

Chapter 1

Introduction: The Beginning of a Journey

"When we share stories from our lives we begin to open ourselves to others, and perhaps nowhere are others more willing to come close enough to hear than when they are being told a story" (Shabatay, 1991, p. 150). And yet...

Stories go in circles. They don't go in straight lines. So it helps if you listen in stories because there are stories inside stories and stories between stories and finding your way through them is as easy and hard as finding your way home. And part of the finding is in the getting lost. [For] If you're lost, you really start to look around and listen. (Metzge, 1979, p. 104)

I am going to share with you the story of my research. Or as I see it, a journey. Like the complexity and blending of seasons, my story too moves in a continuous circle of complexion and blending. A circle of change, signified by color, richness, depth, and hopefully meaning. Just as each season changes, so too does the story. And as the story continues to change so too does my level of understanding as a researcher, a teacher, a woman, and at once an adolescent girl. As the story comes full circle a vision of a new season will emerge. A vision with new questions, new colors, and new levels of understanding.

I had a vision. A vision of adolescent girls; girls running and dancing, swimming and playing, moving freely and powerfully with confidence. I had a vision of adolescent girls finding their bodies to be one with their selves, not separate, not distant, not foreign. Bodies that over time, would be discovered as wonderful sources of knowing, and powerful sources of expression. A discovery so precious the mere thought of abusing or not caring for themselves and others would be unimaginable. I had a vision of healthy bodies, healthy people. But that was my vision.

My vision began a journey toward understanding how adolescent girls interpreted and constructed the meanings of their bodies. What were the stories adolescent girls constructed regarding their bodies? And who were the primary characters in the construction of their stories? What were the dominant and subtle themes that contributed to shaping their personal body stories?

And how could their stories, and the stories of others, empower and disempower adolescent girls in the development of healthy bodies?

Those were my questions, questions that had come from many different stories; cultural stories about women's bodies, about beauty, about physical activity, and about health . Stories that came from the written words, drawings, and conversations I had during a six month pilot study with middle school girls and boys. And equally important, questions that came from deep inside my soul, as they were questions I was struggling with on a very conscious and critical level as a woman, as a teacher who taught young women in physical activity, many of whom were struggling with eating and exercise "disorders," as well as a teacher who taught young women and men who would some day teach adolescent girls and boys. The more I read, the more I wrote, and most importantly, the more I listened to girls, it became very clear that my research needed to be reciprocal in some way. The journey begins with me looking for something in physical education research. I did not know exactly what I was looking for, but it had to do with adolescent girls, and I would know it when I came across it, and I would know if I did not.

Physical Education: How we Have Documented The Bodies of Middle School Girls

As girls move into adolescence it has been documented in the literature that their levels of participation in physical activities begin to decline (Godin & Shephard, 1986; Prokhorov, Perry, Kelder, & Klepp, 1993; Sallis & McKenzie, 1991; Vertinsky, 1992). Around grade 8 it seems many become uninterested, and by Grade 11 many have dropped out of physical education classes and have a distaste for physical activity. Lack of skill or ability is suggested to be one of the primary reasons adolescent girls claim to dislike physical activity (Vertinsky, 1992). Yet how is this determined, by what means are people coming to understand this phenomenon that has such crucial implications to adolescent girl's and future women's health? Multiple stories are needed if we are to shed light on these health concerns.

As educators, specifically teacher educators, it is crucial that we have an understanding of the students our students will some day teach. Yet there is a difference between understanding abstract concepts of learners, and understanding "whole" people. It is my hope that as a researcher

I can come to better understand adolescent girls, the people who have been omitted from the construction of theory for years (Barbieri, 1995; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1982; Pipher, 1994; Rosenbaum, 1993), and still to date, girls that are not white and do not come from privileged homes (Delpit, 1995; Scraton & Flintoff, 1992), in hopes of creating more authentic learning experiences for "my students" who will some day teach adolescent girls. In order to do this we need multiple stories.

Multiple perspectives or stories provide multiple possibilities and interpretations, something crucial in diverse classrooms and diverse societies. But where are these multiple stories? The stories of students and teachers, of gymnasiums and playgrounds; the stories that stir up old memories and awaken new feelings; that bring tears of joy or tears of sorrow. Where are the stories that touch our hearts and enter our souls; that release our imagination to see and feel beyond the actual and toward the possible? Where are the stories of adolescent girls' interests and needs, of their desires and dreams? Where are the stories about the adolescent girls; girls that live and breath, that laugh and cry, that want and need, that love and hate? I am still looking, and what I have found are the girls--their stories, their words, their feelings, their voices. I have found a glimpse of hope, a way that maybe I can better understand the needs, desires, and interests of the lives educators touch. But first I must listen, and not from the traditional standards set forth by the all-knowing high towering universities, but from my heart and from my soul as one human being to another, that is how I must listen if I hope to hear.

Part of hearing however, is listening to the stories already told, whether they are in words that touch one's heart or enter one's soul; that illuminate possibilities or open spaces to multiple interpretations, are left to be decided by each individual. But they are someone's stories, and each is a little different, and each sheds a little light. And so now I look at some of the stories that may provide some insight into what is going on in some of the middle school physical education classes, and how some adolescent girls are being affected.

The Journal of Teaching in Physical Education monograph (Graham, ed., 1995) has provided some desperately needed insights about what children and adolescents think and feel

about their physical education experiences. Graham (1995) writes: "The fact is that as a profession we just do not know how students feel about physical education programs--what they like, do not like, value, would like to have included or excluded in their programs" (p. 364). I would like to take this a step further and say that we do not understand how adolescent girls interpret the meanings of their bodies, something needed before we can begin to truly understand how they experience physical education in the larger context of their lives. Graham (1995) is right when he says we do not know, but we know far more than we understand. "Understanding involves intimacy and equality between self and object [or other person; i.e., researcher and participants] and knowledge implies separation from object and mastery over it" (Belenky, et al, 1986, p. 101). We have some knowledge, albeit not as much about middle school physical education settings, yet we have very little understanding, particularly of how adolescent girls interpret their bodies, and thus how these interpretations may possibly affect their interpretations of their educational experiences; physical education included.

Sparkes (1996) suggests that as a community of learners we need to understand the types of body stories that are woven throughout the physical education community. His claim is that teachers' bodies are an absent presence in the literature. In other words,

Their bodies as part of the body-self complex are everywhere in terms of their gender, age, social class, ableness, sexual identity, race, ethnicity,...yet their subjectively experienced bodies are nowhere in terms of being the direct focus for analysis. (Sparkes, 1996, p.167)

We need to remember that teachers are not the only people in the public schools and universities, students also exist; and their body-narratives are as equally important, as well as an absent presence in the literature. Girls do not deal with the world event by event void of context and culture, but rather frame events in larger structures. It is the structure of girls' experiences that provide an interpretive context (Bruner, 1990). Adolescence is a time of drastic change as girls begin to develop into young women. If we do not begin to better understand how they are constructing the meanings of their bodies; bodies that are changing quickly, we cannot claim to

understand the interpretations they give to their experiences, or how these perspectives can affect their health.

In the monograph dedicated to children's voices, a few (Nugent & Faucette, 1995; Veal & Campagnon, 1995; Portman, 1995; Walling & Martinek, 1995; Carlson, 1995), looked and listened to middle school students in physical education classes from a variety of perspectives. Others looked and listened to elementary students. My focus however, is middle school girls. Thus, I will listen to the adolescent students' voices, as well as the voices of those who write "about" them. Most of the research about physical activity and middle school physical education has been conducted through observation or survey (Griffin, 1984, Griffin, 1985; Prokhorov, Perry, Kelder, & Klepp, 1993; Janz, Phillip, & Mahoney, 1992; Lacy, Kathryn, & LaMaster, 1990; Lirgg, 1992; Thomas & Thomas, 1988; Tannehill & Zakrajsek, 1993). These types of studies can provide only surface level knowledge, they cannot provide the larger structures by which people frame the meanings of their experiences. The most recent efforts are an important addition to further understanding adolescent girls' experiences.

As indicated earlier, it is claimed that many girls moving into adolescence begin losing interest in physical activity. Certain reasons have been suggested as to why this occurs, some of which include: lack of skill (Portman, 1995; Thomas & Thomas, 1988; Vertinsky, 1992); threatening environments, particularly competitive environments (Mitchell & Chandler, 1993; Carlson, 1995); societies view of acceptability to girls and women's participation in physical activity (Thomas & Thomas, 1988), lack of personal meaning (Carlson, 1995; Tinning & Fitzclarence, 1992); and fear of being embarrassed in front of their peers (Carlson, 1995; Portman, 1995; Nugent & Faucette, 1995). If, as suggested by the Center for Disease Control and the American College of Sports Medicine (Pate et al., 1995) as well as the Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health (1996), people need to be accumulating 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day, these reasons why adolescent girls seem to be losing interest in physical activity needs to be further addressed.

Part, but certainly not all of the problems associated with declining interest in physical activity, may be in the types of physical education programs these girls are experiencing. A further look into some specific work may help provide a clearer picture of what is going on in middle school physical education settings. Back in the mid 1980's Figley (1985) did a study on "Determinants of attitudes toward physical education." She looked at 88 female and 12 male elementary education majors who were enrolled in elementary school physical education preparation classes. Figley (1985) asked these students to reflect back to their K-12 physical education experiences. Her hope was to come to better understand possible causal determinants of students' attitudes toward physical education, something very different from attitudes toward physical activity.

I have chosen to look closely at this study for two reasons, particularly in the ways it connects with some of the more recent research on middle school girls' attitudes. First, her findings are very consistent with some of the more recent studies in middle school physical education settings. What I find interesting is these are the things that people remembered about their physical education experiences. And second, her sample consisted of mostly women (88) who were elementary education majors, not physical education majors. Therefore, the possibility that they were stereotypical high skilled movers, or good athletes, is probably lower than if one were looking at physical education majors. This is important if we are trying to see a bigger picture, one that includes more than students who have been labeled high skilled or low skilled based on traditional or limited standards. What she found were that determinants fell into six categories. The categories are ranked based on importance of determining attitudes: curriculum, teacher, peer behavior, atmosphere, students perception of self, and other (Figley, 1985).

The two major factors in both positive and negative attitudes toward physical education were the curriculum and the teacher. Consistencies between Figley's (1985) study and others, in terms of curriculum, were interesting. Figley found the two characteristics of curriculum that were most likely to be associated with positive and negative attitudes toward physical education were variety and choices of activities, and when students felt the activities were irrelevant, repetitive,

formal, and shallow, respectively. The latter is consistent with what Tinning & Fitzclarence (1992) and Carlson (1995) found nearly 10 years later in their studies with middle school students. They too found choice and meaningfulness of activities to be important. It is interesting that the same message is being heard--student's like activities that are meaningful to them, and they like choice (Figley, 1985; Carlson, 1995; Tinning & Fitzclarence, 1992). But this should not be any surprise if we were to just think for a moment about whether we enjoy doing things that we find meaningful and things in which we choose, or whether we enjoy meaninglessness and forced activity.

Another particularly interesting insight from Figley's (1985) study, again similar to more recent studies of middle school students, was class atmosphere. Negative attitudes developed when the environment was such that it led to embarrassment and rejection; that is, student's did not like being hurt or embarrassed in front of their peers. Many have found student's to become turned off due to embarrassment of some type (Carlson, 1995; Portman, 1995; Nugent & Faucette, 1995; Mitchell & Chandler, 1993; Coakley & White, 1992; Griffin, 1984). Embarrassing situations such as being teased for lack of skill or error in a game, fitness tests that were conducted in whole group settings, being chosen last, being compared with "athletes," and having to dress out and shower in the locker rooms were among some of events noted throughout these studies. This takes me to my pilot study and a discussion I had with five girls that I had been working with one time per week.

One of the stories I shared with the five girls that were part of my pilot study was one of the few memories I have from junior high physical education. Yet before I share the story a look into something I have thought about for some time, something captured partially by Lawson (1986, In Bain, 1990) as he writes, "Occupational socialization includes all of the kinds of socialization that initially influence persons to enter the field of physical education and that later are responsible for their perceptions and actions as teacher educators and teachers" (p. 761). The key for me was not entering the field of physical education as that happened by chance, but rather the perceptions I have as a result of past experience. Unlike most people in the field of physical education, whether it is teaching or teacher education, I am not one that would be classified in the stereotypical sense, as a high skilled mover, nor would I be classified as an athlete. This puts me in

a very different position in terms of what I remember, not to mention what I hear when I read physical education research. It is very different if you have experienced what is being reported first hand, as vicarious experience is just not quite the same. Yet what is even more difficult is when the researchers report incident's of alienation, embarrassment, success rate, or whatever, in ways that simply do not capture the very nature of the possible and even profound interpretations of those experiences. And so now I share with you the story I shared with the five girls.

In junior high we had swimming as one of our units in physical education. I remember being very excited about swimming, because unlike everything else, I was good at swimming. I could have fit into Portman's (1995) study as she indicated student's had fun in P.E. when they did something they could already do, where they could succeed. Swimming was going to be fun because I was a good swimmer. But I dreaded swimming, not because of skill, I had the skill, but rather because I was embarrassed to have to put on my swimsuit in front of people in the locker room, and I was embarrassed to be seen in my swimsuit in front of the boys. I was embarrassed because my stomach wasn't flat enough--and everyone knew you had to have a flat stomach. That is one of the few things I remember specifically about physical education class in junior high, and unfortunately it goes with me all the time.

When I shared that story, and I was hesitant at first, particularly after one of the girls had commented at an earlier time about needing to do more sit-ups in P.E. class so her stomach would go away, the conversation became more in-depth. Now, in addition to hearing about how bad experiences for these girls in physical education class had to do with their peer relationships, I also heard their concerns about their bodies and the fear of being seen dressing or showering in front of one another that made me remember more than I wanted. Sarah, one of the girls said, "I didn't want to go to middle school because I heard about having to take showers in P.E." She went on to say how her mother told her she would pick her up after P.E. and take her home to shower if they were going to make them shower in front of everyone. The other girls also dreaded the idea of having to shower. To not want to go to middle school because of a fear of your body and what it looks like says something to me about our culture and the devastating effects of what many call

"body image" and beauty, not to mention how physical education may be contributing. Physical education could be a time where adolescent girls learned to experience their changing bodies as something wonderful and exciting, not something to be feared or embarrassed about.

Whether the fear comes from lack of skill and not wanting to be seen while moving, or from having to dress out and shower in a locker room is something that can potentially affect a person for life. But are these concerns being addressed in physical education, or are they being perpetuated? Let us continue to look.

Tinning (1985) has argued that physical education is partially to blame for this view of the body, or as he calls it, the cult of slenderness that affects so many young girls. The idea that many physical education teachers view health as simply the relationship between fitness and fatness, or that if one is fit and not fat then one is healthy sends messages to students about their bodies. The message being portrayed in his study was that it was not just unhealthy to be fat, but that it was wrong. Keeping in shape was seen as morally good, yet the images portrayed as "being in shape," were not often realistic images. Thus, many girls have been seen spending much of their time trying to "fit into" a body image they were not created for, thereby becoming alienated from their bodies (Tinning, 1985). Tinning is not the only one that has noted this problem. Others, albeit from fields outside physical education (Pipher, 1994; Wolf, 1991; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Rosenbaum, 1993), have also seen adolescent girls respond similarly. To this date it amazes me that what is so central to physical education, the subjectively experienced human body, is still neglected in the literature (Sparkes, 1996).

Alienation was also something that Carlson (1995) looked at in her study. However it was not alienation from one's body, but rather alienation from physical education class. She defined alienation as "the persistent negative feelings some students associate with actively aversive or insufficiently meaningful situations (which students often label with the all-purpose adjective *boring*) in the gymnasium setting" (Carlson, 1995, p. 467). Skill ability played a big role in whether or not students felt alienated from their physical education classes. Thirty-six percent of the alienated group indicated they were below average in sporting ability, while 32% of the group

thought they were average. Most of these students reported being uncomfortable with ball sports and felt that if they were "good at sports" they would enjoy P.E. more. These were also the students who preferred the less competitive activities such as aerobics, walking, yoga, and adventure activities, activities not typically found in traditional sport-based curriculums (Carlson, 1995). While Carlson's emphasis was on student alienation, what the student's had to say was more clear. For example, "[P.E.] is great for people who are into sports and things like that." (Carlson, 1995, p. 474). That says more about what these students needed and wanted than the discussion on alienation. Student voices speak loud and clear. The questions are, do we as writers and knowledge creators provide spaces for students' voices, and then, do we listen? Some, possibly. Team sport based-curriculums have also been found to alienate, to borrow from Carlson (1995), low skilled students from other people's studies as well (Griffin, 1984; Figley, 1985; Portman, 1995; Nugent & Faucette, 1995). Maybe it is time to listen to what the student's want and need. Part of that listening requires us to listen to how girls interpret the meanings of their bodies if we hope to better understand the reasons behind what they choose or do not choose to do in their physical education classes, or in the larger and more important context---their lives.

If, as some (Graham, 1995) have suggested, the purpose of physical education is "guiding youngsters in the process of becoming physically active for a lifetime," feelings of alienation may cause decline in activity rather than lifetime participation and enjoyment. Personally, I think it is more than becoming physically active, it is about developing healthy habits for a lifetime, physical activity being one such habit, but learning to become critical of the images and stories of the body that we are bombarded with daily, and that will affect the potential health of both girls and women, is as equally important. Current efforts have been made to help alleviate some of the problems that we have just looked at, but not all. The National Association of Sports and Physical Education (NASPE) has developed "Outcomes of Quality Physical Education Programs" (1992) whereby they define a "Physically Educated Person" (1992/1995), as well as "National Standards for Beginning Physical Education Teachers"(1995). In addition, NASPE recently came out with a

position statement developed by the Middle and Secondary School Physical Education Council (1995), "Appropriate Practices for Middle School Physical Education."

The first of NASPE's efforts was approved in April of 1990 and included a definition and outcomes of the physically educated person. The purpose of the committee, in response to other NASPE members, educators, and concerned citizens for a national platform to judge quality physical education, was to 1) identify outcomes of what a physically educated person is, and 2) offer for each part of the definition benchmarks that include (Has, Is, Does, Knows, Values) statements. So, a physically educated person (girl) has....these skills, is.....this, does.....these things, knows.....these concepts, and values....these qualities. The benchmarks were designed to be grade-specific so teachers could use them as a guide. I have provided the original NASPE definition of "The Physically Educated Person" (NASPE, 1992) (see Appendix A) as well as the most recent definition (NASPE, 1995) (see Appendix B) as to provide a better idea of what some people believe to be the purpose of physical education.

These definitions and standards certainly will provide many people with a base in which to begin, and that is no doubt important. What I see missing however are two pertinent components. First, mention of "the body" is nowhere to be seen, and yet our bodies are what is being talked "about." The document does not mention in the value section of the original definition for example, learning to value one's unique body, or learning to listen to one's own body. Those two things, to me, are important in terms of a healthy lifestyle, for we are in this world through our bodies. The second piece missing is a critical component (Tinning & Fitzclarence, 1992; Kirk & Tinning, 1990). We live in a visual, media saturated, computer manipulated culture that portrays women's bodies as objects (Bordo, 1989; Pipher, 1994; Rosenbaum, 1993; Wolf, 1991) and yet these documents fail to address this issue, an issue that demands attention if we hope for people to truly be physically educated in ways that reject the long standing historical, debilitating mind-body dualism argument.

The cultural messages that girls are confronted with daily requires them to have the ability to critically look at these images and stories if they are to ever become healthy adults. If we can

begin to better understand how adolescent girls interpret and construct the meanings of their bodies maybe we can begin to create learning opportunities and environments that empower both girls and boys. Yes, we need to better understand the students within our classrooms, but while understanding is necessary, it is not sufficient. We can understand all sorts of things about the benefits of physical activity, good teaching, developmentally appropriate physical education, "body image," but until we recreate the stories and images ours and others' student's hear, see, tell, and participate in, what good is our understanding or knowledge? We need to be able to create multiple empowering stories and images of healthy bodies---healthy people.

The purpose of this study was to look at how four adolescent girls, working with one researcher, interpreted and constructed the meanings of their bodies. The questions that originally guided the project were: What were the stories adolescent girls constructed regarding their bodies? Who were the primary characters in the construction of their stories? What were the dominant and subtle themes that contributed to shaping their personal body stories? And how could their stories, and the stories of others, empower and disempower adolescent girls in the development of healthy bodies? The first three questions, while answered throughout, became less important, yet the fourth question remained at the forefront of my mind throughout the research project. I listened to what the girls were saying, responded to their leads (Brown & Gilligan, 1992), tried to help them find ways to better name the meanings of their experiences (Greene, 1988) as related to their "bodies," and continually asked them to imagine beyond the actual, and envision preferred possibilities (Edelsky, 1994; Greene, 1995). As I reflect upon this journey I am now better able to articulate the roads we traveled, or the map we created. A map which allows for past-present-future to blend, and over time be recreated.

In part, the journey is about uncovering a silenced dialogue; one in which has great implications to girls healthy growth and development. As Greene (1995) writes, "The silences of women and the marginalized have still to be overcome in our classrooms. The invisibility of too many students has somehow to be broken through. There are geographies and landscapes still to

be explored..."(p.16). And in part, the journey is about ethical, democratic, and empowering research. These two roads are intimately connected.

Chapter 2

A Journey Into Methodology: Discovering Meaning and Mapping a Road

Several months ago, I had the opportunity to spend time with some middle school physical education classes. I was "playing around" so to speak with different research ideas. It was interesting to discover just how much one could learn about students and teachers by simply talking with them and listening. I tried all sorts of things with these students. I asked some students to write stories about why people their age liked to exercise or what they liked about physical education. I asked others to draw pictures and describe what it looks like to be in shape or to be healthy. And others I spent time talking with in small groups. What I learned about the needs, interests, and concerns of students through their written, visual, and verbal stories was fascinating. I was amazed at just how easy it is to forget one of the underlying purposes of educational research. That is, to come to better understand students and teachers, and their complex learning environments, in hopes of creating better teacher preparation and physical education programs.

For years physical education research has been dominated by a variety of quantitative methods (Goldberger, Gerney, & Chamberlain, 1982; Salter & Graham, 1985; Silverman, 1985; Silverman, 1990). Research of these types provided insights into the complexities of students, teachers, and classrooms, but only a limited one. More recently, researchers have begun to gain a deeper understanding of life in physical education classes through qualitative methods. These studies have investigated the experiences of both students (Carlson, 1995; Hopple & Graham, 1995; Nugent & Faucette, 1995; Portman, 1995; Sanders & Graham, 1995; Walling & Martinek, 1995), and teachers (Napper-Owen & Phillips, 1995; Schempp, Sparkes, & Templin, 1993; Sparkes, 1996). Both have enhanced our understanding of teachers and students in physical education; understanding that are useful for guiding teacher education programs.

One methodology of qualitative inquiry that is used throughout other domains of educational research, but has yet to find its way into physical education research is narrative analysis. Narrative analysis is a form of the more generic narrative inquiry (Polkinghorne, 1995).

More specifically, it is the configuration of a narrative from multiple data sources (i.e., stories), that offers insights into how people interpret and construct the meanings of their experiences. Narrative analysis is a research methodology that may help better explain the lives of physical education students and teachers, and their complex environments, as well as connect with the ways in which many people, teachers, teacher educators, and researchers, come to learn and understand themselves.

Narrative inquiry uses stories to describe human experience and action (Polkinghorne, 1995), and is an accepted mode of inquiry in many domains of anthropological, sociological, as well as educational research (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Dyson & Genishi, 1994; Nespor & Barber, 1995; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). Stories show whose voices are heard, and whose are silenced; whose histories are valued and whose devalued (Gilbert, 1991). The stories we hear and the stories we tell, whether personal or fictional, shape the meaning and quality of our lives at every stage and crossroad. Stories connect us with others, and with our own histories, through time, place, character, and advice on how we might live our lives (Witherell & Nodding, 1991). Thus, stories bring our past together with our present, and offer vision of possible futures. "A person is at once, engaged in living, telling, retelling, and reliving stories" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4). Stories create images, myths, and metaphors that carry moral resonance and contribute to our knowing and being known. Stories offer a journey into the world of practical ethics, and join the worlds of thought and feeling (Coles, 1989). People live and create their lives through their texts (Witherell & Noddings, 1991).

Thus, as people come to give meaning to their lives through the stories they tell (Bruner, 1986; Johnson, 1993; Witherell & Noddings, 1991) it seems appropriate for those who study human experience to use a methodology that connects with the ways in which people interpret and construct the meanings of life experiences. "Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the patterns of inquiry for its study" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). For the sake of clarity, however, Connelly & Clandinin (1990) call the phenomenon "story" and the inquiry "narrative." That is, "People by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives,

whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience....Life narratives are the context for meaning making" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, pp. 2-3). And narrative is particularly important to the feminine voice of human existence; that is, the power of emotion, intuition, and relationship in human life (Coles, 1989).

If the interest is in telling the stories of students, teachers, and classrooms, whether in math, science, art, or physical education, we need a methodology that captures how people interpret their experiences. Narrative analysis is a methodology that can help access and frame these stories (Bloom & Munro, 1995; Bruner, 1986; Greene, 1995); nevertheless it has often been overlooked in physical education scholarship (Lyons, 1992).

I shall begin a journey into narrative analysis with three adolescents' stories. The stories are some of the stories from the students I visited in a middle school gymnasium during my pilot study. These are not narrative analysis examples, but rather examples of students' stories that could be used by the researcher in constructing narratives. They are only small pieces of what would become a narrative, as a narrative analysis is constructed from multiple data sources (interviews, observations, field notes, etc.). These stories are used throughout the first half of the chapter to help illustrate the power and process of narrative analysis. With these stories as an entry point, I continue the journey with a discussion on the power of narrative, followed by an explanation of the different types of narrative inquiry. In the second half I move into an interpretive framework for this study, entry into the setting, and how I selected the four girls I worked with. In the final portion of the chapter I share a pivotal story from our research about forming relationships, and conclude with my emergent method for interpretation.

I now share with you Amie, Diron, and Paula's stories. All the names I use throughout are pseudonyms. These stories are about why some 12, 13, and 14 year-old girls and boys like to exercise.

Amie

There is this girl, she loves to exercise. I think she's nothing but skin and bones. Well, one day I went up to her and asked her, "Why do you exercise so much." She answered back,

Well my whole family is overweight and I don't want to end up like that. I think all that fat is disgusting. I guess I could understand that, I told myself. When I went home that evening I thought about my family, most of the grown ups in my family are overweight and I'm getting there real fast. The next day when it was time for gym, I noticed she was exercising. I went up and I told her, I understand what you mean, my family is like that and I'm getting close to where they are. Then she asked, if I would exercise with her because it gets lonely exercising alone. After that we did everything together, even being skin and bones.

Amie's story is about herself and her friend, yet Diron writes his story about a 14 year-old girl.

Diron

A 14 year-old girl who likes to exercise.

All girls in the world's worst nightmare is to be fat and out of shape. So this 14 year old girl decided it wouldn't be her that is fat and out of shape. So one day she sat down and told herself that she is going to be dedicated to making her body look absolutely the best. You know at this age and time girls are the apple of a young man's eye, and you shouldn't want yourself to look fat and sloppy. She does everything there is to do in exercising.

Paula, like Diron, writes about someone else. But she also writes about herself.

Paula

Amie loves to be fit. She always stays fit. She is probably skinny to the bone. She is so skinny that I wish I could be her size. Her favorite fitness thing probably is the mile.

Because she runs fast plus her nickname is Speedy. She has lots of friends because she is so skinny. I wish I could be her. Amie is so fit anybody would go out with her.

While we do not know if these stories were really played out, Coles (1989) suggests that stories are theories, and theories help explain and interpret phenomenon. In this case, stories help explain and interpret our life experiences to ourselves and others. Heath (1994) takes it a step further as she writes, "then it is possible to say that the message of their stories is not 'Here is the world; take it or leave it,' but instead, 'Here is something to think about'" (p. 215). Stories of

students and teachers provide teachers educators and researchers something to think about. With the words of Amie, Diron, and Paula lingering in your hearts and minds, I invite you to join me as this journey into narrative analysis continues.

Power of Narrative

Many educators and theorists (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Bruner, 1994; Dyson & Genishi, 1994; Greene, 1995; Johnson, 1993; Witherell & Noddings, 1991) view story as a way of understanding the meaning of our experiences. Our stories, and the stories of others, are an invitation to come to know our world and our place in it. "Whether narratives of history or the imagination, stories call us to consider what we know, how we know, and what and whom we care about" (Witherell & Noddings, 1991, p. 13). Knowledge is constructed and intimately connects the knower with the known (Belenky, et al., 1986). And it is the meaning of our experiences, not the underlying ontological structure of objects, which constitutes the reality we respond to.

While the view of many respected educators, researchers, and theorists is that the construction of our reality occurs through the stories we hear and tell, Bruner (1994) captures the essence as he writes: "A life as led is inseparable from a life as told--or more bluntly, a life is not 'how it was' but how it is interpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold" (p. 36). Life is a continuous narrative, stories woven together, and therefore in order to see, and thus understand the orientation of our life, we must see our life in story (Greene, 1995). It is through stories that we can begin to understand human experience as lived, interpreted, and expressed, for the subject matter of narrative is human-action. And as we come to better understand students' and teachers' stories, their interpretations of experiences, we may be able to better understand what we need or ought to do, and as teacher educators and researchers that is our moral obligation.

As a research methodology, narrative analysis is particularly powerful for understanding the fullness and uniqueness of human existence. The knowledge expressed through stories of students and teachers describes uniquely human experience whereby action and events contribute either positively or negatively to the achievement of goals or fulfilling purposes (Polkinghorne,

1995). "Narrative can illuminate purposes, plans, and goals which are the forms by which our lives have some direction, motivation, and significance for us" (Johnson, 1993, pp. 170-171). While this level of understanding differs from traditional Western science, that which favors abstract rationality, Bruner (1986) reminds us that to ignore one mode of thought (e.g., narrative) or reduce it to another (e.g., the well-formed argument) is to fail to understand the diversity of thought and expression. If we hope to improve the quality of physical education in the public schools and universities, we need to further understand the experiences of students. Narrative analysis can help broaden our lens and provide a deeper level of understanding into the lives of students in physical education.

Narrative originates from what Bruner (1986) calls one of two modes of cognitive functioning, or ways of knowing. These modes provide two different ways of understanding peoples' stories. The other mode of cognitive functioning, the well-formed argument, is more often used by scientists. Yet both the well-formed argument and the good story (narrative) have distinct ways of arranging experience, or constructing reality. Both have fundamentally different criteria for well-formedness, as well as procedures for verification. While they can both be used to convince the other, what they are convincing "of" is radically different. A well-formed argument convinces a person of truth, and verifies through procedures of logical and empirical proof. Narratives convince through their lifelikeness, or verisimilitude (Bruner, 1986). A good narrative rings true. A good narrative results in a compelling message for the reader. A message that may cause the reader to "nod in agreement, pause in reflection, or take action" (Alvermann, O'Brien, & Dillon, 1996, p. 117).

The philosophical questions guiding these two ways of knowing are also distinctively different. Logical and empirical proof originates from the question how do we come to "know truth," while story originates from, how do we come to "endow experience with meaning" (Richard Rorty, in Bruner, 1986, p.12). Students and teachers give meaning to experiences through the stories they tell. If we want to understand their interpretations of experience one way is through their stories.

Narrative reasoning functions by attending to differences and diversity of people's behavior. Narratives retain the complexity of a situation by unifying thought, feeling, and action. Dewey's (1932/1985), notion of the unity of the self and its acts may help illuminate the power of narrative analysis as a research methodology. For Dewey (1932/1985), thoughts and feelings arise simultaneously in experience through action. This action can also take place in one's imagination. Those that emphasize action without equally emphasizing the importance of thoughts and feelings destroy the unity of the experience. Thoughts and feelings are simply aspects of experience. Students and teachers experiences can be relived and understood through the telling of stories. Narrative analysis provides a way of keeping experience and meaning unified, and thus allows for greater understanding into the lives of students and teachers. And according to Patton (1980), qualitative methods seek to understand phenomenon, situations, or people as whole.

When we hear a story of a person's experience it can touch us in ways that evoke emotions such as sympathy, anger, or gladness. The story provides us with an explanation for why the person acted as she or he did; it makes another's action, as well as our own action, understandable (Polkinghorne, 1995). The 14 year old girl in Diron's story exercised so she "wouldn't be fat and sloppy and so her body would be the absolute best." Each story holds its own unique feature, yet it is the varied and extensive collection of narrative experiences that can provide the basis for understanding new actions and interpretations of experience by way of analogy (Polkinghorne, 1995). For some, however, narrative accounts can be unsettling as they require accepting the idea that the world has no fixed rules for giving meaning to behavior (Emihovich, 1995). In other words, narrative accounts are an invitation for multiple interpretations, and multiple interpretations open spaces for multiple possibilities. Take for example all the ways in which Amie, Diron, and Paula's stories could be interpreted and constructed into a narrative. From girls exercising to become "skin and bones" to oppressive gender construction in young boys, their stories are an invitation to think and feel from their perspectives, in their words. Stories are an invitation to understand them better, and thus a subtle cry for us to provide learning opportunities that will help better their futures.

The multiple experiences are represented by the writer of narrative as she or he begins constructing her or his own interpretation of the experience (Bruner, 1986). First impressions of a story on new terrain are always based on previous journeys, or experiences. As the new journey takes on a meaning of its own, regardless of the initial borrowing from past experience, the interpretation becomes its own story. When this happens the reader (or writer) can ask the crucial interpretive question, "What's it all about?" (Bruner, 1986, p. 37). The interpretation is not about certainties or standards, but rather about the multiplicity of perspectives and possibilities that can be constructed to make meanings of experience understandable. It is an expression of hope that we may become more understanding about the human world. Thus the power of narrative for educators is that generalizations are not attempted, or truth is not sought, but rather, reader's will interpret based on their own needs or the needs of their students. It is through the lifelikeness, the verisimilitude of narrative, that allows for multiple interpretations, and multiple interpretations render multiple educational possibilities.

Types of Narrative Inquiry

Polkinghorne (1995) discusses the two types of narrative inquiry as an extension of Bruner's (1986) two ways of knowing (paradigmatic and narrative modes). These two forms of narrative inquiry Polkinghorne labels as paradigmatic analysis of narrative and narrative analysis. Paradigmatic analysis of narrative requires that stories be collected as data and analyzed by identifying aspects of the data as instances of paradigmatic categories. The result is descriptions of themes that cut across the stories, characters, or settings and thus produces knowledge of abstract, general concepts. The process moves from stories to common elements. This can occur in two ways. First, concepts derived from theory or other logical possibilities are applied to the data and determine the outcomes or concepts. For example, theorists claim that adolescence is a time when body image becomes very important. Applying this to the stories written by Amie, Diron, and Paula would help explain what they write about. The second form of narrative inquiry is more indicative of qualitative research, as it allows themes to emerge and concepts to develop from the stories. It is through inductive analysis that the researcher looks for noted similarities in the data,

and from there creates categories that are used to order data as a collection of specific instances. Further, it seeks to identify relationships among categories. For example, in both Amie and Diron's stories' girls exercised in part to avoid getting fat. Obviously multiple stories from Amie, Diron, and Paula are needed to create categories, not merely the three I have used for illustrative purposes.

Most narrative inquiry in qualitative research is conducted by the paradigmatic analysis method. Within the field of physical education, some have used this form of narrative inquiry (Langley, 1995; Schempp, 1993). While the strength lies in its capacity to develop general knowledge about the stories collected, paradigmatic analysis remains abstract and formal and misses the uniqueness of each story because it relies on the researcher's pre-conceived categorization (Polkinghorne, 1995). If all we took from Amie, Diron, and Paula's stories were the common themes---that of exercising to avoid being fat---what we miss are all the other possible messages within their individual stories; and many exist.

The second type of narrative inquiry, narrative analysis, is separated from paradigmatic analysis of narrative by the use of a plot. Whereas in paradigmatic analysis of narrative the process moves from stories to common themes, the outcome of narrative analysis is a narrative. It is the plot that ties together the individual experiences of the students, and thus creates the context for understanding meaning (Polkinghorne, 1995). The researcher seeks students' stories through interpretation of multiple forms of representation (i.e., individual and/or group interviews, journals, letters, personal stories, observations, field notes, images, drawings) that will be used to construct a narrative that displays the connection of elements as an unfolding temporal development whose end provides some explanation. In other words, the data are configured into a narrative, or set of narratives, through the use of a plot, that gives meaning to the experiences of the people involved. Amie, Diron, and Paula's individual stories each create the context for understanding their reasons behind why people their age like to exercise. Simply knowing that Amie loves to exercise does not tell us as much as if we knew why she liked to exercise. Just as their stories have mini plots that help us to better understand the "why" questions, narratives are also constructed

through the use of a plot and can help us begin to better understand the bigger "why" questions. As Johnson (1993) reminds us, while certain aspects of human experience can be captured through concepts, models, metaphors, and paradigms, it is only narrative that can encompass both temporality and purposive organization on a general level by which we pursue the overarching unity and meaning for our lives. Because human beings are storytellers who lead storied lives, the use of narrative allows researchers to study and reveal how humans experience their world (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Both the paradigmatic analysis of narrative and narrative analysis rely on data that Polkinghorne (1995) calls diachronic data. This is contrasted with synchronic data which is obtained from most other forms of qualitative research. Synchronic data tends to be categorical answers to questions sought by researchers and provides information about present situations or beliefs of the person being questioned. Diachronic data provides temporal information about the sequential relationship of events. Typically there is a description of both the event and the subsequent outcomes of the event. Quite often this is in the form of autobiographical reports of personal episodes, and include both when and why actions were taken, as well as the intended results of the actions. Refer to Amie's story which included the when, the why, as well as the alleged action taken. Amie exercised with her friend in "gym class" because she did not want to get fat, and in the process became "skin and bones." Diachronic type of data contrasts with synchronic data that lacks both the historical and developmental dimensions. Because humans are historically situated in cultural contexts, the meanings they give to their lives and experiences must allow for their histories and contexts to emerge and be maintained.

Thus, a narrative analysis is a retrospective synthesis of descriptions of interpretations of events and happenings from questions from a bound study (Polkinghorne, 1995). A bound study has a specific context or time frame, and includes a beginning, a middle, and an end. A narrative analysis links past events, or stories, together to explain a how a final outcome might come about, or how meaning is given to certain aspects of their lives. In other words, a narrative analysis is a configuration of the data into a narrative, or narratives, that renders some explanation, gives

meaning to some experience, or whose interpretation offers possible insights into the motivation and purpose behind a chain of events. Providing insight and understanding to the reader about the people being studied is one purpose of narrative analysis. Conrad (1967) wrote in what has become a famous preface, that it is the writers task, "by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel--it is, before all, to make you see. If I succeed, you shall find...that glimpse of truth for which you have forgotten to ask" (pp. ix-x). As teachers, teacher educators, and researchers, if we could better see what to ask, we may better understand how to respond. Narratives invite us to better see students as human beings with needs, desires, and interests, and thus respond accordingly.

It is through interpretation of the multiple data sources (e.g., observations, written stories, drawings, images, letters, interviews, journal entries) that the narratives will be constructed. As the plot begins to take form, incidents that are crucial to the narrative's outcome become apparent. As this becomes salient for the researcher she is better able to select the data items that are needed to tell the story. The final construction of the narrative must both fit the data and provide meaning that is not represented in the data alone (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1995). In the process of constructing narratives, Alvermann, O'Brien, & Dillon (1996) remind us, the researcher's stories contribute to how the stories of respondents are interpreted. "Like it or not, the interpreting I do as a writer tells as much about me as it does about the others' whose stories are being told....I can never separate my own experiences from the experiences of those I write about" (Alvermann, O'Brien, & Dillon, 1996, p. 117). And thus positionality becomes important (Lincoln, 1996). That is, the researcher must display herself as honest and authentic within the text. Any claim of detachment or objectivity by the author is a barrier to quality. In addition, Lincoln (1996) reminds us that texts are always only partial representations, any claim made that texts represent whole or complete truth are "specious, inauthentic, and misleading....only texts which display their own contextual grounds for argumentation would be eligible for appellations of quality and rigor" (p. 10).

Eisner, in his address to the American Educational Research Association in 1993, urged educators to look toward multiple forms of representation, as each form, through its difference, represents different kinds of experiences, and thereby allows for different types of meanings. Similarly, different forms and ways of presenting and conducting research allow for different levels of understanding. Narrative accounts can broaden our understanding of students and thus expand physical education scholarship, as narrative ways of knowing create spaces that allow for multiple perspectives, possibilities, and connection with others (Greene, 1995; Helle, 1991). Through narrative accounts, we can begin to imagine the different ways students experience, interpret, and understand their worlds through the stories they hear, the stories they tell, and the stories they hope for. Narratives invite us to engage our imagination about what is possible and what is preferred (Greene, 1995).

It is through imagination that we may begin to see students in a broader more holistic light, because imagination above all other cognitive capacities, allows us to give credence to alternative realities (Greene, 1995). To see things or people "big," or more holistic, requires not the remote detachment and value neutrality of the uninvolved spectator, but rather, to see and feel as a participant in the midst of what is taking place, what concerns are held, and what initiatives are being taken from others' perspectives. Greene (1995) writes, "All we can do, I believe, is cultivate multiple ways of seeing and multiple dialogues in a world where nothing stays the same" (p. 16).

If we can begin to better understand how adolescent girls interpret and construct the meanings of their bodies, maybe we can begin to create learning opportunities that liberate and empower girls to become healthy women. Part of the need for narrative accounts of students also stems from the possibilities that narrative inquiry creates. Narrative inquiry is a collaborative methodology. That is, a methodology where both the researcher and participants seek to understand and reveal some phenomenon together (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Thus a caring relationship between researcher and participants is crucial to the outcome. A caring relation holds "that the self is formed and given meaning in the context of its relations with others" (Wetherell & Noddings, 1991, p.5). It is through the development of caring relationships that trust is

established, thereby creating spaces that allow for deeper levels of understanding into the lives of students (Witherell & Noddings, 1991).

Yet the researcher has a moral obligation to their participants, for caring relationships are not unidirectional, but rather reciprocal (Lincoln, 1996; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). This essence, so often omitted from research, is eloquently captured by Nespor & Barber (1995) as they write:

Composing *with* the people who are part of your research--seeing them as co-authors and part of the audience for the text--is different than writing about them for other audiences....Writing with and for people extends and complicates our connections to them; writing about them encapsulates and closes off relationship (p. 50).

Narrative inquiry has the potential for being an empowering research methodology. Empowering research is defined as "research on, for and with" participants (Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton, & Richardson, 1994). Participants give to the researcher by working with them to understand the phenomenon of interest, and thus the researcher has a moral obligation to not only give back to the participants (research for) but to allow for their agenda's (research with) to enter the conversation, or even become the crux of the conversation. Lincoln (1996) suggests that reciprocity is one criteria to determine quality in interpretive research.

Part of giving back to the participants is helping them to develop their voice (Lincoln, 1996). Narrative inquiry, through its form, asks participant to further develop their voices. This can be done in several ways, but one example is that the researcher continues to ask participants to think and articulate the meanings of their experiences. As participants begin to think about their experiences through the multiple methods that the researcher uses, they begin to be able to better articulate their thoughts and feelings. As this happens they may further develop their voices through naming the meanings of their experiences. It is only after we can name the meanings of our experiences that we can begin to become more critical and imagine alternative possibilities, better possibilities (Greene, 1988, 1995). Thus as researchers we have the potential for our

research to be transformative (Benmayor, 1991; Greene, 1995; Lincoln, 1996), or "for" participants (Cameron, et al, 1994; Lincoln, 1996).

The need for narrative accounts is not only about empowerment or coming to better understand, it is also about creating multiple stories and many possible worlds. Yes, we need to better understand the students within our classrooms. But while understanding is necessary, it is not sufficient. We also need to be able to access multiple stories from multiple voices, stories of students. We have the power as researchers to give value to, and construct knowledge, and the types of knowledge we construct is dependent on the ways we conduct and represent our research. Until we broaden our lens and create both multiple ways of knowing and sharing knowledge and understanding, ways that invite a larger audience, an audience that is inclusive rather than exclusive, we will continue to close off the conversation rather than create spaces, illuminate possibilities, and open the doors for multiple voices. Narrative analysis gives access to these stories, these voices, and thus we can begin to see ourselves through the eyes of our students.

Cynics may read this research and find it frivolous and call the students wrong. But the morally perceptive reader will see that the world of the gym is layered in multiple truths. The more perspectives we can see, name, and understand, the greater the potential for improving both physical education and physical education teacher education.

An Interpretive Framework: A Journey Toward Understanding

Many journeys, if to be truly understood, benefit from some form of road map. Maps allow us to record, remember, and return to the road followed, as well as help us imagine alternative possible roads for future journeys. I could only imagine the journeys' map prior to its beginning, as I could not have created a map for a journey not yet traveled, and a route not yet seen. Upon thoughtful reflection of the road traveled I am now able to design the journey's road map for the sake of my readers. This map may provide useful as you begin to experience what Khalilah, Nicole, Alysa, Dauntai, and I engaged in together. In a sense, I better see that the journey was as much about ethical, democratic, and empowering research, as it was adolescent girls' body-narratives.

Methodology was central and intimately related to this research, and how I hope to continue conducting research as I continue seeking more democratic and empowering forms of inquiry. That is, inquiry that not only helps me answer the questions I seek to understand, but allows for multiple voices, is sensitive to the needs of participants, allows for their agenda's and voices to become central in the conversation, and helps them in some way. For me, research needs to be reciprocal. The understanding gained needs to benefit all involved in the journey, not only the driver.

Lincoln, in a paper presented at the National Reading Conference in 1996, discusses what she calls an "Emerging Criteria For Quality in Interpretive Research." Because democratic and empowering research; that is research that is "on, for, and with participants" (Cameron, et al., 1994) does not fit nicely within the genre of traditional qualitative research, Lincoln believes we need to continue the conversation about "how" to judge this type of inquiry to determine its quality. She reminds us however that while these criteria may not fit all forms of research, and certain criteria are seen more and others less depending on the research, we need to be open to emerging criteria that come through the actual research process. Some of Lincoln's (1996) criteria may be helpful to reading, understanding, and judging what follows. I believe much of what she lays out is at the very heart of the work Khalilah, Alysa, Nicole, Dauntai, and I accomplished, and provides guidance for my continuing research.

Criteria For Quality

1. The first criterion Lincoln (1996) discusses is relationship between researcher and participants. I discovered this need for relationships; that is, relationships that were based on caring and trust, during my pilot study. And again, it became evident during my study with the girls, for without becoming in a sense, vulnerable to them, I would have never learned what I did.

2. A second criterion Lincoln (1996) calls "communitarian" for it acknowledges that the research takes place within a certain community, and is addressed in some way to that specific community. Yet more importantly, it is the desire to serve that community (research "for" participants), not just the community of knowledge producers. The "research is first and foremost

a community project, not primarily a project of the academic disciplines alone" (Lincoln, 1996, p. 13). In other words, the knowledge or understanding discovered and produced belongs first to the community from which it came. For example, the girls were able to name many body stories and the surrounding issues during the research process that certainly benefited my understanding. But more importantly as you will see, it helped them develop the language to communicate with others, adults and peers, what they were thinking and feeling; it helped them develop their voices. These girls are the one's that need to be able to name the meanings of their experiences if they will ever be able to critically examine these experiences (Greene, 1988). We are the ones that need to understand their experiences in hopes of helping them more appropriately. Additionally, because I felt that the girls had a right to know what I was choosing to use from the conversations we had, and from their journals and other written artifacts, I shared with them all the transcripts I was using, with the exception of one piece that one girl wrote which in my perception had the potential of hurting another girls' feelings. I also showed them all of the journal entries, both theirs and mine, that I was using. I wanted them to have the opportunity to add clarification or tell me they did not want me to use something. The "book" as they call it, is ours first, and others second.

3. Voice is the next criterion. Whose voices are heard, and whose are silenced becomes important in judging quality.

Voice...echoes the cry for 'passionate participation' as a hallmark of quality in interpretive work...[and] becomes not only characteristic of interpretive work, but the extent to which alternative voices are heard is a criterion by which we can judge the openness, engagement, and problematic nature--and therefore the quality--of any text. (Lincoln, 1996, p. 14)

Not only have girls been omitted and thus silenced in the literature on adolescent development, as well as educational literature (Barbieri, 1995; Greene, 1995), but those who have been included more recently, (Barbieri, 1995; Brown & Gilligan; 1992; Gilligan et al, 1990) were primarily white girls from privileged homes, in privileged schools. There still exists the "silenced dialogue" (Delpit, 1995) of girls and women that need to be heard. Given the duration of my study, part of the selection process required me in part to choose girls who were able and willing to articulate in

writing. In this sense my study is limited. And yet, I wanted a racially mixed group of girls, and while limited to four girls, there is diversity with respect to social class, religion, race, and skin color.

4. Sacredness, or the creation of spaces that are not based on unequal power, but rather mutual respect, dignity, and an appreciation for human beings, is the next criterion for judging quality in interpretive research. My attempts to follow the girls conversations rather than impose "my agenda" was my attempt at breaking down some of the power differential that existed. Yes, I had the power in many ways, but in other ways they had the power.

5. Reciprocity according to Lincoln (1996), is about sharing of oneself and is marked by a "deep sense of trust, caring, heightened awareness, and mutuality" (p. 15). Reciprocity was central to our work from the beginning, for I felt that the only way for this research to be "ethical" was if I was to give back to the people that would give so much to me. Crucial to the criterion of reciprocity are caring and yearning. Caring requires an openness which can come only from active listening, and thus we may begin to see the possibilities of others' worlds. Caring in a sense is about seeking to understand from others' perspectives, and in others' voices. Lincoln (1996) connects yearning (taken from bell hooks, 1990) with the desire for social justice, or the ability to make a difference in the world, even if that difference is very small. "Yearning is this voluntary, fragile state, vulnerability-producing but also empowering....When we find this yearning, our narratives will help others to feel it, and will have responded to another plea for quality in what we, as knowledge producers, write" (p. 22). In many ways, the connections between, caring, yearning, and sacredness come through reciprocity and are laid out in the responsive and emerging method that I created and faithfully followed throughout the time I spent with the girls. My voice, and the voices of Khalilah, Dauntai, Nicole, and Alysa, are subtle cries for a better world for girls and women to live.

Entry Into Their World

The day I had waited for, the process was about to begin, or rather, about to continue. The first day of what many call "data collection." As I sat in the front office waiting for Scott, the

teacher whose classes I would select the girls from (see Appendix C), the clock continued ticking closer to the time I would meet the principal to explain my project. What if I was unable to articulate what I wanted to do? What would happen if she did not like the idea? Thoughts of doubt swept through my mind as I sat and waited. Students continued to walk through the office door trying to get their late passes and get off to class. Finally I was escorted down the hall where I ran into Scott. We proceeded to the principals office, and took a seat outside her door. We chatted about the project, what I was wanting to do today, how we could get the permission slips back quickly. Finally, after the butterflies in my stomach calmed, but only a bit, we entered the principals office.

A tall African American woman with short straight black hair smiled as Scott introduced me for the first time. Her smile was warm, her demeanor pleasant and calm. We sat down, a desk separated Scott and myself from Dr. Patricia Black. She asked me to explain my project. I did. She seemed interested, liked the topic, she too believed that the image the media portrays of healthy is not always accurate. She thought my study would make a "good article." Other small talk went on, and then we left. I felt relieved that I was able to explain what I had wanted to do and it seemed to make sense. Scott and I walked down the hall to his classroom.

This week is health so we did not go to the gym. Their program alternates health one week physical education the next. As we entered the classroom, desks were lined neatly in rows, and the teachers desk was up front. There were two small windows up high in the back with the blinds closed. Light green walls covered with posters that all begin with "Being healthy is....." followed by different phrases associated with health issues. I walked across the front of the room to the table in the corner that had a computer sitting on it. I put down my stuff and talked with Scott as we waited for the first class to come into the room.

As the students entered I found myself watching their eyes, wondering which ones would be a part of the project, wondering what they would think about the things I asked them to do. They watched me, some smiled, others make quick eye contact and turned away. I was a stranger to most, but vaguely familiar to a few. Scott put the morning question on the board and the

students began to write it in their notebooks. His question was: "How can your interest affect your physical activity and fitness goals?" Interesting question I thought. I found myself anxious to hear the students' responses. I was hoping he would discuss the topic so I could hear what they wrote. The students began writing, they seemed unusually quiet for middle school students. But then, it was 8:25 in the morning, so maybe it was still too early.

As the student's wrote, Scott reminded them that there were no wrong answers but that they did need to answer the question. They finished, but before Scott continued he introduced me to the class. He then asked the class to share some of their answers. No one spoke, but then he only waited a couple of seconds before he began a story about football and what is needed to get in shape for football. I found myself really wanting to hear what the students wrote. Yes Scott was making a good point about the need for finding activities that you enjoyed, but I wanted to know what the students wrote. I never got to hear their answers.

At the end of class I handed out my permission slips (see Appendixes D and E), explained just a little about what I was doing, and asked that the students take these home and have their parents read and sign them if they were interested. Scott talked with the students a little about some the activities I would be having them do. He made the project sound important, it made me feel good that he valued what I was doing and saw it as a contribution to his program rather than a hassle.

I had entered their physical world, but only in location. I sat in the classroom with them, but interacted with only with the two sitting next to me---and even that was scarce. It would take time to get to know them, and even more time for them to begin to trust me, if that was even possible. I realized something very important my first day. Students need the opportunity to speak. Their voices need to be heard. They heard one view, that of the teachers. But there were about 35 other voices they could have heard. I felt as if so much were being missed, so many possibilities unexplored. I was so excited to learn from them, to hear their voices. Yet entering their world would take time. But in the end, their voices would teach us some important things about their needs, desires, and interests.

Making a Choice: Which Girls' Voices Will be Heard?

I was into the second week and the parent and student permission slips had been returned. Approximately one half of three classes had permission to participate. Going into the selection process I wanted and needed three things. First, the girls needed to be able and willing to articulate in writing if the project was to be successful in the time frame I was working within. Second, I needed three girls from the same class as we would be working in a group. And third, I wanted a racially diverse group as much of the criticism is that the population of girls studied tends to come from privileged predominately white schools.

From the pilot study I did the year before I learned that written stories and pictures, when combined, were useful in understanding students. Additionally, I had come across a technique some call "freewriting" (Barbieri, 1995). The idea behind freewriting is that the writer writes what comes to mind as quickly as possible without censoring words or thoughts. The focus is on getting the words on paper, not worrying about spelling, grammar, being logical, or making sense. The hope is to capture what the writer really thinks, to work within a space where "energy is unobstructed by social politeness...to the place where you are writing what your mind actually sees and feels, not what it thinks it should see or feel" (Goldberg, 1986).

I asked the students who were able to participate to do three things. On the board I wrote the instructions for the freewriting exercise. I explained that I wanted them to 1) Keep your hand moving--don't stop writing; 2) Write the first thing that comes to mind; 3) Don't think---just write; 4) Don't worry about spelling or grammar; 5) Don't erase anything (cross out if you feel you need to); and 6) There are no wrong answers. (Adapted from Barbieri, 1995) The topic for the freewriting exercise was "Someone who is in good shape." When they finished, I asked them to take another one of the 5x8 notecards I had given them and write a story about a 12 or 13 year old girl or boy who is in good shape. The third piece was to draw a picture to go with the story they wrote. I told them that they could use their freewriting to help them write their story if they wanted. All three classes of students who had returned permission slips participated in these three tasks. I was a little sad, not to mention disturbed, about the topic I would have them write on, for even our

language that we use to describe the aspect of being "healthy" I was wanting to explore, is laced with metaphors of images. Being "in shape" or being "physically fit" both have an underlying structure of an image. I felt trapped in a sense by the language I would have to use if I was to communicate with these students.

As I read through the stories and freewriting sheets I was looking for detail in description, I was looking for things that caught my attention or captured my curiosity. I was also looking at one class in particular as it was the longest class period in the day and would give us more time throughout the semester. This class happened to be a class with many International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IB) students, something I was not aware of at the time. The IB program is "a rigorous pre-university course of study for highly motivated students" (International Baccalaureate Diploma Program Brochure). The students in this program have a 3.0 minimum G.P.A. and score at or above the 85%ile on their standardized tests. Looking back on the selection process, not only did I try to accommodate what I knew I needed, but I also paid close attention to my reactions to the girls stories. There was most definitely a feeling component of the selection process that I could not, and still cannot, articulate in words although as I introduce each girl I will attempt to describe why I selected her.

I will begin with the voices of Khalilah, Dauntai, Alysa, and Nicole, the four eighth grade girls I selected and worked with. The girls signed another permission slip that was more detailed (see Appendix F) and chose the pseudonyms that I used, although each of them wanted me to use her real name. I explained to the girls that I was restricted from using their real names because I had to keep their identities confidential. Khalilah is a 13 year old "brown skinned" African American/Indian Muslim from a middle class family; Dauntai is a 14 year old "light skinned" African American from a lower-middle class family; Alysa is a 13 year old Caucasian from a lower middle class single parent family; and Nicole is a 13 year old "light skinned" African American from a middle class family. These four girls have at least two things in common, they are eighth graders in the IB Program, in a predominately African American Magnet middle school in the southeast part of the United States; and, they all have grown up in a culture which places utmost

importance on the way they "look." Yet their stories are told through my interpretation, and I am a 29 year old Caucasian woman who grew up in an upper-middle class family, in a highly educated, predominantly white community in the high desert of Southern California. But like Khalilah, Dauntai, Alysa, and Nicole, I too grew up in, and live in, a culture that places great emphasis on the way we "look." May their voices help us to better understand the needs, desires, and interests of some of lives educators touch by way of analogy.

Khalilah was the first girl I selected and there were many reasons why I chose her. First, she was able and willing to articulate in writing, something necessary for this study. Khalilah covers her entire body with the exception of her face and I thought that someone who covers their body completely, for whatever reason, might tell different stories about their body. I was very curious. But I was particularly interested in a few of the comments she wrote in her freewriting exercise. Khalilah's response captured my immediate attention.

Someone who is in goo[d] shape looks well. Does not have alot of fat on they [crossed out] their body. They work out all of the time. They eat well. They eat things that are healthy. Most of the time their skiny. The have a nice appearance. They like who they are and that why they try to stay in good shape. They don't eat as much. They look healthy. They don't talk about other people because they feel good about theirselves and people that do talk about other people don't feel good about theirselves. They [crossed out] Their skin looks healthy. Their body looks healthy. Most of the people who are in good shape try to help other people in their family. Its easier for them to do things because they don't get as tired as fast [crossed out] tired as fast as other people do. They are motivated to do things. They like to go out running and walking. They do th [crossed out] They exercise for themselves not for anyone else. (Khalilah, freewriting, 9-24-96)

Khalilah's words sounded planned, almost calculated, censored in that she crosses words out, yet laced with behaviors, feelings, and images associated with an "adult" version of being in shape. Where was she learning that someone who was in good shape didn't "talk about other people," I wondered? At this age, 13, talking about and to other people is as common as eating and

sleeping are for adults. And yet "talking about other people" is one way to perpetuate the social value we place in "looks." She captured my attention, I wanted to know more, she became one of the four girls that would participate in the study.

Nicole was the second girl I selected. Both her freewriting and story were very detailed and descriptive. She wrote:

On one Tuesday a girl named Monica was watching television. Monica started to think about people who are in good shape when she started watching Video Soul. There was a video on with Toni Braxton "Unbreak my Heart" She had the model Tyson in her video. That made Monica think in her head how built Tyson was and how much of a figure Toni Braxton had. She also started to think of how much they had to work to get her self in shape. Monica thought she probably had to develop courage and self confidence. They probably also had to accept self concept also. Well Monica started to think about herself and if she was in shape. Come to find out Monica was in good health but she needed to exercise more often to work on strength, flexibility, and to help herself to form a bigger heart. That day Monica continued to watch the television then she seen some models on the Home Shopping Club network. She began to see how slim and trim all the models were. Then she thought just because you are skiney doesn't mean you are healthy. The day had gone pass and Monica spent her day watching and wishing for figures and looks. Before Monica went to bed she prayed for the lord to give her straighten and help her to exercise more. The next morning she woke up and opened her curtains and the rays from the sun bounced on to her bed. Monica was happy to see that it was a bright sunny day. That ment that she could go out and exercises. Sometimes you have to stop wanting for and just take the first step. After that day Monica continued to work out and exercise. Before Monica knew she was in shape and was finally happy. (Nicole, written story, 9-24-96)

I was not quite sure what to think, but someone who could be this descriptive in writing might also be verbally articulate as well. I wanted to know more. Additionally, it seemed that part of Nicole's response was dictated by the environment with which we were in, that is, a health

class. I wondered how much of this was her "wanting to get the right answer" and how much of this was what she thought. I would find out later.

Alysa was the next the girl I selected. I had remembered Alysa vaguely from the time I spent during my pilot study the year before. She was not one of the girls I worked with directly but was in one of the adjoining physical education classes. There was something about her that resonated with me, it was not through anything she wrote, but there was something I could not ignore. What caught my attention however about her writing was that her story was about boys whereas every other girl in class wrote about girls. And yet she wrote about boys in relationship with each other, she compared two boys, one in shape and one wanting to be in shape. Yet her freewriting was laced with oppressive stereotypical storylines of both men and women. She wrote:

Someone who is in good shape has a washboard stomach, and has muscles. It doesn't have to be alot of muscles just some muscle. If your fat, your not in good shape. For a girl you don't have to have a flat stomach just a skinny one. Girls shouldn't have too much muscle just enough so you can barely see it. Guys should have alot but not a major, major lot, that's sick. Another way to be in good shape is if you can run for 5 minutes w/out being totally exhausted. If you can roller blade, or skate, your[sic] in good shape, if you can play sports, your in good shape. (Alysa, freewriting, 9-24-96)

I could not chose three girls as planned, I needed four. I had started to worry about what would happen if one girl decided she did not want to finish the semester. Three girls just did not seem to be enough to give dynamics to a group. Additionally there was a fourth girl's writing I could not get out of my mind and I had pretty much already decided on Khalilah, Nicole, and Alysa. Dauntai was the fourth girl I selected and the only girl of the four that I did not know who she was, or what she looked liked prior to selecting her. The other three girls I could pick out in a group as I knew who they were. All I knew about Dauntai was what was written on her cards. She wrote:

There was a 13 year old girl who thought that she was overweight. One day she decided that she wanted to lose weight. That day she come home from school and made an exercise

chart. Each day when she came home from school she did exercise to help her lose weight. The exercise she did were, sit ups, jogging, and push-ups. She made a schedule out for almost everyday. When she came home from school she was to do her homework, and then exercise and the rest of the afternoon she could have to herself. Sometimes her friends would join her so they could be in shape also.

A month past and you could see a difference. She had lost alot of weight but still wanted to lose a little more. She continued with her schedule. Gradually, she moved up the number of sit-ups and push-ups she did and the amount of time she took jogging. This not only helped for her own ability at home but it helped with the test she had to take for P.E. She lost her weight and was happy with what she did she no longer was overweight anymore, but she still continued to exercise regularly to stay in shape. (Dauntai, 9-24-96)

As I sat on my bedroom floor reading Dauntai's story about a 13 year old girl who is in good shape memories came flooding back. Her story "rang true" the quality that Bruner (1986) calls verisimilitude, or lifelikeness. This lifelikeness existed for me as I read Dauntai's words, for I could hear a voice from a different time and a different place. I could see a little girl and her friends. It is where diet entered my vocabulary, and I was only 13, the same as the girl in Dauntai's story.

Dauntai's story brought back memories, memories of events that lead to how I began constructing the meanings of my body. I remember sitting outside under an umbrella at a table during lunch with four of my girl friends. I had on my little blue knickers and my little pale yellow, white, and blue striped blouse that buttoned up to my neck and had a little tie. I was eating a half of grapefruit and a yogurt. We were all dieting. I was only dieting because everyone else was, I figured I too must be overweight. I don't think I was more than 90 pounds. Like the girl in Dauntai's story, I would go home and chart my exercise. I video taped all the "20 Minute Workout" shows and would do them over and over. I wanted my waist to be 20 inches and I was determined. Something about Dauntai's story made me sad.

Yet Dauntai wrote more. Her freewriting exercise was what captured my attention, it was why I selected her, something I will elaborate on in another section. Dauntai wrote:

looks healthy

feel healthy

thinks good about theirself

don't think how others feel about them

eat healthy

have a healthy way of living

live in a good environment

exercise regularly

has good self esteem

buff, not fat, nice figure

don't make fun of others if they are not as fit as they are (Freewriting, 9-24-96)

With the words of Khalilah, Dauntai, Alysa, and Nicole I invite you to join the five of us as we journey through narrative as a way of coming to know and understand our selves and others, and our places in society; through the eyes, ears, voices-- through the bodies--of four adolescent girls; girls who are confronted with having to interpret confounding cultural messages about health, physical activity, beauty, and body image, as well as gender, race, religion, and social class.

This is a also a personal journey that I choose to share. I hope you will allow the words to enter your hearts and minds. These words may come from within me, the voices of others, or you may once again hear and feel the words of your own experiences. These combined voices will help us better understand as they tell one story of how four adolescent girls and one researcher, together, interpreted and constructed the meanings of their bodies. As Coles (1989) so boldly claimed in the field of psychiatry, stories, "Their story, yours, mine--it's what we all carry with us on this trip we take, and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them" (p. 30).

Forming Relationships: Sharing Our Stories With Others

They slowly change from a mature green to multiple shades of yellow, orange, red, and pink. Beginning on the edge, the color feeds its way toward the center. It is only through subtle observation of changes in color that we begin to perceive their richness. It is collective diversity and richness of color that offers beauty and a deeper understanding....With the change in season, [my] views began to transform. Stories...lead to a deeper understanding of relationships. (Oliver & Bustle, 1997)

Setting: A beautiful autumn day in mid October, Room 125, Nicole, Dauntai, Alysa, and myself sat at a table, pencils and note cards in hand. Khalilah was on a field trip.

I wanted the group to do a freewriting exercise. I learned about this technique from a book I was reading about learning to listen to adolescent girls (Barbieri, 1995). The theme was "the body" and every sentence was to begin with "I'm afraid that..." We finished writing, all eyes were on me as they waited to hear what I might want them to do next. I found myself in an uncomfortable position. I wanted to begin a discussion about some of the things we were afraid of that relate to our bodies. I wanted Dauntai, Alysa, and Nicole to realize that they share many similar fears (I knew they did because of some of their journal entries), that they are not alone, and that the fears extend beyond adolescence as women too have their own fears about their bodies. Benmayor (1991) suggests that as participants share their stories out loud they begin to realize their circumstances are not "unique, accidental, or the product of their own errors or shortcomings" (p. 162). Further, I wanted to better understand what Nicole, Dauntai, and Alysa feared, what they worried about, and yet did we as a group know each other well enough to have this conversation? Was I comfortable guiding such a conversation, did I even want them to know what I was afraid of in terms of my own body? I did not know what to say, and so I began with something that made me uncomfortable about writing. I told them that sometimes when I do this kind of writing I write down things I do not want to tell anybody. Not realizing what I had just opened myself up to with that comment Nicole says "What do you mean...you write down things you don't want to tell anybody?"

This was really the first time that I was almost forced into sharing with these girls. Sure, I had told them stories about myself, but nothing this personal. I had two choices as I could see. The first was to bypass her comment and shift the conversation to their writing and away from mine, and as the researcher I had this power. Part of me certainly wanted to take this option. The second, and really the only option I felt I morally had, was to take the same risks I had asked them to take in their writing and conversation. If I was not willing to talk about what I was afraid of how could I expect them to talk about their own fears? I could not, and so I became part of their group, the part that talks about things related to their bodies, the worries, hopes, fears, questions.

I looked at Nicole first and then back to my note card. I could now relate to why Khalilah, in her first interview with me, held on so tightly to her paper. Something about having that card with the words already written made it a little easier, but only a little. I began.

Alright, the theme was the body, so I'm thinking of my own body, and I'm afraid of what I write sometimes um for example, I wrote down [pause] the first thing I wrote was I'm afraid that I will get fat [pause] and I don't want to feel that way. [pause] And I wrote I'm afraid that I will not be healthy because I sometimes don't eat right. And I don't want to do that. And I wrote [pause]... I'm afraid that I might not be able to exercise for the rest of my life--because that's such a big part of my life that if I can't do it I don't know I don't know what would happen to me. Um I'm afraid that I don't look right and then I think by whose standards, you know why should I have to feel that way? I'm afraid that I might make you all feel uncomfortable by asking you to talk about some of the things we talk about. [pause] I'm afraid that I might [pause] so I'm afraid of some of these things. I guess I don't want to say something to you that would make you feel bad about yourselves and that scares me [pause] because I remember what's its like to be your age....So I guess in a way I'm afraid of what we're doing because I'm afraid you might feel uncomfortable, does that make sense? [they all slowly shake their heads, yes]...I mean, I don't know how well you know one another, and here I come in out of nowhere and we're gonna talk about these things and that scared me. Because I don't know you well and you don't know me well and yet

you're telling me things and you're talking with me and I don't want to do anything to hurt you.

I could not take it back. No matter what we discussed in the future, Nicole, Dauntai, and Alysa would always know what I was afraid of, particularly in regards to the study. We talked a bit about whether they felt uncomfortable, they shook their heads no. And we talked about whether they felt that they could feel uncomfortable. Nicole responded, "probably not" while the others watched. And then with very few words said, their voices entered the conversation. One by one they read from their note cards, and this was the first time in five weeks Dauntai talked about how she felt. Until today, she had been a silent participator; observing, listening, agreeing with Nicole when I asked for her thoughts and feelings, but not willing to talk, not willing to let her voice be heard. Today, she too, like me, became part of the conversation, a part that speaks from the heart. Yet it was Nicole who began:

I'm afraid that I will get unhealthy one day. I'm afraid that I will not want to exercise because of laziness but I have to keep on going. I'm afraid that instead of people pickin' on fat people it would be me. I'm afraid that I will get fat and not not be a healthy person. I'm afraid that I will be a ter, that it will be a terrible thing if it would ever happen. I'm afraid that I don't do what I'm suppose to all the time and sometimes people get mad at me.

[pause]

Nicole finished, and looked at me. I smiled and asked "Does anybody else want to share?" [pause] You don't have to if you don't want to." Dauntai looked at her note card and started to read:

I'm afraid that I might become over weight, that I might become paralyzed, that I might go crazy, and that I might not do the right thing, I might hurt somebodies' feelings which I probably already have but I didn't mean to, and that a wild animal might bite me and give me rabies, and that I might injure myself badly.

With no words said, without skipping a beat, Alysa began where Dauntai ended:

I'm afraid that when I get older that I might get one of those little pot bellies things like where your stomach has that little pot thing. My mom has one because of having me and my sister and I broke her hip bone....she had surgery when she was a little kid and so she has one of these little stomachs and her bellybutton is like half there and half not its real weird, and I'm afraid of that happening. I'm afraid that sometime in the future I might get so fat that I end up becoming anorexic or bulimic, and if that happens then I could die sooner because of the illness or something.

I interrupted and asked, "So that if you get fat you will turn to anorexia or bulimia to get rid of it?" Alysa continued, "yeah cause its like I don't eat a lot and everybody in my neighborhood calls me anorexic and I know I'm not, and just sometimes I wonder that if I could ever become anorexic." Quietly I said, "I worry about that." She continued, "I'm afraid that I won't be able to lose weight like if I do get fat cause I won't have the energy to do anything."

Each of us had voiced some of our fears, and each of us talked in one way or another of fear of lack of control, and somehow not "being right" or "doing or saying the right thing." So where did we go from here, I wondered? What happened today transformed the group as I would learn later, for we became a group where no one's voice went unheard, I only wished Khalilah had been there.

Yet our conversation was not over yet. I wanted the girls to start thinking about other possible worlds, worlds that did not place so much emphasis on the way we "look," on our "bodies appearance," but also allowed for our voices, our thoughts, our feelings, our hopes, and our dreams. A world where we did not judge one another because of some standard that "someone" invented out of nowhere, a standard that few, in any, can meet, and those that do come close to meeting the standard, what price did they have to pay? Many of our past conversations and their journal entries centered around the way they look so this was not the only conversation that was driving me to want to help them find ways to look beyond. So I asked Nicole, Dauntai, and Alysa, "What do you think it would be like if when we talked about our bodies we couldn't see them? If we had to close our eyes, if there were never any mirrors so you didn't know what you

looked like, what do you think that would be like?" Dauntai responded immediately, "Terrible." "Terrible, how come?" I asked. "Cause cause um you can't see how to do your hair, or how to put on your makeup, or like if you um if your clothes look right." Dauntai's imagination was not allowing her to see what life could be like if we did not image our bodies in ways that focused solely on outer appearance.

I asked the group, "Do you think we would worry about those things if we couldn't see ourselves and if other people couldn't see us either?" Alysa joined in, "Well if other people couldn't see us no, but if they could see us and we couldn't see ourselves yeah." So I asked, "What if were all blind? Let's say we lived in a world where everybody was blind so we didn't look at people. What do you think that would be like?" With no hesitation, in a matter of fact tone, Alysa said, "No one would be like talking about other peoples' clothes, or shoes, or hairstyles, or any of that stuff, or if they wear too much make up, or not enough, or if they should if they shouldn't." Alysa, like the others, is learning what is valued, outer appearance, your hair, your clothes, your shoes, too much make up, not enough make-up. And yet Dauntai's response to my question was different, "I say it would be scary because you know, you would be doing everything like with just touch you know, can't see nothing, there wouldn't be no use for all this other stuff." Other stuff, I wondered what she meant. "Like what kind of stuff?" I asked. "Like TV and stuff, stuff that you use your eyes with."

Dauntai's response reminded me of a previous conversation we had the class before. I said, "And yet last time, Nicole you said that TV just feeds us a bunch of crap about the way we look or are suppose to look. So what if they, what if there couldn't be a television, what if they couldn't do that?" Alysa jumped back in, "Then everybody would probably be, everybody would be different you know, nobody would be sharing everybodies style or something cause everybody wouldn't be like hearing on TV like the same style and think they had be that way." Nicole continued, "I don't know, it would be weird, but nobody would, well, nobody would, people could wear the same clothes every day because nobody would be able to see um maybe they wouldn't no theirselves." "Hum do you think we would think about ourselves differently if we didn't

worry about what we looked like?" I asked. [Nicole shakes her head yes] I continued, "Do you think its just us that worries about it? Because a lot of things you write about I feel the same way and I'm quite a bit older than you are. I mean, I don't know if you ever thought grown ups feel that way." Alysa responded to my question. "I figure grown ups have already been through this and since they're old and mature they like, or well since they like, don't really care what they look like and what other people think."

The sad realization was that it is not something adolescents go through and then move on. It is more of their initiation into a culture that portrays women's bodies as objects (Pipher, 1994; Bordo, 1989; Wolf, 1991). And when adolescent girls begin adopting their culture's oppressive language (Vygotsky, 1978) and begin objectifying their bodies in ways that can potentially be destructive to their health, we call it "normal." I responded to Alysa,

Some of us do. And I think its because I think it's because some of the things I remember. When I was in junior high I remember dieting because my friends were. And so all I would eat for lunch would be a half of a grapefruit and a yogurt because I thought I was fat. And I wasn't very big, but everybody else thought they were fat, and everybody was dieting and so that's what I did too. And I still remember that. It doesn't go away all the time. And I'm wondering if it even has to happen. I'm wondering that if at your age there could be something that that makes it easier so you don't have to experience some of this. That you don't have to grow up feeling like that, cause I don't think anybody should have to feel that way. But...look at what we write. How do you think we could not feel that way? What do you think would help? [long pause]

Nicole responded, "Probably nothing."

The Map of Our Journey: A Responsive and Emerging Method

The setting: Traveling down the windy road, the trees almost at their peak autumn colors, I drove as I listened to the tape from the session before on my way to see the girls.

As the semester continued, the more I listened to what the girls were telling me, the more I realized I needed a way of representing what they were saying in ways that had spaces for

individual voices, collective voices, and yet still allowed for a bigger picture to emerge. Originally I had planned on using Brown & Gilligan's (1992) "Listener's Guide" for interpreting narrative as multiple readings allowed for multiple voices to be heard. And yet the guide just did not seem to fit our work. I did like, however, the notion of multiple voices, and this resonated with my need to have individual and collective spaces, as well as a space for the bigger picture. About half way through the semester as I was making the 45 minute drive to see the girls it hit me. These four girls were telling individual stories about their bodies; they were telling stories about their bodies in relation to others; and they were telling cultural body stories. And yet these three types of stories could not be separated as they operated like as a set of intertwined systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1970).

I realized that if I looked and listened to what they were telling me in three ways simultaneously that I would begin to hear multiple stories; stories that could not be separated if I was hoping to understand in more holistic ways. Lincoln (1996) reminds us that textual representations are always only "partial, incomplete, socially, culturally, historically, racially, and sexually located and can therefore never represent any truth except those truths which exhibit the same characteristics" (p. 10). What follows represents how I have read, listened, and written in three ways; ways that cannot be separated without losing the contextual meanings that emerge. I listened to how the girls experienced their bodies in culture, or body in culture; how they experienced their bodies in relation to others; and how they experienced their bodies as themselves. This listening has helped me to be able to better understand the dialectic between individuals and their cultures, and how this dialectic is socially constructed and revealed.

This understanding came about in part as I worked toward becoming responsive to what the girls were saying. In other words, it emerged due to my methods of interpretation. From the first day I met with the girls as a group I was seeking to understand from their perspectives. Most definitely I had an agenda, but my agenda quickly changed as I responded to my understanding of their views and to my judgments about ways to support their voices. The narratives that follow come from my way of understanding and listening to the voices of Khalilah, Dauntai, Alysa, and

Nicole. I was very consistent and very thorough throughout the "data collection" period. Obviously I started the conversation; but after the first day I tried to follow their leads based on my interpretations. I adhered to the following method from the first through the last day of my time with the girls.

1. I would participate in the group conversation, I always began each day revisiting what we ended with the time before. All conversations were audio-taped.

2. As I would drive home I listened to the 45 minute tape. I always heard more than what I heard during the actual conversation. I found myself paying close attention to the sounds of their voices as well as the content of the conversation.

3. When I got home, I would immediately go run with my friend Lynn Bustle, we always talked about some portion of the conversation I had just had with the girls. This forced me to articulate out loud to another person, I was interpreting in part through physical activity.

4. The same day I would transcribe the entire tape. Again, I would hear things that I missed in both the conversation and while listening to the tape. In addition to transcribing, I would read any journal entries and respond to the girls, and write fieldnotes or vignette's about what I was learning.

5. The following day I would read through the transcripts, their journals, and any other written artifact they had done, or I had written. By this time, the sounds of their voices were lodged away in my mind and I could hear the emotion and their voices as I read their words.

6. Based on everything above, I would make decisions about what to do next. I was trying to understand these four girls and the things I did not understand, or wanted to know more about, or seemed important to them, would become the topic for the next day. I always began with something from the previous day.

7. One time per week I would meet with one of my committee members for one hour and 30 minutes and talk through what I had done and where I was going. We would discuss some of the things that I was hearing and seeing, and discuss possible data collection options. I was constantly planning and replanning based on my interpretations.

8. On the weekends I would spend time re-reading transcripts, journals, and written artifacts over and over. I would write fieldnotes, journal entries, vignettes, and make notes all over creation.

I found this method very beneficial as I was interpreting constantly and taking that interpretation back with me each day to be validated, transformed, or rejected. Toward the end of the semester we were having a conversation about how adults "don't understand us teens." I was curious to know whether the girls thought I understood them, I was an adult after all, and if they felt I was listening to them. Below is part of that conversation. A conversation that validated for me, that they were aware of my efforts.

Alysa: That's the thing, adults are always sayin' like they know how it feels to be a teenager.

Nicole: No they don't!

Khalilah, Dauntai, & Alysa: NO THEY DON'T!

Dauntai: They knew how it feel in their time, but our time is different from them.

Kim:...Is there something I should include about that to help adults understand some of the things that you experience?

Nicole: They still don't understand because they don't experience it.

Kim: Do you think you have to experience something to understand it?

Nicole: YEP!

Kim: Can you explain that?

Nicole: Because, I mean, we could tell somebody about it all day long, but I mean, they might listen or whatever, but they still might say well you know, um you know how they say, they always say it wasn't like this in our time and all this stuff, and um you know they really, I mean they, I think they [adults] spend more time talkin' about us than trying to help us. [emphasis added]

Kim: How do you think they can help you?

Nicole: I don't really know.

Kim: Do you think I understand you at all?

Nicole: You might at some points.

Kim: Do you think that I listen?

Nicole: Yeah, you got to cause you have to listen to that tape.

Kim: Right but I can listen to that tape and still not listen. Do you think I listen to you?

Khalilah: YEP!

Nicole: Yeah, because, like if we have, you know like if we come here on Tuesday, on Thursday you come back and you and you, we can tell that you thought about what we said.

Kim: [quietly] How?

Nicole: Because, I mean, you have somethin' to say about it, and then you also go back to, you know, like

Khalilah: What we said earlier.

Nicole: When we first come in here we might talk about somethin' and then when we leave we might of been talkin' about something else. But like when you come in on Thursday we can tell you were listenin' because you still remember, we can tell you thought about it.

Kim: That makes me feel good.

Nicole: Why?

Kim: Because sometimes I wonder if you think I'm just here for whatever reason. Sometimes I wonder if you know how important this is to me. [long pause] I just wonder if you know that, or can imagine that. I'm glad you can tell that I listen.

It was times in our conversations like this that I felt most vulnerable to these four girls. No one could ever truly know just how important this journey was to, and for me, as it was not only about fulfilling a requirement for a degree. And so I had hoped that they could at least sense I was trying to understand what they had to say, and that I thought not only what they were telling me was valuable and important, but that they were important. The four narratives that follow tell the story of our research; what we discovered together and as individuals, the paths that helped us learn, and the roads we hope for. The journey is about our selves as individuals, our relationships with others, and the culture with which we all live.

Chapter 3

Fashion: Learning to Create and Desire an Image

Journeys, like the change in season, can often be misleading. A cool rainstorm that alleviates the heat of a summer day in mid August, or the warmth of a spring day in the dead of winter often leave those in its midst anticipating something other than what will be. Similarly, a road may appear safe at its juncture, but once taken becomes dangerous. The twists and sharp turns or often unseen potholes hold potential risk to those traveling down the road. Signs become important modes for interpretation, but one must first learn how to see and read the signs. Traveling blindly can be deadly.

Fashion; clothes, shoes, hair styles and products, make-up, things we adorn our "bodies" with to improve, cover, or show off our "appearance" and our "shape." On the surface, fashion merely includes the clothing styles "everybody" is wearing. But like body image, like adolescent girls, like cultural storylines and myths, there is far more that lies beneath the exterior surface. Fashion is one way Khalilah, Dauntai, Alysa, and Nicole experience their bodies in Western culture, in relation to others, and as them selves. If we hope to understand the deeper culturally layered meanings we must look inside these girls stories, and listen to these girls voices, as they speak from their hearts words that can help educators and researchers understand them better, and thus begin to create environments that may better meet their needs, and the needs of others similar to them. It is the interior layers that hold such importance to these girls, for herein lies their hopes, their fears, their dreams, and their worries. Without understanding the interior layers, all we have is surface knowledge. Yet it is the buried meanings that help us to understand, not just know, about the diverse lives of these four adolescent girls, the relationships they have and hope for, and the culture with which they live; and how their health may subsequently be affected.

Fashion is more than clothes and shoes, more than hair styles and "necessary" hair products, or the "right" amount of make-up for Khalilah, Dauntai, Alysa, and Nicole. Fashion represents one of the cultural codes, rules if you will, that set the backdrop for the lives of these four adolescent girls as they begin to develop into young women. Fashion is a dominate player as

they interpret and construct of the meanings of their bodies. Through fashion these girls are learning to create and desire a normalized "image" of a "perfect woman." An image they are beginning to embody through the continual layering of cultural stories of women's bodies with which they see, hear, tell, internalize, and eventually participate in. In part, fashion is helping tell these girls whether their bodies are "right" or "wrong," "normal" or "not normal."

With these thoughts as a preface I invite you to experience, through Alysa's, Nicole's, Dauntai's, and Khalilahs' eyes, one way they are constructing the meanings of their bodies, and how their interpretations may serve to empower and disempower them as they develop into young women. There will be many times these girls are in agreement, for at this age the fear of being "too different" often times silences individual voices (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). Other times their individual voices will speak loud and clear, voices that illuminate the dialectic between individuals and the socially constructed storylines of gender, race, religion, socio-economic, and peer status with which they participate. In understanding the girls' stories, you must first understand part of the process behind how these stories were constructed and revealed.

The setting: Room 125, a rectangular table, a tape player, a dozen different magazines ranging from Black Hairstyles to Shape, and five chairs, one empty for Alysa came late that day, a factor that became crucial later. This began what was to become a continual exploration; an exploration that not only helped the girls **name** some of the cultural codes with which they live by, but helped clarify many previous conversations, journal entries, and written artifacts, as well as provided a backdrop for future dialogue. This exploration also helped them find a language to express their thoughts and feelings in ways that later allowed us to become more critical of the storylines, and imagine what it could be like if we did not participate in some of these storylines. It is only after we can **name** the meanings of our experiences that we can begin to imagine alternative, and even preferred, possibilities (Greene, 1988).

I asked the girls to go through the magazines, cut out pictures that were of interest to them, and create categories for their pictures. As multiple forms of representation allow for different meanings to emerge (Eisner, 1993), and adolescence is the time when girls are being initiated into a

culture that places great importance on "womens' body image," thus as they begin participating in their cultures' oppressive language, they too become more concerned with their own body (Vygotsky, 1978; Erikson, 1968; Brown and Gilligan, 1992; Pipher, 1994), images seemed appropriate to use to help girls construct and reveal meanings about the body that might not be understood through written or verbal discourse. Most of the magazines were one's they had indicated earlier that they read, and a few were one's I included. I asked whether they wanted to create their own categories or work as a group. Khalilah responded immediately, "I want, I want to do it together. You all wanna do it together?" They were in agreement that it would be more fun to work as a group.

So Khalilah, Nicole, and Dauntai began flipping through magazines, talking and laughing as they cut pictures, consulting each other as they proceeded. They started forming categories not long after the process began. "Role Models" and "Beauty" were the first two categories, followed shortly by "Fashion Fair" which was broken into "Fashion In" and "Fashion Out." "Healthy Hair" came next, and was later incorporated into "Fashion Fair" as part of a criteria for being "Fashion In" or "Fashion Out." Khalilah and Nicole regularly asked for others' opinions on whether they should cut this or that picture, while Dauntai worked quietly, taking in the conversation, occasionally contributing to the dialogue. My job was to label the folders of the categories they created. This is how we began, what follows is what we learned, and thus, how they are beginning to interpret and construct the meanings of their bodies in culture, in relation to others, and as them selves.

The Story Behind "Fashion In" and "Fashion Out"

What started as three girls cutting out pictures in magazines soon became a space for them to use verbal language to express a visual part of their world as adolescent girls. We talked at length, and in great detail, about fashion and all its associated meanings. Little did we know at the time, but what they were telling me were their interpretations of cultural body stories of women. Each girl, in one way or another, was striving to become an ideal or perfect woman. And yet, this

ideal or perfection is being associated with an image, similar to an object, rather than a woman. Fashion is at the center of this "perfect" image for these four girls.

Dauntai, Nicole, Khalilah, and Alysa see themselves as being compared and judged by a set of criteria which is "modeled" through fashion, and those modeling the fashion become the "role models" that set the standard for perceived power, and create the images they call "normal." "Fashion In" and "Fashion Out" are the girls' terms; the interpretive codes they use to identify images of women deemed powerful, and thus "normal." The underlying criteria for the powerful image is "looking right." For Khalilah, Alysa, Nicole, and Dauntai looking right, as we will explore, means having "healthy hair," the "right clothes and shoes," the right "body shape," and "looking feminine," all of which they label a "normal appearance." A girl is considered "Fashion In" or "Fashion Out" depending on whether she meets or fails to meet the set criteria; regardless of race, religion, and social class.

Healthy Hair

"Healthy Hair" is the first criteria for the "image" associated with the "perfect woman," and is one of the criteria that determines whether a girl will be considered by her peers "Fashion In" or "Fashion Out." A woman with healthy hair is perceived by these girls to create an image of power. What I find a bit disturbing is that healthy is being described as only a "look," not a state of being. Among some of the "looks" associated with healthy, is hair that "looks" "conditioned," "shiny," "sparkly," "has no split ends," "no new growth that can be seen," and "is straight." Hair that is healthy is being perceived as something that can be created by purchasing and using certain products.

Nicole: Well see with us three [Dauntai, Khalilah, & Nicole] we get perms....you know how if you got a perm it makes your hair more straight....We get one [a perm] because this, [points to wavy part] you can see where it grew....So you have to get a new perm cause you got new growth....And you have to treat that with the perm too.

Kim: Oh, it makes your hair straight when you get a perm?...But what if you don't perm your hair?

Nicole & Dauntai: It looks a mess!

Khalilah: It gets all wrinkly and stuff....It look terrible!

Nicole: See your hair is not like ours.

Kim: Oh OK, so do does everybody perm their hair?

Khalilah: No, if you need it.

Nicole: No, if you cannot afford a perm. I mean some people's hair is just so, you know, it's not funny because they look like a doggy....and you know it makes their hair real thick...it just be coming down and it look like wool...It looks a mess.

Khalilah: You feel like just going out and buying um a perm. Ask um when their birthday is and go buy them a perm.

Nicole: You do!

The normalized "image" of the "perfect woman" has straight hair, regardless of what is natural to the individual person. And so if you are an African American or Indian girl with "wrinkly" or "woolly" hair, Dauntai, Nicole, and Khalilah will tell you that you had better change what is natural if you want to fit the image so you do not "look a mess." Khalilah, Nicole, and Dauntai know that their hair is "suppose to be straight" if they want to create the images of a young woman perceived as powerful. I never knew that perms straighten hair for some African American or Indian girls and women. I never knew we were suppose to have straight hair, but then I have straight hair so I never thought about it. Delpit (1995) suggests those who are like those with power are least likely to be aware, or willing to acknowledge this power, and those with less power are most aware of its existence.

These girls are learning that healthy is a "look" they can create. And yet the "look" is not natural for everyone, thus not necessarily a realistic image of "health" for some. I am left wondering what will happen if girls falsely learn that healthy is only a look, and further, one which can be purchased. I find the "suppose to's" that are spread throughout the girls' conversations interesting in regards to images perceived as powerful, and thus normal, and who can have the powerful images naturally, and who cannot. These "suppose to's" serve to empower some girls

and simultaneously disempower others. I also find it interesting that Alysa knows as little about some of these products that help a girl "look" the way she is "suppose to." But then again, Alysa, like me, has straight hair.

Kim: So what else makes your hair...healthy?

Nicole: Hot oil treatment....I mean it all depends on your hair.

Alysa: What does a hot oil treatment do?

Nicole: It just sets your hair....Like if you want a style in a certain way, like you know how some people just can't wear their hair down because, you know just like, well people with our [Nicole, Dauntai, & Khalilah] hair, you know, it just doesn't stay down like it's suppose to, so the hot oil treatment would help it to lay better.

For a girl to be "Fashion In," her hair needs to "look right" which means it needs to be "straight." So within this particular criteria, that is, "healthy hair," a girl's race and hair type contribute to whether she will be able to meet the criteria naturally or if she will need economic power to buy the image; an image they are calling "healthy." Nicole's comment, "It just doesn't stay down like it's suppose to" is an indication that she is learning what the "culture of power" (Delpit, 1995) calls "normal." And yet for her, Dauntai, and Khalilah, straight hair is a false normality.

False consciousness, "contains a false belief to the effect that some social phenomenon is a natural phenomenon....[or that] the particular interest of some subgroup is the general interest of the group as a whole" (Geuss, 1981, p. 14). This form of consciousness serves to support, stabilize, or legitimize certain kinds of social institutions or practices, many of which are unjust social practices, forms of domination and oppression. Thus if the powers to be are to maintain their power, it becomes important for all girls to embody the normalized "image" created by those in power as "right," and carry out the storyline through images they try to create with their bodies. What I find disturbing is that a woman is being portrayed as an "image" and not a person. Understanding the deeper meanings within these girls' stories; stories that may appear on the surface to some as idle adolescent chit chat, will help us see why it is so important to explore with

girls, ways of becoming aware and critical of these stories and images if we are to ever move beyond an oppression that has implications for girl's and women's health.

Clothes and Shoes

"Healthy hair" is only one part of being "Fashion In" however. The next criteria which will determine whether someone will be considered "Fashion In" or "Fashion Out" are clothes and shoes. What I find interesting is that Dauntai thinks that while people have "different opinions," if they dress the same they will usually think the same about "Fashion In" and "Fashion Out." Further, she can clearly articulate in words what happens to a girl if she is "Fashion Out," and she knows what is required to be "Fashion In," but she has a difficulty describing exactly what "Fashion Out" is, but she will know it if she "sees" it.

I can describe fashion in better than I can describe fashion out. The people in our group that I would consider to be fashion in are Nicole, Khalilah, and myself [Dauntai]. The reason being is because we wear name brand clothes, shoes. Also the way we wear our clothes....When a person is fashion out they will usually get talked about by other people to other people. Although it's not nice to talk about people it's something that just happen....Really I can't explain what fashion out is but I'll know it if I see it. Another type of fashion out can be like if a person wears...no name brand shoes. Some people might not be able to afford shoes that everybody else wear so they'll just have to settle for what they can get but some people get them because they want to. If mostly everybody wear name brand shoes like Reebok, Nike, Adidas and you wear P.F. Flyers, Chic, or another type of bo-bo shoe you will get talked about. People will say things like oh my gosh look at his/her shoes. Or she got on imitation Nike or whatever the shoe look like. Really I can't explain fashion-out but I can show what it look like....Although people have different opinions most people that dress the same way will think the same and consider the same thing as fashion out (Dauntai, written description of what happens if you are Fashion In or Fashion Out, 11-7-96).

The image of a girl who is "Fashion Out" has negative social consequences. Given the enormous pressure and desire adolescent girls have to "fit in" with their peers (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan et al, 1988; Pipher, 1994; Pipher, 1994; Rosenbaum, 1993), in order to maintain their relationships, the very systems of power they perceive as desirable will be the same systems that continue to oppress them (hooks, 1990). Being "talked about" is to be avoided if at all possible. Economic power becomes important if a girl is to avoid being talked about by others. Look again at Dauntai's words, "Although people have different opinions most people that dress the same way will think the same..." It is not whether girls who actually look the same through dress think the same, but they are expected to think the same. Normalizing the look may lead to normalizing ways of thinking, something necessary if the culture of power is to maintain their power (Freire, 1973).

There are specific criteria for the "right clothes or shoes" however, if a girl is to be "Fashion In." As we continue to explore "Fashion In," notice how their normalized image of a "perfect woman" is becoming increasingly more expensive. Look closely at Khalilah's rationalization of cost.

Kim: Now lets look at some of the pictures. There's a Nike shoe in here, how is that Fashion In?

All at the same time: Because it's name brand.

Nicole: Because it's Nike...Nike always be in.

Kim: What if it was Reebok, would that be in?

All of them: Yeah.

Kim: So is it any name?

Nicole: But not the \$29.99 pair of Reeboks.

Khalilah: It got to be at least \$50.

Nicole: I mean it also depends on the price.

Nicole: Just like when Jordan and all his shoes come out the Nikes everybody buy um cause they know they in. But they cost like a \$100.

Khalilah: Like the ones we got on too.

Kim: So what if you can't afford to pay for these, then you can't be in?

Khalilah: No it's different kinds of shoes and stuff, everybody wear Reebok Classics that in all the time, that's in every year.

The image of the "perfect woman" is adorned in name brand clothes and shoes that cost a certain amount of money. A girl can no longer naturally create the "ideal" image; she must have economic power if she will "look right." Reebok Classics do not sell for a price that falls within a level that "everyone" can afford. And while Khalilah may think that there are options for everyone, i.e., "Reebok Classics," that option is not attainable to all people. Thus if a girl does not come from a family that has economic buying power, she would be forced to find other means, or the images perceived as "normal" cannot be created. Lack of economic power eliminates a good number of girls from what the culture of power portrays as normal, and subsequently their bodies are becoming more like objects, or displays, to perpetuate the images deemed powerful in culture.

While name brand clothes and shoes that cost a certain amount of money are central to the criteria, and whether a girl will be "Fashion In" or "Fashion Out," there is more to the image. A girl must also "look" a certain way "in" these clothes.

Kim: Why is she fashionable?

Nicole: Because she look like a model, that look like something a model would wear....Because you know how when um people put on their clothes and they just look nice in them. I mean, see somebody can put on this dress and it wouldn't look like that on somebody else.

Khalilah: Umhum.

Nicole: I don't know, it's just something about how models put on their clothes. It makes them look like they have class...well they have, of course they have people to um fix their clothes like they're suppose to look. But when people buy the stuff it's not gonna really look like this on them unless they really know how its suppose to look. Cause I'm sure somebody is gettin' paid to make them look like this.

The image of the "perfect woman" also looks like a model; you know, the way you are "suppose to look." The models on TV and in magazines today are often computer manipulated

images, and thus create representations that are not, or cannot, ever be achieved by a girl unless she seriously jeopardizes her health (Pipher, 1994). And yet girls are looking to these images as the norm. While Nicole is able to identify that someone is "gettin' paid to make them look like this" she is not identifying with the groups these "images" are benefiting. With each additional criteria for "Fashion In" more girls who can model the "perfect" image are eliminated. Many of the cultural stories of women with which they are seeing and hearing do not center on how we function as human beings, but rather how girls and women can manipulate their bodies to create desirable visual images. The "look" is what they are learning is important. The time, energy, and money that is spent on creating these images takes away from pursuing other interests; interests that do exist as we will explore later. The next criteria for "Fashion In" has potentially devastating health effects for a girl if she begins to embody and desire the image.

Body Shape

One of salient features, and one of the most disabling and disempowering criteria for the desired image, is the shape of a girls' body. Body shape is a crucial factor in determining whether a girl will be considered "Fashion In" or "Fashion Out." Within this criteria we can see the social construction of gender, and the differences in race. A self-perceptive, self aware girl could acquire a sense of what is right and healthy for her unique body and have this feeling rejected by the "image" of the "norm." Thus what is biologically right for an individual and what is visually constructed as normal may not be the same. While the other criteria for the images perceived as powerful for women can be bought, such as "healthy hair" or the "right clothes and shoes," a girls shape cannot be purchased, but there may be other possibilities. Notice how Nicole's next passage tells us precisely what eliminates a girl from meeting the "Fashion In" image, and what these images are based from.

I knew a girl who was overweight who like to dress like all the rest of the young girls but there was a problem, she wasn't qualified to wear some of the belly shirts and short skirts like everyone else. Well some of the things people said about her wasn't nice. For one they said things like she is too big to wear that short skirt and anyway it's fashion out for her

because it's just not meant for her to wear it. Well what I'm trying to say is just because you are overweight and try to wear something like the other girls that are smaller than you it can be fashion out for the heavier person. If you look right and there's a certain style out that's a little exposing it would be fashion in. If you can't wear it then it's fashion out. I think heavier people have clothes that are fashion in, but they want to be like all of the other young people. (Nicole, 11-7-96, written description of what happens if you are fashion out)

Having the right hair, and the right clothes and shoes does not matter if a girl's body is not the "right" shape. Nicole speaks as if being "Fashion In" is something everyone can achieve, something not determined in part by a girl's body shape, but rather the clothes she chooses to wear. And yet she rejects her own interpretation on another occasion.

Nicole: [Fashion in] it also depends on if something looks right on you. Just because you look at other people and see practically the majority of all the people your age wearing a certain thing like baggy clothes, well baggy clothes might not look good on everybody. So you really have to see what looks best on you....Everybody can't wear what's Fashion In, because everybody, I mean you can wear it but it's not going to look right.

Dauntai: It's not gonna look right.

Nicole: Just like we were talking about heavier people wearing tights, Khalilah said their roles and stuff be all look like they're uncomfortable, and well, if like you, if you see two thin people wearing tights and it was "in" that would be Fashion In, but if you seen a heavier person wearing tights it would be Fashion Out because it's just not right.

Dauntai: It depends.

Nicole: It's not, I didn't mean to say that, but it's it's not that its not right, but it's it's not appropriate.

Dauntai: I think that...some big people look right in them [tights] and some people don't. But if you wear a big shirt it don't look that bad...they kinda hide your whatever, fat, or whatever you want to call it. They hide that [your fat] so you can't really see it that much.

The image of "perfect woman" does not have fat, or at least fat that shows, that others can see. And yet adolescence is the time when girls increase in weight and tend to appear "rounder" as their hips widen and fat develops in their breasts, thighs, and buttocks (Dubas & Peterson, 1993; Tanner, 1962). It is at this time, when girls experience bodily changes and become softer and rounder, their culture tells them thin is beautiful, even imperative (Pipher, 1994). Many of the fashions these girls are looking to do not hide a girls shape, but rather accentuate and/or expose a girls body. Fortunately for Khalilah, baggy clothes are one of the fashions that are "in." Khalilah's religious beliefs and practices require girls at the age of 10 to begin covering all but their face completely. Only their husband will see their "shape." Baggy clothes will not be in fashion forever, and they are not the only fashion that people who are "Fashion In" wear. Again, many places of their conversation they are beginning to talk about their bodies as objects. It is about creating an image that "looks" a certain way. Where is our appreciation for difference in look, and individual voices? They are not in cultural images of women.

Images of Femininity

While the images of women these girls are seeing are not images that portray an appreciation for difference and uniqueness, the girls are associating with the cultural storyline of femininity that underlies the image of their "perfect woman." This social construction of femininity is tied in with body shape if a girl is going to "look right." Notice how a lack of exposure to images of women with muscle can be potentially disempowering to girls health.

Kim: What do you think of her? [I pointed to a tall African American women dancer, you can see the muscles in her legs]

Alysa: That's sick...Too muscular....I just think women should be feminine...you know, not where you can see the muscle cause I think that's masculine.

Kim: Oh, so muscular is a masculine trait?

Alysa: No it's just seeing the muscle.

Kim: What does feminine look like?

Alysa: Just like you can have muscle but not really see a lot of it. You don't look fat you just don't have muscle.

Kim: I'm still curious Alysa, why you don't think it's OK for too much muscle to show.

Alysa: I don't know, I just think that men...everybody should have the muscle, but men should show it and women shouldn't.

Not only is muscle a sign of strength, but muscle is important to our metabolic functioning (Surgeon Generals Report, 1996). Women that "look" muscular are not perceived as feminine to Alysa. Weak is a feminine look, and yet a weak look may not necessarily be healthy, but it may serve as an avenue for domination and oppression (Bordo, 1989).

Yet "looking" feminine is also about how a girl acts. I asked the girls to write about how they experienced their bodies in a variety of different settings. Khalilah wanted to read what she wrote about how she experienced her body around boys. Notice femininity is a perceived means for being in relation with others, and what is required to "look" feminine.

Khalilah: I make sure I'm not loud and rude.

Kim: Loud and rude, what would loud and rude be?

Khalilah: Talkin' all loud sayin' stupid stuff, like some girls...they just say stuff and it sounds stupid....They think they sound cute but it it make them look ignorant.

Kim: OK, so things could make you look ignorant if you say the wrong thing? Is it important

Khalilah: And if you have a big mouth, always runnin' your mouth all the time. I don't know, just sayin' stupid stuff.

Kim: And this is only girls that do this?

Khalilah: I don't know, boys do it too.

Nicole: It's better for, it's always better for the boy to do that.

Khalilah: Than the girl.

Nicole: Because it looks better, I mean, the girl shouldn't act like that because...it's not feminine.

Khalilah: Like they have a big mouth always yelling out.

Nicole: How the girls...they just sit around and they be, they be, they have dirty mouths for one, most of the time, and they talk real loud, and they always telling something to somebody who was suppose to say they always gettin' trouble started. And that's unattractive.

A girl cannot be "loud and rude" and still create the image of the "perfect woman" because it would not "look" feminine. Furthermore, ignorance is a look, I was left wondering what intelligence looks like. Pretty, passive, and quiet is "feminine" (Bordo, 1989) so to create the image of the "perfect woman" would require a girl to give up, or lose, her voice. Image is a powerful source of knowing for these four girls. Not only are these girls using images as an interpretive frame for learning about their worlds, and specifically their bodies, they are accepting these visual images they see on face value. There needs to be ways to help girls become more critical of these images that are providing them with major sources of knowledge. As Bustle (1996) suggests, people need to be "literate in image." Particularly adolescent girls who are beginning to desire and embody the limited visual images portrayed, and subsequently perceived as powerful for women.

Looking "Right" and "Normal"

While the specific criteria for being "Fashion In" centered around healthy hair, clothes and shoes, body shape, and images of femininity, the underlying factor in determining whether the images are acceptable are whether a girl "looks right" and thus, is "normal." Notice how being normal is about "looking" a certain way. The conversation we had as I was trying to understand exactly what right and normal were offered an interesting twist in the road.

Nicole: Fashion Out is, I mean Fashion Out could be, I mean, somebody could be put in a Fashion Out category because they look weird. But that doesn't mean that your fashion is out, I mean, well it means that it's out and its really not out because everybody has a right to look the way they want to. But just because they don't look normal or whatever they are in Fashion Out.

Kim: OK. So normal, you've got to look normal not to be in Fashion Out? What's normal?

Nicole: You know, like what, like your hair is fixed like in a normal way and your clothes look decent.

Alysa: I think well it depends on who you are because when some people, if some people have round faces and some people have oval faces like um, like one person can like go with short hair if they have like a round face or something, but if they have an oval face they can have the exact same hairdo but it won't look right and that could be Fashion Out with that kind of face.

Kim: OK OK so you've gotta have a hairstyle that goes with the shape of your face?

Dauntai: Yeah...You gotta look right with short hair.

Again, these girls talk about the body as an object in which they control or manipulate to achieve a desired image; an image that needs to "look right" and "normal." Pipher (1994) suggests that the gap between girls sense of self and cultural prescriptions of what is "right" for females creates enormous problems. American culture "smacks girls on the head in early adolescence" (Pipher, 1994, p.23), for as they enter the larger structure of their culture the emphasis in which they are evaluated and judged shifts to their appearance. After several days of discussing what is right and what is normal, Nicole brought me a piece of paper with the following written passage. This was something Nicole wrote on her own, separate from any of the things I asked the girls to write about. Notice how she claims anyone can determine what is "right" but they do not get to determine whether it will be considered "normal."

I feel that being in fashion in is when you look right which is determined by you and look normal which is determined by people. I think fashion out is not in style doesn't look normal. If it's right depends on the person because some people like punk rockers think it's normal to wear their hair the way they do. Just because it's not normal people say it's fashion out because it's not a every day thing. People dress Fashion in everyday or try.
(Nicole, 11-20-96)

Normality is being given over to other people's perceptions of how you "look." Thus, those with the power to create the images deemed acceptable for girls and women will determine what looks "normal." Notice how these girls think they are setting the standards, when in actuality they may simply be unconsciously perpetuating standards set by others.

Kim: Who tells us what right is?

Alysa: Ourselves

Kim: Ourselves. OK who else?

Nicole: When you're brought up you're taught, most people teach their kids to be neat, and then you know, you listen to people talkin' about people and everyday about how their hair and stuff look, that just make you want to um, you know, feel like you should do everything right because, you know, if you're gonna put on eye-liner then if your taught to be neat or whatever, you wouldn't want it, it's not that it shouldn't be, you wouldn't want it to be smudged all up under you eyes.

Kim: OK, but is there a difference between what we think is right and what,

Nicole: Well normal and right well, you determine if something is right yourself, but normal is how people look at you every day.

Kim: OK, so what is right is determined by you, you determine right?

Nicole: Yeah.

Kim: And what is normal is how other people think of you? So other people, you could tell me if I'm normal or not?

Nicole: Yeah.

The girls believe they determine what is "right" but others determine what is "normal." And normal is being associated, in part, with the images they see of women through fashion. This puts an interesting twist into the story, for they can wear, or act, or look, the way they feel is "right," but they do not get to determine whether it looks "normal." Furthermore, to be "Fashion In" you must be both "right" and "normal," and yet they do not see that they really do not even get to determine what is "right" for if it does not go with what "others" say is "normal" then they are "Fashion Out."

Alysa, Nicole, Dauntai, and Khalilah are learning to create the desirable images that are considered "normal." And yet these images portray a girl as an object, rather than images that represent girls as whole people. Normal is becoming a "perfected look." Notice what these girls are beginning to learn about what is "right," and what deserves attention on their part.

Kim: So if you all determine what is right what are some things that you determine are right?

Nicole: Wearin' the right color lipstick.

Dauntai: Um, [pause] a hairstyle that fits you.

Nicole: If you look right with short or long hair. Cause some people don't look right with short hair and some people don't look right with long hair.

Alysa: Like some people wear make-up and they think it's right, but other people like me don't wear make-up cause I don't think I look right with make-up on.

Dauntai: Your style of clothes.

Nicole: Yeah. I say the colors you wear.

Nowhere are these girls associating looking right with behaviors, their associations are strictly with images. And while these girls are beginning to buy into many of the images of their culture, they are not objects, and this discrepancy between the storylines they are seeing and what they feel as whole people creates the space for resistance. A resistance that may be a struggle to save themselves from a culture that is not particularly kind to girls.

Resisting the Images of the Perfect Woman

The desire to create the powerful images labeled as "Fashion In" does not come without resistance, for the images of women these girls see daily do not necessarily allow for what is natural. Nor do these images always create spaces for empowering girls to develop into healthy women. Many times throughout this particular exploration I could see the girls resist the dominate storylines they were telling. Storylines that are teaching them to embody and desire a normalized "image" of a "perfect woman." Resisting perfection, perfection which is becoming associated with looking right and normal, may be a healthy resistance. A resistance that may serve to empower girls. Levine, Smolak, & Hayden (1994) suggest that perfectionist behaviors increase the risk of unhealthy weight management and eating disorders. Why would we want to teach girls to pursue perfection; and perfection in look as compared to perfection in other pursuits? The idea of perpetuating perfection alone should be questioned. Seeing where girls resist perfection in look may be helpful in finding ways to help them critically examine the cultural images, and the

associated storylines, they are reading in hopes of offering a wider view of what healthy women are, and can become.

Returning to Alysa's comment on how muscle does not look good on women because it is not "feminine" Nicole and Dauntai offer a view that challenges the stereotypical image of femininity. Notice how Nicole talks about muscle, and how she and Dauntai are both resisting storylines of gender construction. Yet also look at how Dauntai is resisting being normalized as she brings the desired "look" back to a personal choice.

Nicole: She's not too muscular, she's just firm, I think she's firm, she's not too muscular.

[Alysa is shaking her head no]...I think it all depends on your body. But I think that um women should, I mean, it's OK for women to look like she [the dancer] looks because it just um, it does give you a better definition on how you work on your body health and how you um work out and do whatever to get that way. But I don't think that that's more masculine if you look like that.

[Alysa is talking to me as Nicole begins talking to Dauntai.]

Nicole: Don't you think that it's OK to look like that [she says this to Dauntai], I mean she [Alysa]...thinks that muscles are masculine.

Dauntai: [says to whole group] I don't agree with her.

Kim: You don't what Dauntai?

Nicole: I don't either.

Dauntai: I don't agree with her [Alysa] cause she said that men should show, men don't necessarily have to show their muscles, I don't think so.

Kim: What do you think about women?

Dauntai: Women they don't have to necessarily not show their muscles. It's all, it depends, it depends upon you how you are, how you want to look like, and what looks best on you what you think looks best on you.

Dauntai and Nicole's resistance to a more oppressive construction of gender, both feminine and masculine, offered Alysa a potentially empowering and important perspective. A perspective that expands the images of both men and women. Muscle is something human beings need to

remain healthy (Surgeon Generals Report, 1996). Yet Dauntai is resisting more than the social construction of gender and being normalized in look. Recall her comment about body shape in relation to what a person can wear. "It depends...I think that...some big people look right in them [tights] and some people don't. But if you wear a big shirt it don't look that bad...they kinda hide your whatever, fat, or whatever you want to call it." Dauntai seems to also be resisting the "perfect" body shape that girls and women are bombarded with daily through the visual representations in TV, magazines, and billboards (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1982/1993; Harper & Marshall, 1991; Levine, Smolak, & Hayden, 1994; Nagel & Jones, 1992; Pipher, 1994; Wolf, 1991). Images that may disempower girls from developing into healthy women, for these images are often computer manipulated, and thus false representations (Pipher, 1994). While Dauntai says "big people" I am left wondering if "big" means obese or if "big" means a shape that is not within the narrow images portrayed for a "perfect woman."

The girls resistance to the images perceived as powerful for women goes beyond a resistance to the "look" however. "Fashion In" is perceived as imperative if these girls are to be in relationship with others, and yet some of them are simultaneously resisting the accompanying effects of "Fashion In." There is a real need for these girls to have relationships with other people, but the perceived power to attain the relationships hold many false promises. Some of these girls are learning the effects of "Fashion In" and they are not liking these associated effects.

Nicole: I don't know her so I can't call her that. I just know she look at me every day....She look at me every day like she got a problem that all. Lookin' at my clothes and I hate when girls do that.

Khalilah: Look at you up and down.

Kim: Why do you think they do that?

Khalilah: See if they dress better.

Nicole: A darker, I guess they like what they see.

Kim: What?

Nicole: They must like what they see.

Those who are "Fashion In" receive scrutinizing looks from others. Nicole models many of the criteria for being "Fashion In." Yet to be viewed as a display case does not leave much room for getting to know a who a person is, and is becoming; or even who they hope to become. Nicole writes about what she wishes her friends understood about her most. Jealousy enters the picture, as jealousy and can keep people from getting to know all that lies beneath the surface; beneath the image.

Well alot of people say they don't like me because I think I'm pretty, well maybe they don't like me because I really am, and they aren't! Well I am tired of silly people who always say I think I'm too good. Well they never have a chance to really get to know me. Because if they don't like me they are just gonna have to get over it. Because not in any shape or form do I mistreat anyone because I think I better, but some people just don't like you!

The images associated with power carry the price tag of jealousy. However, this jealousy is not limited to relationships with only girls, as the relationships with boys begin entering the scene.

Nicole: [Girls] like walk past you and say something about you...

Khalilah: Cause they jealous.

Nicole: They act like they, act like they sayin' something about somethin' else.

Dauntai: Like I wasn't talkin' about you, I was talkin' about somebody else.

Nicole: I was about to go off this morning though because, I don't know what it is, but I do not think Shantell likes me, cause of Diron.

Khalilah: Umhum.

These girls cannot win for if they are "Fashion Out" they get talked about by others, and if they are "Fashion In" they get talked about by others. There are more concerns however.

Nicole: Adults should understand us more because we're growin' up in a time much harder than they grew up. Because I mean...you have boys who try to take advantage of you. I mean it probably happened back then, but not as much as it happens now....My daddy always [she laughs], he always holler, well you know they only want one thing, and then um I be hearin' boys be talkin' like you know, they be like, they feel a girls head up and then they tellin' all these lies.

Khalilah: After they get it they gone. That's what they want.

Kim: What do they want?

Khalilah: Your body. [others laugh]

Nicole: Khalilah is silly, but it is not funny.

Kim: Why do you think that is?

Khalilah: Cause that what everybody do now. That's what all the older boys do, so they [younger boys] wanna be like them.

Kim: What do they do?

Dauntai: They have sex. Some boys take advantage of girls though cause like some of them girls they be they real easy and stuff, and they just don't care.

Alysa: Sometimes its probably just for popularity.

Khalilah: There's girls pregnant at our age.

Dauntai: Yep, its a whole lot of girls that's pregnant, too many, not at this school that I know of, but at Mallard there's whole lot of them.

The concerns these girls have are real, and many are frightening. Not only can listening to the stories adolescent girls tell about their bodies help us to better see, their stories will help those who are different from them to understand them better. Or as Dauntai wrote, "This group...gave me a chance...to tell an older person how younger people are because some older people don't understand and they act like they don't want to take the time to listen to what other younger people are like or what they think" (Journal entry, 11-26-96).

Dauntai's comment, "They [adults] act like they don't want to take the time to listen..." leaves me wondering about what can happen if we truly listen. Listening can be frightening for we may be forced to see parts of a world in which we have helped create that serve to benefit a select and limited population at the expense of many other populations. It is not comfortable when you wake up and realize that you are as much a cause of oppression as a potential way out. The sad realization that accompanies the girls story of "Fashion In" and "Fashion Out" is that the perceived powerful images Dauntai, Alysa, Nicole, and Khalilah are learning to create and desire require

them in part, to view their bodies as objects (Bordo, 1989) for other people's aesthetic viewing pleasure.

The image of the "perfect woman" continues to be perpetuated, as do all the associated effects. And while the "perfect woman" is a myth, her image is not. The Oxford English Dictionary defines myth as "A purely fictitious narrative usually involving supernatural persons, actions, events, and embodying some popular idea concerning natural or historical phenomena" (p. 1889). The "perfect woman" does not exist, but her "image" is becoming internalized within these four girls as somehow they continue to strive in one way or another to become this "perfect woman;" a woman no one can ever become for she is an object. "Fashion In" is the girls way of perpetuating the myth that a woman is an image. Adolescence is the initiation process whereby girls learn to create, and encourage others, to desire the "image" of the "perfect woman." What I wonder is why? "The oppressed have been destroyed precisely because their situation has reduced them to things....They cannot enter the struggle as objects in order to later become subjects" (Freire, 1973, p. 55). Said differently, girls cannot enter the struggles of adolescence as "images" to later become healthy women. The question will become, what are we as knowledge creators, educators, and members of society doing about it?

Chapter 4

Unveiling the Private: Journals, Individual Voices, Silenced Dialogues

The leaves fallen, the trees bare. It is cold, dark, sad. Everything seems dead, stripped down to nothing more than a shell. All that remains are pictures, transcripts, [and journals]---images and text. Everything has ended. I run the streets alone, no one to talk with [but myself]. My time with the girls no longer regular. Their words, the sounds of their voices, the images of their faces tucked safely away in my heart and mind. I'm left alone [with only my private conversation]. Even my faithful cat who sat on my lap as I would write has died. My words, like winter, cold, empty, colorless, lifeless. The process now moves forward through the difficult lonely phase. How do I best represent the voices of the four girls who have given me so much? What if I can't do it? How do I bring life back into the story? (Oliver & Bustle, 1997)

I had spent hours lingering through stores looking for "just the right journals" for Dauntai, Alysa, Khalilah, and Nicole. I wanted something that "looked" like the sense I had about these girls; a feeling I could not put into words, but I would know what I was looking for when I saw it. After several different attempts at finding the "right" journals I came across an entire display; I found what I wanted. Much of my decision about which journal to get whom came from the girls "Personal Maps" and the little I knew about them from the couple of times I had been in their class.

I had the girls do "Personal Maps" the first day we met together as a group. My intent with these maps was to see where they spent their time, what they did, and who they did things with. Hatch & Wisniewski (1995) suggest that understanding individual lives is central in the narrative research process. The "Personal Maps" was also a non-threatening way to ease into the project, and yet their maps would allow me to begin to understand a little about their lives. I asked them to draw a map that indicated the spaces in which they spent time during the day. I gave them an example of how in the morning I wake up in my home so the first place I would draw was my home. I asked them to label the places, telling me what they did in each space, how much time they spent there, and who was there. I gave them six different colors of paper to begin with. Each time

they changed spaces they were to change colors of paper. Later they would each talk me through their map explaining what they had drawn and written, filling in the gaps when necessary.

While the "Personal Maps" were helpful as I was selecting the girls' journals, I was still going more on a feeling than anything concrete I could name. I sat in the gym with Scott waiting for the students to come in. I had the journals for the girls in my hand as Khalilah and Alysa entered the gym first. As they came in I motioned for them to come to where I was, they were smiling as they walked toward me. I showed them the journals and told them that I had a difficult time choosing as I really did not know them well and it is hard to buy something for someone you really do not know. I had spent quite a bit of time selecting the journals as I wanted to get them something that reminded me of them. Alysa was the easiest as she told me she liked animals and in her "Personal Map" she talked often about playing in the backyard with her dogs. I got her a journal with three dogs in a basket. Khalilah was the most difficult, but I chose one covered in red rose buds. To me, red is a deep color, and there is a depth of meaning behind roses. Khalilah seemed like a young lady with a depth of character just waiting to come alive. She immediately said, "I like that one!" as she pointed to the one with rose buds. I was happy as that was the journal I chose for her. Alysa also went immediately to the journal with the dogs. Dauntai walked over not long after the other two and I asked her which journal she liked. She pointed to the one that I intended to be hers; a cat sitting on a windowsill, watching quietly. Dauntai is quiet, at least she had been thus far, and she had a very calming, yet attentive disposition. I chose a journal with a pasture of sunflowers and a blue sky for Nicole. Nicole sang in her community on a regular basis, usually through her church, and had mentioned liking flowers. To me, songs can brighten our world and sunflowers are bright. She too liked the one I selected for her.

My hope with these journals, was to have the girls document the times they noticed their bodies. I asked them to write about the times they noticed their bodies, what they were doing when they noticed their bodies, how they were feeling, and what they were thinking. It started that way, but very soon the journals became a space where I could respond to each girl as an individual, not just a member of the "group" with which we worked. As I wrote back and forth with Nicole,

Dauntai, Alysa, and Khalilah the conversation began to change. I did not realize until very close to the end of our time together just how much the conversation differed from our group conversations, and yet the issues in the journals were how these four girls personally experienced many of the issues that were raised in the group conversations. It was a private conversation however, and they wrote about things they would not always talk about in the group, or how they felt about some of the things we talked about in the group. In the group they would talk about "people our age" not always them as individuals. In their journals they spoke of themselves.

I too communicated differently in their journals than I did in the group. Within the journals there was no group hierarchy. Regardless of my efforts to have a group where every voice could be heard, and every girl could speak, there was still a hierarchy. Nicole dominated the conversation, and Khalilah was a close second. Dauntai listened, but when she spoke there was always a different tone, one which often forced us to think about what we were saying. Alysa however, was the most different of the group, and subsequently the one whose voice was most silenced. She did however speak, but quite often the others did not agree with her. I sensed it was different for her than for the others, but I felt unsure. What was interesting to me was that Alysa and Khalilah wrote the most in their journals, and I too wrote a lot in their journals. Both girls wrote about feelings that were associated with certain forms of oppression, yet Alysa asked questions in her journal. Dauntai spoke more in her journal than in the group, Nicole wrote but her entries were not as private as the other girls. Often, she would discuss what she wrote in her journal in the group conversation, however she did not always indicate to the group that these issues were things she was writing about in her journal. I did not fully realize what was happening as we wrote in these journals, but I realize now the true importance of being able to have a private conversation. Cooper (1991) suggests that "Students can use journal writing to facilitate finding a voice, a voice needed before any kind of dialogue can ever take place between them and their culture" (p. 109). These four girls were finding and speaking their voices in a way where these voices could be heard.

Their journals became the place where their voices could be heard on a different level, a level that could not be silenced in a group. Further, their journals allowed me to take what was being said privately, combine it with our group discussions, and use both conversations as we began to critically examine some of the issues and storylines, and imagine what it could be like if these things were not true, or if they were different. Journal writing serves as a form of self-reflection and self analysis. "Voices in the culture are constructed voices that mirror an integration on the individual voice and common cultural voices. Finding a place in the culture is finding one's constructed voice" (Cooper, 1991, p. 110). Yet they were not only sharing their "constructed voices" but they were also hearing my "constructed voice," and mine was different as they will tell you later. I questioned them, I asked them to try things, I answered questions as I knew them, and I encouraged them to write. My voice was far from passive in their journals, for my experience as a woman allows me to see things they cannot see yet, and subsequently can allow me to share some of that with them in hopes that they may become more aware of some of the things that can be potentially harmful. And yet they too could see things that I could not see, and were sharing their insights with me. Insights that have helped me to better understand some of the empowering and disempowering issues in girl's and women's lives, and how these issues may affect our health.

As with the change in seasons, so too comes the change in understanding and the level of seeing; seeing and hearing something different. As the leaves began to cover the ground, as winter approached, I began to better see what they were telling me, and what I was doing. I only wish I could have seen sooner what was happening in their journals, but there are seasons for a reason; and research has its own seasons. As leaves fall, they plant their seeds for spring. So too, can ideas and stories be planted for a later time, their stories and mine. What follows is part of the private conversation I had with Khalilah, Alysa, Dauntai, and Nicole. But there is also part of my conversation with myself, and with my interpretations of others' research, a part that has only blossomed because of thinking about what these four girls have said. This may read rough at times

for I did not consciously plan this, yet as I continued to respond to the concerns of four eighth grade girls, and as I struggled as a researcher to understand, it just happened.

Khalilah--Veiled From Others' Eyes: Yet a Clear Voice for Others' Listening Ears

"Pay attention to the times you notice or think about your body. 1) What are you doing during these times?; 2) What are you feeling?; 3) What are you thinking?" (My first comment in Khalilah's journal)

I am about to get in the shower. Every time I'm about to get in the shower I always notice my body. I usually think, maybe I need to loose some of this fat on my stomach. I think it looks nasty to have a big stomach. Some of my friends say, "Khalilah you don't eat, that's why you're skinny." but that's not why I just don't eat what I don't like to eat. So if my mother makes something for dinner I don't like I don't eat. A couple of weeks ago I never ate until dinner. When you don't eat for a while when you do eat your not hungry. My mother told me I needed to start eating because I was getting tired easy and weak. I don't eat in school because I don't like eating in front of people I don't really know. Well any ways I need to get back on the subject. Also I think what will people think if they had saw my stomach. It's not really big, I'm just not satisfied w/ it. I just got finish looking at my nose. This ear ring in my nose is messing up my skin and I don't like it. It's getting a ring around the spot my nose is pierced. My mother says I should take it out and let it heal. But I don't want to because it looks ugly. If I do let it heal I'm going to want to get pierced again but I don't think my mother will let me. So I'm going to wait a little bit longer and if it doesn't heal I'm going to let it heal and pierce it again. (Khalilah, Journal entry, 10-5-96)

Khalilah's first journal entry left me thinking about many different things. Why is it that eating in front of people is something to worry about? I know exactly what she is talking about, as I too have often felt the same way about eating in front of others. It is as if taking care of ourselves by nourishing and restoring used energy is not "proper" or is something to be "ashamed of."

Esson also (1995) noted this in her work with adolescent girls. She too found the girls in her study did not like to eat around others, particularly boys, because they felt embarrassed, they thought that

the boys would say, "oh God, look at that pig!" (Esson, 1995, p.1). When a biological function of living becomes a social phenomenon, as eating has seemed to become, issues begin to arise that might not otherwise. Third world countries do not have the same numbers of anorexic or bulimic cases that the United States have. I am left wondering whether eating disorders would be so prevalent in adolescent girls (Levine, Smolak, & Hayden, 1994; Nagel & Jones, 1992; Pipher, 1994; Steiner-Adair, 1990) if eating was considered a necessity, something everyone does to live, rather than a social function to be judged by others? Steiner-Adair (1990) has found that "girls who are unable to identify the societal values that are detrimental to their developmental needs, and who identify with the ideal image that is projected by these values, are at risk for developing eating disorders" (p. 172). Social value is placed on "body image," not valuable functions of living.

Concern with "body image--outer appearance" is noted by many (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Elkind, 1984; Godin & Shephard, 1986; Levine, Smolak, & Hayden, 1994; Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992; Pipher, 1994; and Rosenbaum, 1993) to be a major concern for adolescent girls. Clearly Khalilah's journal entry illustrates this concern. In Erikson's (1968) work on adolescent identity he wrote, "We cannot separate personal growth and communal change, nor can we separate...the identity crisis in individual life and contemporary crisis in historical development because the two help to define each other and are truly relative to each other" (p. 23). Thus, as girls begin joining the culture, they are immersed with images and ideals of young women, women whose bodies are not necessarily an "image" of stereotypical health (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Levine, Smolak, & Hayden, 1994; Nagel & Jones, 1992). And the images they are confronted with are certainly not without imperfections. It does not take much to see how some of these concerns can be held by young girls. We are teaching them the myth that the "perfect woman" is an "image." The question becomes, how and what can adults do to help adolescent girls become more critical of some of the cultural messages and images with which they hear and see? As I began to see what Khalilah was saying I could better respond. I wrote to Khalilah in her journal in response to her first entry. This was a bit awkward at first because it was early on and I did not really know her well, but she was telling me some things that I could not "just let pass" and so I wrote:

Dear Khalilah,

I would like you to try something, and see what happens. I want you to eat something healthy for breakfast like maybe some cereal, or toast and fruit, or a bagel and a piece of fruit, and then I want you to think about HOW your body feels that morning. For example, are you more tired or more awake in your morning classes? Do you feel like you have more energy or less energy say in PE? But think about how your body feels and write about it in your journal. You might need to do this at least 4 or 5 times to get use to paying attention to how your body feels. And I want you to do the same thing when you don't eat. Like if you don't eat lunch think about how your body is feeling that afternoon and write about it to me in your journal. Remember it will be really important if you are going to be able to notice how your body is feeling when you eat breakfast that you do it for awhile! :-)

Second thing, your mom is probably right about letting your nose heal! I don't know what happens when you take the ring out of your nose, but I have left earrings out of my ears for months and the holes never close. It might be different with your nose. You might ask your mother. Also what I have done when my ears got infected was to clean them with peroxide. It helped kill the infection.

Last thing (I hope you like orange pen as I have written a lot!) as you begin and continue developing your stomach will probably not be as flat. That is very normal. I don't know whether you have started your period yet or not, but if you have you may notice that your stomach gets a little bigger or kinda poochy a few days before your period and during. Again this is very normal. If you would like I can show you some different exercises to help your stomach become stronger and develop more muscle. As you develop muscle it becomes more firm. Let me know if you want me to show you some things. The other girls might want to know too so we could do it one day in class.

Thank you for writing to me in your journal. I hope you will keep writing to me!

Kim

Khalilah did not write again in her journal until the end of October, approximately four weeks later. Yet in that time she had taken out her nose ring, and told me that she tried the peroxide and it was healing. She also ate in class one morning when I brought in homemade rolls, however she insisted that the others eat too. She did not however, ask me to show her exercises to help tone her stomach muscles.

Khalilah had been on a field trip the day we did a freewriting exercise where the theme was "The Body" and every sentence was to begin with "I'm afraid that..." so I asked her to do this in her journal. The other girls were also writing in their journals. I had found that only Dauntai and Alysa would write at home. Nicole had written only once or twice, and Khalilah had started asking me to keep her journal as she was afraid someone would find it and read it. I began to give the girls a little time in class to read through their journals and write whatever they wanted or respond to what I had written. Occasionally I'd ask them to write about something specific, usually in relation to the group conversations we had. I also noticed that when they wrote at the beginning of the class they tended to have an easier time talking. I am not sure why, but it seemed that having something to look at, or given the time to think before we started talking was helpful. Even though they seldom, and some of them never, discussed their journal entries in the group, the other writing most of them did was often discussed publicly. I would always begin the day where we left off the previous day so it was a very consistent progression in our conversation. Khalilah's journal entry read:

I'm afraid that my stomach will get too big. I'm afraid that my whole body will get too big. I'm afraid that as I'm getting older I'm getting more ugly. I'm afraid that I'm not going to be able to accomplish what I want to. (Journal entry, 10-29-96)

When she finished I asked her to write about what she "hoped for." What I was beginning to see was when I asked the girls to write about the way they wished things were they were better able to articulate the way "things are." Edelsky (1994) suggests that part of educating *for* democracy includes looking at what people "hope." "Hope--something that comes from learning

about prior struggles against systems of domination, struggles that *did* have some effect (Edelsky, 1994, p. 254). Khalilah wrote:

I hope that my stomach will get smaller. I also hope that I will be able to accomplish what I want to. I hope that I will get prettier and prettier as the years pass on. My mother says that she thinks I'm pretty. I do sometimes and sometimes I don't. I get a lot of compliments from older and younger people. I think people will pay more attention to me if I didn't wear my scarf. Because when mostly boys walk past me they just glance at me and turn away but I think if they just look at me for a minute they will see that I'm very pretty. Girls do that too. Some girls don't like to hang around ugly girls because they might make the boys turn away from them. Some girls don't pay attention to me because I wear a scarf and I don't like that. Sometimes I just feel like taking my scarf off. When I do I think everyone will like me even the boys. I think I have a nice figure but I can't show it. In my religion the women are only allowed to show their figure to their husband. When I get around 17 or 18 I get to make my decision if I want to be a Muslim or not. I think I am still going to be one but I'm just not going to wear my scarf. I think I have very pretty hair and I would like to show it. (Journal entry, 10-29-96)

As I sat on my bedroom floor reading her journal later that day tears rolled down my cheeks. I found myself asking, as I have time and time again, why do we have to live in a culture that places so much emphasis on the way we look? Why does it seem that we have to "look right" before someone will listen to us or like us? Why does our literature on adolescent development make this sound "normal," when the sad reality is that this is a constructed oppression? What can we do as educators to help adolescent girls? I did not have comforting answers to my questions, only more questions. It just did not seem right for Khalilah to have to experience some of what she was writing about. Yet how was I to respond to her? How was I to respond in a way that did not perpetuate the emphasis on "body image?" What was I to say to this 13 year old girl? I thought about what she wrote the rest of the day, and every time I did there was a subtle ache in my heart. Here I was "doing research" and sure I could have just "listened" and never responded, but that is

not morally right for me. The next morning I wrote to Khalilah. I tried hard to respond to her concerns, in her language, and at the same time place the emphasis on voice rather than image. I wrote:

Dear Khalilah,

There is a lot I would like to talk with you about after reading this. Not all right now however. First, what is it you hope to accomplish and why are you afraid you won't be able to? From what I know about you I think you will be able to accomplish anything you want. One of the first things I noticed about you, and it is still my favorite part of you, is that you have something to say and you are not afraid to say what you think and how you feel. A lot of people your age won't do that. I admire you for being willing to say what you think is important. I hope you always will.

In response to some of the other things you wrote---I think people will notice you for many reasons. Remember we are much more than a pretty face or a nice shape, we are people. You smile at people all the time and that makes people feel good. You are funny, smart, and willing to speak. Let people notice YOU not just what you look like. Really beautiful people are much more than their looks. Many of them are the ones who want to accomplish something. You are one of those people! By the way, I think your scarf is neat! It is part of who YOU are and that is special because you are special!

Kim

The next day I was with them the first thing Khalilah asked, right in the middle of someone talking, was, "Did you read my journal?" I responded, "Yes." She continued, "Did you write anything?" I told her that I did, and asked if she would like to see it. She wanted the journal immediately, and after I gave it to her she got up from our table, went over to a corner to read. The rest of us continued our discussion and when she finished reading her journal she came back, sat down, and joined in the conversation. She never said anything about that journal entry, nor did she ever mention any of those concerns in the group conversation. Our private conversation took place solely through writing to each other. Two weeks later she wrote:

I hope to accomplish many things but my most important is to go to college and to become an accountant. After that I want to get a house and have a family. Also I would like to get a job at the age of 14 so that I can start to get things on my own. P.S. Some people call me Smiley because I smile all the time. (Journal entry, 11-11-96)

The following week I asked all four girls to write in their journals about, "What you think about in terms of your body when you are around your friends, around boys, by yourself, around your family, when you look in the mirror, and when you are moving" (11-14-96). Khalilah wrote:

When I'm around my friends or especially when I'm around girls I don't know I pay close attention to my body. I make sure my clothes are fixed right and my eyeliner is not smeared. And also make sure there are no burgers in my nose. That's one thing I can't stand. When I'm around boys I have to be perfect. [emphasis added] I have to make sure everything is right even my face expression. I make sure I'm not loud and rude. When I'm at home with my sisters or by myself I don't really care if my clothes are all twisted and if my make-up is smeared. No one's going to see me so I don't care. When I'm around my family I like to look neat and stuff but it doesn't really matter. They know how I really look and how neat I am. So!! When I look in the mirror I make faces to see which face looks best and I even model to see what I look like. When I'm moving when people are around I make sure my shirt doesn't come up when my hands are in the air. And also I see if I can see the print of my stomach through my shirt when I put my hands in the air. (Journal entry, 11-14-96)

After the girls finished writing Khalilah asked if she could read her journal out loud. This was the first time she had ever shared anything from her journal with the group. After she read we all discussed some of the issues, a discussion I will elaborate later. But once the group became involved the issues became more generalized, not as personalized. I responded to her journal entry later that evening. "Dear Khalilah, I am wondering, you said that what is most important to you is 'to go to college and to become an accountant.' When you are around boys do you ever talk about

what you want to do? What about girls, do you ever talk about what you want to do around them?"
(11-14-96)

I sometimes talk about what I want to do around boys. But the only thing we talk about is what kind of car we're going to get when we get older. When I'm around girls only once in awhile we talk about what we want to do. We talk about where we're going to live, how many children we're going to have ect. We have lots of fun doing this! (Journal entry 11-20-96)

I had asked the girls to go through their journals and to look at some of the things they had written about and then to write about "how they wished things could be." We had moved to a time in our group conversations where we were beginning to imagine what it would be like if things were different, and exploring alternative possibilities. Khalilah wrote:

I wish for many things. I wish that my stomach was flat. I also wish that I do go to college and become an accountant....I also wish that I have enough money to go shopping at the mall and get all the shoes and clothes I want. Later on I wish that I get married and have at least 2-3 children. (Khalilah, Journal entry, 11-21-96)

Dear Khalilah: Did you know that most young women don't have completely flat stomach's? When I was your age I remember hating my stomach because it wasn't completely flat. I really wish now someone had told me that a lot of girls and young women didn't have flat stomach's. You mentioned wanting to have children. You are changing size and shape now so you will be able to have children later. Part of that change includes your stomach and that should be something to appreciate.

I also hope you go to college. You are MUCH too bright not to continue your education. I would want you to be my accountant! (but you need that education!)

While we had discussed as a group what this experience of working together had been like for them, and I even asked them to write about it in their journals, for at this point I had come to realize what they were saying in their journals was a little different, I had not thought to ask what writing in the journal with me had been like. I went back after the first of the year, asked the girls

to all go back and read everything that was in their journals, and then write to me about what it had been like writing in their journals. In addition, I marked each of the entries that I was using in their stories so they could see what was going in our "book" as they called it. Khalilah wrote:

Some of these things I wrote in this journal I can't believe I wrote for someone to see that I didn't really know at first. I usually don't express what I have to say around grown-ups. I don't even tell my mother how I feel. She says I can tell her anything but I can't. In this journal I have expressed a lot of my feelings and said what I needed to say. I'm glad I said some of these things to get them off my chest. I wish I could do this more often. (Journal entry 1-28-97)

Alysa--A Struggle to be Heard: The Struggle to be Noticed

"Pay attention to the times you notice or think about your body. 1) What are you doing during these times?; 2) What are you feeling?; 3) What are you thinking?" (My first comment in Alysa's journal)

I think about my body (looks) all the time. Since I like wearing short shirts I'm always thinking about sucking in my stomach. During lunch, I usually eat a little chicken salad and drink a carton of milk. I normally don't eat breakfast, and eat a good dinner. I don't think about my health a whole lot because I figure as long as I'm healthy why worry! Sometimes I try to exercise but normally can't find the time. (Alysa, Journal entry, 10-4-96)

I found Alysa's first entry very interesting. Alysa thinks about her body in terms that objectify her (i.e., "looks"), and yet she is able to distinguish what it is about her body she thinks about. When I first read "(looks)" I thought to myself, here is a young girl who is objectifying her body and simultaneously showing that she knows that her body is more than just her "looks." I wanted to know more. In part, I was left wondering whether her choice and desire for certain fashions was why she felt she needed to suck in her stomach.

Dear Alysa,

You said that you think about how your body "looks" all the time. You said that you are always thinking about having to suck your stomach in. Why do you think you have to suck

in your stomach? I am also wondering, do you ever think about what your body "feels" like, not just looks like? For example, when you run around the yard playing with your dogs do you ever think about how you feel? Next time you are outside playing would you think about how your body feels and write about it in your journal? Thank you Alysa!

(Journal entry, 10-12-96)

Kim

Early on in the semester I wondered what might happen if these girls could begin to think about "how" they felt when they played. All four girls indicated that they did some type of physical activity during the day, which contradicts much of the literature on adolescent girls' physical activity patterns (Godin & Shephard, 1986; Prokhorov, Perry, Kelder, & Klepp, 1993; Sallis & McKenzie, 1991; Vertinsky, 1992). Yet these four girls considered the physical activities they did as play, not exercise. Exercise meant running around a track, doing sit-ups and push-ups. These types of activities they did not choose to do on their own. Play, what they did do, meant for example to Alysa, chasing her dogs in the back yard or throwing a ball with the dogs. As someone who values regular physical activity because of the associated feelings I get from exercise, I wondered whether these girls every thought about what it "felt like" when they were active.

"Today I thought about my body all day! The shirt I was wearing was making me look fat so I had to suck "it" in all day" (Alysa, Journal entry 10-8-96).

Dear Alysa,

When you think of yourself as fat is it because of your stomach? Is that why you "suck it in?" I am wondering, and this happens to me too so I know what you are talking about a little, why do you think your stomach has to be flat or thin? Or am I not understanding what you mean? (Journal entry, 10-12-96)

Kim

Dear Ms. Oliver,

I'm concerned about my health sometimes. I try to exercise but I'm not into it sometimes. I think it's because I don't like doing things like that by myself. I like having company to talk to because unless I'm talking, I'm not happy. (Journal entry, 10-12-96)

Alysa's journal entry reminded me of Brown & Gilligan (1992) and Barbieri's (1995) work with adolescent girls. They too found adolescent girls had a strong need to be in relationship with others in order to be happy. Yet I wanted to know what it was about talking that made Alysa happy.

Dear Alysa,

Two things I want to comment on. First, I also like having company when I exercise. I run with my friend Lynn and I don't like running nearly as much when she doesn't go. We talk about all sorts of things and it makes me happy when I run with her. Have you ever tried exercising with a friend, like maybe Paula or Katie? You know it doesn't have to be running. Did you know that running around in the backyard with your dogs is a form of exercise? Have you ever thought about playing keep away from your dogs with one of your friends? One more thing, what is it about talking that makes you happy? (Journal entry, no date)

Kim

I think I have to suck in my stomach to look better. When I'm running outside w/ my dogs I feel happy and like I'm losing weight. I think I'm fat because of my legs. There not so fat that I can't wear short-shorts but I don't like wearing just my bathing suit when I tan. My stomach, I admit, isn't that big, I mean, this summer, all I wore was shorts & my bikini top. I think my stomach needs to be flat because guys like skinny girls. Paula's Aunt lives w/ me so I play w/ her a lot. We'll throw the football and this weekend we played baseball w/ my sister & her friend. I like to talk because when I talk I'm noticed and when I don't, I'm not. When I'm talking and giving info to people, or just saying whatever, it just makes me happy. It's hard to explain. When I'm talking people know that I want to be around them. My dad told me you should always act like you have been

waiting all day to see the person your talking too. I try to do that, but sometimes it's hard. I want to know how I can have fun while doing physical fitness and exercising. (Journal entry, 10-15-96)

As I sat on my bedroom floor, the place I went to read the girls' journals and think about what they said, my cat always perched on my lap, I found myself grabbing for my own journal. In my journal I would often write my reactions to the girls' journal entries. I read and reread Alysa's words, and then I wrote. I did not write much, but I as I was writing I was thinking of Alysa, I was thinking of a 13 year old girl whose words spoke more than even she could realize. I looked down at my own words, my own reactions to Alysa, and those reactions were: "Somebody please hear my voice, hear what is important to me, hear my feelings, hear my thoughts, don't just look at my body, don't just judge me by my shape, by my clothes, by my hair, somebody please listen so I will be noticed for who I am." Those were my reactions to Alysa's journal. But was that what her voice was saying, or was that what my voice was saying? Or was that the voice of a woman trying desperately to get back her voice, the voice lost during adolescence? I am still left wondering.

As I still wonder about my reactions to her journal, I began to better see several issues simultaneously in Alysa's entries and how those issues connected with some of her freewriting. I have since gone back to some of Alysa's freewriting for she, unlike the others, seldom shared or talked about these issues in the group conversation. They too tended to be part of the private conversation. Two in particular I find interesting when juxtaposed and connected with her journal. At the beginning of the semester the first freewriting exercise the girls did in the group, the theme was "The Body" and every sentence was to begin with "Sometimes I wish..." Toward the end of the semester the theme was "The Perfect Woman." Alysa wrote:

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| The Body | The perfect woman... |
| Sometimes I wish... | Tall |
| I could be pretty | Skinny |
| I could be skinny | Pretty eyes, nose, mouth |
| I could be smart | Hair style fits her face |

| | |
|--|------------------|
| I could be popular | Nice clothes |
| I could be older | Nice to everyone |
| I had a boyfriend | No enemys |
| I didn't have a boyfriend | Not mean |
| I could win something | Good family |
| I could be perfect | Hard worker |
| I could get along w/ my mom | Gets good grades |
| I could get along w/ my dad & his family | (12-3-96) |
| I could get along w/ everyone | |
| (9-24-96) | |

Think back to "Fashion In" and "Fashion Out." Fashion is one of the cultural codes that tell these girls what is "right" and "normal" about their bodies. Rosenbaum (1993) suggests that because the body is often times viewed as a reflection of the self, and that as society continues to eroticize and transform women's bodies into sexual objects, adolescent girls, as they begin to develop into young women, find their bodies to be a major source of conflict. For Alysa, Dauntai, Nicole, and Khalilah, it is through fashion that part of this conflict takes place. Alysa feels fat because of what she wears. Short shirts and short shorts are considered "Fashion In" and Alysa likes to wear these types of clothes. And yet these articles of clothing make her "feel fat." Alysa is not fat. She is 5 feet 2 inches, wears a size 5-6 in jeans, and is approximately 115 pounds. Yet even this "size" does not fit the size of her idealized image of what a woman should be, an image that is partially constructed through fashion.

Alysa is not alone in her feelings of inadequacies, for many adolescent girls, and I would also say women, feel a sense of disappointment when their body does not fit the "image" of the "ideal" body (Gilligan, 1982/1993), an ideal that is continuing to grow further from healthy reality and toward a dangerous myth (Wolf, 1991). And as girls begin to act on behalf of what others are saying, (i.e., about being "Fashion In") even at the expense of themselves, they gain in socially desirable ways (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). As girls become more self-conscious, both in thinking

and feeling, there is more pressure from their peers to preserve the "norm," see things "the right way," or feel and think what "we" feel and think.

Early adolescence is a time of not only relying on peer relationships, but also a time when many pay particular attention to the ways in which adult women feel, think, and express their thoughts, name their relationships, and act the way they do (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). Many learn to give up, or give over, their version of reality to those who have the power to name experience, and the power to construct norms of right conduct. As the desire to connect with peers becomes greater, they seek approval denying their own knowledge and experience, thus entering a world of constant relational treachery. That is, a world full of fear of being "too different [from others], not pretty enough, not nice enough, subtle enough, smart enough" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 101). Thinking and feeling thus become conventional, as it is crucial to be able to take on different interpretations if girls are going to remain connected and stay in relationship (Gilligan et al, 1988). The stories these girls share become their ways of acting together. And it is the "popular" girls that model many of the "images," or repeat many of the stories, that others strive to achieve through their relationships in hopes of being noticed by others.

People, girls and boys, women and men alike, desire being noticed by others. Yet there are many different ways to be noticed. Alysa appears to be struggling with two ways; wanting to be heard and wanting to be looked at. Cultural codes help us identify and understand ways of being noticed. What seems internal to Alysa is "listen to me." Notice me for who I am. Alysa feels noticed when she is talking. She feels noticed for her voice, and voice is audio; she speaks her mind and heart. She feels noticed when she has the opportunity to say something to others, something that tells about who she is. When she talks she is an active agent in her world. Being noticed for what you have to say is powerful, and Alysa feels noticed when speaking, her voice is what she feels noticed for. People in power are the ones that can name the meanings of our experiences to ourselves and others (Greene, 1988). As long as Alysa can name the meanings of her own experiences she will remain an active agent in her world. The audio (voice) metaphor is active.

Yet the other way Alysa is wanting to be noticed for seems to contrast with being an active agent, and that is "look at me." Fashion helps create and send the message to adolescent girls, "look at me" because I am something aesthetically pleasing, I am pretty. "Stories are constructed by others, and then, taught and learned. But once internalized they shape the way life feels and looks" (Nussbaum, 1990, p. 287). Once the cultural message of "look at me" becomes internalized and important enough that girls and women feel like they need to "look right" before someone will notice them, our voices are at risk. Alysa thinks that to be noticed by boys she must first be "skinny." Yet it is talking that makes her feel noticed. If she moves from an audio (voice) metaphor, that of talking to be noticed, to a visual (image) metaphor, that of "look at me" to be noticed, the shift from an active agent of her world to passive participant who will be silenced, and thus can be controlled by others, can occur. Here is the power of culture.

Those who have had the power in the past (Erikson, 1968), have named the concern for "body image" as a "normal" part of adolescent identity development. Yet what if we looked at this concept not as a concern for "body image" but rather a shift toward "body as image?" The ramifications become different, for "body as image" can be stated another way, and that is, "body as object." Human beings, whether girls or boys, women or men, are NOT objects. Objects do not think, feel, and act. Would this concept be considered "normal" or would we begin to look closer at the cultural messages with which we all send? Look at Alysa's words. "Unless I'm talking I'm not happy....When I talk I'm noticed...when I'm talking it just makes me happy." Sharing her voice with others is what makes her happy. Now look at her freewriting, there is still an active component, and yet there is also a shift from active (audio) to visual (image). I am again left wondering, who serves to benefit if the shift from "listen to me" because I have something to say, to "look at me" because I am pretty (body as image) is considered "normal," and thus continues to be perpetuated? As long as the oppressed believe the storyline is normal our natural oppression continues (Freire, 1973). Being noticed for what she has to say as well as what she looks like can be liberating and debilitating at the same time. Thus learning to become critical of both the stories and images of women's bodies becomes necessary for these girls.

Body as image, what many call womens' body image, has become a social norm, and thus an interpretive framework for adolescent girls to judge both themselves and their peers (Rosenbaum, 1993). Many adolescent girls slowly adopt cultures ideas of "body image" and thus begin to "objectify" their bodies to be "looked at" by others (Pipher, 1994; Rosenbaum, 1993; Wolf, 1991), and in the process risk losing their voice. Look at Alysa's struggle to hold on to her voice, the voice that may give her power. She feels noticed when she is talking, and this makes her happy. Yet she is starting to think that in order to have the opportunity to be heard, she must first "look right." She is adopting her cultures oppressive language (Vygotsky, 1978). Looking right for Alysa means being skinny, and thus concern for body as image continues to grow, and subsequently so does the risk of her "losing her voice." Soon enough, if Alysa feels she does not look right, will she just stop speaking? When she speaks people will notice her, but will they listen if she does not "look right?" Here is the cultural oppression of silencing, for the image of "looking right" is growing further and further from reality (Wolf, 1991). I am left wondering what would happen if girls were given more opportunities to speak, more opportunities to develop and hold on to their voices.

I responded to Alysa's journal entry.

Dear Alysa,

To answer your question about how you can have fun exercising: Because I'm not really sure what you think is fun this is hard for me to answer. Why don't you think about some of the activities that require you to move around a lot that you think are fun. For example, running outside with your dogs, throwing a football or playing baseball are also activities--but you need to be doing them and not standing and watching. To me exercising is the most fun when I do it with a friend. Maybe you and Paula can play football or go for a walk and talk, or make up a dance or go skating or chase your dogs. We can talk about these things in the group if you want??

How do you know guys like skinny girls?

At your age it is natural to gain some weight because your body is changing. I know it can be hard especially if you are growing fast. If playing outside w/ your dogs makes you happy than keep doing that. I am sure they love it as much as you! If you try to make sure you play most days of the week, something that gets you moving and maybe sweating a bit, you will be doing one thing that helps you stay healthy. (Journal entry, 10-15-96)

Kim

Dear Alysa,

Write to me about what is important to you. What do you want to do when you get older-- you mentioned wanting to be a lawyer, why?

When I grow up I want to be a lawyer because I like helping people and love to argue! Also because I want to be able to support myself when I move out of my mom's house.

Lawyers make alot of money and I'll be able to buy my own house, car, and help my mom out, if she needs it. Also because I want to be a lawyer I'll go to VT and won't have to pay as much since its in state. (Alysa, Journal entry, no date)

Dear Alysa,

I'm glad you feel it is important to be able to take care of yourself! I am curious to know what you enjoy arguing about and why?

Also, and this is on a different subject, you have mentioned several different times [in the group] that you do not think a woman "looks feminine" if she has muscle showing. This concerns me for several reasons. First and most importantly, you **NEED** muscle! One of the things muscle does is increase the rate your body burns the calories from food you eat (your metabolism) What helps you maintain a healthy weight is being able to burn calories from the food you eat (**AND YOU NEED TO EAT!**) By believing that it is not good to develop muscle makes its very hard for you to be able to care for yourself in ways that are important now and will be in the future. Muscle is not ugly. I want you to think about something. In the past certain things have been called feminine and certain things have been

called masculine. (this happens today but it's not as bad) I believe that boys, girls, men, and women should be able to do what they want and it not be labeled right or wrong depending on their gender. I hope you will think about it being OK for girls and women to have muscle that shows. It is more than OK, it's more than beautiful, it is necessary! The ideas behind feminine and masculine can hurt you and keep you from becoming healthy and doing what you want if you do not start to ask questions. (Journal entry, no date)

Kim

Alysa did not respond in writing to what I wrote about in regards to some of the benefits of muscles. But one day when we were discussing as a group some of the benefits of muscle Alysa picked up her journal and read the part about metabolism to the group. She did however comment on the other things I wrote.

I like to argue about everything. I don't know why I just think it's fun. I guess it's because I like watching how people can change their expressions and attitudes. With some people it's because I know I can win. I think girls should have muscle, I just don't think they should have an over whelming muscle figure, like with body builders. I was watching Rikki Lake once and it had body building women on it and I saw it and got grossed out. (Journal entry, 11-4-96)

I asked all four girls to write in their journals about, "What you think about in terms of your body when you are around your friends, around boys, by yourself, around your family, when you look in the mirror, and when you are moving" (11-14-96). Alysa wrote:

Girls--When I'm around other girls sometimes if we're just sitting around talking, I sit up real straight so my stomach looks skinnier. If it's like a sleep over I really don't pay attention to it.

Boys--When I'm around boys at school I wonder if they think I'm fat, but when I'm around guys at home I just wear big shirts to hide my stomach.

Alone--I don't pay any attention to my appearance.

Family--When I'm around my dad's family I try to look as skinny & pretty as I can because their all skiny & pretty & my step brother is kinda cute. Around my family, I just ride it.

Mirror--I get kind of depressed when I look in the mirror because I always see myself as fat.

Moving--If I'm having fun I forget about my appearance. When I'm not having fun I think about it. (Journal entry, 11-14-96)

Dear Alysa,

You are **not** fat! Your body--you are changing from a little girl shape to a young woman shape. Little girls look different than young ladies. Change can be scary! I wonder how you would feel if you thought about this change as exciting & neat & wonderful?

In response to when you are at your Dad's. You said you try to look as skinny and pretty as you can because they are all skinny and pretty. You are a WONDERFUL PERSON and I have only known you for a semester. You are sooo much more than a "skinny body" or a "pretty face" you are a whole person, you have things you like to do & want to do. It becomes so hard when you start comparing yourself to others, especially how you look. (I still do it sometimes & I wish I didn't) I wish I knew what to do and what to say to help people your age realize the importance of becoming a whole person and not just "a certain look." What could help you understand how very special you as a whole person are?

While Alysa had been willing to discuss "how much muscle was appropriate for girls and women to have" in our group, she never spoke of the other issues she wrote about. Those were between me and her, the private conversation. Later, I had asked the girls to go through their journals and to look at some of the things they had written about and then to write about "how they wished things could be." Again, I was interested in hearing more about "how things are," or the systems of domination with which have had effects on these girls lives (Edelsky, 1994), as well as hoping the girls could begin to look beyond some of the things they were writing about that they

would not discuss publicly, and imagine alternative or preferred possibilities (Greene, 1995), to add to the collection of stories they already were telling. Alysa wrote:

I wish that life wasn't so hard. I wish that we didn't have so many responsibilities. I wish I didn't have to grow up so fast. I wish stuff wasn't confusing. I wish that it was easy to take care of your body & health and looks. I wish the world was a better place to live. I wish people weren't so mean. I wish that life was fair. I wish that my dad didn't marry his wife. I wish my dad would have married someone nice. I wish I can have a family, children, and a happy life. I wish I can go to college. (Journal entry, 11-21-96)

"Dear Alysa, You said you wished it was easy to take care of you body, health, and looks. Can you explain what you mean to me? Why is it that you think you are fat? Do you know?"

I guess I'm not as fat as I think I am. If I was, the people in my neighborhood wouldn't tell me I needed to eat more. One guy in my neighborhood told me I was anorexic and if I didn't eat more than normal he was going to stick a cookie in my mouth and make me eat it. I got some cookies and ate. Then took the last one, and threw it at him. The reason I don't think I'm fat anymore is because I talked to my mom and she said that big bones and muscles run in the family. My dad has big bones and my mom had muscles. With the woman and muscle thing, its OK to have muscles, like I have muscles in my legs, but showing alot of muscle is something guys should do to impress us with their strength. (Journal entry, 11-29-96)

Dear Alysa:

I don't think you have big bones. You are not a big person. Some people develop bigger muscles than others....Let me tell you a secret, muscles don't impress me on guys, good people impress me. Not all guys have big muscles just like most girls don't look like the girls and women in magazines.

I asked Alysa, and the others, to reread everything in their journals, and write about how they felt about writing in the journals with me. Alysa wrote: "I like writing in our journals because if I don't want to talk about something I can write it" (Journal entry, 1-28-97).

Dauntai--A Voice From The Underground

"Pay attention to the times you notice or think about your body. 1) What are you doing during these times?; 2) What are you feeling?; 3) What are you thinking?" (My first comment in Dauntai's journal)

Dauntai was not writing, nor was she saying too much in the group. I wrote again in her journal. "Dear Dauntai: Will you help me to understand what concerns you about your body? What do you worry about? What do you hope? What do you wish you could learn more about? How can adults help? Will you help me to understand some of these things? Please? Thank you Dauntai, Kim" (Journal entry, 10-12-96).

Dear Kim, The concerns that I have about my body are things like how I look in a certain shirt or pair of jeans or dress. Although these are just little things I worry about bigger things too. I worry about my hygiene and cleanliness. If I have bad breathe. I like to make sure that I am clean and don't have a body odor because I want to make a good impression on people and especially when I meet someone for the first time because of the saying that first impressions always stick. Most of the time I like too look nice and have my hair done but on other days I don't care and I just come [comb] my hair down or fix it in a quick hairstyle. If I get sick I probably won't do my hair that day either. But on days that I go out to the mall or somewhere special or if I'm going to see somebody or if somebody is coming to see me depending on who the person is I will do my hair and have on nice clothes. When some people come see me I don't care what I look like I'll just wear my around the house clothes. (Journal entry, 10-25-96)

Dauntai

"Dear Dauntai, I am interested in knowing who the people are that you like "looking nice for" and who the people are that you don't care how you look are. (Not names, but are they friends, family, girls, boys?) Kim" (Journal entry, 10-25-96).

Dear Kim,

The people who I like looking nice for are boys. Not all boys do I care about how I look but the majority of them I care about if I look right. Boys that I find attractive or boys that are cute. On the other hand boys that I'm just cool with or know very well don't care how I look. For example some of my male friends I call my brothers, so the way I see it is that if they my brother they shouldn't care how I look and I shouldn't either. I treat them as if they were my real brother and I don't care if he see me looking messed up. My family and friends that are girls I don't care how I look because my family shouldn't care how I look when we just in the house but I could understand them wanting me to look nice if we go out somewhere in public cause I would too. But the girls shouldn't care how I look unless they are embarrassed to be with me in public looking a mess. I wouldn't blame them cause I would be embarrassed of myself. But if we just at one of our house I really don't care cause I walk straight not crooked. Well I guess that's it. (Journal entry, no date)

Dauntai

Dear Dauntai,

You said that you don't care if you "look right" around some people. What does it mean to "look right" and how do you know?

I have a question and I would like for you to think about it. You said that you believe it is OK not to "look right" (whatever that means) around people, or boys that are your friends. I think this is wonderful!...My question is, do you want "cute boys" or boys you think are "attractive" to be interested in YOU as a whole person or do you want them to only be interested in "how you look?" You are far too wonderful of a person to only be seen for what you look like. What you think, what you feel, what you say, and what you hope to do are very important. Please remember that Dauntai! (Journal entry, no date)

Kim

Dear Kim

What it means to look right is that you present yourself nicely. It also can mean to be presentable. You know when you look right because your clothes are fixed nice, they don't have wrinkles, they are clean and if your shirt is tucked in it's not hanging all out your pants, skirt, or shorts or whatever you maybe wearing. Also you hair is not all over your head. Your hair should be combed if you have short hair and uncurled just comb it down if your hair is curled try to make sure you don't have pieces uncurled. You know where you look right because you feel nice most of the time. Just cause you think you look right doesn't mean that everyone else has to think you look right. (Journal entry, no date)

Dauntai

Looking right has an associated feeling for Dauntai. She knows she looks right because she "feels nice." Her knowledge comes from something internal, her feelings. Belenky and her co-authors (1986) suggest that this way of knowing is a "subjective knowledge." Subjective knowledge is when girls or women view truth and knowledge as personal, private, and subjectively known--intuited.

Kim,

To answer your question, yes I do want cute boys or boys that I find attractive to be interested in me as a whole person and not just how I look because my inside is just as pretty as my outside may be. Before anybody judges me by how I look they should get to know me just to see how I really am then that's when they can judge me. I think that it's okay to be interested in a person how they look but only before you get to know them because the most important thing is how you are on the inside and that's what people seem to forget. If you just are interested in a person for what they look like when you get to know them you might not like the person anymore and that can hurt their feelings if they really like you a lot. And another problem is is that people seem to forget about people who

don't look as nice as they want and that can also hurt a person's feelings because you didn't get to know that person because you judged them by how they look.

Dauntai (Journal entry, no date)

These words made me think of something else she wrote on the very first day I ever saw anything of Dauntai's. This was the day I began the selection process for my study. I had three different physical education/health classes do a freewriting exercise where the theme was "someone in good shape." Part of Dauntai's freewriting was as follows:

Someone in good shape...

looks healthy

feels healthy

don't think how others feel about them

eat healthy

have a good way of living

live in a good environment

She wrote more but this is what captured my attention immediately, and was part of the reason why I decided to go with four girls and not three as originally planned. I had already had three girls in mind when I came across Dauntai's paper. Dauntai's comment "live in a good environment" was so powerful to me that I would redesign my study to include a fourth girl, a girl whose voice I was dying to hear more of. Dauntai's voice, to me, is a subtle cry for creating a good environment for people to live. As Dewey (1922) claimed many years ago, we can only grow to be as good as the environment with which we live. And look at what she writes in her journal. "Before anybody judges me by how I look they should get to know me just to see how I really am then that's when they can judge me....the most important thing is how you are on the inside and that's what people seem to forget." What Dauntai has to say is what seems to be important to her in terms of being noticed, for only after you know someone can you make judgments about a person. Sadly, that is not the type of environment these girls are describing.

And this is a young person who has spent the majority of the time in the group listening to others' voices. She knows that people "talk about other people," about what others' look like, and she too openly admits to talking about other people. And yet, the private conversation speaks to her spirit as a caring human being who not only is concerned about the feelings of others, but who also respects herself, and understands the need for living in a "good environment." She has not been willing to "give up" her voice for others, contrary to what many claim happens to adolescent girls (Brown & Gilligan; Gilligan et al, 1990), and yet she has taken her voice "underground" as it is spoken only privately through writing. Thus something so beautiful, so precious, and so very powerful is once again silenced.

I had wished many times over the course of the semester that she would have spoken more, for I knew what she was saying in private, and I knew how valuable it could be for others to hear her voice. To hear a voice that says the most important thing is "how you are on the inside and that's what people forget." But she would not often speak, and when she did, much of what she had to say was challenging the dominate storylines that the other three girls, and at times she too, were telling. I can certainly understand why she was not too willing to speak, it is difficult to challenge dominate discourse, and even more so as an adolescence girl trying to stay in relationship with others. Not only are people far too often not willing to listen to something different, but they do not know how to hear to something different. Hearing the difference would require a level of self reflection that could alter one's comfortably created world (Garrison, 1997). And as I have learned time and time again, as I struggle to grow personally and professionally, altering one's world can be frightening and extremely uncomfortable. Yet if we are to grow we must be able to also change.

I understand Dauntai's unwillingness to speak publicly for very different reasons, yet reasons that speak of silencing. In my "environment" at this time, I too feel I can only speak through writing, and often times writing only between the lines. Many of the ways I think about physical education do not fall within the parameters of the dominate discourse; but rather lie in the margins. "What does your work have to do with physical education?" This question has been

posed to me several times, by different people. And to me the answer is very simple, "What does it not have to do with physical education." But it was Dauntai's comment about "needing to live in a good environment" if we hope to "be in good shape," that helped me to better articulate exactly why I thought my work was indeed important within physical education. If we hope to ever have a world where people are "healthy" or are "physically active for a lifetime," than we, all of us, need to start creating more healthy environments for people to live. Environments that are not created to benefit primarily those within the culture of power. Environments that do not portray women's bodies as objects to be "looked at" by others. Environments that do not encourage young girls to believe they must be skinny before they will be noticed and heard. Environments that do not send strong messages that if you eat you will get "fat." Environments that do strongly associate health as an unrealistic image. Environments that do not marginalize and ignore girls as learners and people. And if we cannot, or are unwilling to create these environments, than someone needs to start helping adolescent girls learn how to see, name, and become critical of the detrimental images and stories we all show and tell about their bodies, and not just write "about them." Stories and images that have the potential to prevent them from ever being healthy people.

Part of this effort demands that we better understand how to educate the "whole" person. To understand the whole person requires us to understand the voices as well as the bodies of the students we teach (body-narratives), the relationships they have and hope for, and the cultures with which they live. We need to be able to see inside their worlds, not only what appears on the surface. "We educators set out to teach, but how can we reach the worlds of others when we don't even know they exist?" (Delpit, 1995, p. xiv) Girls have been silenced for so long, omitted until recently from the literature on adolescence development (Barbieri, 1995; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan et al, 1990; Rosenbaum, 1993; Pipher, 1994). And to date, girls that are not white or do not come from privileged homes are still an absent presence. There are many voices that make up the "silenced dialogue" (Delpit, 1995) that need to be heard if we hope to create healthier environments in our schools, and in our societies.

Dauntai,

"What do you think about in terms of your body when you are around your friends, around boys, by yourself, around your family, when you look in the mirror, and when you are moving" (Kim, Journal entry, 11-14-96).

When I look in the mirror I just see my face because I don't have one where I can see my whole body. But anyway when I see my face I observe things that are different or things that stay the same. One of the things I might notice is how clean my face is. I look to see if bumps have appeared or disappeared if I have scars on my face and things like that. I also try to notice my eyes because people tell me they change colors and I want to find out for myself because I don't think my eyes change color I think it's just the amount of light and how it hits my eyes. This can be things that I notice when I'm by myself. When I'm around girls I wonder how they look at me whether they are my friends, people I know, or just girls. What I mean by look at me is like do they think I'm all that because of what I look like what complexion I am. I question this because girls like to think or say that light skin girls are stuck-up, think they all that, think they cute and think they too good for everybody else and things like that. But I really have no need to worry because I'm not like any of those things and I think that that comes out of jealousy.

Again, look at her words, "I try to notice my eyes because people tell me they change colors and I want to find out for myself because I don't think my eyes change color." She is not willing to take on someone's opinion before she finds out for herself, and she has her own explanation. Dauntai and I talked a little bit one day while the other girls were writing about how certain colors of clothes can often make your eyes look different. What Dauntai knows is more important than what others tell her. Yes, she listens to others, but must first "find out for herself." And at the very same time, she wonders what girls think of her because of the color of her skin. She has heard and tells the storylines of difference in skin color, storylines I do not understand, but am learning about from these girls. But once again, she questions these storylines because she "is not like that," regardless of the color of her skin. She is not willing to blindly adopt the cultural message that says light skinned girls are better. She has her own explanation, "I think that that

comes out of jealousy." Yet she will not let others hear her voice, she will not let others know that she is challenging them, her knowledge, as Brown & Gilligan (1992) found with their work with adolescent girls, is taken "underground." But what if that knowledge, that beautiful voice, never comes up, will it die? I hope not. Why should her voice have to go unspoken just because it is different from the "norm?" It should not.

I wrote to Dauntai, "What are they jealous of? Do you know?"

I think they are jealous of me not just me but other girls also because they might think that "we" look better than them or we got something they don't have or because "you" get a lot of boys that want to talk to you. I really don't know but this can be some reasons. (Journal entry, 11-21-96)

Dauntai,

You said that girls like to think or say that light skin girls are stuck-up ect. Are these all girls or dark skin girls, or other light skin girls? I am wondering because until you, Nicole, and Khalilah told me I never knew people talked about "light skin" or "dark skin." I find it interesting. As a white person who is "a light skin white person" I look at things differently. I always wanted to have darker skin---or be tan. Can you explain to me about light skin and dark skin as it relates to your race? I very much would like to understand that because I don't know anything about that. Thank you! :-) (Journal entry, no date)

Kim

Dear Kim,

The girls that say things like that can be all girls. Just because you light skin doesn't mean that they can't talk about other light skin girls. I think people will talk about you regardless of how dark or light your skin is. Another reason why dark skin or darker skin girls say things like this is because most boys prefer light skin girls and I had people tell me this and Friday this boy who wanted to talk to me told me that he had a thang for light skin girls. It the same reason for boys but most girls like dark skin boys cause I do but I'm not saying that I wouldn't go with lighter boys because it's all good. When I grow up I'm not sure

what I want to do yet. I want to run track in college and then in the Olympics but if this doesn't work out I want to be successful in whatever I do. (Journal entry 11-26-96)

Dauntai

I wanted so much for Dauntai to talk more. I wanted to hear her voice, I wanted to understand, and I wanted others to have the opportunities to hear some of what she was writing about to me. In a sense, as I reflect on our time together I become more torn, for many of the conversations I had with these girls led me to question power and race, and more specifically who has the power. And as Delpit (1995) suggests, "Those with less power are often most aware of its existence" (p. 26). I am very aware of the power differential between men and women, yet am not as aware of the power difference associated with light and dark skinned girls. To me, their voices were the power, and yet I held the power to disclose or NOT disclose what they were sharing. They were "teaching me" so I could "teach others," and yet Khalilah was the first to point out that she thinks black people think different from white people.

What if I did not understand what Dauntai was telling me because all I have to go on is the his-torical perspective of a "white" interpreter? If I began over-theorizing Dauntai based on the research on adolescent girls (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer, 1990; Rosenbaum, 1993; Pipher, 1994), research that is done primarily on middle to upper class white girls, I could lose what she was saying, for she does not fit nicely into their theories, and I will not force her in, but rather add her to. The theories on adolescent girls development do not discuss race as an interpretive frame for understanding, and thus, they are limited in view. Even in Pipher's (1994) work where she has one story of a black girl from an upper-middle class family, race was determined to be "an issue, but not a big issue" (p. 277). And yet for Dauntai, as well as Khalilah and Nicole, as we will see much clearer later, race is a predominant interpretive frame for making sense out of their worlds. Delpit (1995) suggests that we need to identify and "give voice to alternative worldviews" (p. 22-23), and Dauntai's views have something to offer others. All I have is the power to let her voice be heard, a voice that she would not speak publicly.

Dauntai's response about what it had been like writing in her journal was:

I think that it has been fun writing in the journals. Some of the things you said or asked me made me think twice or differently about some things. I liked writing about the different subjects especially about the boys because I had to tell an older person how younger people feel about boys. (Journal entry, 1-28-97)

Nicole--Adults Need to Understand

"Pay attention to the times you notice or think about your body. 1) What are you doing during these times?; 2) What are you feeling?; 3) What are you thinking?" (My first comment in Nicole's journal)

Dear Ms. Oliver,

Issues that teens think about and experience. Some issue teens experience are peer pressure some people get pressured by other peers about drugs, boys, girls and other things. Now those are issues that teens think about, because maybe if someone, a girl has been going with a boy for at least 3 to 4 months they probably pressured the girls about sex but most of the time their boy friends are pressuring them. Some people aren't wealthy enough to buy in style clothes so they get pressured. Adults don't understand what teens have to go through sometimes they have difficult teachers who just always act like demons that just don't understand problems that we have. While all that time the teacher has that type of attitude they don't know, but they are making students hate them more and more each and every day. I just think being a teenager is a good thing at some points because we are role models for younger peers. I just think adults need to understand more but some people just don't want to take the time. I know some teenagers are difficult but you have to give everyone a chance. I think everyone deserves a chance no matter how dirty, ugly, rude, smart mouthed, or aggressive they are. Most adults always talk to teenagers and say you all are a bad generation of children because back in the old days well they always say certain thing weren't around. Well they have to realize we are in a much more difficult time. The world is worse with more vicious and daring people. (Nicole, Journal entry, 10-10-96)

What starts out to be a nice text book surface knowledge response about what teens are concerned about changes quickly. The first part of Nicole's response does not surprise me in the least. Nicole is very concerned about "being right," and more specifically, "doing well in school." She is "giving" the adult textbook answers to the question, "what are teens concerned about?" and yet look at where she went with her conversation. Cleaver if you ask me; say what you think "the adult" wants to hear first, and then maybe they will continue listening to what "I" want and need to say. I did not hear her at first, my response clearly shows my own agenda. And yet over time I heard, I listened. I responded to Nicole:

Dear Nicole,

You are right, I think that adults don't understand what teens have to go through. You also said that you think adults need to understand more but some just don't want to take the time. Can you help me understand some of the things teens go through? One thing that I really am trying to understand, and I hope you will help me, is what is important to you about your body? What do you worry about? What do you want to learn more about? And how can adults help? Will you help me understand these things better? Please? Thank you Nicole. (Journal entry, no date)

Kim

Well teens have alot of things that they go through. They go through problems with other teens they have problems with people who like to start trouble. Then they have to worry about school work and all of the tests, and we have to worry about if we will pass the test. If we don't our parents are upset. What is important about my body the most important thing about my body is being healthy because you could be kind of heavy but that doesn't mean you are unhealthy. Well I stress alot because of school work. I worry, because of such things that could happen if I mess up on a test if I fail it how my parents would react. Sometimes I worry so much I get a headache and now for some reason when I worry so much I get a back ache and I feel stress in my shoulders with alot of tension. I also worry because I have 3 tests and they are the last tests that will go on my report card. I don't think

adults will ever understand. They will never understand because most of our parents didn't have it as hard as we do in school. With being a struggling person it still may not matter because I still don't think anyone will understand but teens ourselves.

The perception that only teens understand the struggles that they each face is a dangerous analysis for it cuts off girls from a source of knowledge that can only come from adults. Adults who have struggled in one way or another. Understanding family histories can become important for girls. Even though Nicole claims that only teens will understand she wants adults to take the time to listen and try to understand. At the time I was concerned with how the stress Nicole was experiencing was great enough to cause her body to hurt. That is a clear sign, for anyone who is at all in touch with "how their body feels" under different circumstances that something is not right. One way of alleviating stress is through physical activity and I wondered if she knew that, or thought about exercise in that way.

Dear Nicole,

You said that sometimes you worry so much that you get a headache and a backache. Try this a couple of times and tell me how it makes you feel. When you notice that your head or back aches, get up if you're doing school work and turn on some music and practice your steps or dance, or go for a walk, something that gets you moving for about 20 minutes or so. It can even be less if you want. Sometimes moving your body around for awhile helps take away some of the stress. (Journal entry, no date)

Kim

I'm okay now. I don't worry so much because I passed all of my test. I am proud of myself. But sometimes I still worry. If I probably need to listen to music and move my body a little, because it does make you feel better, but I do just lay on the bed, and listen to music sometimes. It makes me feel better and it relaxes me. I probably sit on or lay on my bed for a[t] least an hour or more. But I am very proud of myself because I made it through the nine weeks with all of my IB classes. I have a lot to do sometimes it's hard trying to please all of your teachers. But sometimes no matter what you do they are still not satisfied.

I still just don't know why some teachers want to be so overprotective of their classes.

They don't let them go out in the hall where other classes are out that are bad well they have to realize what will happen. We will be around them regardless. The teachers just have to give us some freedom sometimes. (Nicole, Journal entry, no date)

Nicole's concern with "pleasing all of [her] teachers" left me wondering who education is for? I think back to all the times when I have sat through classes that seemed to waste my time for the content was meaningless in the larger structure of my life. And yet I also think of the classes, and the teachers and mentors, who have created the spaces for me to grow and learn and become excited about something, and not necessarily what they may have had in mind. The classes where the objectives would become my own search, not some standardized objectives. The classes, or learning environments, where the teachers or mentors, to this day, probably do not even know the positively profound effects, nor could they have in advance.

Dear Nicole,

I am glad you are proud of yourself for doing so well in school. I also think that if you do your best you will continue to feel good about yourself. And how you feel about it is most important! Education is for you! Do it for yourself!

When you said you should listen to music and move your body more because it feels good you are RIGHT ON! I would like you to try something between now and next time you write in your journal. Everyday I would like you to turn on your music and dance around for about 20 minutes and then in your journal write about how it makes you feel. Will you try that and see what happens? (Journal entry, no date)

Kim

Yes I will try it because it never hurt anyone to try something new. Resolution to experiment 20 minute work out! I danced to music that I liked to listen to so it made me feel relaxed and happy.

How I felt while doing the exercise and afterwards to. I felt better because at first I was tired and a song came on that I liked and then a lot of them kept coming on and it made me feel better. (Nicole, Journal entry, no date)

I wonder, was it the music that made her "feel better" or was it the dancing around, or was it the combination of the two? Or, was she writing what she "thought" I would want to hear? I know from personal experience that music made exercising more enjoyable when I was stuck inside.

Nicole: "What do you think about in terms of your body when you are around your friends, around boys, by yourself, around your family, when you look in the mirror, and when you are moving" (Kim, Journal entry, 11-14-96).

When I'm around girls I think about my body by looking at theirs not in a funny way, but some girls have that figure shape and you just have to look at your own body because comparing is just natural you may not say anything but you do think about it. When I'm around boys I wonder what they think about me no matter if I like them or not, because I know for a fact that boys look at you. I always wonder do I look like I'm qualified for what they are looking for even if you don't like each other they still can have something good to say about you.

When I'm around my family they always tell me that I'm having lost weight because when I wear clothes that show my figure they can always notice something. But because we are family we don't really get into each other's body appearance too much because there is always someone who is heavy in the family, and we don't let that be a big issue because it shouldn't matter. When I'm in the mirror I see a reflection of myself which shows me to me. When I'm moving I just look at how my body looks when I move, and how my body moves. (Journal entry, 11-14-96)

As I sat on my bedroom floor reading her journal, her first entry that really dealt with what she and the others so often talked about in the group. This entry contained feelings she never mentioned in the group conversations. Nicole was the most publicly confident girl in the group and

the one most willing to speak. Yet her journal expressed many of her concerns with doing well in school, something that may not have been "appropriate" peer conversations. I found the journals an invaluable method, for they created an additional space for the girls to speak and begin to name their thoughts and feelings about things they were not comfortable discussing publicly. As researchers we need to be able to seek out the unnatural silences if we hope to more fully understand, and journal writing is one method for hearing some of these silences. The girls would talk about their classes and tests and homework, but did not talk publicly about how they worried about doing well in school. I did not know. Nicole is one of the "popular" girls, thus she has an "image" to maintain and that image does not leave much room for feelings of insecurity.

There were many comments that left me concerned with this entry. To begin to think that comparing one's body with another person's is natural shows just how powerful oppressive cultural stories can be. I do not agree that this is a natural phenomenon, I think it is socially constructed. And further, Nicole "know[s] for a fact that boys look at you....[and] always wonder[s] do I look like I'm qualified." Why should she have to wonder, based on what some boy may or may not think, whether she would be "qualified." Furthermore, qualified because of a "look" rather than who she is and wants to become. To perceive that another person, a boy, would have the power to qualify her as good enough is frightening, for it diminishes and places her on a level below the boys, something that simply is not true. Yet something that is certainly perpetuated in our culture (hooks, 1990), and within our educational systems (Barbieri, 1995).

Nicole,

Why do you think it is natural to compare yourself with others? I have often wondered why we do this. You also said that when you are around boys you wonder if when they look at you they think you are qualified. Do you mean only in terms of "how you look?" Or is there more???? (Journal entry, no date) Kim

Nicole never responded to what I wrote. I had asked the girls to go through their journals and to look at some of the things they had written about and then to write about "how they wished things could be." Nicole did part of this in her journal, and part of it through freewriting.

I hope that my body won't change I like my body. I hope that when I put on my bellbottom outfit on Thursday people will like it. I hope that if they don't I will still be happy. I hope that I can learn to just not care what people think about my body. I hope that my stomach will stay flat and my shape won't change. It's hard to tell how my body shape is when I wear baggy clothes. I hope that my body won't disappoint me. I also hope that I won't disappoint my body." (Nicole, freewriting, I hope...)

The struggles against systems of domination become more clear as we ask girls what they "hope" (Edelsky, 1994). I wonder if Nicole is not wanting her body to change because her body is currently within the parameters of what is perceived as desirable to her peers. Nicole is 5 feet 6 inches and weighs 110 pounds, and still has the figure very much like a girl not a young woman. Her body will change, but what will happen to her as a person if she no longer "fits" the image? She writes about her body as separate from herself, but it is not as she also writes, "I hope that I can learn to just not care what people think about my body." I wonder just how many young girls and women hope for this exact thing. I did not get to respond to this as this was not part of her journal, yet it was part of the private conversation, she did not talk about this particular freewriting theme with the others. In her journal she wrote:

I wish that people wouldn't say things about me like I think I'm pretty. I wish they would just accept me for me. I wish boys wouldn't just look at me they would listen also. I wish my teachers and other people's teachers would understand some of the things teens go through and try to negotiate with us more. I also hope that adults realize as long as there's not anything to do young people will still be on the streets. I wish that I won't get to much bigger than I am now. If the world was blind there would be no one's feeling being hurt and people just being their selves. Most of all I hope that adults will understand that we as young people are in a much faster and difficult time from when they were growing up. They really need to give use a chance to be ourselves. (Journal entry, no date)

Nicole is experiencing the false promises that accompany the perceived power associated with being "Fashion In." People cannot accept her for who she is if they are only looking at her,

and there is much beneath the surface of this young lady. Yet she models many of the "images" deemed powerful and subsequently does not get the chances she wishes for people to know her. The comment "If the world was blind there would be no one's feeling being hurt and people just being their selves" really shows how much we value outer appearance, and how people's feelings get hurt if they do not meet the images that are labeled desirable. Nicole's entry made me sad. And yet she continues to point out that adults need to understand young people because their worlds are not like ours were. Nicole's voice, to me, is a subtle cry for grown-ups to listen and pay attention to "young people."

Nicole,

There is so much I want to say in response to what you have just written but I don't know how to say it. You mention three different times about "being yourself." How are some of the ways you feel you CANNOT be yourself and why is it that you feel this way? And when do you feel this way? This is an important question so if you need me to ask it in a way that makes more sense to you PLEASE ask me. I'm not sure I asked it clearly.

Another question, what are some ways you think teacher's could negotiate with you?

Finally, you are a very talented young lady. I hope you always use, and continue to develop your talents, regardless of what other people say. You said you wished people would accept you for who you are. Let me ask you, do you think you accept people for who they are? Sometimes I wonder if part of the reason we aren't accepted by everyone is that they don't feel accepted by us. I don't know this, I just wonder. Also, it is OK to be pretty and it is OK to think and feel you are pretty. But you are so much more than just pretty. You are very bright, you [are] good at expressing your thoughts out loud to others (that is not an easy thing to do!!) and from what I have been told by others, you have a very beautiful voice. Let people hear your voice, and not just singing, you have things to say. The entire idea of wanting to be yourself is important.

One more thing, your shape will probably get bigger--or change--from what it is now.

Nicole, you are becoming a young lady and women look different from young girls. This

can be an exciting part of your life even though it probably is a little scary. One thing that is so important to your development right now is that you try to do some kind of physical activity almost every day. Not only is it good for your health, more importantly I believe it will help you FEEL better! (Journal entry, no date)

Kim

Being yourself is important because if you don't be yourself you wouldn't be happy, because when you are being yourself you are doing things you like and that are normal with you. Now the teacher negotiating with students well I mean they are always prepared to jump all over you but never try to see what the problems are that you may be having or you may just be having a bad day. Being accepted is sometimes hard because you have to do bad things sometimes to be bad or do bad things. Sometimes accepting people can be hard because if you are just meeting someone you don't know whether to trust them or not. I am proud of myself because I like being myself and singing is something I like to do. I also am a speaker at my church. It's great to be able to speak and perform in a professional way in front of others. (Journal entry, 11-26-96)

Being happy is being able to be yourself. "When you are being yourself you are doing things you like and that are normal with you." And yet we are teaching young girls how to desire what those in power have determined "right" for all of us, which is not necessarily the same as what is "normal with you" as an individual and a member of a larger group. The struggle will continue as long as we as a culture perpetuate a normalized image, images that serve the interests of a select few.

"I would like you to go back and read through your journals and then write about what it was like to write with me in these journals" (Kim, 1-28-97).

I feel that it was a good experience. I got to express a lot of great issues I don't get to talk about all the time. I feel that I expressed myself well I hope I helped a lot. It was fun being able to talk with others. (Nicole, Journal entry, 1-28-97)

Chapter 5

Creating Critical Spaces: Imagining and Exploring Alternative Possibilities

The snow has melted and the ice is gone. The brightness from a sunny day offers a long awaited bit of warmth. The dark and dreary grays are slowly being replaced with signs of new color. Winter is not over, but a glimpse of new life is surfacing, and with that, new possibilities are emerging. Imagining the colors of spring is the only way I will make it through the end of winter. The cold, sad, and lonely months are soon to be replaced with new life, new meanings. To see a different world requires imagination, a yearning for new life, for a better place to live.

Only when the given or the taken-for-granted is subject to questioning, only when we take various, sometimes unfamiliar perspectives on it, does it show itself as what it is-- contingent on many interpretations, many vantage points, unified (if at all) by conformity or by unexamined common sense. Once we can see our givens as contingencies, then we may have an opportunity to posit alternative ways of living and valuing and to make choices. (Greene, 1995, p. 23)

The setting: A cold day in early November, no longer strangers, Dauntai, Alysa, Nicole, Khalilah, and I sat in a new room, room 127, at a round table, the handy tape player that Khalilah has taken over, running. The time had come to travel beyond the actual, to imagine the possible, and yet see things "close up and large" (Greene, 1995, p. 16). The girls had named and shared many stories; cultural stories of the body, stories of how they experience their bodies in relation to others, and stories of how they experience their bodies as them selves. I had noticed some of the dominate stories within these stories, many of which centered around the acceptance and/or resistance of oppressive socially constructed images and discourse of the body. Storylines involving gender, race, and social class. The girls were often objectifying their bodies to be looked at by others (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Pipher, 1994; Rosenbaum, 1993; Wolf, 1991), yet simultaneously and subtly, crying for the need and opportunity to be heard and understood. Ideals dominated, the need to "be right" and "normal," and the need to be in relation with others were laced throughout their conversations.

Merely identifying and naming the storylines that were contributing to how they were beginning to interpret and construct the meanings of their bodies was not sufficient. Creating critical spaces marked an additional exploration in our journey. This exploration routes how we openly began looking more critically at some of their stories, both public and private. Throughout the semester I continually asked them to think about things in alternative ways, either by asking them to write what they "hoped for" or "wished things could be like" (Edelsky, 1994). Other times I would ask them whether or not they agreed with some of the things they were hearing and seeing, for example, in magazines and on television. However, in this phase of the journey I combined the private conversations, those from their journals, with the public group conversations as to keep their individual stories safe, and we began to critically examine these topics. We talk in part in generalizations. Once again, as I started to ask them to imagine something different they began better articulating the way things were, and we could better see things "close up and large" (Greene, 1995).

"The passion of seeing things close up and large....is the doorway for imagination; here is the possibility of looking at things as if they could be otherwise. This possibility...looking at things large is what might move us on to reform" (Greene, 1995, p.16). To see how these girls experience their bodies in culture, in relationship to others, and as themselves becomes crucial to the health of adolescent girls growing up in a media saturated, computer manipulated culture (Wolf, 1992; Pipher, 1994) that perpetuates the myth that the perfect woman is an image that can be created. More importantly, critically examining the stories they tell, as well as exploring alternative and even preferred possibilities, is necessary if we are to find ways to help girls see that "the perfect woman" is a myth, not a healthy reality.

Exploring the Paths of Development

Given that many of our conversations related to "look" I wondered whether they thought beyond the images that were a powerful source for interpreting and constructing meaning. I was interested in how they interpreted written discourse about the body. I wondered how much they accepted on face value, and how much they were willing to question other people's perceptions. I

knew Dauntai would question what other people said in certain circumstances from some of what she wrote about in her journal, but I did not know about the other three girls. And so while Nicole, Khalilah, Alysa, and Dauntai went about putting their pictures from the "Fashion Out" category onto a poster and made captions to go under their pictures about why these people were "Fashion Out" we had a discussion about magazine content.

Kim: When you look at magazines do you ever look at them and say no these people aren't right they don't know what their talking about?

Alysa: Sometimes....Like those ones that say that when you get this age you like do this or you turn like this or something like that. Sometimes people don't do that or whatever.

Kim: Like let's say for example, if in one of the magazines it says as you get older your hips are going to get wider.

Alysa: That's not necessarily true.

Kim: Is that one of those things that you don't believe?

Nicole: No.

Khalilah: I wouldn't believe that. I don't believe that.

This conversation made me think. How could these 13 year old girls not know that as they developed their hips would begin to get wider? And at the same time one of the things I noticed about all of these girls was how image, the way things looked and were visually represented, was a predominant interpretive frame for understanding their world. The images they were describing about "Fashion In" and "Fashion Out" were not images of developed girls. And the pictures they were cutting out of women tended to be images of women's upper bodies accentuating faces, hairstyles, eyes, and teeth. What they were seeing and hearing about development was not the same thing, and the visual representations of girls were the sources they seemed to be accepting over what the text was saying. Notice in this next section as we discuss what happens to a girls body as she develops how Alysa is learning about control.

Kim: What do you think will happen? [during pubescent development]

Khalilah: Some people maybe [will develop hips] some people not.

Alysa: Whatever you want to happen....If you sit there and say OK this is what's gonna happen and then you sit there and be waiting and waiting for it to happen then it is probably going to happen. But if you say no that's not going to happen and work to make so that it doesn't happen than it won't.

Alysa's comment, "But if you say no that's not going to happen and work to make so that it doesn't happen than it won't" speaks strongly to the cultural messages supporting both the mind-body dualism (Dewey, 1922) as well as definitions of femininity (Scruton & Flintoff, 1992), as both rely on being in control over our bodies, as if they do not even exist. This type of storyline can be detrimental to Alysa's health if she starts trying to control the biological functioning of becoming a woman.

I was left wondering whether these girls had any idea why girls hips develop and become wider in the first place. Nicole knew that women "have hips regardless," and Alysa was associating hips that were wider than hers were now as "fat." Yet not one of the four girls knew why their hips would become wider as they developed into young women. And so I asked the girls, "When you get pregnant where does the baby sit in your body?"

Nicole: OHHH right here [points to her stomach between her hips].

Kim: Right here [I put my hands on my stomach between my hips], right between my hips. So what if I had really really narrow narrow hips?

Alysa: The baby is gonna spread um....Like if you don't have a baby your hips might not spread cause you don't have anything pushing them apart.

Kim: No but do you think that our bodies are built so that we can have babies?

All at once: Yeah/yes.

Kim: Yeah? So we have to have hips that are a little bit wider right?

Khalilah: Yeah.

Kim: OK now just because your hips are wider doesn't mean you are fat, it means you have hips.

I picked up the picture of the woman that Alysa thought was too muscular because her hips were no wider than her waist. I wanted the girls to think about what they were seeing.

Kim: ...OK here she is, does she have wide hips?

Alysa: They are really small hips.

Kim: Really small hips. Do you think that most women look like that?

Alysa: No.

Kim: I don't either. Do you Dauntai?

Dauntai: No.

Kim: So do you think this would be a picture, if I were to look at this picture I would think that this would be realistic for me to look like that? See how can you tell when you are looking at pictures if it's real? I mean how do you know? Did you ever think about that?

Alysa: You don't unless you talk to the person.

Kim: But do you think that the pictures that they show us in magazines represent the way most people look?

Nicole: Most people?

Kim: Yeah.

Nicole: No.

Becoming literate today means much more than knowing how to read and write. An expanded notion of literacy needs to include becoming literate in health, and part of this literacy requires us to have the abilities to critically read and write our world. Bustle suggests that part of this critical reading requires us to become literate of image, for image has a way of working on powerful levels below consciousness (Bustle, 1996; Oliver & Bustle, 1997). The images and messages portrayed of girls and women are growing further and further from healthy reality (Wolf, 1991). If magazines are telling girls that their hips will spread as they develop, yet showing girls young women whose hips have not, or are computer manipulated, sends very confounding messages. And it is this discrepancy between the images and stories that creates the plagues of eating disorders (Pipher, 1994; Wolf, 1991). Adolescence, given the nature and speed of change that occurs (Dubas, & Peterson, 1993; Elkind 1984; Pipher, 1994; Tanner, 1962), is the most formative time in the lives of women. "Girls are making choices that will preserve their true selves

or install false selves. These choices have many implications for the rest of their lives" (Pipher, 1994, p. 72).

Notice the fear of growing that these girls are experiencing. Notice also how growing is being associated with becoming fat. I simply cannot understand why it needs to be this way. Why we subtly teach girls to not only fear their bodies natural biological changes, but to attempt to control these changes.

Kim:...What do you think would make it easier for you...as you develop into young women?...What would be some things that you would want to learn more about...as you're changing? Because a lot of you write about not wanting your shape to change too much. Your shape is going to change, that is going to happen.

Dauntai: I don't want to grow no more.

Khalilah: I want to grow a little bit taller.

Nicole: Yep, cause if you're taller, you if you like get a little bit overweight it won't show as much as if you were shorter. Cause when you're short and fat you look like round [she laughs].

Kim: It's not, just because it [the shape of your body] changes doesn't mean you get fat. You don't automatically get fat.

The fear of becoming fat is real for these girls. The sad thing is, the fear of becoming fat that these girls are experiencing is not an irrational fear. Our culture places such value on beauty, and beauty is associated with thinness (Pipher, 1994; Wolf, 1991 & 1993). Girls get "talked about" if they are too heavy. I sat and listened to Khalilah, Dauntai, and Nicole talking about watching "Big Kathy" one day. Kathy was on their step team, and yet she could not do some of the steps the other girls could do because her legs were "too big" and she could not clap under her legs the way that was required. Nicole thought, "that looked terrible," while Dauntai mentioned "watching her." Listening to their conversation made me realize just how real their fear is of becoming fat. And I can certainly relate to that fear. Here this girl, a girl they call "Big Kathy," is doing some form of physical activity, something all girls need to do (Surgeon Generals Report, 1996), and she is being ridiculed by her peers.

Kim: Do people make fun of her?

Dauntai, Khalilah, and Nicole: [All at once] Umhum.

Nicole: She be laughin' with you sometimes.

Khalilah: But inside they don't know how she feels, she probably be cryin' inside.

Nicole: She probably be cryin'. Khalilah crazy.

Khalilah: I think she do feel hurt inside.

Khalilah's sensitivity toward people who, in their social judgment of "normal," do not "look right," surfaces now and again. I am left wondering if that is because she too has experienced what it feels like when you do not "look" like "everyone else." The conversation about "Big Kathy" headed the girls into an interesting discussion about eating. I had asked them again what they would want to learn more about as they were developing into young women, as their bodies were changing. What I find fascinating is that one minute they are "talking about" how a "big" girl looks, and the very next minute they want to help. Alysa became part of this conversation, interestingly if you will notice, as a source of information.

Nicole: How to help others.

Kim: Help others do what?

Nicole: I mean because, you know, have some friends and they stressed, you know like they might be anorexia or something because they think, because their body is changing that they're gonna get fat or something like that....I've heard people say I haven't eaten in three weeks.

Alysa: I know this one girl she um who didn't eat for three days. All she did was drink water and that was it in the morning and at night. That's all she did.

Kim: Why do people do that?

Alysa: I don't know. People think, like everybody in my neighborhood thinks like I'm anorexic, but I'm not. I eat.

Kim: Do you know what anorexia is?

Alysa: You don't eat.

Khalilah: Than what's bulimic?

Alysa: Bulimia is where you eat but you throw it up....It's gross cause you stick your finger down your throat and you start throwing up and it will get all over your hands.

Nicole: Auh she knows....She know about that stuff. That is nasty.

Kim: But why do you think people do it?

Nicole: Cause they think if they eat then they gonna get fatter.

Eating disorders have become a perceived means for preventing becoming "fat." But it is not necessarily fat in the clinical sense of obesity, as many girls who would be considered "healthy" become dissatisfied with their bodies when they begin comparing them to our cultural ideals (Pipher, 1994). And yet, these girls talk about anorexia and bulimia as something "out there" if you will, something other people do, but not them. Listen to the next part of their conversation.

Nicole: My grandma always pick with me because it was like last year I wasn't this bony, and um my grandma told my mom, I think she got ashamed and went on a diet. But she always act like she playin' but I think she really think I went on a diet.

Kim: Really?

Nicole: Yeah I really do think she do because I use to go out to eat every day....Then I just, I got tired of eatin' I said I don't want to eat.

Kim: So you don't eat anymore?

Nicole: Yes I eat, but probably only once a day.

Kim: That's it?

Khalilah: Me too 'til dinner.

Nicole: I don't never get hungry because I'm not use to eating any more.

Alysa: Yeah it's like you get into that way.

Listening to these girls makes me wonder why we spend so much time and energy in schools on food pyramids, and healthy diets, but no time recreating the images and stories girls are seeing and hearing that say if you eat you are going to get fat. I am not convinced that learning what to eat is as important for adolescent girls as learning why we eat, and what happens when we eat or do not eat. Eating is being associated with gaining weight, not a necessary function of living.

Maybe we need to spend some time helping girls learn how to critically analyze the cultural messages they see and hear about eating. One cannot turn on the television, for example, without seeing some form of advertisement from the diet industry. And the diet industry has done a very nice job spreading the subtle message that we need to control our natural hunger.

These girls are naturally gaining weight as they are growing into young women. I wondered if they thought at all about how their eating could affect them.

Kim: But do you think that's a good way to be? [eating once a day]

Nicole: No. Well I'm not gonna make myself eat if I'm not hungry.

Khalilah: I use to eat a lot, I could eat 2 plates of spaghetti.

Alysa: I think everybody eats a lot when they're kids.

Khalilah: And when I got sick, like last year or year before, than I stop eatin' a lot.

Alysa's comment "I think everybody eats a lot when they're kids" left me wondering. As girls begin to develop into women, and women's bodies are portrayed through the media, magazines, movies, billboards, as objects or images than can be created and controlled (Bordo, 1989; Pipher, 1994; Rosenbaum, 1993; Wolf, 1991) girls begin learning that in order to participate in their culture they need to be in control of their bodies (Wolf, 1991). Controlling hunger becomes part of the oppressive vocabulary (Bordo, 1989). To continue to accept the cover girl magazines, and manipulated images (Pipher, 1994), as acceptable and desirable body sizes for girls and women is just another way to say that eating and exercise disorders really are not all that bad, girls will grow out of it, it is just a normal thing. First, girls and women seldom grow out of it (Wolf, 1991), and second, eating disorders are socially constructed, not natural. If we continue to say that we already knew that girls were affected by what television and magazines show and tell, particularly about their bodies, and accept this as normal, is no longer acceptable.

When 20% (Nagel & Jones, 1992; Pipher, 1994; Wolf, 1991) of young women between the ages of 12 and 30 suffer from a major eating disorder, and the ages with which girls are suffering often begins during early adolescence (Levine, Smolak, & Hayden, 1994; Nagel & Jones, 1992; Pipher, 1994), sometimes even younger, we need to start doing something to help

prevent this social oppression from continuing to grow or even be maintained. Simply becoming aware of what it is that our cultures are saying is no longer sufficient. As "knowledge producers" (Lincoln, 1996) we have a moral obligation to create a different type knowledge, a type that serves to benefit those from which we seek to understand, not just those within the culture of power. We need to explore and map ways to work with girls to become more critically literate of images and stories that will affect their lives, or their health will continue to be in grave danger.

Imagining and Alternative Society: Exploring Beyond the Actual

I decided to revisit "Fashion Out" one last time to make sure I had interpreted what they were telling me correctly. Further, I wanted to get them to look again at what they were saying and begin to explore alternative, and even preferred possibilities. I wanted them to look critically at "Fashion In" and "Fashion Out," as well as some of the other things they had discussed. I did not know whether they would be able to do this, and it was a struggle for me to find a way to communicate what I was wanting them to do. Nicole created a wonderful opening for the conversation.

Kim: If your body isn't right you would still be considered Fashion Out, correct?

Nicole: Umhum.

Kim: Is that about right?

Nicole: That's how it goes, but that's not right.

Kim: No I'm not talking about whether it's right or wrong.

Nicole: Yeah, that's how it goes.

Kim: That's how it goes. There is a difference between what happens and what we think is right and wrong. It might not be right if I put on a...dress that would be considered Fashion In... and it doesn't look "right" on my body because somebody thinks it doesn't look right. I mean who are they to say it doesn't look right, you know whose to tell me my body isn't right? So I think what I'd like to be able to do is to start to look at some of the things that you talk about, and we will look at them from a different way.

And so I sat and explained to Khalilah, Dauntai, Alysa, and Nicole how I wanted to take some of the things they had been talking about and look at them in another way. We were going to create "an alternative society." What I thought was so neat was that Dauntai was in a group called "Making a Difference in Society," so this idea fit in with something she was doing, albeit in a very different way. I took all the dominate themes I could see at the time, both private and public, and I combined everything together as I said to Khalilah, Alysa, Nicole, and Dauntai:

Let's imagine that we're gonna live in a world, where is there no "Fashion In" and "Fashion Out." We are going to live in a world where boys...and girls...weren't interested in what we looked like, they were interested in what we had to say and what we did. Let's say we lived in a world where there wasn't any such thing as feminine and masculine, where girls, boys, women, and men could just do whatever it is they wanted to do....Let's say we lived in a world where there were no magazines. Let's say that we lived in a world where there was no such thing as a perm for our hair.

Alysa: It would be boring.

Dauntai: Yep.

Khalilah: If we wouldn't know about it it wouldn't be boring. But since we know about it it's boring.

Kim: Right, but let's say that some of these things hurt us as we grow up, because what I see happening, a lot of the things you tell me I see being very hurtful to you in the long run, if you don't learn how to see it or look at it differently. Let me give you an example...and there is nothing wrong with anything that you have said, there's no right or wrong there's just different ways to look at things, OK....Remember...way back at the beginning where...we had a discussion about how much muscle women should show and how much they shouldn't show? And not everybody agreed and that's OK. But muscle is very very important for us to be healthy, and so if we think...we can't have this, or it's not feminine to show too much that can hurt us, OK. So some of the things we have talked about I want to start looking at them a little bit differently. Does that make any sense? [they look at me]....On your card I want you to write about what it would be like

if there no such thing...as perms for our hair...or masculine and feminine, there was no such thing as labels like that. No such thing as Fashion In or Out. Boys and girls...didn't judge you by the way you look....Try to imagine what a world could be like without some of things.

Khalilah: I can't really, I can a little bit but

Kim: It's hard, it's really really hard and that's why I want to talk about it because I might be able to imagine some more things and you might be able to imagine some more things and so as a group we may be able to imagine an awful lot together.

Multiple perspectives offer multiple possibilities (Greene, 1995; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). And so Khalilah, Nicole, Alysa, and Dauntai began writing on their cards. I did not know whether what I was asking them to do was making any sense, but I had to try. If we can find ways to help girls see that what they consider "normal" or natural is but one possibility, yet not the only possibility, then they may have the opportunity to begin naming preferred possibilities (Greene, 1995). Not long after they started writing Alysa asked, "When you say it will be natural [your hair] do you mean get it cut or not cut it?" I had hoped they would interpret what I had said any way they wanted. Not knowing quite what to say I responded, "You can cut it...but what would it [your hair] look like if you wore it just the way it was naturally?...Let's say we didn't put stuff in our hair...we didn't worry about that, that wasn't important." Nicole looked up from her card, and in a nonchalant way said, "Everybody would have afro's" and went back to writing. Not long after she looked up again and said, "Well, if we didn't have perms we wouldn't know no better, if we didn't know that they existed we wouldn't want for um." Khalilah added, " That's why it's hard for us to do this." Notice in this next section why perms are considered important.

Kim: I know, but let's say for example, because you had said, and this is what really concerned me about the perm thing, Nicole I think it was you that said it in one of our conversations, you said that people like us [meaning Dauntai, Nicole and Khalilah] and not me and Alysa, you said people like us perm our hair or us hot oil treatments so that it will be straight like it's "suppose to be." Who said it's suppose to be straight?

Nicole: I mean, you know how African American's hair is it's like wool.

Kim: But what's wrong with that?

Nicole: There's nothing wrong with it, but I mean, some some races, well when we get perms we try to make, you know better ourselves because some other races already low rate us because of our color. And being, you know, we just get perms because we don't want our hair to look, you know, despicable.

Kim: But what I don't understand is why should you be made to feel that what your hair does naturally is wrong, why should

Nicole: Society.

Nicole's comment "...some races, well when we get perms we try to...better ourselves because some other races already low rate us because of our color...we don't want our hair to look, you know, despicable." made me think not only about what Greene (1995) refers to as "close up and large," but what Delpit (1995) calls "the culture of power." When we begin to better see things close up and large, we are better able to identify the codes of power and those cultures who are responsible for creating the codes. Further, Delpit (1995) suggests that those who do not participate in the culture of power can acquire this power easier if they are told explicitly what the rules are. Nicole knows, straight hair is one of the rules. If we can better identify the codes of power maybe we can begin to break down some of the oppressive stereotypes that are plaguing our educational systems. Straight hair is not natural to all people, black, white, brown, or yellow respectively. Yet somewhere straight have has been named "right" and "normal."

What I find so fascinating is that a topic such as hair and perms can lead to an understanding of how some of these girls are learning about their bodies. Notice who has the power to determine what is "right," and then imagine we were talking about body size.

Nicole: If we didn't have perms we wouldn't want for them because we wouldn't know they existed. If we wouldn't have a such a thing as society then people would, they wouldn't know what they were suppose to look like so they would just go on with their natural self.

Kim: OK, there you said it, they wouldn't know what they're suppose to look like so they would go with their natural self. Think about that for a minute. What's wrong with your natural self?

Khalilah: NOTHING!

Kim: NOTHING! You're right. Absolutely there is nothing wrong with whatever you are naturally! Do you think society tells us there are things wrong with us?

Nicole: YEP! Because if you got nappy hair they tell you to get a perm and they show you all these people and all these shinny hair and

Dauntai: Straight

Nicole: Yeah and the look like it's been hot oiled. But they could be lookin' in the mirror and they say well I see all these people and so they think they suppose to look like that so they don't know no better.

Kim: They don't know no better?

Nicole: They don't! Because they look at everybody else so I mean I guess they try to fit in.

They are looking at cultural images as a way of learning how to "fit in." Nicole's comment "If we wouldn't have a such a thing as society then people...wouldn't know what they were suppose to look like....But they could be lookin' in the mirror and they say well I see all these people and so they think they suppose to look like that so they don't know no better." speaks very clear for the need to begin to look more critically, and help girls learn how to look critically, at what "society" shows and tells about what their bodies "should look like."

The process of creating an alternative society in hopes of becoming more critical of the dominate storylines and images was not simple. I was continually struggling to find a language to communicate with these girls. A language to express a very visual part of their worlds. More importantly, I did not want them to feel that what they had been saying was "wrong" I just wanted them to look at what they were saying as it could be otherwise. I wanted them to look below the surface, below what we take for granted (Greene, 1995).

Kim: What I'm trying to get you to do, is to get you to think about what society tells us and then to look at whether or not that's gonna hurt you or if it's going to help you. For example, society tells us in many ways that it is not feminine for women to have muscle. Quite honestly I think that's a bunch of crap. I don't think that's right! I don't think it's right for society to tell me the

way I'm suppose to look and I don't think it's right for society to tell you the way you are suppose to look. But how do you know that unless you start to ask questions? Do you see what I'm trying to get you to do? I want you to start to look at some of the things society tells you and then to question that.

Alysa: I think it's alright for people to have muscle it's just, in my opinion, if like a woman has...so many muscles that you know there's no fat, it's just muscles and that just, I just don't think that's right....You know, it's not like I'm telling the person you don't look right with that much muscle so loss it, you know, I'm just saying that's how I feel.

Kim: And there is nothing wrong with feeling that way, there is ABSOLUTELY nothing wrong with feeling that way as long as you understand how muscle helps you. And I was telling her [I say to everyone] do you know what muscle does for you?

This conversation opened a space to discuss some of the benefits of muscle in relation to metabolism and maintaining a healthy weight. Nicole, Dauntai, and Khalilah several times mentioned, both in writing and our conversations, that they feared becoming overweight, while Alysa, often thought she was fat. I wondered what the girls knew about muscle in relation to maintaining a healthy weight so I asked. They knew that muscle helped them to move, and they had "heard of" metabolism but none of them remembered or really understood what it meant. We talked for awhile about our metabolism being how fast or slow our bodies burn calories from the food we eat. We talked about gaining and losing weight, and how to maintain our weight. We talked about how "playing" (i.e., stepping, making up dances, running around with one's dog) is part of maintaining a healthy weight. We talked on a very simple level about the benefits of muscle, particularly the role muscle plays in our metabolism. These girls had been continuously associating eating with getting fat, but never using the calories they take in. Our conversations were not however structured in a way that I could be sure they actually understood. We talked about how it can hurt us if we think it is bad to have too much muscle, or muscle that "shows" because we need muscle to help us live healthy. But "healthy" is a taken-for-granted, and subsequently not of primary concern, but the fear of becoming "overweight" or "fat" is.

The very real and immediate concern these girls had was the way they looked, how other people thought they looked, and how others looked. I went back and said, "We are imagining a world that's different, that's better. That doesn't put so much pressure on us to look a certain way, to act a certain way. What would it look like? What would a society like that be?" Alysa looked down at her card and read:

I think that if guys didn't pay attention to what we look like just what we thought or whatever that um there wouldn't be as much criticism, cause like if they didn't care what people looked like they wouldn't say oh you look ugly or your hair's wrong or something like that.

I asked the other girls, "How do you think it would be if people didn't care as much about what we looked like?" Khalilah thought, "People would be more happy" and Nicole thought, "People would have more respect for others." Dauntai's response was interesting to me, very perceptive.

Kim: Dauntai what do you think?

Dauntai: I think it would be like the opposite. I think like what you say would be like now, would be how you look, and how look would be like what you say now.

Kim: Can you explain that a little bit.

Dauntai: Like now boys like look at you, like you cute whatever. But then sometimes they might care about what you say, before they care about what you say they um look at you how you look first, and then like, if it was, if they didn't care about how you look it would be like they would care about what you say instead of how you look.

Kim: Do you think that would be better?

Dauntai: In a way....they might understand you more.

Alysa: In some ways it might be the same, like now people might look like at somebody and say ooh they don't look good, and then if they just pay attention to what people are saying they might look at them and hear what they're saying and say, ooh she just said something really stupid.

Kim: Right, but at least they would be listening to what you thought and what you felt as compared to just what you look like. Because for somebody that looks too different do you get looked at?

Khalilah: NO!

Kim: You don't get looked at do you? And is that right?

Khalilah: No!

Khalilah understands what happens when you look "too different." The scarf she wears sets her apart from her peers. While our conversation dichotomized looking and listening and that is not necessarily the most beneficial way to explore these issues, our conversations had seemed so one sided, that is, laced with either or, and I wanted them to look at the other side. As I reflect on the conversations now, I can better see the next step, and that is to look more closely at the liberating and empowering stories, rather than concentrating primarily on the disempowering or oppressive stories. While it is helpful to be able to critically look at the oppressive cultural messages that are hurtful, it is as equally important to be able to name those things that are helpful, in order to have the opportunity to make choices. I do not believe we spent enough time looking at the empowering stories, something important for me to remember later, for these stories could have added a deeper dimension and more powerful possibilities for those involved. As Lincoln (1996) suggests, critical subjectivity, or becoming more self-aware through the research process is important. Words such as transformative and critical have both the action aspects of research, "but also recognize the ability of meaningful research experiences to heighten self-awareness in the research process and create personal and social transformation" (Lincoln, 1996, p. 15).

Being Noticed

While creating the "right look" was perceived to be the means in which a person would be noticed by others, I wondered what these girls wanted to be noticed for. Did they really want to be noticed for only what they looked like? Khalilah's comment about not being noticed if you "look too different" opened a space to discuss how they wanted to be noticed.

Kim: How else can we be noticed?...How do you want to be noticed? What do you want to be noticed for?

Nicole: For being nice...some people they be like, oh I don't like her because she um, she's not nice or she's too mean or she always [at the same time with Khalilah] runnin' her mouth.

Kim: So what would you want to be noticed for being nice, what else?

Nicole: I don't know what I could be noticed for because

Kim: No, what do you want to be noticed for? There's a difference.

Nicole: I don't know, I mean [pause] being myself.

Kim:...Dauntai how about you?

Dauntai: Same thing.

I found it interesting that what Dauntai and Nicole wanted to be noticed for could not be determined through visual observation. Being noticed for "being yourself" requires people to listen; listen what they hope for and what they want others to understand about their lives. This conversation in part reminded me of some of the things Dauntai and Alysa wrote about in their personal biography papers. Early in the semester I asked the girls several different types of questions with the hope of getting to know a little bit more of their personal biographies. In a sense, this is part of finding out who they are and what they hope for. "What would you like adults to understand about you the most?" was one of the specific questions I asked. Alysa wrote, "How I act, why I do things when I do them, how I feel, and what I want to say when I can't get it out" (Personal Biography Paper, 10-8-96). Dauntai wrote, "That we are different from them [adults] when they were young and things are different. That teenagers need privacy" (Personal Biography Paper, 10-8-96).

We base so much on what we see, and often times at the expense of what lies beneath the images. I was left wondering whether we teach teachers what to "look for" but neglect teaching them how and why to listen. I do not know, but I am left wondering, and it is not something I will soon forget or stop questioning.

Returning to the Path of Right and Normal

Upon returning to what these girls see as "right and "normal" offered a turn I never expected. Notice the interpretive frame some of these girls will use to explain my lack of understanding, or my struggle to understand from their perspectives what is "right" and "normal." My lack of understanding will not be contributed to a lack of knowledge.

Kim: Remember we had talked about...we were going to create an alternative society, we're imagining how things could be different? Let's imagine...we didn't have right and normal, what would that look like?

Khalilah: We would look messed up. [Nicole laughs]

Kim: Can you define messed up for me?

Nicole: Not right and not normal.

Kim: OK, but what is...normal? [I'm laughing] [everyone laughs] You have got to help me understand right and normal [still laughing]. I know what right and normal is from my perspective, I want to know what it is from yours.

Nicole: Well you can't really explain it because everybody might have a different opinion about it.

Kim: But I want your opinions...I'm not concerned with everybody else's, I want to know yours!

Khalilah: It seems to me, [pause] that um, I don't know how to say this, but it seems to me black and white people have, that black people have the same kind of opinion on what they think and white people, they might see something different from us and we might see something different from them.

Kim: Can you give me an example of something you think black people think differently about than white people?

Nicole: OH MY GOD, THAT IS A GOOD QUESTION!! Wait a minute. [Dauntai laughs]

Khalilah: That's what I think.

Kim: Well let's talk about this.

Nicole: It's true!

Once again, as we began revisiting issues, and as we got to know each other better, we started to see things "close up and large" (Greene, 1995). This conversation shifted our group discussions away from creating an alternative society toward race and racism. We had talked on the surface about racial issues, but today the conversation became more in depth, and today marked yet another path that we traveled in our journey together. As a mixed racial group, Khalilah, Dauntai, and Nicole began to talk specifically about perceptions of race as an interpretive frame, and

subsequently added a deeper level to the understanding of body in culture, body in relation to others, and body as self. I did not realize the significance of our conversations to Khalilah, Nicole, or Dauntai until I showed the girls some of the transcripts I was using for an earlier chapter.

Chapter 6

Color Blind

They open slowly, soft and delicate, offering multiple shades and magnificent colors. Eventually they will change to a mass of greens blended in among the others. But first their unique shapes and hues will bloom for all who are interested to see. The season without color is the saddest of all, yet as it moves and changes the colors bring new life to the surface, a new appreciation for the wonders of nature, and the blending of colors. Without the diversity of color the multiple blossoms would fade amongst each other, and something so beautiful would go unseen. It is only if the blossoms can open, and share their colors, will we see their inner beauty.

The setting: A cold winter day in early December; room 127, Khalilah, Alysa, Nicole, Dauntai, and I sat around the table, tape player running, notecards and pencils in hand.

I had spent the better of my Thanksgiving break writing as to have something to show the girls before the semester was over. I wanted to give them an opportunity to see what I was taking from our conversations, and give them an chance to edit some of the transcripts. Yet before I handed out the transcripts I wanted to see if I was even close to being on the right path. I asked the girls to do another freewriting exercise, the theme was the "Ideal or Perfect Woman," and they were to write whatever came to mind. They finished writing and I collected their notecards, placed them in a folder, and passed a copy of the transcripts to each girl. I explained as best I could at the time what the chapter was about. I told them I wanted them to have a chance to "edit" the selections I was using from our conversations. I also mentioned that this was a first draft so I might be adding more, but definitely wanted to use these parts of our conversations and their writing. I asked them to read through the transcripts, paying particular attention to what they said, and add anything they thought was necessary in the margins. I reminded them that we do not typically talk the way we write so not to worry about all the "um's, you know's, I mean's, I don't know's, OK's, etc." They started reading and did not make a sound for almost 20 minutes. I too sat quietly as I read through their notecards. Much of what was in their freewriting supported what I had written in the chapter. When they finished, they sat with the transcripts in front of them looking at

me. Nicole had crossed out one word that changed the meaning of a sentence, and Dauntai asked a question about a transition, but nothing else was written on the papers.

They sat quietly as I asked whether I needed "to add anything to help clarify?"

No one responded at first, and then Khalilah said, "You're not going to use that part where we's were talkin' about how the black people are different?" "Oh yes, that's gonna come in someplace else, I just haven't figured out where to put that yet. Where do you think that would be a good place to go?...Do you think the section on the differences between black and white could fit in here?....I, I don't know how I would title it." Nicole responded, "Color Blind."

Kim: Where did we leave off on Tuesday?

Khalilah: Talkin' some conversation you told us to bring it back up.

Nicole: About Color Blind.

Kim: OK, now let me ask you about Color Blind, how, why is it that you think that would be a good title? What did you mean when you said that?...And the reason I'm asking is that when I think of color blind I think of lack of color. So there wouldn't be color or you wouldn't see color. But we do see color, do you see why I'm, why I'm wondering about Color Blind? If we're gonna talk about differences between the way you see the differences between black and white people...and we call it Color Blind do you think it will represent difference or do you think it will represent lack of difference? Do you know what I'm asking? Does that make sense?

Khalilah: I think we should keep it Color Blind.

Kim: OK, if you want to call it Color Blind I'll put it Color Blind. But what I'd like to know is why you want to it to be Color Blind. So how would we define, no not define, but what would we want Color Blind to represent?

Khalilah: People don't understand the differences so they're Color Blind.

For Khalilah, Nicole, and Dauntai race is an important part in how they interpret and construct the meanings of their bodies, not to mention how they see their worlds. Delpit (1995) says that many well intended teachers claim that they do not see color, they only see children. In other words, the claim they are not prejudice. She goes on to suggest that if in fact one does not

see color, than one does not really see children. The portion of transcripts I asked the girls to read was not the portion where we had discussed their perceptions of the differences between black and white people. I knew I was going to use those conversations somewhere, I had just not figured that out where or how, for I did not think I had a good enough understanding of what they were saying to write about that as I have not explored as a reader or writer issues of ethnic studies. But they did not know my intentions. Khalilah's question was not only an important question to our past, present, and future conversations, but a very subtle way of telling me that I was "Color Blind" by not including those sections. There was so much from our conversations about race and racism that could not fit within that chapter I had shown the girls, and yet it seemed important to some of them that I have a chapter on "Color Blind." As Lincoln (1996) suggests, research is "first and foremost a community project" (p. 13), and Color Blind is what they wanted me to write.

What became so interesting were the conversations that followed, for Khalilah's question led us down a path toward deeper levels of dialogue. A path that invited us to better see color as we sat around the table and talked further about the ways they saw differences between black and white people. Our conversations reminded me once again of the power of story and the importance of dialoguing across difference. "The stories we hear and the stories we tell shape the meaning and texture of our lives at every stage and juncture....They attach us to others and to our own histories..." (Witherell & Noddings, 1991, p.1). Caring relations hold that "the self is formed and given meaning in the context of its relations with others....[and] requires dialogue" (Witherell & Noddings, 1991, p. 5-7). It is through open dialogue that we begin to acknowledge the complexities of language and that which we take for granted. At this crossroad, we are often called to "confront the fact that 'what everybody knows' is all too often not what everybody knows" (Witherell & Noddings, 1991, p. 7).

And yet there are times when dialogue can fall short, times where not everyone has a voice that is heard. While our conversations opened spaces for a new dialogue, they simultaneously closed spaces for others. Yet it is not until we are willing to try, willing to listen to something new, that we will begin to see a world we may have been blind to all along. The conversations, while

initially were more how Khalilah, Nicole, and Dauntai felt about the differences between the races, soon became conversations about racism. Alysa sat quiet for the most part, she was the only white girl of the four, and I was more interested in listening. It was my judgment that for this particular conversation, if their voices were to be heard, mine needed to be silenced. I had too much power in many ways, and yet because I was hoping to understand a world unlike what I had ever experienced, and they held the power to speak or not speak, that power would keep me silent.

As I sat and listened I found myself wanting to break down some of the stereotypes being discussed, particularly the stereotypes about white people; but I felt they needed the space to say these things. I needed to understand their stereotypes, for all I had were my own. Additionally, I thought they needed to be able to have this conversation with an adult. So often throughout the semester they would comment on adults not understanding what it is like to be their age, and how adults do not listen to them. In many ways they were cutting themselves off from a source of knowledge and understanding that can only come from adults. Much of the literature on adolescent development addresses how teens turn toward peers for advice and information (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Erikson, 1968; Miller, 1993; Pipher, 1994), and yet there needs to be ways to help young girls seek and share information from and with adults as well.

But more than my belief that they needed to be able to have this conversation with an adult, I needed to have this conversation with teenage girls. Particularly girls who have resisted in many ways completely giving up their views of the world to those who have the power to name experiences. And yet as I reflect back on our conversations I am now beginning to see that what I thought might have been resistance to dominate discourse may be a false resistance. One of Khalilah's comments helped me to better see some of their resistance, I'm just not sure whether the resistance is more of an acceptance of what the culture of power has labeled "true."

Khalilah: I bet you if a grown up reads this book they think different. I think that a black person read that, a grown up, and read what we said about the black and whites they would think different....Because they're older and they think more in a positive way then we do....I just think that younger kids say and think things in a negative way more than grown ups do.

Nicole: No no no cause...I think that we're [younger people] more positive about that situation because, I mean, the older generation they're, you know, their parents were more, you know, they taught them more about, I think it really goes down a line to um how they [white people] low rated us, and everything like that. But I think that um we're more positive about it, because my mother's mother was real strict on her about stuff like that, and she always taught her about stuff like that, but my momma, she don't, you know, she don't pressure me about learning about how we were treated and, but you know, I mean, I think that we're more [long pause]

Kim: More accepting?

Nicole: Yeah.

Kim: I see that, but I don't know what you see. You said [meaning Khalilah] you think that that um younger people are less accepting than older people.

Khalilah: I just think that younger kids say and think things in a negative way more than grown ups do. They like

Nicole: We we don't care what we say. I mean

Khalilah: Yeah that's what I'm tryin' to say, we don't care, the grown ups, they make sure they gotta say everything, not all of them, but you know it might be a couple, like I don't know, like uh uh a rich black person, they think that in a positive, try and say it in a more intelligent way to not, just to say, I mean, we say anything but

Nicole: Not to really, you know like say that [pause] black people are you know

Khalilah: Better.

As I listened to these girls it seemed to me that they were resisting silencing, and they were having the opportunity to do so. Now I wonder. The silencing as I interpreted it, was labeled by Khalilah as "think in a positive" or "say it in a more intelligent way." The resistance, what people their age do, Khalilah calls "a negative way." As the conversation continued, in a sense, they began challenging some of their own stereotypes, for no sooner would they say "white people do this.....or black people do that.....they would stop, and say, well not all white people or not all black people." And yet what I did not hear at the time, something that is now beginning to haunt

me as it shows just how deep racist stereotypes lie beneath the surface, that what they were most often breaking down were the stereotypes about white people, but not the stereotypes about black people. How can we, particularly white scholars engaged in democratic critical inquiry, become more aware and critical with our participants of oppressive storylines if they are so ingrained within our culture that some of us cannot even see them? Had I even attempted to get them to look critically at what they were saying I very well could have helped them further perpetuate the oppression, for I was not hearing the racism within the storylines they were telling at the time. By dialoguing across racial difference, these girls have taught me how to see some of the subtleties of racism, including my own; something I have been blind to most of my life. In many ways it seemed to me that being able to say some of these things out loud in a racially mixed group was important to Khalilah, Nicole, and Dauntai. And it was as equally important to me, more so now that I am better able to see what was being said. "Grown ups...try and say it in a more intelligent way," more intelligent to whom, and by whose definition, and at whose expense, is what I wonder.

What follows are portions from our conversations that were initiated earlier in the semester, as well as the conversations that came from them specifically wanting me to have a section on Color Blind. I am very uneasy with this section, and have struggled a great deal to find ways of representing their voices. In many ways I do not understand enough to write this section, and yet Color Blind is the section they wanted me to write. And given that this is first and foremost a community project, I needed to be responsive to what they wanted me tell. The conversations we had were difficult conversations, as none of us had ever had this type of conversation in this particular type of setting. We struggled to know what and how to communicate, in many ways, I sensed the struggle was to communicate without hurting another persons' feelings. Often I did not know how or what I was asking in response to what I was hearing, and in similar ways, they were struggling to articulate their views to me. For Khalilah, Dauntai, and Nicole Color Blind is about race and racism, and represents how people do not understand their perceptions of the differences between black and white people. For me, Color Blind represents the subtlety of the dominate

storylines that plague our culture, and how those who are "like" the power of culture, regardless of efforts made, can often times miss these subtleties, and thus, run the risk of unconsciously nourishing racist scholarship.

Khalilah: People don't understand the differences [between black and white people] so they're color blind.

Kim: OK, that makes sense. Can you explain a little bit more? What are some of the differences people don't understand?

Khalilah: I don't know.

Kim: You don't know? OK....I look at you as a person, not just what you look like, what you are, who you are, um so help me, help me understand how to write about Color Blind. Cause she [Nicole] said that it [Color Blind] is when you look at a person, you don't look at the color they are you look at them as a human being.

Khalilah: Yeah but you can look at them as a human being, but you don't gotta look at their color, it's just certain things when you have to look at their color, understand how they are, certain things.

Kim: OK like what kind of certain things?

Khalilah: I don't, I don't, like you have to understand things um, I don't know, I don't know, you just have to understand [Nicole laughs] certain things.

Kim: OK but I need, but I need to know what certain things are, what is important to you that your color is part of the understanding? Does that make sense?

Khalilah: Well I don't know if this is, but, um I don't know. I don't know.

Kim: Yes you do, you just have to find a way to say it.

Khalilah: OK, [pause] OK this is how I, this is what I think, OK, you know how they say uh like a black young man has to struggle to go to college, to get into a nice college. And they say that like he can become a professional in something. And I bet you somewhere if someone looked at him, I bet you he would want them to think of him as a [pause] black educated young man.

Kim: OK so color would be important in that distinction?

Khalilah: Yes cause there's not as many.

"You know how they say...a black young man has to struggle to go to college...and they say that like he can become a professional." Who is the "they" and why are there "not as many" is what I wonder? How and where are we teaching young girls that it is difficult for a "black young man" to go to college? What about black young women--are they not part of the conversation? I wonder why Khalilah, when talking about when color is important to understanding a person, did not mention girls or women. What I am left questioning is that if Khalilah refers to the need for inserting color when talking about being educated, does this storyline disempower or empower; liberate or oppress black young men and women? I do not even begin to know.

Exploring Language and Difference: Shades Within the Image

Language was a predominant theme in our discussions about racial differences. Notice who is being considered "different."

Nicole: I mean we're just different period, because I mean, like

Khalilah: We talk different too.

Kim: Yeah?

Khalilah: I don't like, I don't like how white people talk....You see a lot people, a lot of white people....And a lot of white people they say "like" when they, they be it be "like" um, you know we was um "like" and um, and "like" we went there, and then "like" after that we went to the mall, and then "like" we seen some boys, and then "like" they came up to use, they say "like" all the time.

This particular conversation took place prior to talking specifically about Color Blind. And yet both Nicole's and Khalilah's comments, "we're just different period" and "We talk different too" show their perpetuation of the dominate storyline of who is considered "different." Neither of the girls say, you [white people] are just different period, or you, [white people] talk different. They describe themselves as the ones who are "different." And yet Khalilah does not like how white people talk, but she will not call them (white people) different, she calls herself different. I am left pondering whether I too thought of them as different, rather than me as different, or we as

different from each other. As we started to further explore some of their perceptions about the differences among black and white people, language entered the conversation again. This time it was not so subtle.

Nicole: I'm talkin' about like, language....How we all talk.

Kim: How do you talk?

Nicole: I'm sayin' um Caucasian people, most of the time they either have like a um, a country accent, but it doesn't have to be real country but you can always tell.

Kim: Southern accent? I notice a southern accent here.

Alysa: I think everybody is their own person no matter what color or race or whatever they are and if, and when everybody mingles no matter who they are they either become different or alike.

Kim: What do you mean?

Alysa: Like with the language, if like people can just get together and everybody just speak the same or people can spread apart and speak differently.

Kim: OK so you think as people come together they start being more alike?

Alysa: Yeah, so they understand each other cause they learn how to talk like each other.

Khalilah: There are black people that talk like white people.

Kim: How do white people talk?

Khalilah: I don't know, it's just different. White people do talk like black people in a way. No a black person talk like a white person but there not too many white people.

[Someone knocks on the door I get up and go to the door and the conversation continues without me.]

Khalilah: You ever heard a black person talk like a white girl?

Nicole: Umhum.

Khalilah: That's cause they hang around too many white girls.

In many ways it seems that our involvement with cultures unlike our own has been limited. I thought time and time again that many of the things these girls said were not true for me, nor for my perceptions of the "white" people I know. And yet my experience has primarily been with

upper middle class white communities in the west, and predominantly white schools. Subsequently my understanding of African American or Indian culture is extremely limited, not to mention my understanding of the part of the country with which I now live. Similarly, it seems these girls have been in predominantly black communities and black schools, for their understanding of some white cultures appear limited. Both of Khalilah's examples of how white people talk seem to come from her immediate environment. The first example was most likely a person her age as included in the content of the conversation was "malls and boys." Her second example is indicative of the part of the country and the community with which she lives.

Yet this time, unlike earlier when talking about difference, Khalilah was willing to name the difference on white people. What I found interesting about this conversation was how Alysa and Khalilah and Nicole had explanations for why people talk different. Alysa contributes language to who you are around, your community or subculture, regardless of race or color. Khalilah and Nicole however, contribute language difference specifically to race. Having moved from the west to the south I too would have contributed language to subcultures, particularly the part of the country and community with which a person lives. I cannot even count the number of times I have said something that I would have never said while in the west. But then I had never heard some of the southern expressions before. Language, and not only verbal, is the mediating tool for the transfer of culture (Vygotsky, 1973; Dewey, 1922). Yet whose language is being named right, and whose is being called different? As suggested by Delpit (1995),

the linguistic form a student brings to school is intimately connected with loved ones, community, and personal identity. To suggest that this is 'wrong' or, even worse, ignorant, is to suggest that something is wrong with the student and his or her family.
(p.53)

While the girls were using different interpretive frames for explaining language difference, I am left wondering whether Alysa's explanation of peoples' language, and Nicole's and Khalilah's are not the same. Both would fall within Delpit (1995) claim that linguistic form "is intimately connected with loved ones, community, and personal identity" (p. 53), and yet

Khalilah's comment earlier, "Grown ups [black grown ups]...try and say it in a more intelligent way" shows just whose language is considered the norm. As the conversation continues, the oppressive and racist storylines surface further.

Khalilah: Our language is worsen than ya'all.

Kim: What do you mean?

Khalilah: I mean, I'm sayin'...It sounds more more slang, I don't know how to say it. Like, you might be like, you was at home chillin' and stuff, and we don't say [she articulates every syllable] chilling, ing, we was at home chill i n g with our friends [enunciating every syllable] [everyone laughs].

Khalilah: We don't say that, I don't know, what's it called when we talk like that? You don't hear a lot of white people do that.

Khalilah's interpretation of her race partially comes from how television sitcoms represent black people. When I had a colleague read a draft of this chapter she pointed out that "i n g" came from the television show "Martin." Early in the semester in one of the personal biography questions I asked the girls to list their two favorite television shows. Khalilah put "Martin" as one of hers because "it was funny." The conversation continues.

Khalilah: We don't, we don't talk more, you'all, I mean some [white people], talk more proper.

Kim: What's proper?

Khalilah: Like when when you would pronounce everything, well not every single thing but you pronounce the word right.

Kim: OK. Do you think there's a difference

Nicole: Some people be, say we be doin' this...and we be doin' that.

Kim: Yeah, I don't say that.

Khalilah: But when I get around people I know I got a talk right, I talk right. I know how to talk right when I have to, but when I don't have to I talk

Kim: Who tells us what talking right is?

Nicole: Every time, the first approach is to where people look at you from. Now if from that time on because you know like if you met a person and they look, you know, hoodlumfied.

Kim: What does that look like?

Nicole: Terrorizing...always doin' stuff just terrible. Or you know they come up to you like "whass up" you're like oh I know that girl yeah she talk all, but see if they came up to you and talk real, you know appropriate, you know, not really appropriate at the point you know where it's just pathetic, but you know, pronounce all their words in all their sentences and everything like it should be, you have a better impression of that person.

Kim: OK so you think it's more appropriate to pronounce your words when you say it?

Nicole: When you're approaching somebody you don't know. Cause you see, we're around each other every day, we just, it don't matter you know, we don't worry about how we talk.

Alysa: My mom and dad taught that when your like meeting somebody new you should always be very very quiet and when they start to like let go and hang out then that's when you start to.

Returning again to Delpit's (1995) claim that there are codes and rules for participating in the culture of power, and these rules relate to "linguistic forms, communicative strategies, and presentation of self" (p. 25). These girls are beginning to understand the codes and rules, for they know when to "talk right," or not talk at all. And some are correct, for if they hope to succeed economically, they need access to the politically popular dialect, the language of power (Delpit, 1995). And yet they think "this is appropriate or right." Given that language will affect how someone "looks at you" if they do not speak "right" they will not be able to create the desired images that are perceived as powerful.

Furthermore, those of us who engage in scholarly writing that use people's verbal narratives are forced to adhere to "Standard English." We are not suppose to write "talkin' or sayin' or thang or chillin'" without adding [sic] to the end to indicate that we know this is not a spelling mistake on our part. And yet the subtle message is that these words are "wrong," or even worse, sic[k]. In a discussion about writing the "book" as they call this dissertation, Nicole,

Khalilah, and Dauntai all thought it would make the book more interesting if it were written as their words sounded verses the "proper" spelling.

Trailing Racial Identity: Returning to "Fashion In"

While these girls are learning to desire and create the "images" deemed powerful, thus objectifying their bodies, there are multiple associations with these images. "Fashion In" and "Fashion Out" and all the subsequent ramifications exist for these girls. But now, Khalilah, Nicole, and Dauntai tell their stories about these images specifically in regards to racial differences. Some of these stories come with a great deal of pride in their perceived "difference," and others show how they are learning about their "race" through limited forms of representation. I am no longer convinced that the underlying stories within our conversations are solely about racial differences. Social class, segregation, and limited experience with diverse populations are subtly laced throughout. These subtleties have taken me a long time to see.

Nicole: And also our clothes and how we dress.

Khalilah: Is different from white people.

Nicole: Because you know when black women go to dress up they wear you know real, you know, real classy suits and stuff like that, and I look at a lot of the teachers and they wear [she laughs] those dresses, just those dresses, you know those long dresses. And um, they look a mess.

Kim: Which ones? The white ones or the black ones or both?

Khalilah: Both, I mean, some of um here, like Miss K. she can dress. You don't see, oh you usually don't see a whi, a Caucasian person dressing like that.

Nicole: You know, like real classy like.

Khalilah: Yeah.

The white people they are referring to are "teachers." I am left wondering what the extent of their encounters with white people are outside of their school and neighborhoods. And yet to this point, throughout all the conversations about "Fashion In" and "Fashion Out" never once was

difference between how black and white girls dress openly discussed in relation to "Fashion In" and "Fashion Out." These girls were talking about black and white women, not black and white girls. They often look to women to understand what or how to be. It was not until Alysa was called to the office for awhile that black girls surfaced publicly in the conversation about "Fashion In." I asked, "Do you think when you think of Fashion In and Fashion Out do you... three [Khalilah, Nicole, and Dauntai] would you...call something Fashion In that maybe Alysa would call Fashion Out?" Nicole and Khalilah thought they would, while Dauntai thought that "sometimes" she would. Part of this "Fashion In" is based on economic power, again perceived differences emerge.

Khalilah: And we like buyin' more, like you see black people buy more clothes, well you might see black people buy more clothes and more shoes than white people.

Nicole: But I didn't appreciate it, who was it, I think it was Reebok and Timberland, who said they don't want color people buyin' their stuff.

Alysa: They did?

Kim: When was this?

Nicole: Yeah they said on the TV.

Alysa: Oh my gosh!

Nicole: And I mean, well if you really wanna know what I think, I think we buy more from them than any other race, because when you look at all the drug deals, you know all the young people that are on the streets, what do they have on?

Nicole's last comment, "I think we buy more from them than any other race, because when you look at all the drug deals, you know all the young people that are on the streets, what do they have on?" made me sad. I wondered why she associated her "race" with "young people on the streets" involved in drug deals rather than with any other association. hooks (1990) suggests that the representation of black men on television is often associated with violence or crime, and because TV is one of the primary mediums for propaganda African Americans need to be critical of whose interests are being served and whose are not through this mode of representing black

culture. Nicole associated her "race" with young men, but not young women. In connecting this with the need to learn how to become aware and more critical of the dominate storylines that tell us "what is right" we need to remember that these storylines are often portrayed through image (Bustle, 1996; Eisner, 1984), and in this case, an absence of image. And it seems that "images" [i.e., body images, social class images, etc.] are one of the predominant ways all these girls are learning to understand their worlds. And for Dauntai, Nicole, and Khalilah, but not Alysa, specifically racial images are part of their primary interpretive frames for constructing meaning.

Nicole: Yeah. They said, they said you know they didn't want us to buy it because they just wanted to make it for Caucasian people and I mean, how can the possibly do that? What about a mixed child?

Khalilah: Didn't Tommy Hilfigure, I don't know why people buy his clothes, but I do, I would

Dauntai: He racist, he a designer he make clothes.

Khalilah: And we buy his clothes all the time.

Dauntai: And stuff, and he racist, he don't like black people. But he may, he make clothes like what we wear and stuff, you know for um um his business....And plus

Khalilah: Timberlands and Reebok.

Dauntai: Everybody um like, a lot of black people be wearin' Classics, Reebok Classics and stuff, a lot of girls and stuff do.

Nicole: And they should not have said that because, I mean, but you know they not gonna stop buyin' the stuff, but I mean, that is very wrong, cause they ought to appreciate, I mean they get a lot of business from black people.

I think Nicole's comment, "that is very wrong...they ought to appreciate..." is right on. Reebok and Tommy Hilfigure are both brands that are very popular with adolescent girls and boys in this particular school, more importantly, they are clothing styles and shoes associated with "Fashion In." And whether Tommy Hilfigure or people at Reebok are racist is not the issue as much as they are perceived as racist by these girls. It seems then, to be a no win situation for these girls. They see the people that own and design these brands as racist, and yet because these are

styles considered "Fashion In" their bodies subsequently, if adorned in these products, become a display for the subtle perpetuation of racism. And if they do not wear these brands, and everyone perceived as powerful else is, they may run the risk of being "Fashion Out."

Kim: OK, do you think there's a reason why you buy more clothes...that black people buy more than white people?

Khalilah: Appearance, they like to look neat, I mean you know, I'm not sayin' that white people don't like to look neat [says that part really softly]....Cause they, it seem like they don't really care, some do, but it seem like they just put their clothes on, shoes, come to school, but we have to go and we have to have a new shirt, we have to be clean. I cannot wear no dirty white sneakers [Nicole is talking the whole time but can't hear her] and you know we look, and their shoes be dull, they be dirty.

Kim: Do you agree with this [I ask Alysa]?

Alysa: With me I like to shop and get new clothes but I can't because, well my mom won't let me go to the mall.

Khalilah: I wouldn't want to come school, just put anything on. It takes me a long time to find my clothes and stuff.

Nicole: Cause people gonna talk about you.

Dauntai: Umhum....Cause I talk about people, I not gonna lie, I talk about people....I talk about somebody just about every day.

Kim : What are some of the things you talk about?

Dauntai: How their hair look, what they got on, stuff like that....I mean, some people like, they might got somethin' on and um it might be cute or whatever, but them um it might be how they got it make them look, um I don't know.

Nicole: I hate when people look a mess and then think they cute.

Dauntai: Yeah.

Economic power is what is necessary for the image portrayed as powerful if to avoid being "talked about." Yet some of these girls are associating the images as difference between races. It

seems that when "difference" is determined by Khalilah, Nicole, and Dauntai, whether the difference is in clothing styles, behavior, purchasing power, language, body shape, etc. the reason behind the difference is race. These three girls are using race and racial images as the predominant interpretive frames for constructing meaning. Race is not however a conscious interpretive frame for Alysa.

Listening to some of the girls conversations left me wondering if what they are seeing are really differences in social class. There seems to be a class of people that is missing in their conversations, I wonder what their perceptions would be if this class were to be seen. False consciousness is necessary if the culture of power is to benefit from racism. Notice how segregation plays a part in perceptions.

Khalilah:...I'm going to the hair now, you might see a black person with their hair like Nicole and you know, white people their hair can't stay up like that. So there's a girl go here, she wear baggy jeans, she dress like a boy, she try to put her hair up in a ponytail, and then put the "plats" comin' down, and she'll try and make it puff up [Nicole laughs]. See I'm saying you don't see too many white girls doing that unless they coping a black person.

Khalilah:...She try put her hair like ours.

Alysa: It's fittin' in.

Nicole & Khalilah: Yeah.

Khalilah:...Because more black people are popular than white if it's, if there's more black people in the school. You can go to a white school and there'd be more white people popular than blacks.

Kim: Is this school more black people or more white people?

Khalilah: More black.

Kim: More black people. And so are the black people more popular than the white people in this school?

Khalilah, Nicole, & Dauntai: Yes.

Nicole: Because, but see, because there's more black people...But, you know, you go to lunch and you see white girls sittin' at a table, well they're probably popular in their little group they hang in, but we're talkin' about school wise.

Khalilah: The whole school.

Nicole: In that case a black girl would be more popular because this is a black school, it's in a black neighborhood.

Khalilah: So then white people would try to fit in since it's more black people popular so they try and dress like you, do their hair like you, so then they fit in, more, or they think they fit in.

Nicole's comment, "...this is a black school, it's in a black neighborhood." shows partially how racism and classism can be perpetuated. Yet for these girls the issue is "fitting in" and fitting is associated with the way a person "looks." Returning to "Fashion In" and "Fashion Out" these girls are judging each other and "talking about" each other. Because Alysa came late the day the girls began cutting out pictures in magazines and creating the categories we used, she was not a part of the naming or language construction. She used their language however in order to "fit in" with our group. I am left wondering what would have happened if the ethnic mix of the group were the same, or the numbers of black and white girls were the same. For racial and ethnic issues to surface openly there seems to be power in numbers, and the need to be comfortable in the "research environment." Color Blind, and how race openly surfaced as a predominant interpretive frame for Dauntai, Nicole, and Khalilah three quarters of the way through the semester and yet this is crucial to understanding how these three girls interpret and construct meaning; their body-narratives.

Epilogue

The flowers are open, the trees blooming. No longer trapped inside by the dead of winter, life begins to renew itself as the season changes and comes full circle. Stories, like the seasons, go in circles; circles, that while come to a close, offer new possibilities for the future. The journey, both private and public, has ended; and simultaneously has just begun. I think back to the roads Dauntai, Khalilah, Nicole, Alysa, and I traveled together, and the seasons I came through alone.

I think back to the times we spent together; the times they made me laugh, "Ms. Oliver you walk with your feet turned out" as Nicole and Khalilah told me one day. And the times they made me cry, "I think people will pay more attention to me if I didn't wear my scarf....Some girls don't pay attention to me because I wear a scarf and I don't like that. Sometimes I just feel like taking my scarf off. When I do I think everyone will like me even the boys" as Khalilah wrote to me in her journal. Or, "I'm afraid that sometime in the future I might get so fat that I end up becoming anorexic or bulimic, and if that happens then I could die sooner..." as Alysa read from a card the first time we shared our stories as a group.

Listening to their voices, the stories they told, made me wonder how and where we might include a critical component within curriculum. "I get kind of depressed when I look in the mirror because I always see myself as fat" (Alysa, Journal entry, 11-14-96). "Every time I'm about to get in the shower I always notice my body. I usually think, maybe I need to loose some of this fat on my stomach. I think it looks nasty to have a big stomach" (Khalilah, Journal entry, 10-5-96). "When I'm around boys I wonder what they think about me not matter if I like them or not, because I know for a fact that boys look at you. I always wonder do I look like I'm qualified for what they are looking for..." (Nicole, Journal entry, 11-14-96).

I remember the many times they asked me to look outside and see something new. "I mean, some some races, well when we get perms we try to make, you know better ourselves because some other races already low rate us because of our color..." as Nicole said one day. And when Khalilah said, "It seems to me, [pause] that um, I don't know how to say this, but it seems to me black and white people have, that black people have the same kind of opinion on what they think

and white people, they might see something different from us and we might see something different from them." I was left wondering what happens to black girls who use race as their predominant interpretive frame, particularly visual images of race, when the predominantly black schools they attend have far more white teachers? Does this contribute to pushing them toward peers that "look" similar, or the media's representation of African American young people, or parents as an avenue for learning? I began to think more about curriculums and the need for multiple visual representations that are inclusive rather than exclusive.

I also remember the times they brought to the surface what I had buried deep inside, hidden from the world. "What do you mean you write down things you don't want to tell anybody?" asked Nicole. As a learner, it became very clear to me that I do not feel comfortable in certain environments, so rather than speak to only hear "Well you just think different," or "You are just different," I spent much of my time writing, and many times writing between the lines, thus silencing myself. Not all that unlike what Khalilah, Nicole, Dauntai, and Alysa are learning.

These four girls helped me think about what I was doing, and wanted to do as an educator. "Someone in good shape...feels healthy...don't think how others feel about them...eat healthy...have a good way of living...live in a good environment" as Dauntai wrote that very first day. "I just think that men...everybody should have muscle, but men should show it and women shouldn't." as Alysa said one day. Yet Nicole disagreed.

She's not too muscular, she's just firm....But I think that um women should, I mean, it's OK for women to look like she [the dancer] looks because it just um, it does give you a better definition on how you work on your body health and how you um work out and do whatever to get that way. But I don't think that that's more masculine if you look like that.

How can girls learn to be healthy if they cannot see the storylines that lie beneath the images portrayed of women's bodies; images that work on levels below consciousness (Bustle, 1996)? Finding ways to help girls become aware and critical of the cultural storylines that plague the images so that they may be able to see both the empowering and liberating stories and images, as well as the disempowering and oppressive stories and images, in order that they may make

choices. How can girls choose to be healthy later in life if, as adolescent girls, they cannot see and name multiple choices? Image was a predominant way of constructing meaning of the body for all four girls. Where are the multiple visual images for girls to learn from, and learn how to critique in school curriculum?

They showed me ways to meet their needs, and the needs of others their age through my work, and made very clear, once again, the importance of relationships in educational research. Over the course of the journey I spent a great deal of time thinking about the purpose of educational research, and who it serves.

Nicole: I think it was an excellent experience because it had, this prepared advantages of teachin' people how to communicate better with others and it helped us, you know, express our feelings more, you know how most of the time when you're talkin' to somebody you don't really know them, well it kinda helped us in that way....Also we got to see [emphasis added] how much adults can, I mean, you know, really get involved with teens if they really, if they really care about what they have to say, or if they really want to learn about things we, you know, see [emphasis added] every day, things we talk about.

Kim: So you think this has been a good way to do that for me?

Nicole: Yeah.

I remember thinking about how we conduct research. Do we treat the people we seek to understand as objects, or human beings? I remember thinking about who educational research serves to benefit: knowledge creators, educators, the community from which the understanding is derived? I remember thinking about how we share the knowledge or understanding that comes from research. Do we write in ways that only certain populations can understand and make meaning from? Do we write in ways that show our compassion and desire to reach people's emotions? Do we break things into dispassionate parts and categories, or do we write holistically, ways that are natural to how some of us understand? I remember fighting against what was so unnatural to my way of learning, seeing, and constructing meaning; and the struggle I took on to find a way of writing that was natural to my way of understanding and seeing the world. And I

remember hearing more than once, you will have a hard time becoming part of the "community" if you do it this way. Yet not everyone understands in the same ways, so why should we have to write the same if we hope to be part of a community?

I remember thinking that research is not just about a sophisticated well designed study with a sound purpose, or finding something new, or confirming or disconfirming some hypothesis; it is also an expression of hope and caring for human beings, it is a yearning (hooks 1990) to create a better world for all people to live, and a desire for a different ending to an oppressive story.

I wanted to know how the girls felt about the time we had spent together. I remember when they began asking when my last day would be, whether I would be back next semester, or if they had to go back to their regular class. We had talked briefly about how the experience had been as a group, but by this time I realized that what they were writing in their journals was a little different. I had started to see how their journals had become a private conversation, one with which I valued dearly. Their journals were a space for them to voice what we are often times socially silenced from saying. And so I asked the girls to write in their journals about how "this" experience had been for them.

I liked talking about all of the things we talked about. I liked this class because we got to talk about things I wouldn't have really talked about w/ my friends. At first I didn't feel comfortable talking about this stuff around you but then I got used to it....I didn't feel comfortable at first because I didn't know you. Sometimes when I just meet people I'm very quiet....It was kind of a challenge for me because you wanted us to explain what we had to say, and some of the things were hard to explain. I did like working w/ this group. I wouldn't mind working w/ them again....We think of things in different ways such as when we discussed about black and white. (Khalilah, Journal entry 11-26-96)

I have had a lot of fun working in this group because it gave me a chance to really see other people's point of view's on different subjects that we have talked about and also to tell an older person how younger people are because some older people don't understand and they

act like they don't want to take time to listen to what other younger people are like or what they think. (Dauntai Journal entry 11-26-96)

These girls had talked time and time again about adults, whether in reference to their mothers or teachers, or in their stories about how "adults just don't understand us." And yet it did not seem that they were pushing adults away as much as asking adults to listen and understand and help them learn. They were not asking adults to merely "know about" people their age, they were asking adults to "understand and listen." Not once did any of these four girls push me away because I was an adult.

And yet I still wondered at times whether I really had been responsive to them, or if I had pushed "my" agenda at the expense of theirs.

Kim: Do you think there are things you wished we had talked about that we didn't? [no one said anything--long pause] Alysa what do you think, I mean what has this experience been like for you?

Khalilah: I think it be different for Alysa because it's a group of more black girls.

Alysa: It's been fun and I've got to talk about like feelings and how I feel about certain things and stuff and how I'm glad I could help with your book and stuff.

Kim: Have you learned something about other people?

Alysa: Yeah.

Kim: Have you learned something about other people?

Nicole: She [Alysa] didn't really say as much, I mean because theirs more black people in this group we express, I mean, we express more our, you know, what we had to say about racism and stuff like that. But I don't really know what she thinks because she's from, she's speakin' from a white person's point of view but she didn't really, you know, really say anything.

Alysa: I always figure that black people would want to like everybody to be the same you know, not really worry about the differences, cause that's like how I feel.

What I found so interesting in Nicole's comment was that it did not indicate that she saw Dauntai or Khalilah as individual girls with individual ideas about race or racism because they were "black." Again, race being a predominant interpretive frame, and in this case denying individuality

within race. She very well could have learned something about Dauntai and Khalilah, but because they were similar colors their individual voices went unnoticed as she was looking to understand the "white" perspective of Alysa. And Alysa's comment about wanting everyone to be the same speaks to the power of the norm.

I remember the sheer loneliness I felt that first Tuesday I woke up at 5 o'clock in the morning but did not make the 45 minute drive to their school to talk with them while sitting at our round table with that silly tape player Khalilah loved. I remember the utter exhaustion that would not go away, and the fear that I would not know how or what to write. Khalilah, Alysa, Nicole, and Dauntai had taught me something about our society, our culture. They helped me to better understand my role as a teacher educator and researcher in ways that might allow me to be more responsive to society, and how I might work to help move our society to function more justly. They helped me to find a language to begin to express what it is I hope to do. And they showed me just how important it is to continue working with adolescent girls in hopes of finding ways to help girls learn to become more aware and critical of the empowering and disempowering stories and images of girl's and women's bodies. It was Harry Wolcott (1990) who said, "Writing is a form of thinking" (p. 21). Our story was my way of thinking, seeing, and coming to better understand some of the issues that are crucial to girl's and women's health.

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Appendices

Appendix A

A Physically Educated Person

HAS learned skills necessary to perform a variety of physical activities

1....moves using concepts of body awareness, space awareness, effort, and relationships.

2....demonstrates competence in a variety of manipulative, locomotor, and non-locomotor skills.

3...demonstrates competence in combinations of manipulative, locomotor, and non-locomotor skills performed individually and with others.

4....demonstrates competence in many different forms of physical activity.

5...demonstrates proficiency in a few forms of physical activity.

6...has learned how to learn new skills.

IS physically fit

7...assesses, achieves and maintains physical fitness.

8...designs safe, personal fitness programs in accordance with principles of training and conditioning.

DOES participate regularly in physical activity

9....participates in health enhancing physical activity at least three times a week.

[This is no longer accurate in accordance with the Surgeon General's Report on Health and Physical Activity (1996).]

10....selects and regularly participate in lifetime physical activities.

KNOWS the implications of and the benefits from involvement in physical activities

11...identifies the benefits, costs, and obligations associated with regular participation in physical activity.

12...recognizes the risk and safety factors associated with regular participation in physical activity.

13...applies concepts and principles to the development of motor skills.

14...understands that wellness involves more than being physically fit.

15...knows the rules, strategies, and appropriate behaviors for selected physical activities.

16...recognizes that participation in physical activity can lead to multi-cultural and international understanding.

17...understands that physical activity provides the opportunity for enjoyment, self-expression and communication.

VALUES physical activity and its contributions to a healthful lifestyle

18...appreciates the relationships with others that result from participation in physical activity.

19...respects the role that regular physical activity plays in the pursuit of life-long health and well-being.

20...cherishes the feelings that result from regular participation in physical activity.

(NASPE, 1992, p.7)

Appendix B

A Physically Educated Person

1. Demonstrates competency in many movement forms and proficiency in a few movement forms.
2. Applies movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of motor skills.
3. Exhibits a physically active lifestyle.
4. Achieves and maintains a health-enhancing level of physical fitness.
5. Demonstrates responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity setting.
6. Demonstrates understanding and respect for differences among people in physical activity settings.
7. Understands that physical activity provides opportunities for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction. (NASPE, 1995, p.1)

Appendix C

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Informed Consent for Teacher Participant

of Investigative Projects

Title of Project: Adolescents girls and boys body stories

Investigator: Kimberly L. Oliver

I. The Purpose of this Research/Project:

This project is designed to learn about the stories adolescent girls and boys tell about their bodies as it relates to health. Two classes of approximately 35 students in each class will be included in this study.

II. Procedures:

All the girls and boys in two of your classes will be asked to draw pictures, write stories and letters, and a few will be asked to participate in informal oral interviews with the researcher, Kimberly Oliver. You will also be asked to participate in informal interviews. These interviews will be audio-taped. The activities will take place during the regularly scheduled physical education and health classes. Not all students will participate in all activities planned for the two days per week. The project will begin in September of the 1996-1997 school year and end the week before Winter Vacation in December.

III. Risks:

There are no risks to you other than that of your regular physical education and health classes.

IV. Benefits of the Project:

The benefits from the project will be a better understanding of what adolescent girls and boys believe it means to have a healthy body and how they achieve this. This understanding can be used to help improve physical education and health classes for your students. At any time you may ask the researcher for research results.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality:

The student, teacher, school, and district will all be anonymous. Each student, teacher, the school, and the district will be given a pseudonym to protect the identities of the participants. Anything said to the researcher will be confidential between you and the researcher. When talking about, or writing about students or teacher, pseudonyms will ALWAYS be used. Every effort will be made to keep your name and the name of your students and school confidential. Results will be used to contribute to the professional literature and at professional conferences, however the pseudonyms will be used to protect the identities of all involved. The interviews will be audio-taped. These tapes will be kept by the researcher through the duration of the study and not shared with anyone other than those directly involved in the project. The tapes will be transcribed by the researcher and will be destroyed when the project is final. In some situations, it may be necessary for the investigator to break confidentiality. If child abuse is known or strongly suspected, investigators are required to notify the appropriate authorities. If a participant is believed to be a threat to herself/himself or others, the investigator should notify the appropriate authorities.

VI. Compensation:

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw:

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. All you will have to do is tell the researcher that you no longer want to participate. You are free not to answer any questions you do not wish to answer.

VIII. Approval of Research:

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the Department of Teaching and Learning and the Roanoke City Public Schools.

IX. Subject's Responsibilities:

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

X. Teacher Permission:

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my agree to participate in this project. I agree to abide by the rules of this project.

Signature

Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

Kimberly Oliver (Investigator)

Phone:953-4534

Dr. George Graham (Faculty Advisor)

Phone: 231-7545

Tom Hurd (Chair, IRB Research Division)

Phone: 231-5281

Appendix D

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Informed Consent for Student Participants

of Investigative Projects

Title of Project: Adolescents girls and boys body stories

Investigator: Kimberly L. Oliver

I. The Purpose of this Research/Project:

This project is designed to learn about the stories adolescent girls and boys tell about their body as it relates to health. Two classes of approximately 35 students in each class will be included in this study.

II. Procedures:

You will be asked to draw pictures, write stories and letters, and a few of you will be asked to talk with the researcher, Kimberly Oliver. You will do these activities during your physical education and health classes. Your teacher will be in the same room during these activities. The project will begin in September of the 1996-1997 school year and end the week before Winter Vacation in December. Some of the interviews will be audio-taped.

III. Risks:

There are no physical risks to you other than that of participating in the regular physical education and health classes taught by your teacher. Some of you may be asked to participate in small group discussions with me and two other students. We will be discussing issues related to health and your body. I will do my best to make sure you feel comfortable in the group. If you feel uncomfortable with any of the activities or conversations tell me and you can go back to your regular physical education activities.

IV. Benefits of the Project:

The project is designed to better understand your stories about what it means to have a healthy body. The more we can learn about you, and what is important to you, the better we can make your physical education and health classes.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality:

Your name, the name of your teacher and school will not be told to other people. When writing about what you say or your drawings or written stories, a pretend name will be used so no one will know who you are. Your stories and drawings will be used in articles and at conferences but your names will never be told. If you are asked to be part of an interview with the researcher we will tape record our conversations. I will keep all the tapes and no one else will get to listen to them. The only time I will break our confidentiality is if child abuse is known or strongly suspected. At this time I am required to notify the appropriate authorities. If a participant is believed to be a threat to herself/himself or others, I will need to notify the appropriate authorities.

VI. Compensation:

You will not get anything for participating in this study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw:

You are free to stop participating in the study at any time. All you will have to do is tell me that you don't want to participate anymore and you can go back to your regular class activities. You also do not have to answer any questions you are not comfortable answering.

VIII. Approval of Research:

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the Department of Teaching and Learning and the Roanoke City Public Schools.

IX. Subject's Responsibilities:

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

X. Subject's Permission:

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project.

If I participate, I may withdraw at any time without penalty. I agree to abide by the rules of this project.

Signature

Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

Kimberly Oliver (Investigator)

Phone: 953-4534

Dr. George Graham (Faculty Advisor)

Phone: 231-7545

Tom Hurd (Chair, IRB Research Division)

Phone: 231-5281

Appendix E

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Informed Consent for Participant's Parent/Guardian of Investigative Projects

Title of Project: Adolescents girls and boys body stories

Investigator: Kimberly L. Oliver

I. The Purpose of this Research/Project:

This project is designed to learn about the stories adolescent girls and boys tell about the meaning of their bodies as it relates to health. Two classes of approximately 35 students in each class will be included in this study.

II. Procedures:

Your child will be asked to draw pictures, write stories and letters, and may be asked to participate in informal oral interviews with the researcher, Kimberly Oliver. These interviews will be audio-taped. The activities will take place during the regularly scheduled physical education and health classes. Not all students will participate in all activities planned for the two days per week. The project will begin in September of the 1996-1997 school year and end the week before Winter Vacation in December.

III. Risks:

There are no physical risks to your child other than that of participating in their regular physical education and health classes taught by the teacher. Every effort will be made to insure an emotionally safe environment for your child. At any time your child may tell the researcher that they do not want to continue with the activities or in the conversations. Your child will then go back to the regular physical education activities.

IV. Benefits of the Project:

Possible benefits to your child will be a better understanding of what it means to have a healthy body. The benefits from the project will be a better understanding of what adolescent girls and boys believe it means to have a healthy body and how they achieve this. This understanding

can be used to help improve physical education and health classes for your child. At any time you may ask the researcher for research results.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality:

Your child's name, the name of his/her teacher and school will not be told to other people. When writing about what your child says or their drawings or written stories, a pretend name will be used so no one will know who they are. Your child's stories and drawings will be used in articles and at conferences but their names will never be told. If your child is asked to be part of an interview with the researcher we will tape record the conversations. I will keep all the tapes and no one else will get to listen to them other than the people doing the project. When the project is completed the interview tapes will be destroyed. The only time I will break the confidentiality is if child abuse is known or strongly suspected. At this time I am required to notify the appropriate authorities. If a participant is believed to be a threat to herself/himself or others, I will need to notify the appropriate authorities.

VI. Compensation:

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw:

Your child is free to withdraw from the study at any time. All they need to do is tell the researcher or their teacher that they no longer want to participate. Your child is free not to answer any questions he/she does not wish to answer.

VIII. Approval of Research:

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the Department of Teaching and Learning and the Roanoke City Public Schools.

IX. Subject's Responsibilities:

I hereby allow my child _____ to participate in this study.

X. Parent/Guardian Permission:

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my agree to allow my child _____ to participate in this project. I agree to abide by the rules of this project.

Signature

Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

Kimberly Oliver (Investigator)

Phone: 953-4534

Dr. George Graham (Faculty Advisor)

Phone: 231-7545

Tom Hurd (Chair, IRB Research Division)

Phone: 231-5281

Appendix F

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Informed Consent for Student Participants

of Investigative Projects

Title of Project: Adolescents girls body stories**Investigator:** Kimberly L. Oliver**I. The Purpose of this Research/Project:**

This portion of the project is designed to learn about the stories adolescent girls tell about their bodies. There will be four girls and the researcher working together.

II. Procedures:

You will be asked to draw pictures, write stories and letters, and participate in small group and individual interviews. The small groups will include you, three other girls, and myself. The individual interviews will be with me. The interviews w

ill be audio-taped. You will do these activities during your physical education and health classes. The project will begin in September of the 1996-1997 school year and end the week before Winter Vacation in December.

III. Risks:

There are no physical risks to you other than that of participating in the regular physical education and health classes taught by your teacher. In the small group interviews we will be discussing issues related to health and your body. I will do my best to make sure you don't feel uncomfortable. If you feel uncomfortable with any of the activities or conversations tell me and you can go back to your regular physical education activities.

IV. Benefits of the Project:

The project is designed to better understand your stories about what it means to have a healthy body. The more we can learn about you, and what is important to you, the better we can make your physical education and health classes.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality:

Your name, the name of your teacher and school will not be told to other people. When writing about what you say or your drawings or written stories, a pretend name will be used so no one will know who you are. Your stories and drawings will be used in articles and at conferences but your names will never be told. If you are asked to be part of an interview with the researcher we will tape record our conversations. I will keep all the tapes and no one else will get to listen to them. The only time I will break our confidentiality is if child abuse is known or strongly suspected. At this time I am required to notify the appropriate authorities. If a participant is believed to be a threat to herself/himself or others, I will need to notify the appropriate authorities.

VI. Compensation:

You will not get anything for participating in this study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw:

You are free to stop participating in the study at any time without penalty. All you will have to do is tell me that you don't want to participate anymore and you can go back to your regular class activities. You also do not have to answer any questions you are not comfortable answering.

VIII. Approval of Research:

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the Department of Teaching and Learning and the Roanoke City Public Schools.

IX. Subject's Responsibilities:

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

X. Subject's Permission:

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project.

If I participate, I may withdraw at any time without penalty. I agree to abide by the rules of this project.

Signature

Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

Kimberly Oliver (Investigator)

Phone: 953-4534

Dr. George Graham (Faculty Advisor)

Phone: 231-7545

Tom Hurd (Chair, IRB Research Division)

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Curriculum Vita

Kimberly L. Oliver**PERSONAL**Work Address

University of Alabama
College of Education
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EDUCATION

- Ph.D. Curriculum and Instruction: Physical Education Pedagogy
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, May 1997.
- M.A. Physical Education
California State University, Fresno, May 1994.
- B.A. Recreation Administration: Community and Private Enterprise
California State University, Chico, May 1990.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**1994-1997 Graduate Teaching Assistant, Virginia Tech**Physical Education Pedagogy Teaching Responsibilities:

Pre-Student Teaching Practicum (Fall 1994/Spring 1995) Assisted with the practicum seminar first semester, responsibilities included grading students weekly teaching reflection papers. Conducted student seminars second semester.

History and Principles of Physical Education (Spring 1996)
Designed and taught the course for undergraduate physical education and exercise science majors.

Supervised Student Teachers (Spring 1996)Basic Instruction Teaching Responsibilities:

Activity Courses: Designed and taught three activity classes each semester. Classes included: Beginning Jazz Dance, Weight Training, Step/Aerobic Dance, and Running Fitness.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (Continued)Technology/Internet Responsibilities:

Health and Physical Education Homepage (Spring 1995) Designed the internet homepage for the Health and Physical Education Department.

Computer Power Point/Email Training (Spring 1995) Taught undergraduate P.E. majors power point and e-mail.

Committees:

Governance Task Force Committee (Spring 1995) Student member of the task force committee designed to provide a plan for restructuring the college.

- 1992-1994** **Long-Term Substitute Teacher:** Fresno Unified School District, CA
 Long-term substitute taught in both middle and high school physical education classes.
- 1990-1992** **Elementary Physical Education Teacher:** Sierra Sands Unified School District, CA
 Taught 1st-6th grade physical education and all special education physical education.
 Adult Education Program: Designed and taught adult education aerobics program.

PUBLICATIONS

Oliver, K. L. & Bustle, L. (paper submitted, QSE). Collaborative stories and images: Adolescent girls' body-narratives.

Oliver, K. L. (in press). A journey into narrative: Mapping the meanings of physical education. Journal of Teaching in Physical Education.

Oliver, K. L., & Garrison, J. (in press). A narrative journey: Beyond the myth of the mind/body and self/society dualisms. Proceedings of the Fortieth Annual Meeting of the South Atlantic Philosophy of Education Society, (55-65).

Oliver, K. L., & Garrison, J. (1996). Reflective writing and kinesthetic listening: The other half of the dance. Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, 67 (6), 37-39.

NON-REFEREED PUBLICATIONS

Graham, G., Bell, K., Doering, N., Elliott, E., Krouscas, K., Manross, M., McCollum, S., Oliver, K., Pennington, T., Person, L., Poole, J., and Westfall, S. (in press). [Review of the book Student learning in physical education: Applying research to enhance instruction]. Journal of Teaching in Physical Education.

Oliver, K. L. (1995). Editorial Response to: "Should the development of a healthy lifestyle be the primary purpose of physical education?" Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, 66 (8), p. 6.

UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH

Oliver, K. L. (1994). A comparison of cardiovascular endurance levels of fifth grade students taught by physical education specialists and classroom teachers. Unpublished master's thesis, California State University, Fresno.

PRESENTATIONS

Oliver, K. L., & Bustle, L. (1997 Paper submitted for presentation) The intersection of two stories: Adolescent girl's and women reading cultural body stories and images. National Reading Conference 47th Annual Meeting, December 3-6, Scottsdale, AZ.

Oliver, K. L. (1997). A Silenced Dialogue: Adolescent girls' body narratives. Paper presented at the 20th annual meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association, Hilton Head, SC.

Oliver, K. L., & Bustle, L. (1997). A collaborative inquiry: Adolescent girls' body narratives. Paper presented at the International Qualitative Research in Education Conference, Athens, GA.

Oliver, K. L., & Garrison, J. (1996). A narrative journey: Beyond the myth of the mind/body and self/society dualisms. Paper presented at the meeting of the South Atlantic Philosophy of Education Society, Blacksburg, VA.

Oliver, K. L. (1996). Young bodies tell old stories: Discovering adolescent girls' body narratives. Presentation at Sixth Annual Somatics Conference: Somatics, Body, and Culture, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.

Graham, G. Oliver, K., Elliot, E., Bell, K., & Pennington, T. (1996). Do your students have a cue: What they can learn about wellness in 72 hours. Presentation at Sharing the Wealth in Elementary, Middle, and High School Physical Education Conference, Jekyll Island, GA.

Oliver, K., McCollum, S., Bell, K., Westfall, S., & Doering, N. (1995). Alternative ways of assessing fitness. Presentation at United States Physical Education National Conference. Orlando FL.

Graham, G., Oliver, K., McCollum, S. McCrumb, D. Bell, K., Westfall, S., Himberg, C., Doering, N. (1995). Alternative ways of assessing fitness. Presentation at Sharing the Wealth in Elementary, Middle, and High School Physical Education Conference, Jekyll Island, GA.

Graham, G., Oliver, K., McCollum, S., McCrumb, D., Bell, K., Westfall, S., Himberg, C., Doering, N. (1994). Alternative ways of assessing motor skills. Presentation at NCAHPERD, Greensboro, NC.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Spring 1995

Co-designed and implemented a spring Wellness Fair for an elementary school in Blacksburg VA. The fair was designed to bring different members of the community together to provide health and wellness information and activities to the children and their families.

Spring 1995

Co-taught K-4 physical education two days a week at a small private school in Blacksburg, VA.

HONORS/AWARDS

1994

American Master Teacher Program Pedagogy Specialist Certificate, December 1994.

1995-1996

The Fitness /Wellness Instructional Services Graduate Teaching Assistant Award.

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Member, American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance

Member, American Educational Research Association--Special Interest Group, Research on Learning and Instruction in Physical Education

Member, Eastern Educational Research Association

Member, South Atlantic Philosophy of Education Society

REFERENCES

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