necessary part of what occurs in classrooms, yet the part that is in danger of being snuffed out, as rigid "behavior plans" have students sitting in their seats for extended periods, with silence as an indicator of goodness, and those sudden hums and giggles resulting in five minutes of lost recess time. As teachers are being forced to use scripted texts, to teach to the test, and to conform to rigid time schedules for each subject that they teach, the techno-rationale prevails, and the voices of the children and the teachers are silenced further.

Sexuality and sexual preference are sometimes highly charged topics that are related to curriculum, but necessary to discuss with pre-service teachers. An example of this occurred occurred when I assigned an article that discussed the needs of non-traditional families of schoolchildren, specifically gay and lesbian families, and how schools could help. This was a difficult topic, especially since I knew that there were fundamentalist Christians within the classroom who had deep ethical dilemmas concerning homosexuality and the definition of family. I explained to the students that they would, no doubt, encounter diverse family structures in their careers, as I had. I also honestly told them how I wished that I had been able to engage in discussions about such topics with peers and professors when I had been in school, but that, instead, I faced these circumstances alone in an environment that was less than supportive to the parents. I confessed my own ignorance at the time of some of these interactions, and how I wished I had guidance in evaluating and critiquing my own thoughts and ideas on this difficult topic. I also asked students to think deeply as to how they could give these families, at a minimum, the same support as other more traditional families. Then, I asked them how they could come to grips with this, if the religion in which they believed espoused moral and ethical issues with homosexuality. Although there were a few very quiet students, many students presented their views and wrestled with ideas of conflict between their personal ethics, ethics espoused by their religion, and their desire to meet the needs of all the children in their classroom. There were no moments of pure clarity by these students, but I sensed that some of them were beginning to deconstruct some of their long-held belief systems.

I have addressed issues regarding socioeconomic class by grounding this discussion in the work of Payne (2003). In my recent position, many of the pre-service teachers come from Appalachian background, and some have first-hand experience of generational poverty. Some pre-service teachers are in field sites that use Payne's work as a school-wide grounding to their teaching. Besides having been required to read Payne's work, we engage in discussions on the impact of poverty on school children and, at times, upon themselves in their college classes. The atmosphere of trust provides an environment in which deeper understanding can occur, both for those who have experienced poverty and those who have not. In addition, solutions to practical problems

are sometimes brainstormed, including ways in which hunger issues can be lessened by adding free breakfast, and ways by which to keep these children from feeling stigmatized by classmates who are not in a lower socioeconomic class.

Certainly, we hope that we can nurture the beginnings of deeper understanding and commitment to issues of social justice in our students, as we engage them in discussions of topics that fully apply to their lives, their experiences and their awakening understandings of the ways in which our society functions. We hope to help our students take these deeper understandings to form the beginnings of passionate commitment towards working for social justice. We help them understand that such work can be started in schools, but should impact and will impact upon on their lives and their community. We help them begin to take on the roles of activists with a deeper level of understanding, and with a thirst to hear other voices, other truths that strengthen their personal convictions of the importance of such work. We must help our students become a strong force that can resist the injustice within our educational settings and beyond.

Pinar (2004) states that

> …teachers must reconceive our notions of legitimate political authority in the United States. To do so, we must engage in serious autobiographical labor to break those internalized 'modes of address' that keep us smashed on the social surface, unable to remember the past, and too distracted by bureaucratic busywork to focus on the future. (pp. 254-255)

As we work with our pre-service teachers, we must strive to collectively deepen our self-understanding, increase our self-mobility, and work together for social reconstruction (Pinar 2004). In essence, we will be working together to create schools that are not dehumanizing, but instead, humanizing sites where students and teachers work together to create a more just society.

Hopeful

You got a fast car
And I got a plan to get us out of here
I been working at the convenience store
Managed to save just a little bit of money
We won't have to drive too far

Just 'cross the border and into the city
You and I can both get jobs
And finally see what it means to be living

(Chapman, 1988)

I've spent a year working with eleven of these students, many of whom were the first college graduates in their family, some the first high school graduates. Many of were from Appalachian backgrounds, and some had first hand knowledge of the suffering that accompanies poverty. I hoped to help all of them deepen their understanding regarding the effects of oppression. I remember in the fall, during my first methods course with them, when I passed out social justice articles that applied to issues of race. A few students gave me the impression they were silently thinking "Not this again!" Other students expressed annoyance at having to do more reading, saying that they were busy enough without my adding to their workload. I tried to introduce ideas to them by using examples from my own practice as a kindergarten teacher to help them rethink issues of race. I told them how I wished that I had been given more work in this area in my certification program, because it would have helped me become a better teacher. I was not sure if I was reaching them.

During the next semester, in addition to coursework, I also worked with these students supervising them in their field placements. I was discouraged as I observed black children often sitting alone in classrooms of predominately white students, while their white classmates sat in clusters. Explanations regarding "behavior issues" were all too frequently used regarding the isolation of the black students. None of my students noticed that the black students in their field placements were often singled out. In our college classroom, I handed out McIntosh's "Unpacking the Invisible White Backpack" (McIntosh, 1990) *and was pleased to see the class was more responsive as a whole to the ideas regarding examining our white privilege.*

Early in the semester, during one of my field visits, a pre-service teacher was almost in tears when we talked after one of my observations. She complained about how badly the black student in the room had behaved in her lesson. I tried to calm her down, saying that the student was just an active young child, and perhaps if she let him sit next to her in the circle time, it might help. I also gently pointed out to her that during her

lesson, that the student had complained about another student's misbehavior three times, and she ignored his complaints. We then talked about the curriculum in her classroom, and I asked if she or the cooperating teacher ever read anything or incorporated anything specific to African Americans into the curriculum. She thought for a moment and replied "no." As we progressed through the semester, I noticed that this student more tolerant of the minor behavior differences this child exhibited, and was pleased to see her incorporating literature that was not only about white children.

At the end of the semester, the students were given the opportunity to observe an urban community forum in a setting outside of their suburban schools. In a follow-up reflection class, these students were engaged in a deep discussion about race. One student was talking about how at one point in the forum, she felt as if she was experiencing "white bashing." Other students stated that they felt guilty, that they were beginning to understand the concept of white privilege, and could not imagine the suffering that accompanied living in such impoverished conditions as had been described. The student who had earlier experienced difficulties with the Black boy in her class asked the student who was complaining about white bashing if she had ever considered what it might feel like to be the one of only a few white children in her school, and to have only curriculum related to black history and Africa presented to her, to have only books about black children to read, and only to do work in relationship to the Black culture, with no acknowledgement of White culture.

There is a sense of hope in a pedagogy of the blues. It is this sense of hope that gives educators the ability to continue to work towards a more just schooling, and realize that such change can occur.

Traditional blues songs are nearly always written in the first person, and interconnect the private with the public of the performer. She/he will describe experiences that occurred in the public that deeply impact the private, and vice versa. The interrelationship between the two are apparent as the singer effortlessly weaves between the two sectors in his/her lyrics. This parallels the importance for teachers and students to take care that both the public and private are attended to in education, and that the learners are consciously aware of the close interconnection between the two.

Many old blues songs start with "I woke up this morning." To me, this can be viewed two ways. First, it indicates that the singer was not in such a state of despair that that she/he opted for suicide. She/he made it through another day. It also indicates that no matter how hard and difficult the past was for the singer, she/he made it through those tough times to begin a new day…she/he woke up and the darkness of night gave way to the dawning of a new day. The remaining verses of blues songs often describe the troubles that were endured before that morning awakening, and the song might end with plans for the future, whether it is how the singer will deal with his/her partners in the future, or what type of traveling plans she/he might have. These topics reflect a hope in the future, even if it is only by talking about the future in the midst of sorrow and suffering. This reflects a sense of hope in that there exists a tenacity to keep moving forward, and to keep trying to find a better life regardless of how bad the present is. It is connected with adaptation and transcendence, much like the aforementioned slave narratives presented the idea that this world could change, and would change (Pinar, 2004).

A pedagogy of the blues is infused with hope. The very nature of this pedagogy is full of hope. To bring issues of race, class and gender into the open brings hope. To honestly look at ourselves and deconstruct long-held beliefs that contribute either directly or indirectly to marginalization adds a component of hope for the future. To describe suffering, and to bond together and forge forward to continue to work against entrenched marginalization in our society, and to bring about change gives a sense of hope to educators and students.

Naming the injustices in our current society is one step towards change, and a step that is full of hope. If there was no reason to hope, why should we bother naming the injustices? If we do not believe we can change our schools, then why do we continue to work in them?

Bringing subjects into the open that are rarely discussed elsewhere is a step in the right direction. Sometimes, by acknowledging that such injustice exists makes the burden a little lighter for those who are bearing it. It also can deepen the compassion of those within the class. Especially in hegemonic societies, some of the oppressed may not have been able to fully appreciate the extent of their oppression. Similarly, some of those

individuals in the dominant class may not be aware of their place of privilege in society and the implications and effects this has with others less privileged. In exploration of self, and in sharing elements of these explorations, change can occur. Naming the injustices, describing the ways in which elements in the environment are unjust opens the opportunity to seek change, and in doing so, provides hope.

The sense of hope that a pedagogy of the blues instills is not only routed in the deliberation of causes of suffering, but is deepened by planning and taking action to create the means by which to alleviate the suffering, in planning the means for resistance. Freire (1994a) states

> …at the bottom, in seeking for the deepest 'why' of my pain, I was educating my hope. I never expected things to 'just be that way.' I worked on things, on facts, on my will. I invented the concrete hope (p. 29)

Freire is reflecting deeply on his experience. The process of working with our students in also deeply reflecting, identifying suffering, identifying its causes, and creating means by which to dismantle the power behind the causes for suffering help to create a sense of hope in an often depressing educational environment. hooks (2003) warns us against merely naming the injustices without action. She states

> …exercises in recognition, naming the problem but also fully and deeply articulating what we do that works to address and resolve issues are needed to generate anew and inspire a spirit of ongoing resistance. When we only name a problem, when we state complaint without a constructive focus on resolution, we take away hope. (p. xiv)

Although naming the problem is an important component in the pedagogy of the blues, without the addition of creating the means to take action, it is merely complaint. Without having any planning of forms of resistance, frustration and anger might abound. Without the recognition that change can occur, hope could not flourish. These are key elements in adaptation, resistance, and ultimately, transcendence above the dehumanizing environments in which we and our students toil.

The entire process of identifying injustice, sharing our stories, forming plans to work against injustice, and implementing those actions provides a model that instills hope. When people of differing races, genders, or classes come together in work in

solidarity for social justice, it presents a sense of hope and a sense of community. hooks (2003) describes such a relationship with a white male colleague. She states "just as our relationship provides us with the needed intimacy and love, we bear witness publicly to engender hope, to let readers know that genuine connection and community is possible" (p. 116). To try to work against injustice in isolation is a difficult task, and it is difficult to maintain the sense of hope alone. However, in combining voices and joining others in this resistance, our sense of hope is deepened.

At times, I have found varying sources of hope in practicing a pedagogy of the blues. Through my own introspection, I have gained hope in that I am now able to identify causes of injustice that I was not aware of ten years ago, when I was obliviously ignorant of my position of White privilege. I have a sense of hope that I am now less apt to engage in hurtful behaviors because I am more aware. I am hopeful when I identify oppression where I would not have recognized it ten years ago. I cannot sit quietly when I see such examples, and I forthrightly name them so that those who are knowingly or unknowingly involved in it can no longer silently "get away with it." I have a sense of hope when I witness changes in my students that I can attribute, at least partially, to my teaching them about social justice issues. There are times when this sense of hope feels like a very slender filament, yet on some days, it is only by grasping this slender filament, that I can continue to move forward. It is difficult work, and there are times it can be disheartening, but the underlying understanding that I must not ever give up the hope energizes me to continue to work towards these goals. The bonds that I have made with others who are also working for social justice are often the strongest providers of my sense of hope. Their actions, their work, and their lives serve as invigorating examples that reemphasize the importance of continuing to resist injustice. They have demonstrated to me that this world is not static, that it can and will change.

<u>Joyful/Playful</u>

Up in Harlem every Saturday night
When the highbrows git together it's just too tight
They all congregates at an all night strut
And what they do is tut tut tut
Old Hannah Brown from 'cross town

Gets full of corn and starts breakin' 'em down
And at the break of day
You can hear ol' Hannah say
'Gimme a pigfoot and a bottle of beer.
Send me - gate, I don't care.
I feel just like I wanna clown.
Give the piano player a drink
Cuz he's bringin' me down.
(Wilson, 1994, pp 43-45)

It is hard to think of isolated incidents in my practice where joyful, playful interactions were incorporated into the practice of the pedagogy of the blues. They are often present, sometimes in short little bursts of laughter. It is sometimes related to a playful way of reminding us that in spite of the serious of this work, it is good to 'lighten up' in a sense. I can think of an informal moment when I was at a national conference with a noted African American male scholar. We were returning from a trip to a history museum which had a large statue of Thomas Jefferson prominently displayed in the entrance. I had openly questioned the prominence and reverence that seems to continually accompany this former president, especially when considering his history with slaveholding. After attending a presentation at the museum, we were among the last people to get on the bus filled with primarily White people. My colleague laughed and commented "Oh no. So this is how it is. We're being forced to the back of the bus again." This cut through some of the formality and tension among the other bus passengers, and the remainder of the bus ride home was filled with sharing, with laughter, and with elements of community that may not have been present without that opening comment changing the atmosphere.

Although the blues metaphor acknowledges suffering and pain, there exists within it the sense of joy and playfulness. This is connected to the community that is built through the practice of this approach to education. hooks (1994) refers to the laughter that often erupts from her classroom. The presence of laughter does not mean that hard work is being foregone. Yet, the ability to find the points where humor, playfulness, and joy

are welcome, natural accompaniments to the work is important. Scapp (qtd. in hooks, 1994) notes

> sometimes it's important to remind students that joy can be present along with hard work. Not every moment in the classroom will necessarily be one that brings you immediate pleasure, but that doesn't preclude the possibility of joy. Nor does it deny the reality that learning can be painful (p. 154)

I vaguely remember years ago hearing some famous comedian, whose name I now forget, saying that it was most important for his work to include first and foremost a sense of humor about himself, and how excellent comedians have the ability to see the humor in their personal selves. I connect this story with a very abbreviated tale about a horrible vacation I once had with three small children and a grumpy husband. The trip included breaking down in the middle of a busy intersection lined with "In memoriam" white crosses for all the people who had died at that intersection, having a thirty-six hour delay for the vacation in a town far from home while the car was being repaired only to find it was going to cost more than the car was worth, and having two days without our new rental car because the keys accidentally and irretrievably slipped down the defrost vent, and there were no spare sets. As much as I remember the nasty parts of this vacation, I also remember the awe in my then two-year-old's voice as we walked on cliff paths by the Maine coast, and she whispered "This place is pretty, isn't it, Mommy?" When I retell the woe that befell this vacation, I usually end up laughing. There was a sort of humor in the Murphy's Law (whatever can go wrong will go wrong) aspect this entire vacation. There is also the reality that in spite of all the misfortune, it was beautiful, sad (we had saved up for this and made reservations six months earlier), and it was humorous. I could see the humor in it (my husband could not, at the time), and I learned to appreciate moments of joy within this experience through the wisdom of my children. While this may not directly connect too schooling, it provides a narrative that explains an autobiographical incident that helps me, as the writer, more deeply connect the idea that I am espousing, i.e., the importance of humor sometimes in unpleasant situations, and the ability to learn even in these situations. It does not nearly reflect the level of suffering that exists in the dehumanizing environments of schools, not is it as

serious as issue as working on issues of social justice, but it does connect an autobiographical understanding I have had to the material with which I am grappling.

When a group of individuals join together in a commitment to work against injustice in the society, when a classroom of learners work together to unveil injustices, and formulate and enact plans to work against injustices, a community is formed. Within this community members form bonds and friendships that are deepened as a result of this work. Part of this community includes the safety of being able to laugh, to treasure the joyful moments, however many or few. It means having the ability to laugh at ourselves, to forgive ourselves and one another, and to cherish the connections we have created between one another. This does not mean that differences do not exist, or that tensions are not present. Yet it is exactly the presence of these differences and these tensions which co-exist as the group steadfastly works on difficult issues that can nurture and build the beauty and joy experienced in utilizing the pedagogy of the blues.

Freire (1998b) refers to the importance of committing to life as an essential component in education. The importance of committing to life is essential in a pedagogy of the blues, and spills over in schools settings. It is in the nature of living with a commitment to work towards change and a commitment to live our lives in manners that embody our work that help to imbue the spirit of joy in what we do. Freire states that these factors also contribute to the creation of a joyful school. He notes that

> we forge a school adventure, a school that marches on, that is not afraid of the risks, and that rejects immobility. It is a school that thinks, that participates, that creates, that speaks, that loves, that guesses, that passionately embraces and says *yes* to life. It is not a school that quiets down or quits. (p. 45)

The importance of playfulness and joy cannot be overlooked in this work. The gravity of the work may sometimes preclude consideration of this aspect. However, it is the very nature of the seriousness of the work that dictates that we must demonstrate our ability to still enjoy life, thrive, and derive pleasure despite of the oppression against which we are working. This models our ability to adapt to the unpleasantness experienced in school environments, our ability to resist it by not allowing it to demoralize us, and our ability to transcend it through joyfully working together towards change.

Autobiographical

It's late in the evening; she's wondering what clothes to wear.
She puts on her make-up and brushes her long blonde hair.
And then she asks me, "Do I look all right?"
And I say, "Yes, you look wonderful tonight."
… It's time to go home now and I've got an aching head,
So I give her the car keys and she helps me to bed.
And then I tell her, as I turn out the light,
I say, "My darling, you were wonderful tonight.
Oh my darling, you were wonderful tonight." (Clapton, 1995)

When I was younger, and involved in the dating game, my emotions would run the gamut from being extremely happy to very blue, depending upon my interpretation of how my relationships with my boyfriends were going. During the down times, when I was not particularly pleased with outcomes, I found myself deeply, richly creative. I wrote many songs, and sang many songs that connected to my innermost feelings, however transient those moods might be. I wrote the following song when I was particularly annoyed with my husband, who was my boyfriend at that time. My annoyance was connected to his behavior, but also to how I had let him become an important part of my life. In thinking about the coffeehouses I played in, and connecting it to the common themes of traveling folksinger, I sang

The trees fly by this speeding car
Like swiftly sketched lines
I can't believe I'm come this far
And you're still on my mind…
The cigarette smoke curls around my head
Making patterns in the air
I'm two hundred miles away from home,
And still wishin' you were here…
I'm just singing around,
Another bar, another town,
But most of my songs are for you. (Wade, 1978)

Once in a while, I will listen to a recording of that song, or even sing it. I still deeply connect to it still, often laughing with the irony that at times, I still find he is annoyingly

on my mind, especially after a disagreement. Sometimes, I will laugh because the song reflected my youthful feelings but the core emotions are still present, twenty-seven years later – he is still so very much on my mind, even when I am not annoyed. The song takes on different meanings depending on my mood, and depending upon my place in life, figuratively and physically. It still retains autobiographical components, and I suspect it would even if I had ended up with a different partner, for that strain of connection between two individuals can be both a blessing and a burden but is often part of our humanity. Songs written by other artists also soothed my aching soul in my younger years, and those same songs connect to me today in sometimes different ways, but still forge a connection. The words and performances resonated with my being then, and continue to resonate with me now, perhaps in differing ways.

A pedagogy of the blues is autobiographical. In attempting to truly grasp theory, to create theory, teachers and students must connect it to themselves. Freire notes that education for freedom "denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world. It also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people" (Freire, 2003, p. 81). When truly trying to understand theory, to learn deeply, teachers and students must deeply reflect upon what they are learning and how it applies to their selves.

Pinar (2004) discusses the need for students to draw from their deep data sources of lived experiences to connect their academic studies to themselves. Following this introspective excursion, he suggests that the student must then make it whole, connecting the past to the present, with understanding of future implications. An example of this in practice occurred when I was learning about critical race theory, I read some chapters in Delgado's book of the same title (*Critical race theory: The cutting edge*, 1995). These were completely new ideas to me. As I read some of the chapters, I could not help but think about how they presented an entirely different way of viewing the world than that which had been my experience as a white middle class female. However, I started some introspective reflection, thinking about how I could relate some of the theory espoused in the book with my lived experiences, or with the experiences of my family members or friends. I began to connect the ideas in the book with my autobiographical data source. I shared some of my ideas of this text with other classmates, some of whom were African

American and some of Jamaican descent. They shared their experiences and interpretations with me as well.

I began to integrate these new ideas into a new conception of the society in which I lived, one that changed me, that changed the way I reacted and interpreted in the present, and changed the way I would do so in the future. I made the concepts of critical race theory "whole" instead of dry material to be learned from one of many thick texts I was required to read that semester.

I believe that this dissertation exemplifies some of the autobiographical components of a pedagogy of the blues. It stands as a piece of work in which I am both the teacher and the student. My role as a teacher was to create a piece of work that might be useful in helping the readers rethink some of their ideas about curriculum, to perhaps view the curriculum in a different light. I hope that some of the ideas I presented resonate with some parts of their practice, that they can connect parts of it to their own lives. I also hope that my use of narrative might facilitate the interconnections between my ideas regarding a pedagogy of the blues and the readers' ideas on curriculum. Essentially, I am hoping that the use of narrative makes the step of connecting knowledge to the readers' lives and practices easier.

However, this process has also taught me much. My role as a learner was deeply fulfilled. In the process of completing the dissertation, I have *learned* – this piece developed and changed over the past two years as I wrote it, reflecting this learning. The concept of a pedagogy of the blues evolved as I wrote. An important component of that growth is demonstrated throughout my writing. I included narrative to illustrate how I was connecting theory to myself – through my personal life and through my practice as a teacher. I also included stories from family members, colleagues, and friends, that resonated with me, that helped to define my emerging theory. Some of these narratives are closely aligned with what Taliaferro Baszile (2006) refers to as critical testimonies, in that they describe my personal struggles teaching against the grain, so to speak. Much of the depth of these narratives and my understanding of when and where their use would be appropriate developed through extensive conversations with other professors, colleagues, and students in my class. These dialogues expanded my understanding, and helped me

further understand the interconnections between what I was living and the theory I was generating.

In using autobiography as part of a pedagogy of the blues, teachers and students are connecting "academic knowledge to their self-formation, a connection made in historical time, embedded in [their] cultures" (Pinar, 2004). Through the use of engaged dialogue, students are better able to reflect and critique their being, with all of its values, experiences, and incongruences. Gromet (1990) states " I cannot speak of autobiography without relating it to some conversation real or imagined, that I have had with someone else, and at the same time, the text that I produce is dear to me like my own body, and I am concerned about its location, size, and form…"(p. 323). There are elements of the social, i.e. in connecting our stories to others, and the individual, as they are as complexly near and dear to our selves, and as open to criticism as our own bodies are. The autobiographical content connects us with others, or may outrage others, much as the blues songs and performances of old did. Yet, they are excellent conduits for growth and learning.

Pinar (2004) asks "what would the curriculum look like if we centered the school subjects in the autobiographical histories and reflections of those who undergo them? The 'subjects' in school subjects would refer to human subjects as well as academic ones" (p. 38). A pedagogy of the blues incorporates the idea regarding the importance of the autobiographical connection to the subjects being taught. By adding this component, the depth of learning is significantly higher. Moreover, when students do relate the learned information to their lived experiences, this helps the knowledge learned evolve. They adapt it as they wrestle with fitting it into their personal understanding. In doing so, as they reflect verbally and in written format, they deepen the knowledge of those with whom this struggle is shared, by adding richer perspectives than mere reading of texts allows.

In returning to the beginning narrative for this section, I explained how a song evolved over times in its meaning to me personally. I have recently been reading some of my reflections from early in my doctoral program. I will not throw them out. It is good to read them and see purity of thought and raw connection to the materials I was assigned. However, much of what I wrote still reverberates with me. My ideas have evolved but

these reflections connected to my lived experiences at that time, which are part of my past. They still ring true. While my experiences over the past four years have deepened my understanding in many instances, it is refreshing to see that I can still understand how and why I connected theory to myself in such ways as demonstrated in those reflections. Reading through them helps define me, and who I have become as a part of this process of learning. This process clearly connects the autobiographical to that which was learned.

Conclusion

This is the end,

Beautiful friend,

This is the end.

(Morrison, 1967)

The use of metaphor has been a primary component in my conceptualization of a pedagogy of the blues. I have noted how the themes in the blues metaphor are intertwined throughout much of the popular music in our country, and have used these themes as a basis of a pedagogy of the blues. I believe the following brief metaphor about jazz by Dizzy Gillespie that interconnects some of these ideas. In describing the uniqueness of jazz, Gillespie (qtd. in O'Meally, 1998, p.120) states

> I'm looking at it like this: if you have a group, the group is like a painting, a masterpiece. Each one of the instruments represents a specific color and the diversity of different colors is what makes it beautiful. You've got five pieces and none of them sound alike, but they must have unity. So you take red, orange, blue, green or purple: each color in its diversity is supposed to be beautiful. Each one has a role, and when one of the colors overlaps the others, you have chaos. Therefore, each one should be thinking in terms of the whole, in terms of the beautification of all the instruments. Paintings don't clash, like a purple going over into another color. They stay what they are but it's the whole picture that makes for togetherness. Unity (p. 120).

A pedagogy of the blues creates a classroom climate like this. It envisions this type of community. Much as jazz music has individual instruments coloring the tone, so too do the individual voices within a classroom. Tension occurs between the instruments, whether the back-up piano and trumpet in old blues recordings or the interplay of

instruments in jazz bands, but this tension actually adds to the beauty of the entire piece. It cannot be ignored. Likewise, tension between different voices in a classroom will occur, as differing voices may compete. This tension adds to the beauty of education centered on a pedagogy of the blues. There is a sadness in certain instruments or the blues singers' voices that cannot be ignored, yet the music can express some joy and playfulness while confronting this suffering as well. So too would a classroom that acknowledged the injustices in education and society, as students may playfully joke and cajole one another. Each voice must be given full attention, no voice is ignored. As other voices are added, the richness grows. Ultimately, each voice begins a journey of growth in being heard, respected, and in being a part of a diverse whole. This, in itself, brings deep satisfaction.

This description of a pedagogy of the blues represents my journey and work with it. Hopefully, my examples and explanations have clarified how it is a work in progress, much as my teaching and learning is. It is not per say a tool that I would hand out to each pre-service student that I teach, as a list of the themes and appropriate means to implement them. It is not something that I would expect to have elementary students that I taught fully grasp. However, I model components of it in every class that I teach. I engage pre-service students in discussion about choices about the manner by which they present curriculum, and have them critique the power arrangements in their choices. I share autobiographical accounts related to education with them, and have them do so with their classmates and me. I bring difficult issues that confront educators and students in today’s schools to the forefront, and together as a class, we discuss and critique various approaches to these issues. I have my students critique their values, and reflect upon them. I ask them to begin a journey of more deeply understanding their selves and the interrelationship of their selves with the world.

Can I teach students the ideas behind this pedagogy? I think that I can. Even as a kindergarten teacher, I began to teach students some of the underlying themes. Simply put, I would try to get students to begin to relate the effect their actions or ideas impacted on those around them, sometimes in as simple a mode as the importance of sharing, or the importance of hurting their classmates’ feelings. I had established a sense of trust early with these students, and we worked on the importance of respect to one another. This

sometimes led to nurturing the beginnings of critical thinking within these students. When they parroted racist assumptions that their parents or grandparents had made, I would stop them, and ask them to really think about what they said. Often, even at this early age, they could begin to sense the injustice in their comments. If I read trade books with Euro-centric, patriarchal themes, we would engage in discussion about other viewpoints that could be taken. While it could be argued that this is merely a critical approach to education, it went further than this. It involved a way of looking at life. When students were sad, when they were having a bad day, or a bad year, we would talk about how sometimes things just really weren't right or fair, but that we were "tough" and would get through it together. Then, we would try to find things to bring joy into the classroom, sometimes by walks through the woods, sometimes with extra play time, and sometimes through creative expression of movement, music, or art. In effect, I worked with the students to help them adapt and transcend difficult circumstances, which ranged from fighting cancer, to parent divorces and parent death.

In college settings, I have indirectly taught this method, by teaching the students the premises behind the themes. With one group of students, I did formally describe the pedagogy of the blues. This group of students had worked with me for two consecutive semesters, and understood this to be a work in progress. They understood and practiced elements of a pedagogy of the blues, and grappled with its application when they working as pre-service teachers in other teacher's classrooms. They stored ideas that sensed they could not use within the culture of their cooperating teacher's classroom, knowing they would utilize them when they got their own classrooms. They sought out my explanation of a pedagogy of the blues, point blank asking me to describe what my dissertation was about. From this experience, I realize that I can describe this pedagogy to undergraduate students, and explain its use, engaging students in the pros and cons of this approach.

Like the blues, my conceptualization of the pedagogy of the blues is constantly evolving, yet certain core aspects remain unwavering. These aspects are, of course, closely aligned with the blues metaphor. However, the enactment of such a pedagogy may vary from day to day, as the needs and awareness of the teacher and the students changes from moment to moment, and as power structures often seemingly beyond the control of teachers and students impact on their lives and their curriculum.

In opening venues for students and teachers to name injustices, to finger of the jagged grain of pain that Ellison (1964) so poignantly describes, and to resist and transcend these injustices, there exists an interconnection in the human experience. Such is the nature of the blues metaphor. A pedagogy of the blues builds upon those key elements interconnecting our human experience, and by doing so, creates spaces where students and teachers from varied backgrounds find solidarity in fighting oppression. hooks (1994) remarks that engaged pedagogy requires both students and teachers to share and to confess, and in doing so, teachers and students grow and become empowered. A pedagogy of the blues is an engaged pedagogy that enables such learning on the part of teachers and students. Its strength lies in its grounding in the common thread of the blues metaphor that is interwoven throughout our history.

Works Cited

Albertson, C. (1985). *Bessie* (3rd ed.). Briarcliff Manor, NY: Stein and Day.

Alridge, D. P., & Stewart, J. B. (2005). Introduction: Hip Hop in history: Past, present, and future. *Journal of African American History, 90*(3), 190-195.

Ani, M. (1994). *Yurugu: An African-Centered critique of European cultural thought and behavior*. Trenton: Africa World Press.

Apple Hill. (2005). *Playing for peace*. Retrieved May 12, 2006, from http://www.applehill.org/p4p/index.php

At, D. (2005, 12/29/2005). *Haunted house blues*, from http://www.drmysterian.com/archive/2005_12_01_blogarchive.html

Attali, J. (1985). *Noise: The political economy of music* (B. Massumi, Trans. 2 ed.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Baez, J. (1964). *Joan Baez/5*. New York: Vanguard.

Baker, B. A. (2003). *The blues aesthetic and the making of American identity in the literature of the South*. New York: Lang.

Baker, H. A. (1984). *Blues, ideology, and Afro-American literature: A vernacular theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press,.

Barlow, W. (1989). *"Looking up at down:" The emergence of blues culture*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Barry, P. (1995). *Beginning theory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Barthes, R. (1973). *Mythologies*. London: Paladin.

Benton, T., & Craib, I. (2001). *Philosophy of social science: The philosophical foundations of social thought*. Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave.

Brackett, D. (1994). The politics and practice of `crossover' in American popular music, 1963 to 1965. *Musical Quarterly, 78*(4), 774.

Braziel, J. E. (2004). "Bye, Bye Baby": Race, bisexuality, and the blues in the music of Bessie Smith and Janis Joplin. *Popular Music & Society, 27*(1), 3-26.

Bstan-dzin-rgya-mtsho, D. L. X., & Cutler, H. C. (1998). *The art of happiness: A handbook for living*. New York: Riverhead Books.

Bundo, D. (2001). Social relationship embodied in singing and dancing performances among the Baka. *African Study Monographs, 26*(Supplementary Issue), 85-101.

Carby, H. (1986). It jus' be's dat way sometimes: The sexual politics of women's' blues. *Radical America, 20*(4), pp 9-22.

Carlson, D. (2002). *Leaving safe harbors: Towards a new progressivism in American education and public life*. New York: Routledge Falmer.

Chambers, I. (2000). A strategy for living. In S. J. Hall, Tony (Ed.), *Resistance through rituals* (pp. 287). London: Routledge.

Chapman, L. H. (2004). No Child Left Behind in art?, *Arts Education Policy Review* (Vol. 106, pp. 3-17): Heldref Publications.

Chapman, T. (1988). Tracy Chapman: Electra.

Clapton, E. (1992). Unplugged [sound recording]. Burbank, CA : Reprise,.

Clapton, E. (1995). The cream of Clapton: Polydor.

Clarke, D. (2000). *Billie Holiday: Wishing on the moon* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: De Capo Press.

Clarke, J., Hall, S., Jefferson, T., & Roberts, B. (2000). Subcultures, cultures, and class. In S. Hall & T. Jefferson (Eds.), *Resistance through rituals: Youth subcultures in Post-war Britain* (pp. 9-83). London: Routledge.

Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.

Columbia. (1928). Synchopated yodelin' man. *Chicago Defender, 24*(26), p. 10.

Combahee Women's Collective. (1982). A Black feminist statement. In G. Hull, P. B. Scott & B. Smith (Eds.), *All the women are White, all the Blacks are men, but some of us are brave: Black women's studies* (pp. pp. 13-22). New York: The Feminist Press.

Conniff, M. L., & Davis, T. J. (1994). *Africans in the Americas: A history of the Black diaspora*. New York: St. Martins.

Cooke, S. (1965). *The best of Sam Cooke*. New York: RCA.

Davis, A. Y. (1995a). I used to be your sweet Mama: Ideology, sexuality, and domesticity in the blues of Gertrude 'Ma' Rainey and Bessie Smith. In E. a. P. Grosz, Elspeth

(Ed.), *Sexy Bodies: The Strange Carnalities of Feminism* (1st ed., pp. 303). New York, London: Routledge.

Davis, A. Y. (1999). *Blues legacies and Black feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday*. New York: Vintage.

Davis, A. Y. (2001). Black women and music: A historical legacy. In J. Bobo (Ed.), *Black feminist cultural criticism* (pp. 216-232). Malden: Blackwell.

Davis, F. (1995b). *The history of the blues* (1st ed.). New York: Hyperion.

Delgado, R. (Ed.).(1995) *Critical race theory: The cutting edge*.. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Delpit, L., & White-Bradley, P. (2003). Educating or imprisoning the spirit: Lessons From Ancient Egypt., *Theory Into Practice* (Vol. 42, pp. 283-288): Ohio State University.

Dewey, J. (1990). *The school and society and the child and curriculum.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dillard, C. B., Abdur-Rashid, D., & Tyson, C. A. (2000). My soul is a witness: Affirming pedagogies of the spirit. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (QSE), 13*(5), ???

Douglass, F., 1818-1895. (2003). My bondage and my freedom. In J. Stauffe (Ed.), New York: Modern Library.

Drescher, S. (2001). The Atlantic slave trade and the Holocaust: A comparative analysis. In A. S. Rosenbaum (Ed.), *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide* (pp. pp. 97-119). Boulder: Westview Press.

Du Bois, W. E. B. W. E. B. (c1997). *The souls of Black folk*. Boston : Bedford Books,.

Dylan, B., 1941-. (1989, c1976). *The songs of Bob Dylan : From 1966 through 1975*. New York: Knopf/Cherry Lane,.

Dyson, M. E. (2001). *Holler if you hear me: Searching for Tupac Shakur* (1st ed.). New York: Basic Civitas Books.

Dyson, M. E. (2004). *The Michael Eric Dyson reader*. New York: Basic Civitas Books.

Eisner, E. W. (1994). *Cognition and curriculum reconsidered* (2ND ed.). New York: Teacher College Press.

Eisner, E. W. (2002). *The educational imagination: On the design and evaluation of school programs* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Eisner, E. (2006). The satisfactions of teaching. *Educational Leadership, 63*(6), 44-46.

Ellison, M. (1989). *Lyrical protest : Black music's struggle against discrimination*. New York : Praeger,.

Ellison, R. (1964). *Shadow and act*. New York,: Random House.

Epstein, D. J. P. (1977). *Sinful tunes and spirituals: Black folk music to the Civil War* Urbana : University of Illinois Press.

Evans, M. (1995a). Stealing away: Black women, outlaw culture, and the rhetoric of rights. In R. Delgado (Ed.), *Critical race theory: The cutting edge* (pp. pp 502-515). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Fisher, J. W. (2001). Comparing levels of spiritual well-being in state, Catholic and independent schools in Victoria, Australia. *Journal of Beliefs & Values: Studies in Religion & Education, 22*(1), 99.

Fletcher, E., Glover, M., Robinson, S., & Chase, C. (1994). Message from Beat Street: Best of Grandmaster Flash: Rhino / Wea.

Frazier, E. F. (1950). Problems and needs of Negro children and youth resulting from family disorganization. *Journal of Negro Education, 19*, 269-277.

Freire, P. (1994b). *Pedagogy of hope : Reliving the pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Freire, P. (1998a). *Pedagogy of freedom : Ethics, democracy, and civic courage.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Freire, P. (1998b). *Teachers as cultural workers : Letters to those who dare teach* (D. Macedo, D. Koike & A. Oliveira, Trans.). Boulder: Westview Press,.

Freire, P. (2003). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Garon, P. (1996). *Blues and the poetic spirit*. San Francisco: City Lights.

Garon, P., & Garon, B. (1992). *Woman with a guitar: Memphis Minnie's blues*. New York: De Capo.

Gillis, A. M. (1999). Destination Delta., *Humanities* (Vol. 20, pp. 9): Superintendent of Documents.

Gilroy, P. (1984). *The Empire strikes back: Race and racism in 70s Britain*. London Melbourne: Hutchinson.

Giroux, H. A. (1989). Schooling as a form of cultural politics: Toward a Pedagogy of and for difference. In H. A. Giroux & P. McLaren (Eds.), *Critical pedagogy, the state, and cultural struggle [computer file]* (pp. xxxv, 299 p. ;). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Giroux, H. A. (1992). *Border crossings : Cultural workers and the politics of education*. New York ; London: Routledge,.

Giroux, H. A. (1998). Education incorporated? *Educational Leadership, 56*(2), 12.

Giroux, H. A. (2000a). Insurgent multiculturalism and the promise of pedagogy. In E. M. Duarte & S. Smith (Eds.), *Foundational perspectives in multicultural education* (pp. 195-212). New York: Longman.

Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination : Essays on education, the arts, and social change* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Grumet, M. R. (1988). *Bitter milk: Women and teaching*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Grumet, M., & McCoy, K. (1997). Education: Discipline analysis. Women in the curriculum series. Maryland: ERIC.

Grumet, M. (1992). The language in the middle. *Liberal Education,* 78(3), 6.

Grumet, M. (1990). Retrospective: Autobiography and the analysis of educational experience. *Cambridge Journal of Education,* 20(3), 321.

Hall, S., & Jefferson, T. (Eds.). (2000). *Resistance through rituals: Youth subculture in Post-war Britain* (5 ed.). London: Routledge.

Hamilton, M. (2000). Sexuality, authenticity and the making of the blues tradition. *Past & Present*(169), 132-160.

Handy, W. C. (1957). *Father of the blues: An autobiography*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson.

Harland, R. (1987). *Superstructuralism : The philosophy of structuralism and post-structuralism / Richard Harland*. London ; New York: Methuen.

Harrison, D. D. (2000). *Black pearls: Blues queens of the 1920s*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Hear Bessie Smith cook this pair of broilers. (1929, December 7). Chicago Defender, p.10.

Hebdige, D. (2000a). The Meaning of mod. In S. Hall & T. Jefferson (Eds.), *Resistance through ritual:Youth subculture in Post-war Britain* (pp. pp. 87-96). London, New York: Routledge.

Hebdige, D. (2000b). Reggae, rastas, & rudies. In S. Hall & T. Jefferson (Eds.), *Resistance through rituals: Youth subcultures in Post-war Britain* (8th ed., pp. 286). London: Routledge.

Hebdige, D. (2001a). "The function of subculture. In *Subculture: The meaning of style* (pp. 73-80). New York: Routledge.

Hebdige, D. (2001b). *Subculture: The meaning of style*. London, New York: Routledge.

Henderson, D. (1995). Jimi Hendrix deep within the blues and alive onstage at Woodstock--25 years after death., (Vol. 29, pp. 213): *African American Review*.

Henderson, R., DeSylva, B. G., & Brown, L. (1924). *The birth of the blues*. Retrieved 6/10/05, 2005

Herbert, B. (2005). Feeling no pain. *New York Times* *154*(53216), A21.

High, C. (2001). What would you do. In *City high*: Interscope records.

hooks, b. (1990a). *Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics* (1 ed.). Boston: South End Press.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York: Routledge.

hooks, b. (2000). *Where we stand: Class matters*. New York London: Routledge.

hooks, b. (2003). *Teaching community : A pedagogy of hope*. New York: Routledge,.

Iannone, R. V., & Obenauf, P. A. (1999). Toward spirituality in curriculum and teaching. In *Education* (Vol. 119, pp. 737-743).

I'm tired of fooling around with you. *(*1929, April 10). Chicago Defender, p. 7.

Jefferson, B. L. (2002). Blues on blues: Charlie Patton, Blind Lemon Jefferson: Varese Records.

Jimmie Rodgers. Retrieved January 22, 2006, 2006, from http://www.countrymusichalloffame.com/inductees/jimmierodgers.html

Johnson, J. C. (1989). Black Mountain blues: Sony.

Johnson, J. W., & Johnson, J. R. (Eds.). (1954). *The books of American Negro spirituals*. New York: DaCapo.

Johnson, R. (1969). The blues line; a collection of blues lyrics. In E. Sackheim (Ed.), (1st ed., pp. 500 p.). New York: Grossman Publishers.

Joplin, J. (2000). *Janis Joplin's greatest hits [sound recording]*: Columbia.

Kliebard, H. M. (1975). Metaphorical roots of curriculum design. In W. Pinar (Ed.), *Curriculum theorizing: The Reconceptualists* (pp. 84-85). Berkeley: McCutchan.

Kliebard, H. M. (1982). Curriculum theory as metaphor, *Theory into practice* (Vol. 21, pp. 11): Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Kliebard, H. M. (1995). *The struggle for American curriculum*. New York: Routledge.

Knight, R. (2001). All that jazz. *Geographical Magazine, 73*(10), 14.

Lakoff, R. T. (1994). Women's language. In S. Maasik, and Solomon, Jack (Ed.), *Signs of life in the USA* (1st ed., pp. 725). Boston: Bedford Books.

Latifah, Q. (1989). All hail the Queen: Tommy Boy.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2003). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. L. Denzin, Y.S. (Ed.), *The landscape of qualitative research: theories and issues* (pp. 684). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Linmde, D. (1999). Goodbye Earl. On *Fly*. Milwaukee: H. Leonard Corp.

Litwin, B. (2004). Blues e-mail (pp. E-mail). Philadelphia.

Lomax, A. (1993). *The land where the blues began* (1st ed.). New York: Pantheon Books.

Marcuse, H. (2001). The aesthetic dimension. In R. Kearney & D. Rasmussen (Eds.), *Continental aesthetics: Romanticism to postmodernism*. Malden: Blackwell.

Markle, K. (2003). *Red hot blues*. Retrieved November 8, 2005, 2005

Marshak, D. (2005). Seeing Children as 'Engines Of Economic Nationalism'. *Education Week* (Vol. 24, pp. 35): Editorial Projects in Education.

Marshall, J. D., Sears, J. T., & Schubert, W. H. (2000). *Turning points in curriculum: A contemporary American memoir*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

McIntosh, P. (2005). Gender perspectives on educating for global citizenship. In N. Noddings (Ed.), *Educating citizens for global awareness* (pp. pp.22-39). New York: Teachers College Press.

McIntosh, P. (1990). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Independent School,49*(2), 31.

McKim, J. M. (1969). Negro Songs. In B. Katz (Ed.), *Social implications of early Negro music* (pp. 1-2). New York: Arno Press.

McLaren, P. (2000). White terror and oppositional agency: Towards a critical multiculturalism. In E. M. Duarte & S. Smith (Eds.), *Foundational perspectives in multiculturalism* (pp. 213-241). New York: Longman.

Mcwhiney, G., & Mills, G. B. (1983). Jimmie Davis and his music: An interpretation. *Journal of American Culture, 6*(2), pp.54-57.

Memphis Minnie. (2003). Queen of country blues 1929-1937 [CD]: JSP Records.

Minnie, M. (1983). Blues lyric poetry: An anthology. In M. Taft (Ed.), (Vol. v. 361, pp. p.194). New York: Garland.

Mol, H. (1979). The origin and function of religion: A critique of, and alternative to, Durkheim's interpretation of the religion of Australian aborigines, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (Vol. 18, pp. 379): Blackwell Publishing Limited.

Morrison, J. (1967). *The Doors*: Elektra.

Morton, J. R. (1999). The "Inventor of jazz". In R. Walser (Ed.), *Keeping time : readings in jazz history* (pp. xiv, 16-22). New York: Oxford University Press.

Murray, A. (1989). *Stomping the blues*. New York, N.Y.: Da Capo Press.

Murray, A. (1996). *The Blue Devils of Nada : A contemporary American approach to aesthetic statement*. New York : Pantheon Books,.

Murray, A. (1999a). Keeping time : readings in jazz history. In R. Walser (Ed.), (pp. xiv, 450 p.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Murray, A. (1999b). Playing the blues. In G. D. Capone (Ed.), *Signifyin(g), sanctifyin(g), & slam dunking* (pp. pp. 96-109). Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Nelly. (2000). Greed, hate, envy. On *Country Grammar*: Universal.

Nhat Hanh, T. (2001). *Thich Nhat Hanh : Essential writings*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Noddings, N. (2002a). *Educating moral people: A caring alternative to character education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Noddings, N. (2002b). *Starting at home: Caring and social policy*. Berkeley Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Oakley, G. (1997). *The Devil's music: The history of the blues*: DeCapo Press.

Oldinski, T., & Carlson, D. (Eds.). (2002). *Educational yearning: The journey of the Sspirit and democratic Education*. New York: Peter Lang.

O'Meally, R. G. (Ed.). (1998). *The jazz cadence of American culture*. New York : Columbia University Press.

Ostlund, D. R., & Kinnier, R. T. (1997). Values of youth: Messages from the most popular songs of four decades. *Journal of Humanistic Education & Development 36*(2), 83.

Palmer, R. (1981a). *Deep Blues*. New York: Viking Press.

Payne, R. K. (2003). *A framework for understanding poverty* (3rd rev. ed.). Highlands, TX: Aha Process

Peabody, C., 1867-1939. (1904). *Exploration of mounds, Coahoma county, Mississippi*. Cambridge, Mass.: Pub. by the Museum.

Pinar, W. (1975). Sanity, madness, and the school. In *Curriculum theorizing : The Reconceptualists* (pp. 359-383). Berkeley, Calif. : McCutchan Pub. Corp.,.

Pinar, W. (2004). *What is curriculum theory?* Mahwah, N.J. : Lawrence Erlbaum,.

Pinar, W., Reynolds, W. W., Slattery, P., & Taubman, P. M. (2000). *Understanding curriculum: An introduction to the study of historical and contemporary curriculum discourses*. New York: Peter Lang.

Pinderhughes, E. B. (2002). African American marriage in the 20th century. *Family Process, 41*(2), 269.

Plantenga, B. (2004). *Yodel-ay-ee-oooo : The secret history of yodeling around the world*. New York: Routledge.

Porterfield, N. (1979). *Jimmie R: Rodgers: Life and times of America's blue yodeler*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Posner, G. J. (1998). Models of curriculum planning. In L. Beyer & M. W. Apple (Eds.), *The curriculum: Problems, politics, and possibilities* (pp. 79-97). Albany: State University of New York Press,.

Previn, D. (1998). Mythical kings and iguanas: Reflections in a mud puddle [Sound recording].

Price, C. G. (2002). Got my own world to look through: Jimi Hendrix and the blues aesthetic. *The Journal of American Culture, 25*(3-4), 442-446.

Quantz, R. A. (1999). School ritual as performance: A reconstruction of Durkheim's and Turner's uses of ritual., *Educational Theory* (Vol. 49, pp. 493): Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois.

Rainey, M. (1969). The blues line: A collection of blues lyrics. In E. Sackheim (Ed.), (1st ed., pp. p. 47). New York: Grossman Publishers.

Rainey, M. (1991). Ma Rainey [CD]: Milestone.

Red Mountain blues. (1926, February 20). Chicago Defender, p. 8.

Redding, O. (1968). The dock of the bay. In *The Super hits. Vol. 2: Platinum soul legends* (pp. 1 sound disc (33 min.) 33 sound discs). New York, United Kingdom: Atlantic Warner Strategic Marketing.

Reissman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Richter, C. (Ed.). (1975). *Bessie Smith: Empress of the blues* (1st ed.). New York: MacMillan.

Robelen, E. W. (2005). PTA members are split on NCLB's effectiveness, *Education Week* (Vol. 24, pp. 30): Editorial Projects in Education.

Rodgers, J. (1977). Blue yodel no. 1. In *JimmieRodgers: Legendary performer*: RCA Victor.

Rodgers, J. (1992). Train whistle blues [sound recording] Asv Living Era.

Rodgers, J. (1997). Waiting for a Train. On *The Essential Jimmie Rogers* [sound recording]: RCA.

Rolling Stones, P. (2002). *Hot rocks : 1964-1971*. [sound recording] New York: Abkco.

Rowell, C. H. (1998). `Let me be with Ole Jazzbo.'. *Callaloo* (Vol. 21, pp. 789): Johns Hopkins University Press.

Rudinow, J. (1994). Race, ethnicity, expressive authenticity: Can White people sing the blues? *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 52*(1), pp.127-137.

Samford, P. (1996). The archaeology of African-American slavery and material culture, *William & Mary Quarterly* (Vol. 53, pp. 87): William & Mary Quarterly.

Santino, J. (1982). The spirit of American music: "Nobody ever told me it was the blues, *Journal of American Culture, 5*(4), 29-25 p.

Schwartz, T. (1992). The complete Stax/Volt singles: 1959-1968. *American Music, 10*(3), pp. 387-390.

Schwarz-Bart, S. (1982). *Pluie et vent sur Telumee miracle. English*

The bridge of beyond (B. Bray, Trans. Vol. 27). London ; Exeter, N.H: Heinemann Educational Books.

Shakur, T. (1995). Me against the world. On *Me against the world*,[Sound recording]

Shakur, T. (1998a). 2Pac - Greatest hits: Interscope Records.

Shakur, T. (1998b). Dear Mama. On *Me Against the World,* [Sound recording].

Shakur, T. (1999). Still I rise. In *Still I rise*: Interscope Records.

Shor, I., & Freire, P. (1987a). *A pedagogy for liberation : Dialogues on transforming education*. South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin & Amp; Garvey Publishers.

Shor, I., & Freire, P. (1987b). What Is the 'dialogical method' of teaching?, *Journal of Education* (Vol. 169, pp. 11): Journal of Education.

Shujaa, M. J. (Ed.). (1994). *Too much schooling; Too little education*. Trenton: African World Press.

Simon, P. (1990). *Songs. selections:Paul Simon complete*. New York : Amsco Publications : Exclusive distributors, Music Sales Corporation.

Singleton, T. A. (1995). The archaeology of slavery in North America., *Annual Review of Anthropology* (Vol. 24, pp. 119): Annual Reviews Inc.

(Sittin' on) the dock of the bay. (1988). *Rolling Stone* (534), 70.

Sleeter, C. E. (1993). Multicultural education: Five views., *Education Digest* (Vol. 58, pp. 53): Prakken Publications.

Sleeter, C. E. (2000). Multicultural education, social positionality, and Whiteness. In E. M. Duarte & S. Smith (Eds.), *Foundational perspectives in multicultural education* (pp. 118-133). New York: Longman.

Smith, B. (1983). Blues lyric poetry : an anthology. In M. Taft (Ed.), (Vol. v. 361, pp. p.194). New York: Garland.

Smith, B. (1993). Black Mountain blues. On *The complete recordings, Vol.4/Bessie Smith*. New York: Columbia/Legacy.

Smitherman, G. (1997). The chain remain the same. *Journal of Black studies, 28*(1), pp. 3-26.

Stevick, E. D., & Levinson, B. A. U. (2003). From noncompliance to Columbine: capturing student perspectives to understand noncompliance and violence in public schools, *Urban Review* (Vol. 35, pp. 323-349): Kluwer Academic Publishing.

Stewart, J. B. (2005). Message in the music: Political commentary on Black popular music , from rhythm and blues to early Hip Hop. *Journal of African American History, 90*(3), 196-225.

Striking a chord: Railroads and their musical heritage. (2006). Retrieved January 22, 2006, 2006, from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/rails/sfeature/chord.html

Sturgis, I. (2004). Sing it again: Beloved old African American spirituals find a new following., *Black Issues Book Review* (Vol. 6, pp. 20-23): Cox Matthews and Associates Inc.

Taliaferro Baszile, D. (2006). Bringing down the Master's house: Race and redemption in Academia. *Unpublished manuscript*, pp. 35.

TLC. (2005). No Scrubs. In *Now and forever: The hits*: La FAce.

Tribbett, M. C. (1998). `Everybody wants to buy my kitty': Resistance and the articulation of the sexual subject in the blues of Memphis Minnie, *Arkansas Review: A Journal of Delta Studies, 29*(1), 42.

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (2002). *Decolonizing Mythologies:Research and Indigenous peoples*. London: Zed.

Turner, G. (1996). *British Cultural studies* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Van Ronk, D. (1992). Dave Van Ronk: The Folkway years: 1959-1951: Smithsonian Folkways.

Vincent, T. (1992). The window of opportunity. *The Black Scholar, 22, No. 4*(Fall,1992), 6-16.

Vocalion. (1929). Levee breaking blues. *Chicago Defender, 25*(4), p.6.

Wade, S. J. (1978). Most of my songs are for you. *Unpublished song*.

Wald, E. (2004). *Escaping the delta : Robert Johnson and the invention of the blues* (1st ed.). New York: Amistad.

Waters, M. (2006). Essential recordings: Muddy Waters: Sony.

Welch, S. D. (1999). *Sweet dreams in America : Making ethics and spirituality work*. New York: Routledge.

West, C. (1994). Diverse new world. In S. Maasik, and Solomon, Jack (Ed.), *Signs of life in the USA: Readings on popular culture for writers* (pp. 725). Boston: Bedford Books.

West, C. (2004). *Democracy Matters : Winning the Fight Against Imperialism*. New York: The Penguin Press.

White, B. (1969). Sleepy man blues. In E. Sackheim (Ed.), *The Blues Line* (pp. p. 238). New York: Thunder Mouth.

Whitfield, P. (2005). No Child Left Behind., *Journal of Children & Poverty* (Vol. 11, pp. 43-54): Carfax Publishing Company.

Wild, D. (1998). Bonnie Raitt. *Rolling Stone*(787), 12.

Wilson, W. (1994). Gimme a pigfoot. In *Bessie Smith Songbook* (pp. 42-46). Milwaukee: Frank Music.