CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSES

Setting the Scene:
Mrs. Taylor's 4th block and the persecution assignment

On one of the first days I observed Mrs. Taylor's[1] 4th block[2] regular[3] English class for this study, I witnessed several groups of rural 11th grade students perform skits they had written in partial fulfillment of a WebQuest[4] assignment, which was the culminating element of a month-long, beginning-of-the-semester unit on Puritanism and early American settlement. On Mrs. Taylor's WebQuest website, entitled "Arthur Miller's *The Crucible:* Reading the Past to Shape the Future," the WebQuest activity was introduced as such:

> *The Crucible* exemplifies the persecution and discrimination that occurred during the infamous Salem Witch Trials. But has the witch hunt ended? Is history doomed to repeat itself again and again? Consider these questions carefully, seek answers, and you will discover!

> While you may have escaped past and current suspicion, you have been charged to employ your questing talents to make important discoveries and then stretch your imagination by writing a futuristic play depicting a form of persecution. (Fieldnotes, September 23, 2002)

In the WebQuest activity, students were to go to specific internet sites highlighting such topics as religious persecutions, the Salem Witch Trials, McCarthyism, the Holocaust and hate crimes. In self-selected teams, students were to "research the significance of persecution throughout history to the present" as they selected topics to research, and write summaries of what they found and learned at each site.

The students were then to collaboratively write skits--short, theatrical sketches-- to perform in front of the class. Each skit was to contain the following: "1) a setting in the future; 2) characters who demonstrate the appropriate traits associated with persecution (antagonist/protagonist); 3) a plot, which includes at least one conflict based on persecution as well as the resulting climax; 4) a theme reflecting timeless persecution, and 5) a point of view/narrator that furthers the theme" (Fieldnotes, September 23, 2002).

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[1] All names of persons and institutions presented throughout this study are pseudonyms.

[2] At Hilltown High School, 90-minute classes are scheduled on a 4 x 4 block; thus, Mrs. Taylor teaches three 90-minute classes every day and has one planning period. This 4 x 4 block follows a semester schedule; Mrs. Taylor loses her fall semester students in January after exams, and gains a new group of students for the spring semester.

[3] Hilltown High School gives 11th grade students the course options of either a regular-level English 11 course or an Advanced Placement English 11 course; there are no "honors" or "basic"-level courses at the 11th grade level.. The regular English 11 course is focused on American literature and writing. Readings include "literature from the Native American era to the present." Writings includes "persuasive and informational pieces, including literary critiques" (Hilltown High School "Course Descriptions and General Information" handbook, 2002, p. 24).

[4] A WebQuest is most often defined as an inquiry-oriented activity in which most or all of the information used by learners is drawn from the Web. WebQuests are designed to use learners' time well, to focus on using information rather than looking for it, and to support learners' thinking at the levels of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The model was developed in early 1995 at San Diego State University. http://webquest.sdsu.edu/overview.htm

Mrs. Taylor later explained to me that the entire activity revolved around the idea that 'history repeats itself.' She explained, "Although we should learn from history, somehow we don't and we keep making similar errors. The *Crucible* was so much about persecution, so that was to be the theme of their own skits. We talked at length about the saying, and that is the main reason we did the drama to look at persecution closely and see what could possibly lie ahead if we did not pay attention to our historical mistakes now" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

Persecution in the classroom

The *New World Dictionary of the American Language* defines "persecute" in the transitive verb tense, which means the verb requires a very real object (or subject) at the other end of its action. Thus, the "affliction," "constant and distressing harassment," "cruel oppression, especially for reasons of religion, politics, or race," and "constant troubling and annoyance" (1980, p. 1061) of persecution must be directed toward someone for the word, and the action, to realize its full meaning.

What I witnessed in Mrs. Taylor's class was indeed persecution, but not an imagined, fictitious oppression and harassment directed toward some unknown person or group in a make-believe future setting; what I witnessed was very real oppression dialogically directed by students toward people they didn't like and couldn't tolerate or accept, usually for reasons based on race, ethnicity, or differing cultural values; in one instance, such persecution was directed at one of their own.

In the first skit I observed, student group members called each other "Billy Bob" and "Tweeter," as they dragged hippies behind their truck through piles of cow manure. Students in another group had a hard time getting through their skit as they laughed at each other when they tried to pronounce--in pseudo-Spanish accents (Cheech and Chong come to mind)--the Hispanic names they'd given each other. This skit involved Hispanic men being dumped out of a truck and beaten for trying to illegally sneak into America.

As I observed the skits, I felt disoriented, frustrated, shocked. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Why wasn't Mrs. Taylor doing anything to stop the skits? Why was she letting them perform such blatant, stereotypical, prejudiced skits in class? How had the skits gotten this far? Most importantly, how did they fit into Mrs. Taylor's goals for student understanding of persecution as a mistake, something that should and could be prevented through tolerance of others?

"That's Nasty"

The last skit of the day increased my incredulity. The actual skit, as the students wrote and performed it, appears below:

> ***Narrator ~ (*The year is 2020*) Jamal and Jill are your ordinary happy couple. Well, I wouldn't exactly use the word ordinary, see, Jill is white and well, Jamal he's black. They are sitting together in the park when two people out for a walk pass by their bench.**

*<u>Walker 1 </u>(*Chris*)~Dude, that's nasty.

*<u>Walker 2</u> (*this is me idiots LoL*)~Yeah it is.

*<u>Walker 1</u> ~ I wonder what her daddy says about that?

*<u>Walker 2</u> ~ I don't know, but I *do* know I wouldn't allow it.

*<u>Jamal </u>~ (*sounds angry AND black*) Yo what they say? They talkin bout us?

*<u>Jill</u> ~ Don't worry about it hun, they're gone now.

*<u>Narrator</u> ~ A few moments later Frank (a friend of Jill's brother Joe) is walking by when he recognizes Jill.

*<u>Frank</u> ~ Jill! What in the world are you doing with him? Does your family know about this?

*<u>Jill</u> ~ Ugh! Don't worry about it Frank, just go on some where.

*<u>Jamal </u>~ Yeah fa real yo. You gotta problem or sumptin?

*<u>Frank</u> ~ (*walks away and laughs when he says)* Nah man looks like yall are the ones with problems.

*<u>Narrator</u> ~ As Frank continues his walk he sees his buddy out.

*<u>Frank</u> ~ Hey man what's up?

*<u>Joe </u>~ Hey Frank Nuttin man just walkin around.

*<u>Frank </u>~ I hate to burst your bubble and all man but you wouldn't believe who I seen your sister cuddled up with.

*<u>Joe</u> ~ Who?!?

*<u>Frank</u> ~ Well I don't know his name or anything but it was some black guy.

*<u>Joe</u> ~ WHAT!?! There's no way you are being serious.

*<u>Frank</u> ~ As a heart attack.

*<u>Narrator </u>~ Joe storms off to find his sister.

*<u>Frank</u> ~ Hey! Wait up man!

Pause for a few seconds

*<u>Joe</u> ~ JILL!! (*okay Matt say what you would to your cousin. <u>No Cussin!!!</u>*)

*<u>Jill</u> ~ But Joe, I care about him, and he treats me well!

*<u>Joe</u> ~ I don't care! (*finish it up Matt***)**

After the skit, a White, female student, visibly upset, stood up and left the room. Mrs. Taylor followed her out, returned, and then began making announcements to the students about group evaluation rubrics and upcoming test dates. She then gave the students the last few minutes of class to "talk quietly among yourselves" (Fieldnotes, September 23, 2002). When the bell rang, the students dispersed and I remained, my confusion and disbelief unresolved.

At this point, Mrs. Taylor walked over to me and started talking about how frustrated she was with the block schedule. She said, "A student said on Friday that most teachers don't really teach here. Or they teach for 45 minutes and then just let the kids do whatever. I'm not the kind of teacher who just hands out worksheets or workbooks." She also talked about the class: "There are really low kids in here right beside kids who should be in AP, but aren't, maybe, because of money. I feel caught in the middle in here" (Fieldnotes, September 23, 2002).

<u>What happened?</u>

Mrs. Taylor did seem frustrated; she didn't, however, make any mention of the skits, or what had happened with the female student who had obviously been upset about the last skit the students performed. I wondered if Mrs. Taylor's complaints about the schedule or the wide range of ability levels in her class was an attempt on her part to acknowledge what had happened just minutes before, if not to explain and/or justify it. But what *had* happened?

Because I had just gained access in the school and met Mrs. Taylor only a few days prior, and because I was learning that being a beginning researcher required careful negotiation among many roles, i.e., my teacher-self, my researcher-self, and my hip-to-the-students self, I decided not to ask her any of the questions swimming around in my head.

Too, I didn't want to push because my study, so I thought at the time, was going to be about literacy *outside* of school; at this point, I was only observing in classrooms so I could get to know students who might let me into their out-of-school worlds; I didn't understand at the time I'd already been brought into that world.

I left Hilltown High School that day, believing I could just shrug off what I'd observed. The very next day, however, during an SOL[5] test preparation session I tutored for some of Mrs. Taylor's students, one of the boys involved in the skit, Jason, asked me:

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[5] "SOL" is an acronym for "Standards of Learning;" As described by the state Department of Education, the standards "were adopted in the summer of 1995 by the state Board of Education to emphasize the importance of instruction in four core subjects—English, mathematics, science, and history and social science…The standards are

Did you hear what our skit was about yesterday? About white women with white men? Matt, you know Matt, his cousin Jenny, Jenny's dating a black guy and Matt don't like that. That's why we wrote the skit. To piss her off. That's why Mrs. Taylor sort of sat there and had to sit beside her. (Fieldnotes, September 24, 2002).

When I look at this interview transcript now, I notice I didn't say much to Jason as he told me this; I mumbled a few "Mm-mmmm's" and "OK's." Like Mrs. Taylor, I remained silent. I found myself at a loss for words; I didn't want to jeopardize my delicate, incipient insider-relationship with the students, but more importantly, I realized I didn't know what a productive response to their discourse would be.

I realized then that Mrs. Taylor had understood the students purposely manipulated her assignment and used the skit to persecute Jenny. Like me, Mrs. Taylor had either felt paralyzed or, for other reasons, had chosen not to interrupt or intervene in the skit. In fact, Mrs. Taylor had ignored what the students had done, making no mention of it and going on with class as usual when she returned to the room after following Jenny out.

When I left Hilltown that day, feeling less judgmental but still frustrated, questions continued to nag me: What would I have done if that had been my class and I hadn't had the luxury of hiding behind my researcher's mask? Would I have ignored the students' skits, perhaps chalking them off to "assignment fulfilled"? Or would I have interrupted and challenged their skits, especially one deliberately meant to persecute a fellow classmate? Would I have allowed the male students to be heard in the classroom, at the expense of Jenny's and my own silence?

I reached back through my own teaching career, trying to remember if I'd ever been in similar positions as Mrs. Taylor. I thought back to my early years where I taught in a suburban middle school, and then to later years where I taught in a gifted program in a city high school. Except for a one-year stint in an inner-city middle school in Baltimore City, which was so driven by the need for federal money its instructional programs were little more than scripts teachers read from, I'd never been out of my own cultural comfort zone. Like me, the students I'd taught over the years were predominantly European-American and, minus a few exceptions, generally well-off.

As I was to later find out, I actually had a lot in common with Mrs. Taylor, a White, upper-middle-class veteran teacher, who had expressed feeling like a "foreigner" at the rural high school where she'd been hired when she and her husband, a professor, had moved to a nearby college town; she admitted in a later interview she was in "culture shock" at Hilltown, and felt most of the students she taught were "basically skilled." She explains, "A lot of kids down there are like that. And I think a lot of it comes from the culture, from the background. It's laziness, it's just

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minimum requirements in each grade level, kindergarten through grade 12, in the four core subjects. The standards set reasonable targets and expectations for what teachers need to teach and students need to learn" (Foreword, p. 1) Beginning with this year's juniors (the class of 2004), Virginia students must now earn two verified credits in English and four in subjects of their choice to earn a standard diploma. To earn a verified credit, a student must pass a high school course and its related SOL test (Hoffman, p.6).

doing just a little bit. They don't really want to be there [in school]" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003). Mrs. Taylor didn't see herself staying at Hilltown very long.

I wondered how, if at all, this cultural dissonance was connected to the students' responses to Mrs. Taylor's assignment. I wondered, too, if the assignment itself, if indeed Mrs. Taylor's own pedagogic discourses, had somehow contributed to the creation of space in the classroom for the students' oppositional discourse to be heard.

The Research Focus Changes

I knew then my study's focus had changed course. No longer was I going to be Shirley Bryce Heath, romantically gleaning a small rural community for evidence of local literacies in practice. Originally, influenced by current reconceptualizations of literacy as "alternative," "unofficial," and "everyday," I had wanted to set out and investigate these literacies for myself, as they were used by rural adolescents outside the official realm of the classroom.

As a previous English teacher, I knew students were literate in ways that didn't get recognized or valued in school; I had always wanted to examine the literacies of my students' out-of-school lives to inform my own future teaching, but had never found the time, until now. As a graduate student, I finally had the luxury of time to seek and explore and *think* about what I might find. Only, what I observed in Mrs. Taylor's class had me confounded. This wasn't a clear-cut case of in-school literacy on one side, and out-of-school literacy on the other.

I knew then that I'd witnessed something powerful, something I couldn't ignore. Literacy wasn't acting in ways I'd expected it to, as either an "official," "sanctioned" "school" literacy *or* an "unofficial," "unsanctioned" literacy. I'd been captivated by such descriptors in my own graduate research course readings, and had gotten caught up in thinking about everyday literacies as opposed to school literacies; only, for our students, where does "everyday" stop and "school" begin?

I realized I wanted to challenge my own previous binary definitions of and categories for multiple literacies—definitions and categories that didn't help me make sense of what I'd seen in Mrs. Taylor's classroom.

Here, too, was a chance for me to reflect on and attempt to understand what I'd seen in Mrs. Taylor's classroom—slow it down long enough for me to put it under the microscope—to look closely at a situation that, like most in the day-to-day busy-ness of classrooms, happens too quickly for most teachers to react to or respond to, let alone reflect on.

Here was my chance, then, to walk straight into the conflict I had been privileged enough to avoid in my own teaching. I could meet it head on, try to understand it, and most importantly, figure out what I'd do and say next time students set their own purposes to an assignment, which they do more often than teachers realize. Maybe I could even help other teachers like Mrs. Taylor, who found herself in a cultural space that felt "foreign" to her, know what to say next time, too, when literacy broke out of its nice, neat binary containers.

With all of this in place, then, by some stroke of serendipitous luck, I stumbled across Mary Louise Pratt's landmark essay[6], "Arts of the Contact Zone."

Defining the "Contact Zone"

Pratt's essay introduces the concept of "contact zones," a term Pratt uses "to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" (2002, p. 4).

Ten years have passed since this essay was first written, but Pratt's concept resonates strongly for me as teachers and teacher educators scramble to understand and meet the needs of diverse student populations in a post-911, post-war nation, where increasingly conservative social pressures would have us imagine ourselves as a homogeneous and unified community of equal citizens.

Community

Pratt's idea of the contact zone, however, is intended to contrast with such traditional notions of community that underlie current conceptualizations of literacy, communication, and culture. Pratt says languages have often been understood as "discrete, self-defined, coherent entities, held together by a homogenous competence or grammar shared identically and equally among all the members" (p.11). Such a conceptualization of language, she furthers, reflects "the utopian way modern nations conceive of themselves as what Benedict Anderson calls 'imagined communities'" (p. 12).

In his book, Anderson (1984) explains that most human communities exist as *imagined* entities in which people "will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion." He further states: "Communities are distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (p. 15). Anderson proposes three characteristics in which the modern nation is imagined: 1) *limited*, by "finite, if elastic, boundaries"; 2) *sovereign*; and 3) *fraternal*, "a deep horizontal comradeship" for which millions of people are prepared "not so much to kill as willingly to die" (p. 15).

Such a style of imagining modern nations is "strongly utopian, embodying values like equality, fraternity, liberty," Pratt explains, and assumes cooperation and "a single set of rules or norms" willingly shared by all participants. As literacy theorist Elizabeth Moje points out, "Representations of communities as homogenous and fixed groupings may lead to the assumption that the practices of a group are all good and useful or to assume that all members of the group practice them with the same zeal or proficiency" (2000, p. 99).

Classroom communities are not immune to such imaginings. As Pratt explains, "If a classroom is analyzed as a social world unified and homogenized with respect to the teacher,

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[6] Pratt's essay was originally presented as the keynote address at MLA's Responsibilities for Literacy conference in September 1990 in Pittsburgh.

whatever students do other than what the teacher specifies is invisible or anomalous to the analysis" (p. 24). Such an understanding, then, of classrooms as "unified, homogenized social worlds" holds implications for how we understand literacy.

If classrooms are not "homogenized, social worlds," then literacy educators can't expect literacy practices to be either. Pratt's concept, then, makes it possible for multiple literacy practices, both "official" and "unofficial," both "sanctioned" and "unsanctioned" to be present in the classroom simultaneously.

Pratt's text encouraged me to think about Mrs. Taylor's class as a "contact zone," and how teachers often ignore "unofficial" or "unsolicited" literacy practices, and thus don't recognize oppositional discourses, which often point to underlying sociocultural tensions that I believe are always already present in literacy practices. As Wolff (2002) explains, "Pratt draws a geography of the metropolis, where metropolitan literacies come into conflict with indigenous discourses, where Creole languages are a necessity for communication or commerce" (p. xv).

Autoethnographic texts and transculturation

Such hybridized, "Creole" languages, Pratt explains, can be seen in such contact zone phenomenon as the "autoethnographic text" and "transculturation." Pratt defines "autoethnographic text" as:

> a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them. Thus if ethnographic texts are those in which European metropolitan subjects represent themselves their others. autoethnographic texts are representations that the so-defined others construct *in response to* or in dialogue with those texts. (2002, p. 6)

"Transculturation," then, "describe processes whereby members of subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted by a dominant or metropolitan culture" (2002, p. 9). To illustrate the "transcultural," "autoethnographic text," Pratt tells the story of Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, an indigenous Andean who, in the year 1613, some forty years after the Spanish conquest of the Incan empire, wrote a letter, mixing Quechua and Spanish, as well as over 400 line drawings, to King Philip III of Spain.

In the letter, Guaman Poma appropriates official Spanish discourse to "parody Spanish history," Pratt explains: "Using the conqueror's language he constructs a parodic, oppositional representation of the conqueror's own speech," in doing so, Guaman Poma creates "a new picture of the world, a picture of a Christian world with Andean rather than European peoples at the center of it—Cuzco, not Jerusalem" (2002, pp. 4-7).

Because "Quechua was not thought of as a written language in 1908, nor Andean culture as a literate culture," however, the letter never found its way to the King and instead ended up in a museum in Copenhagen, where a Peruvian explorer found it almost 300 years later (1992, p.34).

As data and my interpretations of that data I present in Chapter 5 illustrates, I believe the persecution skit written by the male students is such an "autoethnographic text," "transculturally" written in dialogic opposition to Mrs. Taylor's pedagogical discourses, and institutional discourses encouraging students to be tolerant of diversity.

Pratt believes language is more "transcultural" than we imagine, and suggests that teachers find places in our classrooms where such "arts" as "autoethnography, critique, collaboration, parody, vernacular expression" can become visible. But, as helpful as Pratt's conceptualizations are in helping teacher and teacher educators "re-imagine" classroom communities, Pratt doesn't explain what teachers should do when such "autoethnographic arts" represent reactionary resistance that functions to harass another student.

Thus, this study explores the idea that our pedagogies create spaces and opportunities for oppositional discourses that we have little knowledge or practice in recognizing or productively responding to. As I explain in Chapter 6, teachers in "contact zones," must learn and teach new languages, recognize hybrid literacy practices, reassess what we teach, how we teach, why we teach, and why we privilege certain discourses while dismissing others. We must learn, as Wolff (2002), "to see the power differential in the classroom and other institutional spaces, to reflect and to theorize, to read the rhetoric of the classroom" (2002, p xiv). In such a multi-vocal space, disparate elements "material practices in the classroom in relation to sociocultural situations of students and teachers, theories of community juxtaposed with the sometimes violent spaces of education" can, and should, be brought together (Wolff, 2002, p. xiv).

In re-imagining literacy and community, then, I draw on feminist poststructuralist theories about language, deconstruction, power, subjectivity, and agency throughout this study. The remainder of this chapter focuses on feminist poststructuralist theories of language and deconstruction as it moves toward Chapter 2, where I attempt to show a history of "troubled" literacy categories and definitions.

Defining Poststructuralism

Definitions of poststructuralism will differ depending on who is articulating its meaning, and the situation in which it is being applied. This particular research project uses poststructuralism as a philosophical and methodological tool which questions and critiques truths or "master narratives," and instead, focuses on the "various master narratives, disciplines, or theories as regimes of truth as historical and socially constructed knowledge with varying and unequal relations to various apparatuses of power" (Middleton, 1993, p. 58). Literacy is not immune to researchers' and theorists' attempts to produce master narratives, but as this study attempts to illustrate, a poststructuralist understanding of literacy anticipates multiple and varied 'mini-narratives' in voice with each other simultaneously.

Poststructural Definitions of Language

In "Arts of the Contact Zone," Pratt explains "the prototypical manifestation of language [and written communication] is generally taken to be the speech of individual adult native speakers face-to-face (as in Saussure's famous diagram) in monolingual, even monodialectal

situations—in short, the most homogenous case linguistically and socially" (2002, p. 13). Saussure, a structural linguist, theorized language as:

> an abstract system, consisting of chains of signs. Each sign is made up of a *signifier* (sound or written image) and a *signified* (meaning). The two components of the sign are related to each other in an arbitrary way and there is therefore no natural connection between the sound image and the concept it identifies. The meaning of the signs is not intrinsic but relational. Each sign derives its meaning from its difference from all the other signs in the language. It is not anything intrinsic to the signifier "whore" for example, that gives it its meaning, but rather its difference from other signifiers of womanhood such as "virgin" and "mother." (Weedon, 1987, p. 23)

Such a theory understands language as logocentric in that "signs have an already fixed meaning recognized by the self-consciousness of the rational speaking subject" (Weedon, 1987, p. 25); thus, such a theory "does not account for different meanings of the same signifier" (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 481).

The Need to Order

Poststructuralism foregrounds an awareness of our own structuring impulses and their relation to social order. Michel Foucault's (1970/1966) *archaeology* of the human sciences traces the history of how language has been used to construct binaries, hierarchies, categories, tables, grids, and complex classification schemes that are said to reflect an innate, intrinsic order in the world. St Pierre (2000) explains:

> Much of the work of humanism has been to define the essence of things, to get at that single, unique factor that enables one to identify something or someone and group it with others of its kind—thus producing, and even enforcing, order out of randomness. In humanism, deep structures, myriad layers of orderly schemes, provide foundations that ameliorate and support the day-to-day confusion and random nature of living. As these structures are 'discovered,' they are named and slotted into existing and ever-increasing classificatory schemes." (p. 481)

Feminist poststructuralists are wary of such "naming and slotting" processes, which attempt to stabilize and normalize the identity of things/ideas/people into single categories in hopes to produce order and regularity. For example, many different people are slotted into the same category *woman,* while such differences as race, class, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc., are subsumed under the single identity category. Such essentializing enables the production of meaning to be located within closed binaries where the meaning of woman, then, is not understood in terms of differences within the single category, but in the definition of its opposite, i.e., *man*. Thus, identity is privileged over difference.

Lather (1991) reminds us that to categorize is an act of power. She explains, "The category systems we devise to 'explain'...are strategies of legitimacy where exactitude and certainty deny the unthought in any thought, the shadow, supplement, alterity, the structuring absence inherent in

any concept" (p. 125). Feminist poststructuralists are concerned that the erasure of difference makes "naming and slotting" of people, and thus, dismissal, manipulation, and oppression easier to achieve.

Thus, women and other marginalized peoples, who usually find themselves on the wrong side of binaries and at the bottom of hierarchies have reasons to be wary of dichotomous definitions which attempt to ignore and erase difference. According to Patricia Hill Collins (1991), dichotomies mask the complexity of life by defining people, things, or ideas according to labels constructing dualistic differences that contribute to the perpetuation of inequitable relations.

Definitions of "White" or "masculine" are not merely neutral differences against which "People of Color" or "feminine" are defined. Because meaning-making is embedded in masculine- and/or White-dominated relations of power, defining White/People of Color or masculine/feminine in dichotomous relation to each other contributes to the social construction of politically charged dualistic relations. Tensions between dualisms are often resolved by subordinating one side of the dichotomy to the other (Fassio, 2000).

Feminists believe that the first term in binary categories is male and privileged and the second term is female and disadvantaged. As Spivak (1974) explains, "It is this longing for a center, an authorizing pressure that spawns hierarchized oppositions. The superior term belongs to presence and the *logos*; the inferior serves to define its status and mark a fall" (p. xix). The first term in a binary thus indicates a presence and the power of presence. As Spinosa & Dreyfus (1996) point out:

> One term in the distinction will end up being defined more loosely. For instance, *woman* will be the more loosely defined term in the distinction man/woman. This method of defining has the important effect of making the more loosely defined term seem less important. manliness will be defined more clearly and will be treated as a clear type while womanliness will be defined more loosely, as being *more* or *less* subservient to manliness, and therefore as an inferior type to manliness. (p. 758)

Davies (1994) explains that binarisms structure our knowledge of ourselves and the social world and help to maintain such dualisms as male/female, mind/body, emotional/rational, public/private spheres, individual/social, etc., through "unmarked," i.e., male, and "marked," i.e., female, categories that comprise binary pairs (pp. 8-9). She explains, "That which is marked is visible as such. That which is unmarked is invisible as such that one side of the dualism struggles away from the other, i.e., man away from woman, and thus one side becomes the "negative form against which one defines what it is to have achieved" (p. 10). Davies warns that such binarisms become "culturally dominant forms" which are either rejected or accepted as "divided" worlds become "natural" (1993).

Deconstruction

Feminist poststructuralists have worked toward developing theoretical tools for understanding the complexity of power relations embedded in hierarchical categorizations, and how this complexity shapes voices, knowledge production, relations, and efforts toward change. Such a theoretical tool is Derrida's concept of deconstruction, which serves the purposes of making visible how language is used to produce very real, material, and damaging structures in the world.

Derrida challenged the notion that the production of all meaning is within closed binaries with his concept of *différance. Différance* is central to Derrida's theory of deconstruction and combines the sense of the English verbs "to differ" and "to defer." Derrida (1993/1989) explains that *différance* is the "necessary reference to the other, the impossibility for a presence to gather itself in a self-identity or in a substantiality" (p. 223). Derrida introduced this concept as a poststructural tool to critique language--to explain how the meaning of language shifts depending on the social context; thus, meaning can always be disputed. St. Pierre explains:

> Poststructural thought accepts de Saussure's idea that there is no correspondence between a word and a thing, that signs have no intrinsic meaning but obtain meaning because of their difference from other signs in the language chain. As such, meaning is generated through difference rather than through identity. However, de Saussure's theory does not account for different meanings of the same signifier, but is *logocentric* in that signs have an already fixed meaning recognized by the self-consciousness of the rational speaking subject. (2000, p. 481)

For Derrida, language works "not because there is an *identity* between a sign and a thing, not because of presence, but because there is a *difference*, an absence" (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 482). Derrida's deconstruction, then, meant to critique structures held together by identity and presence, unfixes meaning and constantly defers it; "knowledge is not closed, and the myth of finitude explodes, since the critic must always make room for a new concept, the reconstitution, which, in turn, must be deconstructed" (St. Pierre, p. 483).

This flexibility of meaning often generates charges from critics that poststructuralism is hopelessly relativistic. According to Alloway and Gilbert (1997), poststructuralism offers a "conceptual tool for releasing a text from a singular 'truth,' and for making visible the complex textual positions of its speaker and listener" (p. 59). To release a text from a singular truth does not make possible an endless number of equally plausible truths. Instead, it opens possibilities for constructing alternative truths that must then struggle for legitimacy.

Derrida explains the aims of deconstruction are to "dismantle the metaphysical and rhetorical structures which are at work, not in order to reject or discard them, but to reinscribe them in another way" (Spivak, 1974, p. 1). As truths are "dismantled and reinsribed" through making the social, political, cultural, and historical details of their production visible, subsequent truths will also be constrained by power relations operating in the social fields of their production.

Weedon (1997) explains that feminist poststructuralists' deconstructions illuminate the socially constructed nature of categories by looking for differences or complexity within what have traditionally been considered fixed and uncontradictory categories, i.e., oppression, race, gender. These deconstructive processes aim to expose the historically specific relations of power that have naturalized categories viewed as natural or universal. By seeing how meanings, i.e., categories, truths, knowledge, that support particular relations are socially, politically, historically, and economically shaped, it becomes possible to see how meanings could have been or could be shaped differently to support different relations and categories. According to Weedon, deconstruction opens new possibilities for naming histories, subjectivities, and what is understood to be agentic (p. 177). These new possibilities would be struggled over, defined, redefined, and variously mobilized to meet different and shifting political needs.

Lather (1991) explains that deconstruction is not a method, but a disclosure of how something functions. As Lather explains, deconstruction can be broken down into three steps:

1) identify the binaries, the oppositions that structure an argument; 2) reverse/displace the dependent term from its negative position to a place that locates it as the very condition of the positive term; and 3) create a more fluid and less coercive conceptual organization of terms which transcends a binary logic by simultaneously being both and neither of the binary terms (Grosz, qtd. in Lather, 1991, p. 13). The goal is to keep things in process, to disrupt, to keep the system in play, to set up procedures to continuously demystify the realities we create, to fight the tendency for our categories to congeal (Caputo, qtd. in Lather, 1991, p. 13).

Troubling Literacy

Cognitivist literacy theorists and researchers aimed to disrupt the nature/nurture binary behaviorism placed literacy within; sociocognitive and sociocultural literacy theorists and researchers have aimed to disrupt the mind/society binary, and thus we find ourselves in the midst of a social practice paradigm, where literacy is viewed as always already more than reading and writing skills one has or doesn't have; literacy, to the social practice theorist, must include particular social contexts and settings that determine how literacy is practiced, used and understood.

Yet, such a paradigm, resist as it may, continues to place literacy practices within binary categories and classification schemes. Some social practice perspective literacy theorists, who believe literacy happens as much outside of school as it does in, have created such classifications of literacy practices as "everyday" (Barton, 1999; Knobel, 1999), "hidden" (Voss, 1997), and "out-of-school" (Hull & Schultz, 2002).

Hamilton (2002) explains, "Many of the literacies that are influential and valued in people's day-to-day lives, that are widely circulated and discussed are also ignored culturally: they do not count as 'real' literacy" (p.5). Barton suggests "schooled literacy. has become the accepted literacy, to some extent marginalizing other literacies as it pushes into the home and

other areas of life" (p.178). Street (1995) uses the term "pedagogization" to describe "contemporary society's relentless preoccupation with organizing class time, work practices, and materials so that schooled literacy takes on an air of authority, separating if from everyday reading and writing" (qtd. in Alvermann, 1998, p.366).

Other literacy theorists applying the tenets of the same social practice paradigm to studies of school literacy, who understand school literacy practices can and often do take different forms than those of traditional "schooled" literacies, i.e., essays, answering comprehension questions at the end of textbook chapters, have created such classifications of literacy practices as "alternative," "un-schooled," or "unsanctioned" (cf. Finders, 1997; Moje, 2000a).

Such theorizing and scholarship, then, have encouraged reconceptualizations of literacies and the ways students use them in terms of "either-or" categories: unsanctioned or sanctioned, authentic or nonauthentic, official or unofficial, vernacular or dominant, everyday/home or school, hidden or public, alternative or schooled. Such a dichotomous labeling system proves problematic, as this present study aims to show.

Chapter 2 provides a discussion of the methods of data collection, interpretation, and negotiation of researcher/researched relationships used in my attempt to address the research question posed in this study: How does literacy function in the "contact zone" of a rural high school English class?

Chapter 3 provides a summary of theoretical views of literacy beginning with the cognitive perspective and aims to show how attempts to universalize literacy or describe it in some "Grand Narrative" have failed as binary understandings of literacy fail to remain fixed and stable. Current binary conceptualizations of literacy as either "in-school" or "out-of-school" fail to recognize, and have not allowed for analysis methods of literacies that merge, infiltrate, and graft onto each other, and for what purposes.

Chapter 4 provides a discussion of discourse and a closer look at the various and multiple discourses present in the contact zone of Mrs. Taylor's 4th block English class. Chapter 5 continues the discussion of discourses as it looks closely at Mrs. Taylor's progressive and critical pedagogical discourses.

Applying Pratt's concept of the "autoethnographic text" and Bakhtinian literary theory, Chapter 6 analyzes the skit the students wrote about Jenny in an attempt to understand the skit as an "autoethnographic text," which represents unsolicited oppositional dialogic discourse accomplished through multiple forms of resistance which intersect in the autoethnographic text.

Chapter 7 aims to describe pedagogical practices that may help teachers "teach the conflicts" present in students' literacy practices, so that teachers' pedagogical strategies are not reduced to the limited options of either ignoring oppositional discourses or merely reacting or responding to them when sociocultural tensions, which are always already present in the contact zone of any classroom, surface in the assignments we naively and "innocently" create.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCHING LITERACY PRACTICES

As soon as you can forget the naturally obvious and construct an artificial obvious, then you too will see deer.–Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

Situated Knowledge

I live on a long winding road in one of the most beautiful valleys in Southwest Virginia. Many people drive this road to take in the sights: the lush greens of the hills, the purples of the red buds that dot the roadsides in the spring, the gold and fiery foliage in the fall. Sometimes folks pull off on the side of the road to watch deer or a flock of turkeys--rare finds in suburbia.

People who drive by the house I share with my husband and various pets often stop and tell us how beautiful the land is, how lucky we are to live where we live. And we *are* lucky, we feel very fortunate to live where we do. Yet, while I appreciate people who take the time to drive ten miles out of town to take in a view unhindered by residential and commercial development, I know that a view from the road is just that: spotty, at best, on the details.

For example, in the springtime the valley that stretches behind my house and the adjacent hills look fuzzily green and soft from the road, inviting perhaps a slow leisurely walk or picnic. But I know better. My dogs and I walk the valley and hike up the hills and we know there's nothing soft or fuzzy about the thick grasses that come to our knees and hides snakes and holes where birds nest and rabbits and groundhogs burrow.

We know never to wear shorts or sandals when walking in that innocent-looking grass because curious welts and rashes have developed where it has grazed our skin; I've stopped counting the number of ticks we've pulled off our dogs and ourselves.

What's not visible from the road either are the hubcap-sized cow pies we have to mow around as we cut the grass that will be rolled and baled as hay for the winter, or the piles of scat we think are left by a mountain lion. Invisible, too, are the barbed-wire fences, tufted with deer hair, which establish property boundaries, and attempt to contain neighbors' horses and cows.

And that's just the part of the valley and hills one can see from the road: hidden from even a roadside view, on the other side of the hills, is a stream where my husband and I fish and visit an old snapping turtle who occasionally graces us with its presence; even further sits an old log cabin, rock facings, caves which house bats, and more unidentifiable animal scat.

In the spring we know to listen for the geese which fly right by our house, but in the fall we dread hearing the shotguns that blast all around us during hunting season. And while tourists may think the cows and deer that dot the sides of the road are cute, we know not to get too attached to them: many of our neighbors don't share our belief that animals should be pets and not food. Living on this road has helped me understand the romantic view from the road as only *one* view: incomplete, partial, and often inaccurate--a view that differs from the views of those who actually live here.

I didn't know it when I started this research, but living on this road serves, and continues to serve, as a humbling metaphor for the reasons why I put down stakes in qualitative research's camp: Reality is subjective, or rather, subject to social definition, and, as Dillard (1974) realizes when she can't see a frog she's staring at because it's not the green color she expects it to be, it's hard to "know what the lover knows...to see the artificial obvious that those in the know construct" (p. 18).

To "see the artificial obvious," Donna Haraway (1991) suggests a "politics and epistemologies of location, positioning and situating" in research "where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims. These are claims on people's lives; the view from the body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity" (p. 195).

Heeding Haraway's call to "learn how to see faithfully from another's point of view...elaborate specificity and difference," (p. 190), I describe myself as a feminist qualitative researcher, who must, as Kirsch (1999) explains:

1) ask research questions which acknowledge and validate women's experiences; collaborate with participants as much as possible..;
2) analyze how social, historical, and cultural factors shape the research site..;
3) analyze how the researchers' identity and experience shape the research agenda;

4) correct androcentric norms by calling into question what has been considered 'normal' and what has been regarded as 'deviant';
5) take responsibility for the representation of others...
6) acknowledge the limitations of and contradictions inherent in research data. (p.

In essence, a feminist qualitative researcher isn't satisfied with the view from the road; a feminist qualitative researcher knows she better get to know the people who live on that road if she's going to get beyond the partial, the incomplete, and the inaccurate.

Research Questions

As illustrated in the introductory chapter, I didn't set out to do feminist research. I simply wanted to explore conceptualizations of literacy I had recently discovered in graduate research classes where I first encountered such terms as "everyday" and "hidden" as descriptions of literacy. Accustomed to believing literacy was the domain of the English teacher, but cognizant of the fact students bring knowledge and ways of using language to school that often get ignored or de-valued, I wanted to see for myself what this "out-of-school," "everyday" knowledge might look like.

But I didn't expect to see literacy acting the way it did in Mrs. Taylor's class through the persecution skit several male students wrote—as resistance to a White, upper-middle-class teacher who struggled for her own legitimacy in the classroom, as a struggle for recognition, as harassment and oppression of another White, working-class, female classmate.

When I saw literacy acting in these ways, I also saw myself in Mrs. Taylor, as a White, middle-class teacher who had tried on similar pedagogical discourses but, because I'd never been out of my cultural comfort zones, had not seen them fail. Recognizing myself in her position to either respond to or condemn the students' oppositional discourse enacted in the persecution skit, I realized I, too, would be at a loss as to how to respond, if I should respond at all. I realized, too, that condemnation only serves to continue the "conspiracy of silence" surrounding social and historical issues that oppositional discourses in the classroom often point to.

So I knew, then, I needed to do this research to "validate women's experiences," and women's work in the classroom; too, I knew I needed to explore and seek out a different kind of experience that White, middle-class female teachers could have in classroom contact zones, where our students are increasingly not White, and not middle-class.

But as feminist poststructuralists understand, validating women's experiences means looking for those places where class, age, race, sexuality preference, etc., intersect gender. When I began this research, I naively assumed I wouldn't have to "worry" about such categories. I was a white woman; Mrs. Taylor was a white woman, and all the students in her class were white. In fact, only three African-American students attended Hilltown High School the year this research took place, and none of them were in Mrs. Taylor's class. I thought I was home-free; I wouldn't have to delve into such complexities.

Only, as I soon learned, race and ethnicity can be multiple variables which, when layered with gender, class, age, etc. can cause persons to be positioned, as they position others, differently and, thus, have very different life experiences. I saw this play out in Mrs. Taylor's 4th block class, where Mrs. Taylor continually struggled to be heard and recognized. What I came to understand was that Mrs. Taylor and her students didn't get along even though they were the same race, and they didn't get along because class differences, a category that rarely gets mentioned, affected their social and cultural histories differently. As Yeskel & Leondar-Wright (1997) explain:

> In the United States, discussions involving issues of class and money are often more taboo than discussing sexuality. Deep-seated prohibitions about disclosing the facts of one's class identity are learned quite early in our lives. Shame at being poorer or richer than others leads to secrecy and silence. This silence powerfully maintains the invisibility of class and supports the dominant myth that this is largely a classless society, or at least one in which class does not matter very much because all are assumed to be able to move up in class if they work hard enough. (p. 232)

I see this silence maintained even at the university level where, in our teacher education program, we place beginning teachers in schools with predominantly African-American minority populations so they can "get experience working with diverse populations." While such placements are valuable in that some beginning teachers need the "shock" of being in a visibly-different culture before they acknowledge fears, their own privileged positions, and possibly deep-seated racism, I believe beginning teachers learn that diversity equal racial differences only, and, thus, continue to ignore exploring their own classed positions, and how such positions are tied to an

economic system which reinforces a myth of class mobility and assumptions that those who don't move up lack a strong work ethic. Silence around class issues, ultimately, contributes further to a largely invisible history of class and classism in this country.

So, then, my research questions had to change. No longer could my questions focus on literacy in out-of-school contexts, and what such literacies "mean" to people who use them. In realizing students' in-school literacies didn't ignore or exclude "everyday," or "hidden" aspects, I realized literacy operates in the production of students' worlds, no matter where they are. Thus, I needed to know not what "everyday" literacy is, and what it means, but how it functions, how it gets produced and regulated, how it exists, and, most importantly, to what social effects?

Layered, then, with a desire to validate and explore "women's experiences," to explore issues of class as they intersected race and gender, and to explore ideas about classrooms as "contact zones" I'd become aware of as a result of reading Mary Louise Pratt's essay, "Arts of the Contact Zone," my research question became: How does literacy function in the contact zone of the rural high school English class?

Collaborating with Participants

Gaining access to Hilltown High

In the spring of 2002, I sent a letter to the assistant superintendent of Morristown County Schools, requesting permission to conduct a research study at Hilltown High School during the 2002-2003 school year. Included in my letter to her was a copy of the IRB request I had written earlier in the year and its approval by my university's IRB chair. She replied she did not see a reason why the study could not be done, but I would need permission from Hilltown's principal, Mr. Simmons.

Therefore, in July 2002, I made contact with Mr. Simmons at the school and talked at length with him about my research proposal. He granted approval of the study, but told me I would need approval by Mrs. Newton, the English department head, as I would be working exclusively with the English teachers at the high school. He told me he would call her and ask her if such a study was O.K. with her. Two days after this meeting with Mr. Simmons, he called to tell me Mrs. Newton had approved the study.

In mid-August 2002, Hilltown teachers returned for a work week before students would report back to school the last week in August. I called the school during the teacher's work week to ask Mr. Simmons if I could visit the school and make myself known to the English faculty. I didn't get to talk to Mr. Simmons directly, but left a message with his secretary to this effect. The next day, I received a phone call from Mrs. Newton who told me I would not be able to get into the school and begin working with faculty or students until mid-September. Mrs. Newton explained, "I have new teachers this year, and old teachers teaching new stuff, so I just think things need to get settled down before you begin" (personal journal entry, August 14, 2002). Having been an English teacher, I could understand and appreciate Mrs. Newton's concern about her teachers beginning the school year without any outside pressures. She told me she'd be in touch with me in September.

In mid-September, Mrs. Newton contacted me to tell me I could begin my study, but I could only observe, as students would be preparing for SOL tests until mid-October. The English SOL test is given during a high school student's 11th grade year, and because Hilltown follows a block schedule, with a fall and spring semester, the fall semester students would be testing in mid-October; the spring semester students would test in May. Mrs. Newton said after SOL tests were done for the fall semester, I could "do more" with students (personal communication, August 14, 2002).

SOL Remediation Teacher Needed

She then told me the school was trying to find people who might be interested in working with students on SOL remediation[7]. She explained the English department needed someone to do remediation for the writing portion of the English SOL test with 11th grade students who could probably pass the test with extra help. She told me there are some students who "just won't pass. We've given up on them. We need someone to work with those that can pass with some guidance" (personal communication, August 19, 2002).

She explained school funds were available for SOL remediation, and I would be paid $20.00/hour. I told her I would be interested in doing the SOL remediation, and we set up a time and date for me to go to the school and meet the English faculty.

I first met with Mrs. Newton and the three English teachers who comprise the English department on Tuesday, September 17, 2002. At this meeting, I explained to the teachers what I wanted to do--to look at rural students' literacy practices, and Mrs. Taylor, the eleventh-grade teacher told me she thought I had "good questions for this area" (fieldnotes, September 17, 2002). At the time, those questions focused on looking at "out-of-school" literacy knowledge rural students have that may get ignored or devalued in school. The other teachers seemed supportive, as well.

I accepted the remediation job because I felt like it would give me access to eleventh-grade students who 1) were directly affected by standardized test scores because of the diploma requirement put into effect that year, and 2) were singled out by their English teacher as students who needed additional remedial help in writing. When I asked Mrs. Taylor how she selected which students I would work with, she told me I would be working with students in only one of her two "regular" 11th grade classes, as another person was working with students in her other class.

She then told me she "could tell, from their writing, who needs help" (Fieldnotes, September 17, 2002). At this point, I didn't know if these students' past test scores were used to determine if they would work with me or not. Too, I had not interviewed Mrs. Taylor yet, and thus had not been able to get any elaboration on what she meant by her above statement.

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[7] The *New World Dictionary of the American Language* defines "remediation" as "the act or process of remedying or overcoming learning disabilities or deficiencies" (1978, p. 1201). *As* explained in Chapter 2, many efforts are made at Hilltown High School to remediate students who do not pass standardized tests; remediation involves isolating and repeating comprehension and basic writing skills.

It just so happened, that three of the students I would be working with on SOL remediation were involved in the persecution skit I observed a week later in Mrs. Taylor's class. Jason and Matt had participated in writing and performing the skit, and Jenny was the silent victim, condemned in front of her classmates for "going against her family" and "doing what's not right."

Collaborating with Mrs. Taylor

When I observed the skit, I knew I'd found my research focus, but I didn't know how to proceed as far as communicating that to Mrs. Taylor. After all, to focus on the skit automatically meant focus on her and her teaching, as well.

Kirsch (1999) explains that feminist scholars have long argued for inviting participants to become full partners in research through collaboration in the development and implementation of research agendas. I wondered, then, if the research could truly be a collaborative work, with both of our voices speaking through the data as we explored together what had happened in her classroom that day the boys chose to persecute Jenny in their skit, and what productive responses could have been.

She had been excited about my research at first, when it was to take place far from her classroom. But what would she say now? Would she okay my new research focus? Would she be willing to be a part of my research?

I thought she would. I thought since we shared a similar middle-class, White background, shared the experience of being English teachers, and had expressed similar fears of conflict when working with students, Mrs. Taylor would readily trust me and welcome me into her classroom. But I found it hard to establish rapport with her.

Mrs. Taylor, however, was feeling vulnerable. Because it was Mrs. Taylor's first year at Hilltown—although she'd taught for ten years before in other schools—she was experiencing "first-year" teacher struggles: establishing her authority, getting used to what she described as a "grueling" block schedule, getting over the "cultural shock" of teaching working-class kids who didn't share or value her learning expectations, as described in previous chapters, and dealing with the fact that she was the only 11th grade English teacher. Thus, juniors graduating the following year depended on her and good SOL test scores. Too, she considered herself a teacher who had always experienced success, but was now experiencing a sense of failure and disconnect with her students.

I often felt, (though this was never voiced), that Mrs. Taylor felt like I was there to critique or judge her. During several of my classroom observations, she would come over to where I'd be writing in my field journal, and start to explain or justify something she or a student had just done. I would share my own teaching experiences with her, hoping she could begin to relax around me, but I don't think she ever did.

While I hesitated and thought more about bringing Mrs. Taylor into the study, I started talking to the kids. During the first SOL remedial tutor session, the day after the persecution skit, they wanted to talk about what had happened. Jason asked me, "Did you hear what our skit was about yesterday? White women with white men?" (Fieldnotes, September 29, 2002).

I knew I wanted to start interviewing the students, so I talked to the students about consent forms, got their parents' signatures, and then started taping our SOL sessions, where our talk often diverged from how to write a coherent five-paragraph essay. I don't know how ethical this was: Mrs. Taylor still at this point did not know my research focus had changed. When I met with my dissertation committee and they encouraged me to invite Mrs. Taylor's voice into the research, I knew I had to approach her and ask her if she'd agree to work with me. I didn't feel I could continue without, at least, her approval.

Finally, one day close to Thanksgiving break, I stopped into her classroom on a day I wasn't normally scheduled to be there, and asked if I could talk to her. I expressed my thoughts, how I was intrigued by what I had seen with the persecution skit and felt that there was a lot I, as a future teacher educator, could learn that would be helpful. I told her I thought the research would be really powerful if she contributed her side, her views, her understandings, as she knew the students in ways I didn't. I told her I'd do all the writing; all I'd need from her was her voice, her thoughts, shared with me.

She told me she, too, was intrigued by what had happened, but felt overwhelmed by my request. She complained that she felt physically sick all the time because of the demands of the block schedule and the SOL tests, and coupled with trying to raise a three-year-old daughter, she just didn't know if this was the right time for her. She told me she'd think about it and get back to me. I didn't hear from her again until January.

By this point, I had fortunately gathered the data I thought I needed from the student participants who, unlike Mrs. Taylor, had embraced me and opened to me very quickly. This probably was a result of my behavior with them, as I didn't "act" like a teacher. I dressed in blue jeans and t-shirts, tennis shoes, and often laughed at their jokes and didn't reprimand when they talked about usually "unofficial" "out-of-school" activities they'd get suspended for doing in school.

Conflicted Researcher Roles

This is not to say my role with the students was not a conflicted one; many a time I wanted to challenge Jason's and Matt's beliefs about African-Americans, but I felt that doing so would jeopardize my insider-relationship with them. Too, a research professor had wisely coached me in saying: "Your job is not to change them." That didn't keep feelings of wanting to change them from occurring.

Too, as I explained in Chapter 1, I felt in not challenging their racist and sexist language with me, I was somehow condoning it, or pretending I was not positioned within it. Although it was easy to hide behind the "researcher's mask," I felt that I, like Mrs. Taylor, didn't know how to respond.

In my conversations with Jenny, I grew angry and frustrated upon hearing that Mrs. Taylor had known what the boys were doing and didn't stop the skit. I talked to Jenny at length about keeping her own journal, where she recorded events that happened like the skit so she'd begin to have some evidence if she ever decided to go through with reporting such harassment to school authorities.

When I suggested she do so after hearing about the skit, she said she couldn't prove it and that the boys would only get suspended and that that would make it worse. I imagine she's right.

Before I left the school in November, Mrs. Taylor had expressed to me how she resented the time I had to get to know the students in ways she couldn't. She said she envied the fact that I got to sit down and have jovial conversations with them, and said she wanted to get beyond the teacher-student relationship but couldn't because of the constraints she felt with the school schedule and SOL testing. I felt this envy when she asked me to have the students call me "Mrs. Groenke" rather than the "Susan" I had told them was okay.

In January, after winter break, Mrs. Taylor called me at home and said she didn't think she could participate in the research with me. She said she didn't have the time or energy to commit to such a project at that time, but maybe she could do something similar in the future.

Research Disappointment and Interpretive Conflict

I was immediately disappointed. I didn't understand how she could not want to explore what had happened in her classroom that left one of her students so angry she wouldn't speak to her. As I'd been reading feminist poststructuralist theory at the time, and had explained to Mrs. Taylor how I felt she was oppressed through the skit, I was doubly disappointed that she didn't want to join in my feminist agenda. How could she not want to un-oppress herself?

Kirsch (1999) explains "feminist researchers who deliberately set out to validate women's experiences can face interpretive conflicts when interviewing women who do not share their values" and, thus, can "become vulnerable to disappointments and misunderstandings" (p. 50).

When Mrs. Taylor agreed to an interview in June the following year, we did not come to a consensus on my interpretations of the data, as illustrated in the following excerpt from our interview:

Susan: I felt like the kids created a space where they can say those racist things without getting in trouble for it.
Mrs. Taylor: No. I hadn't thought about it that way. I mean, bottom line, I know that provided them an opportunity to do that. And I mean, I wouldn't change the assignment. I still think it's a good assignment. You know, you said that maybe they're creating these spaces for these things to happen but that's the only situation I've seen like that. (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003)

Mrs. Taylor held opposing views about the persecution skit assignment and about how it pointed to larger sociopolitical issues that are prevalent in the school and larger community. Mrs. Taylor believed that because she hadn't seen the students do that before, that it was an isolated event and probably wouldn't happen again. I didn't agree with that, however, and tried to explain that with the racist and sexist attitudes I discovered in my interviews with the students I was surprised it didn't happen more often. We politely agreed to disagree, and I continued to struggle to understand my obligation to her, especially since I was focusing my dissertation on an experience she wasn't comfortable with or didn't see the same way I did.

I was disappointed after our interview, and after the entire research project really, as I realized how much disconnect can exist between the university researcher and the practicing classroom teacher. Mrs. Taylor didn't have the time or energy to think through what had happened in her classroom the way I did; nor did she have the luxury of time to get to know the students the way I did, where they opened up and talked frankly about why they did with the skit what they did.

I was disappointed, too, because I wanted to explore feminist poststructural theories—which were new to me at the time—with Mrs. Taylor; I was excited about them as they helped me to realize how our multiple positions—teacher, woman, wife, mother, White, middle-class—influence how we are thus positioned by others.

I also wanted to explore ways such reactionary, oppressive literacy practices could be resisted by female teachers, whose positions of authority are already precarious. But, she didn't want to explore that with me, and again, I was disappointed. Kirsch explains that conflicting values and different commitment levels can inhibit or restrict the collaborative reciprocal relations we may hope to establish with participants (1999, p. 51).

Contextual Details

The research context

Rural literacy research

One fourth of U.S. schoolchildren go to school in rural areas or small towns of less than 25,000. Fourteen percent go to school in even smaller places with fewer than 2,500 people. In Virginia, 30.6% of the state population is rural. 26.3% of public schools are in rural areas, and 19% of public school students are enrolled in rural schools. 14.9 % of rural students live in poverty, and 29.2% of rural students are free lunch eligible. But these children, and the communities and schools they live and study in, are largely unnoticed in the national debate over the direction of American education. (Beeson & Strange, 2000)

I believe rural high school students comprise a marginalized group of young adults/adolescents, who unlike their urban counterparts, are ignored in literacy studies that highlight the sociocultural. We know little about how adolescents weave their unsanctioned or alternative literacies together with academic literacies, and have only a few studies of how

marginalized adolescents use literacy to make sense of their social and school lives (cf. Camitta, 1993; Knobel, 1999; Moje, 2000; Shuman, 1993).

While these studies are insightful and do begin to shed light on literacy use by marginalized adolescents, they focus on students in urban and/or suburban school settings. Camitta and Shuman focus their attention on urban youth in Philadelphia, while Moje focuses on "gangsta" youth in Salt Lake City, Utah. Knobel looks at two students in a suburban school location in Brisbane, Australia; one student in an urban school location in Brisbane, and one student in a "satellite city" (1999, p.10).

The studies of rural literacies that do exist tend to focus on elementary-aged school children (Heath, 1983), college students (Kruse, 1995; Whiting, 1999), or adults (Fingeret, 1982, 1983; Merrifield, Bingman, Hemphill, & deMarais, 1997; Neilsen, 1989). While Thompson's (2000) study, described in Chapter 1, focuses on rural literacies, its scope is limited to literacy practices of adolescent girls; Smith & Wilhelm's (2002) study, similarly, limits its scope to rural males' literacy practices, and doesn't describe the sociocultural implications of the rural context.

Further evidence that few studies on the literacy practices of rural high school students exist has been provided to me as I have attended the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) conferences over the past two years. At the 2000 and 2001 NCTE conferences, no presentation or workshop on rural literacies was offered. The 2002 NCTE conference, themed "Celebrate the Languages and Literacies of Our Lives," includes no presentations on rural literacies.

A "literacy" topic search on the 2002 NCTE convention website does list, however, such presentations as "Literacy in the Lives of Urban Students," "Empowering Urban Students' Literacies through Inclusion and Inquiry," and "Activities to Improve Language and Literacy in Central City Schools." If the presentations at the 2002 NCTE conference are any kind of indicator of what students' literacy practices are represented in research on literacy and teaching, then the need for rural literacy research is dire.

This is not to say I am interested in getting caught in more binary thinking, pitting rural against urban. As DeYoung, Huffman, & Turner (1989) attest, many concerns and problems in rural education are similar to their counterparts in urban and suburban locations (p.55).

However, they explain, "some problems in rural areas seem specifically a function of demographic factors very different from those in central cities" (p.57). They go on to explain how geographical isolation in some regions can cause school budgets to be disproportionately allocated, and can make it hard to attract and retain good teachers in rural areas, given the "wide range of competencies needed among instructors having to teach multiple subjects in relatively small schools" (p.57). Rural schools sometimes suffer losses in numbers of children to educate, due to rural citizens moving toward metropolitan areas for job opportunities.

Furthermore, they suggest many federal and state initiatives to compensate for economically and culturally disadvantaged children are biased in favor of the urban poor, as opposed to those in rural areas. They explain:

Research monies designated by Congress for the analysis and understanding of educational underachievement in America primarily focus upon the bias and discrimination faced by urban minorities in their educational and community settings. Yet the plight of many rural poor children—white, black, Hispanic, and native American, goes unmentioned and unanalyzed in the education journals or at professional meetings around the nation. Similarly, those compensatory programs which have been implemented in the United States over the past few years, although arguably inadequate in urban America, are even more difficult to put into place among widely dispersed schools in the countryside. Coordinating and sharing counselors and reading specialists across hundreds of square miles appears much more problematic than being able to concentrate most district resources in two or three buildings of a central city. (pp.57-58)

But there are reasons why I believe rural places are special. I have fond memories of my mother's childhood farm in "Broadridge," a rural area of southeastern North Carolina. This farm became my own childhood farm, where I learned how to plant potatoes in the rich, dark soil under my grandfather's watch, and spent miserable summers picking cucumbers to sell for my weekly allowance. I helped Granny shuck field peas that came from her garden. I helped her crack pecans I had picked off the ground from underneath the enormous pecan tree that sat at the end of the dirt driveway. I helped Granny pick blueberries, too, off the trees bordering her house. I chased dogs and kittens, made mud pies with chinaberries as decorations, rummaged through the "ole' packhouse" for hidden treasures, and stayed up all night waiting for a sow to give birth so I could name the newest members of our pig family.

I don't miss those cucumber-picking days, but I do miss the homegrown and handmade lifestyle I took for granted in my youth. I also miss my quiet-spoken grandfather, who couldn't read or write, but knew more about making things grow and getting the respect of people and animals than anyone I've ever met. I think it was he who taught me there's more to people than meets the eye, and that rural places—and the schools that serve them--are places that matter.

Overview of Hilltown High School[8] and student intake area

Hilltown High School's attendance area contains a diverse population distributed unevenly throughout the southeastern part of the county. The two largest communities of Eagletown and Sutton serve as focal points of social, economic, and educational activity. There are, however, many other smaller communities nestled along the creeks and waterways which are characteristic of the geographic region. Although there are three outlying communities which are predominantly African-American, the southeastern part of the county is predominantly Caucasian; less than five percent of the student body is African-American. In fact, "Blacks make up 3.7% of the entire county's residents" ("Community Group," 2002).

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[8] Much of the information on Hilltown High School presented here comes from an annual school profile report written by one of the school's history teacher. I am indebted to this teacher for his willingness to let me see the profile and talk to me at length about the school and its students.

Historically, there has been a strong tradition of agricultural endeavor for the people who live in the area. Most residents therefore live in single-family homes surrounded by either acreage or forest; population density must be considered exurban or low. Only in Eagletown and Sutton are there significant residential communities. Four of these residential communities are ones in which trailers[9] or small modular homes are predominant.

In recent years, however, the entire county has developed a light industrial base. Smaller, environmentally-friendly business and manufacturing facilities occupy the local industrial parks, including the Rowe Furniture manufacturing facility and Hall Construction Company. Such economic development led to a rise in the county's population as a whole in the 1990s; Morristown County is the only county west of Roxton to have had a net gain in population since the 1990 census.

Moreover, the Sutton-Eagletown area lies between two larger centers of urban and commercial development. Canton and Buxton lie directly to the west while Roxton and Storeysville lie to the east. With the economic development of these areas, many families, especially those whose family members work in both areas, have chosen to settle in either Sutton or Easton as a geographically central location. On the whole, growth in the southeastern part of the county played an important role in the decision to construct a new Hilltown High School.

Hilltown High School opened in the fall of 2000. Previously, its student body attended Sutton High and Middle School, a combined school in Sutton, Virginia. At the present time there are slightly less than 300 students in grades nine through twelve. The number of male and female students is approximately equal. The new, two-story facility contains slightly less than 110,000 square feet of space with twenty core classrooms. The school's design was intended to make the school "less of an institution and more like a home."

Students are divided by grade and each grade has its own individual wing or home. The ninth and tenth grade homes are on the first floor on either side of the student store and cafeteria, which sits in the center of the school; the eleventh and twelfth grade homes are upstairs on either side of the library. Each home is color-coordinated and has displayed four quotations in the center of each common area.

Those teachers who work within that home (or with a particular grade level) have separate workrooms, storage, and bathroom facilities, and a dedicated laser-printer linked to the computer workstations in their rooms.

Students in a particular grade have many of their classes in their own wing. Each grade level has its own commons area where tables and chairs enable them to interact socially with their peers. Eventually, each commons area will also have its own battery of computers and printers. A unique characteristic of the school is that all wings and rooms have large exterior windows that allow for natural light and picturesque views of the surrounding mountains. Overall, the interior atmosphere of the school is one of open and well-lit spaciousness.

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[9] Sutton currently has the fourth-highest concentration of mobile homes in Virginia, with "47% of houses designed to be towed on their own chassis" (Gangloff, 1). The Easton-Layton area ranks eighth in Virginia with 44 % of its houses classified as mobile.

Methodology

The Qualitative Case Study

Because I understand the comprehension and composition of textual meaning as enmeshed in and integral to social practices, I chose research methods that allowed me to focus on the students' literacy practices and on the social relations and contexts surrounding their literacy practices. According to Huckin (1992), "Context-sensitive text analysis tries to account for as much of the *context of situation* as possible. it assumes that people's reasons for writing things in certain ways are influenced by a broad spectrum of contextual factors, including social, cultural, and other factors" (p. 89). To gain an understanding of how students' texts shaped and were shaped by their relations and contexts, I employed the qualitative case study method.

The case study is a *type* of qualitative research which, according to Yin (1994), "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). For literacy research that claims literacy practices cannot be separated from their social contexts, and that contexts themselves are not sealed tight or boarded off from one another, the case study seemed an appropriate research design for this particular study.

When I first started considering the case study as a research design, I worried that a "case" had to be an individual student or an individual teacher. Because a social theory of literacy resists the autonomous model of literacy, which defines literacy as a set of decontextualized, cognitive skills resting inside individuals, and instead views literacy as situated peopled events and practices, I wanted to select a research design that allowed space for intersecting human networks or webs of association, and movement of discourses, that might begin and end far beyond their immediate boundaries. In essence, I wanted a design that allowed for movement from one context to the other, *within a single, bounded space*.

The case study may be bounded, "fenced off," yet representative of a system (Merriam, 1998; Smith, 1978; Stake, 1995). Stake (2001) explains, "If we are moved to study it, the case is almost certainly going to be a functioning specific. [with] working parts; it is purposive; it often has a self." Yet, he furthers, "It is an integrated system a working combination of. forces" (p. 436). As qualitative, particularistic, and interpretive in nature, the case study aims to observe patterns of interaction. To do so, it requires boundaries, but also allows for an abstracted space that always and already exists beyond researcher-imposed or physical boundaries.

Merriam (1998) explains the phenomenon a researcher wishes to study must be "intrinsically bounded" to be a case; in other words, the number of people interviewed and the amount of time needed for observations must be finite. For the purposes of this research then, the case is defined as a literacy event I observed during my fieldwork in a "regular" junior-level English class in a small rural high school in the fall of 2002.

The literacy event comprising this case is the performance/enactment of what I refer to as a persecution skit. As a case, this particular literacy event is bounded: a skit, written by three white male students as part of a culminating writing activity in a teacher-designed unit, was performed during English class to "piss [another student] off" (Fieldnotes, September 29, 2002); one English teacher and fourteen students witnessed the performance of the skit; the performance of the skit occurred in the physically bounded space of the classroom, within the physically bounded space of junior "home," at a specific time during fourth block, on a specific day in September, 2002.

I realize the performance of the persecution skit-as-literacy event resulted from other, prior literacy events, i.e., reading Arthur Miller's *The Crucible,* in-class discussion of the concept of a "witch hunt," a Web Quest research activity prior to the skit-writing activity, the actual talking/topic-choosing and physical writing of the skit itself. But I did not observe these events personally, and can only understand these events through "texts" I retroactively gathered, observed, and sometimes created (problematically so, I realize) through interviews and artifact collection.

A social theory of literacy understands events are mediated by written texts and thus, a written text, or texts, are crucial parts of literacy events. Barton & Hamilton explain, "Usually there is a text central to the activity and there may be talk around the text...the study of literacy is partly a study of texts and how they are produced and used" (1998, p. 7-8). Such mediating texts in Barton's and Hamilton's community literacies project include recipes, government forms, i.e., tax forms, and notes on betting. The mediating text for my classroom-based literacy research is the written artifact of the skit, which was ultimately enacted publicly in class.

I have another reason, however, for focusing on the performance of the skit as the literacy event/case in this study: I believe, as I have discussed, that it is in the physical performance of the written artifact where space was claimed by the male students to publicly carry forth a racist, sexist agenda, an agenda that on paper remains bounded, restrained, restricted itself, and thus incapable of hurt/oppression of others unless read by others or as, in this case, performed. Space was claimed to dialogize Jessica, create an identity for her, using the skit as an artifact. The performance allowed for oppression, allowed the space for the students to carry out their agenda, and I believe the case study allows for Bakhtin's heteroglossia, where voices are constantly in contact and interaction, involved in a struggle for meaning that begins when we mouth our (parents') first words. As Bakhtin (1981) explains:

> The word, directed toward its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filed environment of alien words, value judgements, and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group: and all this may crucially shape discourse, may leave a trace in all its semantic layers. (p. 276)

The case study, then, allows for the "dialogically agitated environment" to be bounded, yet is not restrictive to movement beyond its boundaries.

Literacy always exists in a social context, and the notion of literacy events underscores this situated nature of literacy. But Barton and Hamilton understand literacy as a set of social practices that *can be inferred from events which are mediated by texts*. Barton's and Hamilton's recipes and government forms were written for varying purposes, in varying contexts, and were shaped by varying social rules.

The skit, as a text, shifted school/out-of-school contexts as it was patterned by varying social institutions and power relationships both in school and out-of-school, and was used to serve multiple contextual, political, and social purposes. This is where the perspective of "practices" to studies of literacy events and texts becomes crucial, for a close look at practices hopes to describe those practices associated with specific events and texts. Just as importantly, a close look at practices hopes to understand what people do with literacy.

While events can be constrained within the boundaries of a case, the practices which shape them can not. Literacy practices are cultural ways of using written language, and involve processes both internal and social, i.e., how people make sense of literacy and the shared cognitions represented in ideologies and discourses; literacy practices thus "straddle the distinction between individual and social worlds" (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 7). Literacy practices involve values, attitudes, feelings and social relationships, and might best or most usefully be understood as existing in the relations *between* people, in the dialogic interaction(s), that occurs among students in the contact zone of the classroom.

When I struggled methodologically with how to identify a practice when I see one, I decided to look instead at discourses, and thus, using Gee's conceptions of discourses, realized I needed a methodology that allowed for the visibility and movement of discourses.

Multiple Sources of Data

From September, 19, 2002-October 30, 2002, I spent approximately 11/2 hours per day, 3-4 days per week as a participant observer in Mrs. Taylor's 4th block English class at Hilltown High School. In addition to participant observation, data for this study includes: spoken texts (informal interviews with students, Mrs. Taylor, and Mr. Simmons, the principal of Hilltown High School); contextual data (school district data and environmental details from the site); fieldnotes, and written texts (texts written by students, class syllabus, school documents).

Participant Observation

Though interviews were highly valued in this research because they represented the participants' own voices, participant observation was equally necessary to explore the research questions I was asking. It is not possible, for example, to describe the social relations in a classroom solely by interviewing the population within a classroom. I needed first-hand observations as well.

Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw (1995) explain, "The ethos of fieldwork holds that in order to fully understand and appreciate action from the perspective of participants, one must get close to

and participate in a wide cross-section of their everyday activities over an extended period of time" (p.10).

Merriam (1988) explains that the researcher can take on one of several stances while collecting information as an observer. These stances range from being a "full participant—the investigator is a member of the group being observed—to being a spectator" (p.100). Drawing on Gold's (1958) typology, Merriam explains the four possible stances:

- *Complete participant*—Here, the researcher covertly acts like a member of a group.
- *Participant as observer*—The researcher is first and foremost a participant with the researcher's role minimized;
- *Observer as participant*—The researcher participates in participants' activities but only secondary to gathering information;
- *Complete observer*—Here, the researcher is completely hidden from the group and does not engage in the group's activities.

The first and last categories are extreme. I didn't intend to engage in covert activities, nor would it have been possible for me to be an observer without being noticed. Instead, this role for me was a combination of the two middle categories.

I made observations in one "regular" eleventh-grade English class, as only one "regular" class was offered fall semester. I initially planned to immerse myself in the classroom/culture by spending everyday there, beginning with the first day of fall semester. Such intense, prolonged engagement would make "what is happening visible" and the "familiar strange and interesting again" (Erickson, 1986, p.121). Erickson explains that everyday life is "largely invisible to us (because of its familiarity and because of its contradictions)" (p.121). However, as explained earlier, I was not allowed to begin the study until after the start of the school year, and as I soon realized, observing everyday soon became physically exhausting. It was also soon obvious I would not be able to keep up with data if I observed everyday. However, I realized the importance of establishing a routine so I would be cognizant of the routine of Mrs. Taylor's class.

As Uttech (1999), a former teacher and researcher in rural Mexico, writes:

A one-time or short-term observer in a classroom will have only the opportunity to focus on select aspects and not be privy to the complexities of what normally takes place in that classroom. Long-term observation is a prerequisite to understanding relationships and routines so that focuses can change, students can become accustomed to the presence of another person in the room and uncommon events can be distinguished as such, rather than perceived as the norm. (p.86)

Uttech goes on to describe how she went from being a "silent observer" in her research study, to "teacher helper," to ultimately teaching the class when the teacher went on a month's sick leave (p.86).

Participant observation requires that we recognize the effect we have on whatever it is we are observing. As Nespor found in his two-year ethnographic study in an urban elementary school, those being observed will often create an identity for the observer who "refuses to exhibit any recognizable signs of being a normal person." He furthers, "By refusing to participate actively in the fashioning of an identity, an observer's presence becomes an uncontrolled disruption, possibly one of greater magnitude than that caused by a reasonably interacting observer" (qtd. in Nespor, 1997, p.221).

I struggled over what kind of identity to represent not only to students, but to the English department on the first day I was to meet with them to describe my study. In my journal that morning, before even leaving my house, as I struggled with what persona I wanted to show, I wrote: *What to wear? Who do I represent today? And how will that affect how I want to be represented later?*

I wanted to put on my Birkenstocks and linen pants, or my "feminist" T-shirt, and then thought briefly about wearing my IZOD polo. Finally, I settled on neutral: khaki pants, a white button down shirt, (tucked in), and tennis shoes. In my journal again: *Don't want to be a threat, but do want to be casual as that's the persona I want to show, especially to students.*

The students wanted to know who I was and why I was there. On my first visit to Mrs. Taylor's class, toward the end of the class, a student stood near me talking to the special education aide, Mrs. Pruitt. The student must have asked Mrs. Pruitt about me because Mrs. Pruitt turned to me and asked, "What is it you're researching again?" She then asked if Mrs. Taylor had introduced me. The student said, "Yeah, who *is* she? People are wanting to know who she is." The student turned to me then and asked, "Are you in college?" I told her no, that I had been a teacher at one time, and she wanted to know where I had taught. I told her and then, seemingly satisfied (or bored), she went back to her seat.

I told Mrs. Taylor I'd need to be introduced or introduce myself to the class, as students were wondering about me. She asked for the class's attention, and then told them my name, explained I'd be working on "several different levels with students," and then told me she'd let me explain why I was there. I told students I had been a teacher, but now wanted to get from behind the teacher's desk and get to know students a little better. I told them I was interested in finding out what they thought about reading and writing, and that I hoped they'd grow comfortable enough with me being there to talk to me. They didn't seem too excited. Of course, having been a teacher, I know how relationships change as things become more familiar. This doesn't mean they became more excited about working with me, but as they got accustomed to me, I appeared less as a stranger to them, and more as an adult who they were comfortable talking to.

What we choose to focus on in observation is somewhat revealing in our biases. When I observed behaviors, actions, and interactions, I wrote about them from my own perspective. But my perspectives, and therefore my observations, are shadowed by my own personal history and culture. Uttech (1999) explains "it is inevitable that as observers our histories and experiences influence our descriptions of our observations according to how we code and decode cultural signs" (p.90).

Emerson, et. al (1995) argue a field researcher can never be completely neutral (p.3). They explain, "Rather, as the ethnographer engages in the lives and concerns of those studied, his perspective is intertwined with the phenomenon which does not have objective characteristics independent of the observer's perspective and methods" (p.3). I know that in describing students' or teachers' actions, I selected and emphasized certain features and actions, and ignored and marginalized others, as I chose what I thought to be relevant to my interpretations of the data.

Becker (1998) explains, "We social scientists always, implicitly or explicitly, attribute a point of view, a perspective, and motives to people whose actions we analyze. We *always*, for instance, describe the meanings the people we have studied give to the events they participate in, so the only question is not whether we should do that, but how accurately we do it" (p.14).

In descriptions I wrote, I know that I constantly interpreted what I saw. No two people observing an event will write the same description of that event. What draws my attention in an activity may be different for another researcher. Nevertheless, with systematic observations over time and attention to detail, a similar representation of what is happening should be recreated through words by both.

In general, the important elements that are described during observations include the setting, the participants, the implications of the environment to the actions of the participants, the activities, interactions, events and subtleties of the situation (Merriam, 1988).

These observations become data when they are recorded in the form of field notes.

Field notes

Merriam (1998) explains that "what is written down or mechanically recorded from a period of observation becomes the raw data from which a study's findings eventually emerge" (p.104). This written account, then, constitutes field notes, which are similar to the interview transcript. Because I want the reader to understand the data describes real, lived experiences of the research participants, it is imperative that my field notes be detailed and descriptive enough so that a reader can easily imagine what I have seen.

Though some researchers prefer to keep two separate records, one for documenting "pure" descriptions, and another to serve as a diary of sorts for reflections and personal feelings, my early attempts at keeping field notes showed that this was not a strategy that worked best for me. I decided, then, to combine descriptive, personal, and analytical writing in one field note journal.

Emerson, et al. (1995) suggests that keeping separate "field note records" and "diaries" leads to an erroneous assumption that the data is objective and "has a fixed meaning independent of *how* that information was elicited" (p.12). They further assert that attempts to control the separation of the two misleads us into believing that the information somehow becomes more reliable if we segregate our subjective feelings from our "data." To some this separation "is thought to be essential because personal and emotional experiences are devalued, compromising

'contaminants' of objective data rather than avenues of insight into significant processes in the setting" (p.12).

Emerson, et al. (1995) recommend that the fieldworker "register her feelings, then step back and use this experience to increase sensitivity to the experience of others in the setting" (p.27).

Interviewing

Irving Seidman's (1998) guide to interviewing proved a good fit for me and the goals of this study. Seidman opens his text with the question "Why Interview?" and explains:

> I interview because I am interested in other people's stories. Most simply put, stories are a way of knowing. The root of the word *story* is the Greek word *histor*, which means one who is 'wise' and 'learned.' Telling stories is essentially a meaning-making process. When people tell stories, they select details of their experience from their stream of consciousness. Every whole story, Aristotle tells us, has a beginning, a middle, and an end. In order to give the details of their experience a beginning, middle, and end, people must reflect on their experience. It is this process of selecting constitutive details of experience, reflecting on them, giving them order, and thereby making sense of them that makes telling stories a meaning-making experience. (p.1)

Interviews have been categorized in the literature in several different ways, from the structured, semi-structured, non-structured (Johnson, 1992), to standardized and reflexive (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983), to formal and informal (Agar, 1980). Informal interviews can occur during normal conversation, and can elicit important information. Formal interviews, in the strict sense, occur in a pre-designated place (Merriam, 1998) and discussion is on predetermined topics.

Most of the interviews I conducted were informal, open-ended one-on-one and group interviews.

Interview protocol

Before each interview began, I explained to the participants who I was and what my intentions were. I asked permission to record the interview, informing the interviewees they did not have to answer any questions they did not want to discuss. I also promised anonymity and confidentiality (see Appendix C). I was granted permission to tape the interviews, but was told by one student during a group interview if I wanted to know more about something, I'd have to turn the tape recorder off. I did so and he finished his story.

After each interview, I gave each interviewee a copy of their transcribed interview to read, to ensure the accuracy of the recording. Each participant in the study was permitted to eliminate sections, add comments, or correct information. In all cases, the transcriptions were left in their original form.

Reflections on the interview process

Outcomes of interviews can be dependent on the location of the interview. Most of the group and one-on-one interviews I conducted were in the commons area of the eleventh grade wing, or home. This area provided several large round tables to sit at, thus adequately accommodating 4-5 students and me. However, several teachers at any given time used this area to send groups of students to for test-taking or project work; students were constantly walking through the area or talking at other tables, or trying to study. This made it hard to hear the interviews when I tried to transcribe them.

Also, at times during group interviews, other students walked over to the table and wanted to know what we were doing. Of course this affected the course of the interview; oftentimes I would have to turn the tape recorder off and wait for socializing to end before the interview could resume. I thus had to move my interview sessions to a quiet room located off of the library. This affected the interviews because several students, who had been jovial in the commons area, became quieter in this room as it was small and more confining. At times, I felt students were uncomfortable being in the room with me, especially if it was just me and the student. I would try to alleviate such feelings by engaging in small-talk, but the location seemed to affect the students' participation levels.

I noticed a difference, too, between group and one-on-one interviews. In the group interviews, students were more willing to talk to me. They 'bounced' comments off of each other, and what one student said sparked ideas and furthered discussion with other students. In one-on-one interviews, as described above, students seemed almost wary of me, and not as willing to offer their stories as they were in the group interviews.

As Nespor (1997) explains, "One-on-one interviews with kids pose complex methodological problems, some of which are reduced in group interviews, although the dynamics that take their place are equally problematic" (p.232). Davies (1982) and Tammivaara and Enright (1986) warn that "adult interviewing in one-on-one situations risk controlling interview and eliciting from students what the kids think the interviewers want to hear" (qtd. in Nespor, p.232). Nespor goes on to explain how he found it impossible to control the direction of talk in group interviews he conducted with students in an elementary school. He explains:

> the students used "minimal or story-based 'bridging' devices to make transitions from one topic to the next. That is, they simply bounced off any element in the previous speaker's comment (a minimal bridge) or made thematic connections to the previous turn. One-on-one interviews, by contrast, usually function like conversations with text-based bridges, in which each speaker's turn is connected to a text—usually the interviewer's questions, which are in turn grounded in texts of the researcher's academic discipline. (p. 232)

Nespor explains that, as a result of such minimal story bridges in collective interviews, he must "reproduce relatively long strips of conversation to make them intelligible," whereas responses from one-on-one interviews can be "detached" much more easily (p.233).

Briggs (1986) reminds the researcher that the interview is a "unique social situation" and "involves a negotiation of social roles and frames of reference between strangers" (p.24). He furthers that group interviews will differ from one-on-one interviews in the variety of discourse forms they elicit, and "the interviewer...stands as a co-participant in the construction of discourse" (p.25).

Briggs argues that conventional one-on-one interviews "shape speech into particular forms that are highly referential, require words to have discrete and unambiguous meanings, and presuppose shared understandings among interviewer and interviewee" (qtd. in Nespor, p.233). Nespor goes on to explain how one-on-one interviews "suppressed rich verbal forms" in his own study (p.233). He explains:

> Using conventional one-on-one interviews...meant missing most of the kids' ways of expressing themselves; they might never have raised the same topics that arose in the other contexts. For example, many of my data on popular culture come from the fourth graders' spontaneous conversations. Attempts to raise this issue in one-on-one conversations produced relatively short, stilted comments or expression of amazement that I knew or want to know about such things. (pp.233-234)

Briggs explains that the researcher should not do away with interviewing altogether, but should first study the various ways of speaking and the speech events people participate in and try to model discussions with them on such events (Nespor, p. 234).

Triangulation

The triangulation of data involves gathering data from multiple sources (i.e., interviews, student-generated texts, etc.) that "can produce converging results that support the strength of the plausibility of one's argument[s]" (Huckin, 1992, p. 90). Triangulation strengthens the plausibility of one's argument by locating the researchers' arguments in data gathered from multiple sources within the research site. For example, in analyzing the persecution skit, I used the written artifact of the skit's text, interview data from the students who wrote and performed the skit, as well as students who observed the skit, interview data from the teacher who assigned the skit, and fieldnotes from the classroom and school contexts to gain understandings of the social organizing conducted in the classroom and how literacy practices figured into this organizing.

According to Pitman and Maxwell (1992), "This layering of data across time, informants, events, documents, and so on is an essential validation technique" (p. 763). I do not mean to imply that multiple sources validate a fixed, objective reality. Instead, multiple data sources strengthened the plausibility of my understandings of the complexity of shifting meanings across time, space, subjectivities, subject positions, and events.

Limitations of the Research

Using a conception of discourses, coupled with event and textual analysis, proved to be a useful interpretive and analytic device. Without a doubt, it enabled the teasing apart of *some* of the complexities constituting the lives of the participants in the present study and enabled the weaving together of threads of evidence from multiple sources in support or disconfirmation of discourse claims and interpretations made about relationships.

While boundaries among discourses will always be provisional, using Gee's discourse theory and Barton's focus on texts used in literacy events an interpretive frame certainly helped to explain some of the multiple identities, subject positions, and language and social practices coordinating and enacting the lives of the research participants. Arriving at satisfying interpretations of discourses, however, called for a great deal of experiential but verifiable knowledge about multiple forms of life and what it seemed to mean to be a member of each. I soon discovered that insufficient knowledge renders a discourse more-or-less invisible to a researcher, even when repeated patterns of interpretation and actions suggests that some sort of coordination by a discourse is being enacted by and upon a person. Paradoxically, I also found that identifying and interpreting discourses requires degrees of analytic distance from participants and their forms of life. That is, too much (perhaps unconscious) familiarity with a discourse (or an intersection of discourse coordinations) may also make a discourse invisible to the researcher.

In addition, using a theory of discourses may have predisposed me to "find" discourses in the collected data. I realize this is not an insurmountable problem if adequate strategies are employed to enhance the validity and trustworthiness of proposed interpretations. In the present study, I employed member checks and data cross-examination to strengthen my claims. Although the reader is the ultimate judge of the interpretations and analyses presented here, I believe a social theory of literacy, coupled with feminist and feminist poststructural theories, enabled me to examine some of the complex interrelationships among language use, sets of values and beliefs, social practices, social groups, and social institutions that co-constitute and coordinate the lives of the research participants.

Future Research Questions

Rural Research

An understanding of literacy as socially practiced underlies my belief that literacy initatives in rural schools must involve a close, committed look at the communities rural schools are situated in and serve. As evident to me through the interviews conducted with students, what is happening in the community influences what happens in the school: zoom into the classroom and you see the community. Rural schools may be the last bastion of the traditional community and the only place that brings the entire community together regardless of age or socioecomomic status.

Future researchable questions would guide investigations regarding how English education is perceived and supported in rural communities:

1. What does the school and district need to know about its rural communities in order to provide relevant literacy learning?
2. How do parents and community members in rural areas define *quality* literacy/English education as compared to urban and suburban parents and community members? Does this perception vary from the perception of students, teachers, and administrators in each environment?
3. What literacy/English skills are judged relevant by people in rural communities?
4. Do literacy/English knowledge and skills used in rural communities differ from those used in urban and suburban areas?
5. What are successful ways that schools have involved rural communities in literacy/English curriculum development, teaching, and learning? (Heath)

Literacy Research

Although I do intend to continue practicing literacy research in the social practice perspective and looking at where literacy is local, as evidenced in this study, we also need literacy perspectives that show the various hybrids, alliances, and multiple agents and agencies that simultaneously occupy acts of reading and writing.

The social practice perspective has provided the field of literacy studies with overwhelming evidence that human agents, individually and collectively, mediate literacy practices whenever they take them up—imbuing them with local intentions, resisting their often hegemonic currents, recrafting them to fulfill needs at hand.

However, Brandt & Clinton (2003) advocate "to acknowledge the heavy hand literacy has had in building networks across time and space—in de-localizing and re-framing social life—and in providing the centralizing powers by which larger and larger chunks of the social world are organized and connected" (p. 347)

Such a perspective, I believe, does not mean literacy researchers have to abandon local life, but would follow the many "Ariadne threads at the site of reading and writing, exposing the ways that 'local literacies' are recruited into distant campaigns through reading and writing" (p. 347).

Thus, the literacy event as the primary unit of analysis, would need replacing, as it privileges human actors over non-human actors, suggesting that literacy is not happening unless it can be shown that local human actors at the scene are oriented toward writing or reading. Brandt & Clinton (2003) describe a different kind of analysis, what they call "literacy-in-action," in which "any objective trace of literacy in a setting (print, instruments, paper, other technologies)" would be analyzed, whether they are taken up by local actors or not. They describe "literacy-in-action" as retaining attention to the role of literacy in human action, but shifting focus, too, to consider "the additional question of how literacy acts as a social agent, as an independent mediator (i.e., literacy, itself, in action)" (p. 349).

I see such a perspective as useful, especially in terms of considering such literate acts as the slogans on working-class While males' t-shirts, which were predominantly derogatory toward women, i.e., "Ho Depot" (appropriating Home Depot©), and another whose slogan, appropriating a pet grooming service, read "No one likes a smelly pussy." As Brandt & Clinton (2003) explain:

> When we use literacy, we also get used. Things typically mediate this relationship. Attention to sponsors can yield a fuller insight into how literate practices can be shaped out of the struggle of competing interests and agents, how multiple interests can be satisfied during a single performance of reading or writing, how literate practices can relate to immediate social relationships while still answering to distant demands. (p. 351)

And I do feel, to some extent, the perspective Brandt & Clinton offer would be helpful in continuing the research presented in this study, as I believe the boys' writing and performance of the persecution skit point to the fact that their literacy practices are shaped "by distant demands;" future research could attempt to discover what those "distant demands" are.

CHAPTER 3: TROUBLING LITERACY

However complete one thinks his or her system is, however fixed or finished, there are always other possibilities, other interpretations.
— Jim Garrison and Mary Leach, "Dewey after Derrida"

A long history of troubled binaries, of attempts to "disrupt, to keep the system in play, to set up procedures to continuously demystify the realities we create, to fight the tendency for our categories to congeal" (Lather, 1991) pervades literacy research and scholarship. Literacy refuses to be defined, categorized, or classified in simplistic, overly reductive dichotomous terms.

While an *archaeology* of the history of literacy categorization schemes, and ultimately the dismantling of such categories, is beyond the scope of this present study, Chapter 3 intends to illuminate dichotomous understandings literacy theorists and researchers have struggled (and continue to struggle) to place literacy within, i.e., nurture/nature, cognitive/social, written/oral.

At the same time, this chapter intends to show how such dichotomous understandings are resisted and how, as Garrison and Leach (2001) maintain, "there are always other possibilities, other interpretations" (p. 69). Literacy theorists and researchers have been unsuccessful in establishing any theory of literacy as a "master narrative," "metanarrative," or "grand narrative" (Lyotard, 1984/1979, p. 37), that serves as "transcendental, totalizing justification of knowledge projects" (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 508) and "privileged discourse capable of situating, characterizing, and evaluating all other discourses" (Fraser, 1989, p. 87).

As St. Pierre (2000) reminds us:

One of the most significant effects of deconstruction is that it foregrounds the idea that language does not simply point to preexisting things and ideas but rather helps to construct them and, by extension, the world as we know it. In other words, we word the world. The 'way it is' is not 'natural.' We have constructed the world as it is through language and cultural practice, and we can also deconstruct and reconstruct it. There are many structures that simply do not exist prior to naming and are not essential or absolute but are created and maintained every day by people. (p. 483)

This chapter, then, resisting binary opposition and privileged positioning, serves to illustrate some of those structures literacy theorists and researchers have "created, named, and maintained" as helpful and temporary, rather than totalizing and stable. Lather (1991) explains that deconstruction allows for conceiving "useful categorical schemes as provisional constructions rather than as systematic formulations, [where] focus shifts to how data escape, exceed and complicate rather than how to impose a specific direction of meaning" (p. 125).

Thus, literacy scholarship from such "provisional constructions" as cognitivist, sociocognitivist, and sociocultural perspectives is presented in this chapter to 1) highlight selected aspects of each perspective that I believe have contributed to changes in our understandings of literacy, and point toward those which underlie this study, and 2) to illustrate

how data presented in Chapter 6 continues to elude, "escape and complicate" these existing theoretical positions. We need new provisional constructions to help us understand literacy in classroom contact zones.

Chapter 3[10] begins with a look at cognitive traditions, and continues to a discussion of the rise of the social practice perspective, which largely informs my own understandings of literacy and the analysis of this study. Chapter 4 details more fully the aspect of *discourse* in the social practice perspective of literacy as a conceptual tool for understanding and tracing literacy practices as they transgress domains.

Cognitive Perspectives of Literacy

Behaviorism, as a school of thought, dominated the human sciences for more than half a century. Behaviorists believed that whatever exists, exists in some quantity and can be measured. In his 1957 book, *Verbal Behavior,* B.F. Skinner argued that language, like other behavior, could be described in physical, observable terms, without reference to thought or any other mental process. Skinner, in essence, believed that children would learn grammar by associating stimuli with reinforcement, i.e., praise a child for saying "two feet" instead of "two foots," and the child will learn grammar. Learning, then, was a function of specialized "cognitive modules in the brain" (MacFaquharr, 2003, p. 67).

Chomsky found this idea preposterous. For Chomsky, grammatical rules must be "already there, hardwired into the brain, into something like a language organ." To Chomsky, the ability to speak "developed naturally, like the ability to see or hear. There was, in this quintessentially human endeavor, no need for pellets" (MacFarquhar, 2003, p. 70). Chomsky believed in a "pure" grammar that came from within. To him, language was a "self-enclosed system a perfect, unified system" that did not exist "out-there" in the messiness of the social world (MacFarquhar, 2003, p. 72, p. 77). For children to learn language, then, they simply had to be immersed in language practices[11].

Such behaviorist and pre-cognitive theories of language positioned learners as universally passive (one received environmental stimuli or biological "hard-wiring") and autonomous (structure of language comes from within; "part of the human biological endowment" [MacFuharar, 2003, p. 72]). Environmental and social aspects of how internal knowledge structures, i.e., long- and short-term memory, schemas, are shaped by environmental influences were ignored or marginalized (Fassio, 2000, p. 22). Such passive and autonomous views of literacy positioned the skills and concepts that accompany literacy acquisition and use, then, as automatically, neutrally, and universally stemming from the qualities of literacy inherent in any learner.

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[10] I am greatly indebted to Kristi Jones Fassio (2000) for her previous dissertation work on historical perspectives and research traditions of literacy.

[11] While Chomsky's work in linguistics has influenced cognitive, autonomous views of literacy, which describe innate acquisition of literacy skills, Chomsky has distinguished between the "innate nature of language learning" and the learning of "culturally determined human capacities like literacy" (Hemphill & Snow, 1996, p. 174).

Cognitive theories attempted to push literacy research and theorizing away from this nurture/nature binary, which polarized the literacy debate and thus learners between delimiting views of passivity and autonomy. With the "cognitive revolution" came constructionist beliefs about the mind--that mind is dynamic rather than static, authoritative and active, continually constructing and adapting internal knowledge structures in response to ever-changing environments (Bybee & Sund, 1982). To cognitivists working out of a constructionist paradigm, the mind was not simply a recorder of information or a compiler of associations, but a "set of powers which transforms diverse experiences into wholes" (Foster, 1992, p. 47).

Yet cognitive psychology continued to ignore environmental and social contexts. According to Scribner and Cole (1981), psychologically-oriented cognitivists believe that cognitive development unfolds according to a biological clock, unaltered by culture. To psychologically-oriented literacy theorists, then, "literacy may influence how society does its work, but not the structures of mental operations" (p. 235).

The composer, then, continued to be depicted as a "problem-solver" who, as a reader or writer, "mapped old knowledge onto new knowledge encountered in a process of representing (and acting upon) a literacy task" (Greene & Ackerman, 1995, p. 384). This mapping of old knowledge to new was central to most cognitive theories and surfaces in a wide variety of cognitive literacy scholarship (e.g., schema[12], conceptual change learning[13], information processing[14], situated cognition[15], mental models[16]). David Asubel's (1963) work with advance organizers explains that new knowledge can only be assimilated into existing cognitive structures if/when bridges are formed between prior knowledge and new knowledge (Anderson & Pearson, 1984).

Impact on Literacy Pedagogy

Such views and research impacted, and continues to impact, literacy pedagogy. In a psychologically-oriented cognitivist-influenced classroom, a learner constructs the "appropriate" internal structures and processes to carry out so-called culturally neutral, universal composition and comprehension skills. Thus English teachers implement instructional methods that involve building background knowledge to enrich and instantiate schemas to increase comprehension and teaching strategies that help students connect new concepts to prior knowledge. In addition, an English teacher must provide "skill-and-drill" opportunities for students' multiple and varied exposure to new concepts to instantiate long-term memory slots with language conventions (e.g., phonemic awareness, spelling, grammar, punctuation).

Literacy, then, from a psychologically-oriented cognitivist standpoint, can be described in terms of an acquisition metaphor. Either one gets it or doesn't, and if one doesn't, then there must be a cognitive deficit. Evaluation is product-oriented, i.e., correctly spelled word lists, essays,

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[12] See Alba & Hasher (1983) or Anderson & Pearson (1984) for schema theory.
[13] See Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog (1982) or Vosniadou and Brewer 91987) for conceptual change learning theory.
[14] See Andre & Phye (1986) or Anderson (1983) for information processing theory.
[15] See Resnick (1987), Resnick, Levine, & Teasley (1991), and Brown, Collins & Duguid (1989) for situated cognition theories.
[16] See Johnson-Laird (1980) for mental models.

comprehension tests. More behaviorist than psychologically-oriented cognitive literacy researchers would like to admit, literacy from a psychologically-oriented cognitivist perspective becomes something to be measured through the appropriate device. Mechanistic approaches to writing instruction are encouraged, as is teaching for the test and stressing matters of superficial form and correctness. (Berlin, 1990).

Such testing of student abilities leads to tracking in English courses at the high school level. When students are unable to demonstrate acquisition of the teacher's internalized structures, remediation efforts often focus on fixing individual cognitive deficiencies rather than on understanding social practices surrounding students' literate lives.

In my observations of several English classes at Hilltown High School, I witnessed such remediation efforts. 9th grade students who fail to pass the reading portion of the eighth grade SOL test are required to take a pre-9th grade course entitled "Appalachian Studies." If these students do not pass the eighth grade SOL test as ninth graders, or perform in the lowest quartile on the Stanford 9[17] test, they are tracked into an "English 10 Pre-Integrated" or "English 10 Integrated" course the following year.

As described in the "2002-2003 Course Descriptions and General Information" handbook, the Appalachian Studies course is designed "to help students develop reading strategies so that they can be successful in all classes. Students will study both fiction and nonfiction literature of Appalachia. They will also work daily on computer programs designed to help them practice the reading strategies they are learning in class" (p. 23). The "Pre-Integrated English 10" course emphasizes "basic reading and writing skills" through a focus on grammar, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling (p. 24). The "Integrated English 10" course emphasizes written compositions, oral presentations, and study of world literature (p. 24).

On one day I observed the Appalachian Studies course, in the fall of 2002, students were rotating among three stations. The first station was in the school library where a computer lab is housed. Students, under supervision by a special education resource teacher, participated in an Accu-Reading© computer program.

Described as a "hands-on learning experience," Accu-Reading© provides short non-fiction selections designed to improve specific reading skills: main idea, vocabulary, sequence, factual recall, inference, and drawing conclusions. Students are immediately assessed, and after an assessment, students work on specific skills or learn in a mixed practice format through the computer program that includes crossword puzzles and two-answer questions

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[17] The Stanford 9 Achievement test is a combination of multiple-choice and open-ended subtests of student educational achievement. The Reading domain tests student achievement in the following categories: sounds and letters, word study skills, word reading, reading vocabulary, sentence reading, and reading comprehension. The open-ended writing assessment analyzes student achievement in the following six categories: Ideas and Development, Organization, Unity, and Coherence, Word Choice, Sentences and Paragraphs, Grammar and Usage, Mechanics

(http://www.meritsoftware.com). An example of a reading comprehension question looks as follows:

> *Have you ever looked up at a giraffe? It is the tallest animal in the world. Some giraffes grow as tall as 20 feet. They can eat leaves off the very tops of trees. Giraffes reach the trees by stretching their long necks. To drink, a giraffe spreads its front legs far apart. Then it bends its knees slightly but does not kneel. Finally it lowers its head to the water. A giraffe usually sleeps standing up. If it lies down at all, it rests its head on a low branch.*
>
> *Which sentence could logically be inserted in this paragraph?*
>
> a) *A male elephant weighs six times as much as a male giraffe.*
> b) *The giraffe's long upper lip and 17-inch tongue also help it to get food.*
> c) *Adult giraffes have no enemies.*

The second station took place in the freshman commons[18] area.

At this station, students were told by another special education aide to "spread out and do 1-5 in the workbook." Students were also told, "This will be graded on correct and incorrect answers" (Fieldnotes, September 23, 2002). I looked at the SOL workbook exercise entitled "Measuring Up." Students were to read a passage and answer five comprehension questions based on the passage.

The third station was in the Appalachian Studies teacher's classroom. Here students were preparing to write their own ghost stories. Mrs. Green and her students talked about how best to work on stories. Mrs. Green showed students booklets of ghost stories her last year's students wrote. The following dialogue ensued in this classroom:

> S1: Can we work with partners?
> T: I don't care. It's up to you guys how you do it.
> S3: Just one story per person?
> T: You can just write one. Or feel free to write more. [laughs]
> S3: Short in length?
> T: Probably want to write a page or two at least. We're going to go through the writing process to do this. You know, brainstorming ideas, writing everything you know, editing, typing. We're going to do all that stuff. (Fieldnotes, September 24, 2002)

Mrs. Green's announcement that the students would "go through the writing process" is indicative of a shift that occurred in cognitivist literacy research and scholarship.

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[18] As in the sophomore, junior, and senior "homes," all classrooms sit around and open onto a square commons area where 4-5 round tables sit, as well as a computer workstation. Teachers from all disciplines use this area for student individual/group work.

Sociocognitive Perspectives of Literacy[19]

Sociocognitive literacy research was pivotal in shifting cognitive research away from a strictly inside-the-head focus. Such research questioned instruction based solely on building internal cognitive structures and looked toward literacy instruction addressing literacy processes.

Influenced by Jerome Bruner's beliefs that language enables the mind to categorize learners' experiences (Foster, 1992), sociocognitive literacy researchers began to think of reading and writing as "cognitive processes," universal intellectual mental functions, which would exhibit certain general features manifested in the behavior of all literacy users. These new understandings encouraged cognitivists to move away from an internal focus (e.g., short-term, long-term memory) and toward reading and writing processes literacy learners used, such as pre-reading and post-reading, topic selection, editing, and question generating (Graves, 1983; Hayes & Flower, 1986; Palincsar & Brown, 1984).

Cognitive-process researchers believed they could understand such processes through protocol analysis (analyzing individual records of writers asked to document their thoughts and behavior as they write), and observations of reader/writer behavior. Cognitive-process researchers observed the ways readers and writers worked, and from those observations created models of what readers and writers do.

Early writing process models tended to be linear, dividing composing into three parts. Examples of these include the Conception/Incubation/Production model of James Britton[20] and the Pre-Write/Write/Re-Write model of Gordon Rohman[21]. Later researchers insisted that the "stages" of composing interact continuously, so that the process itself is not at all linear, but reciprocal and recursive[22].

Context also became important. Frank Smith describes the power of context in writing: "the writer is not free to produce words arbitrarily. [writers are bound by] two things, the subject matter...and the language the writer is employing" (1988, p. 41). Smith explains that students use the resources of language, i.e., syntax, diction, organization, and format, to invoke context.

In their review of cognitive literacy research, Greene and Ackerman (1995) explain that a trend appeared. Proficient reading and writing seemed to involve employing comprehension and composition strategies for "invoking context" to build representations of a text. "Readers use cues from a given text (or texts), prior knowledge and experience, and knowledge of discourse conventions to infer and discard hypotheses, make predictions, and question assumptions" (p.

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[19] Psychologically-oriented cognitive and sociocognitive perspectives often cross categories, as psychological frameworks frame both perspectives.
[20] See James Britton (1975). *The Development of Writing Abilities.*
[21] See Gordon Rohman (1965) "Pre-Writing: The Stage of Discovery in the Writing Process," CCC, 16, 106-112.
[22] See Linda Flower & John R. Hayes (1981). "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing." In V. Villanueva (Ed.) *Cross Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.

391). The boundaries between context and cognition, then, as sociocognitivist literacy researchers found, were not as distinct as psychologically-oriented cognitivists constructed them to be.

Impact on Literacy Pedagogy

Again, such literacy research and scholarship affected literacy pedagogy. Teachers who embrace the cognitive-process views of reading and writing see their mission as helping students understand and master their own reading and writing processes. Teachers no longer see themselves as lawgivers and authority-figures obligated to pour their knowledge into their passively receptive students and enforce universal 'standards' of editing, etc., but as active participants in their students' learning, ready to empower them with an awareness of their own responsibilities as writers.

Teachers become nurturers of students' processes, then, and may supply information about writing and reading, or direct students in structural stages, but their main job is to create an environment in which students can learn for themselves the behaviors appropriate to successful reading and writing (Berlin, 1990). Evaluation is no longer product-oriented, but emphasizes each learner's process.

Various process-oriented approaches define what constitutes a literacy process differently, but the focus of instruction is processes, not products. For example, Donald Graves (1983) describes the processes of writing as involving everything from the 'time he first contemplates the topic to the final moment when he completes the paper' (p. 250).

Processes are taught through instructional methods such as teachers modeling processes by conducting think-alouds wherein they literally think out loud as they solve problems in their reading or writing, thereby giving novices access to the skills of experts. Instruction is designed around social practices such as cooperative grouping for literature discussions, peer reviews of written pieces, buddy reading, and routine one-on-one literacy conferences between peers or between the teacher and individual students (Cooper, 1993). Students learn reading and writing processes not by completing drill sheets but by engaging in the processes. For example, rather than learning capitalization skills through fill-in-the blank worksheets, students write stories on topics they have selected through strategic topic selection processes (e.g., brainstorming, webbing). Then peers find each others' missing capitals as they engage in the process of editing each others' work.

As these methods indicate, sociocognitive approaches to literacy broadened literacy curricula to include social activities (e.g., buddy reading, peer editing, publishing and sharing) and processes of literate meaning-making. While embedding literacy instruction in social practices represented an important step away from views of literacy as strictly a matter of individual, internal structures, the underlying assumptions of literacy and learning remained consistent with those of psychologically-oriented cognitivists.

Other influential sociocognitive work was done by Scribner & Cole (1981) with the Vai in Liberia. When psychology-informed perspectives grew inadequate, such sociocognitive

researchers as Scribner & Cole (1981), influenced by Vygotskian beliefs that thought and language have social origins, blurred the lines between the internal (i.e., mind) and the external (i.e., society). Their hybrid framework of "situated cognitive skills in culturally organized practices" (Scribner & Cole, 1981, p. 259) made it possible to move research beyond "antonymic terms that dominate much thinking about thinking...higher order versus lower order...terms that offer little guidance to our search" (p. 259).

Scribner and Cole explain that "describing Vai script literacy...required us to go beyond a mere cataloging of individual activities with the script. We could not hope to achieve even an elementary understanding of the intellectual significance of these activities unless we had an account of their role within Vai society" (p. 18). This awareness of literacy as socioculturally embedded led Scribner and Cole to label their framework "a practice account of literacy" (p. 235). They define a practice as "a recurrent, goal-directed sequence of activities using a particular technology and particular systems of knowledge" (p. 236).

Such an account of literacy was critical to Scribner and Cole's analysis, and it has had far-reaching effects for the work of subsequent literacy theorists, researchers, and practitioners (e.g., Rogoff, 1990; Street, 1995). A practice account of literacy allowed Scribner and Cole (among others) to understand that "in order to identify the consequences of literacy, we need to consider the specific characteristics of specific practices. And in order to conduct such an analysis, we need to understand the larger social system that generates certain kinds of practices (and not others) and poses particular tasks for these practices (and not others)" (p. 237).

According to Great Divide[23] literacy theorists, becoming literate brings with it the cognitive consequence of so-called "higher order" thought processes (e.g., sorting geometric figures, logical syllogisms). Scribner and Cole set out to identify the cognitive consequences of literacy through studying specific cognitive consequences of specific practices. They found that one group of people in the culture could write a Vai script used in various practices. However, through separating the cognitive consequences of English schooling from the cognitive consequences of being literate in that particular Vai script, Scribner and Cole found that being literate in the Vai script alone did not necessarily predict what Eurocentric cognitivists considered higher order mental processes. Importantly, Scribner and Cole found that the work of the dominant social order did not depend on the Vai script.

All official business (e.g., taxation, laws, elections) was conducted in English. Scribner and Cole explained that the "hegemony of English" (p. 242) had restricted the utility of Vai script: Literacy, as a socially organized practice, "is not simply knowing how to read and write a particular script but applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use. The nature of these practices, including, of course, their technological aspects, will determine the kinds of skills (i.e., consequences) associated with literacy" (p. 236).

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[23] Such literacy theorists as Walter Ong (1982, 1986) and David R. Olson (1977, 1994) used what they believed were differences between oral and written discourse to define literate and nonliterate societies; they "focused on alphabetic literacy as a unique agent of cognitive and social reorganization in attempts to explain cultural changes in modernizing societies" (Brandt & Clinton, 2002).

The work of Scribner and Cole provided evidence suggesting that the consequences of cognitive skills are "intimately bound up with the nature of the practices that require them" (p. 237). Scribner & Cole, thus, demonstrated how "the cognitive effects of literacy actually vary with the settings in which it is learned; what literacy does to you depends on what you do with it" (Brandt & Clinton, 2002, p. 340).

While sociocognitive perspectives recognize the importance of seeing literacy as situated in the social practices of a group of people, such approaches do not help students learn how composition and comprehension shape the social contexts and relations in which these practices are embedded. Nor do these approaches help students understand how textual practices are shaped by the contexts and relations in which the practices are embedded.

Eurocentric literacy practices still define what constitutes literacy or literate practices. Pedagogical goals of process approaches shift from individual to social modes of learning, but both psychological and sociocognitive pedagogies are guided by the need for individual development of standardized, technical skills. The focus of literacy pedagogy, then, remains on the idea of the sole, autonomous, individual learner; social and environmental contexts embedded in relations of power continue to be ignored and marginalized. Thus, literate processes are defined and presented as though they were culturally neutral, value-free, and universal. These are considered processes every reader or writer needs to understand in order to be fully literate— regardless of which social practices or which social groups call for their use.

Sociocultural Perspectives of Literacy

Prompted by Scribner & Cole's (1981) findings, literacy researchers began to study contextualized literacy practices as *social* practices. Unlike sociocognitive perspectives, sociocultural literacy perspectives focus on the relationships between literate practices and social power. Fassio explains:

> Like sociocognitive literacy theorists, socioculturalists advocate a definition of literacy that recognizes learners as situated, active meaning makers. However, unlike much sociocognitive work, sociocultural work recognizes that different social groups and practices will generate different literate meaning-making practices. Rather than viewing differences as deficient or as deviations from the "standard," socioculturalists embrace differences. Drawing from liberal notions of pluralism, socioculturalists aim to understand and appreciate individual and cultural differences. (p.35)

Shirley Brice Heath's study (1983), *Ways with Words*, is a landmark example of such an aim toward understanding and appreciation of differences. In her ethnographic study, Heath spent over a decade looking at the ways in which literacy is embedded in the cultural context of three communities in the Piedmont Carolinas. I focus on two of those communities here, in much detail, in an attempt to highlight the effects of preschool home and community environments on language learning and use in classroom and job settings. One such community—what Heath refers to as the "Mainstreamers," is comprised of Black and white "townspeople who see themselves as being in the 'mainstream of things' and have much in common with the national mainstream

middle class generally presented in the public media as the American client or customer" (p. 236). Heath describes a second community, that of Roadville, as "a white working-class community of families who have been a part of mill life for four generations" (p. 28).

Although I discuss *discourse* in much more detail in Chapter 4, I feel it is necessary to explain sociolinguist James Gee's conceptualization of the term as it influences my understanding of different community members' "ways with words," or discourses, and how disconnect can arise when multiple discourses meet each other in the classroom. The descriptions of the Mainstreamers, presented below, show how the Primary Discourse of children from the middle-class community bears a strong resemblance to many aspects of secondary Discourses of school. School for Mainstream children is a relatively seamless and successful extension of their home practices.

James Gee (1992; 1996) uses the term *discourse* to describe "identity kits" people use to know how to act and talk so as to "take on a particular role that others will recognize" (1996, p. 3). To Gee, every discourse involves values, attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, ways of learning, and ways of expressing what we know.

Gee explains we can distinguish between two broad sorts of discourses in any society. The first sort Gee calls "primary discourses," and defines them as "those to which people are apprenticed early in life during their primary socialization as members of particular families within their sociocultural settings" (1996, p. 137). Such discourses constitute our first social identity, and "something of a base within which we acquire or resist later discourses. They form our initial taken-for-granted understandings of *who* we are and *who* people 'like us' are, as well as what sorts of things we ('people like us') do, value, and believe when we are not 'in public'" (p. 137). We don't get to choose our Primary discourses, then.

A primary discourse is discourse we get "free at our mother's knee," the discourse of "face-to-face oral communication with those close to use in the community where we start life" (Finn, 1999, p. 108). For example, my primary discourse includes values, beliefs, and attitudes associated with the Southern Baptist religion, with being part of a small, middle-class, suburban, White family--a discourse much like the Mainstreamers' I'd imagine.

Gee explains that people "acquire" secondary discourses: "People are apprenticed as part of their socializations within various local, state, and national groups and institutions outside early home and peer-group socialization for example, churches, gangs, schools, offices. They constitute the recognizability and meaningfulness of our 'public' (more formal) acts" (p. 137). Secondary discourses are developed in association with and by having access to and practice with secondary institutions. For example, because I was previously a secondary English teacher and am currently a graduate student, discourses associated with public education and academia constitute my secondary discourses. I didn't learn these at home, but through my association and participation in such institutions

Boundary lines between primary and secondary discourses are blurry, and open to constant negotiation and change. Nevertheless, as Knobel (1999) explains, "Distinguishing

between the two categories of discourse types provides an invaluable means of explaining how it is that some students are able to achieve success in school more readily than others" (p. 41).

Just down the road from Mainstream America, is a white working-class community whose primary discourses, as Heath shows, are not valued (i.e., practiced) within the secondary discourses of the local school. Indeed, Roadville children found many school practices unfamiliar and alienating. These children were often regarded as academically poor students, despite the rich language and literacy practices evinced in their primary discourses.

The Mainstreamers

The townspeople are strongly school-oriented; they believe that academic and social success in school is a prerequisite for being successful as an adult. Heath explains, "Mainstreamers exist in societies around the world that rely on formal educational systems to prepare children for participation in settings involving literacy. Cross-national descriptions characterize these groups as literate, school-oriented, aspiring to upward mobility through success in formal institutions" (Heath, 1983, p. 398).

Viewed as an institution, Mainstreamers understand the school's purpose is to instill values such as respectability, responsibility, and an acceptance of hard work into their children. Townspeople see success in school as comparable to success in the workplace: "Early achievement within an institution that rewards adherence to norms of conduct reflecting these values is necessary for success in the workplace, whether as a businessperson, lawyer, politician, doctor, or teacher" (1983, p. 237).

Heath explains how Mainstream children grow up surrounded by reading and writing materials, as well as adults who read for pleasure and instruction. Mainstream children grow up listening to their parents talk about what they read. Mainstream children grow up learning to rely on print, as they see their parents read reviews of movies and consumer guides. Mainstream parents believe "their ways of talking about what is written and responding to the content of written materials will impart to their young the necessary skills for achieving school and job success" (1983, p. 262).

As Heath explains, much of the physical and verbal environment of Mainstream babies is oriented around literacy. From an early age, children are expected to take an interest in books and information obtained from books. Babies' rooms are decorated with murals, mobiles, and stuffed animals which represent characters from books. Many toys are "educational."

Mainstream babies are, almost from conception, "fitted to a schedule," and "treated as a potential conversationalist" (1983, p. 245). Talk is the primary form of communication. As Heath explains, "Once home, the baby is addressed, and answered for, by adults and other siblings. Sometimes in these 'exchanges,' the speaker waits an appropriate time before answering for the baby, as though the speaker actually intends to give the preverbal infant a chance to answer" (1983, p. 246).

Mainstream parents carry the baby about, pointing out things and providing names, descriptions, and running commentaries. There is a consistent emphasis on the baby as an individual, a separate person, with whom the preferred means of communicating is talk, usually face-to-face. Mainstream mothers talk to their babies and assume they are attending to their talk; the mother interprets any response the baby makes as "intentional" and "representational" (1983, p. 248). Heath explains:

> If shortly after one interpretation is given, the baby issues a contradictory signal, the mother may even comment on this shift as an attempt on the part of the child to clarify his intentions: 'Oh, you *didn't* like that, huh? I'm sorry, Mommy thought you like that, I didn't mean to scare you.' Once the infants are old enough to babble or make other sounds which can be interpreted as having a representational or expressive value, mothers repeat and expand these utterances into well-formed sentences. They restate the infant's utterance as they believe the infant intended it, acknowledging that though the infant is not old enough to say what he intends, he is capable of having intentions which can be interpreted by others. The mother interprets the utterance by assuming the child's intention to express a meaning and to use language to represent something in the environment or situation symbolically. (1983, p. 248)

This appears again and again in the question and answer routines Mainstream mothers engage in with their infants. Children are thus trained to act as conversation partners and information givers. When Mainstream children are pre-school age, they are asked what Finn (1999) refers to as "display questions—ones where the adult has the answer but wants the child to display its knowledge" (p. 106).

Most display questions ('What does the doggie say?') are repeated again and again and on similar occasions such as bed time or book reading time. When Mainstream children are old enough to start having experiences their parents do not share, they are expected to give information about such experiences when asked in "straightforward narrative form" (Finn, 1999, p. 106).

Mainstream childrens' conversations with their parents almost always allude to books. Parents take every opportunity to relate ongoing events to books, even when books aren't available. Parents read to their children while they wait in doctors' office, or travel. Often, Mainstream parents stimulate or model book stories in oral form for children, and thus "make up" stories. Too, books and book-related talk count as entertainment, and children understand that when they engage in book talk, they can engage in fantasy and say things that aren't true.

Mainstream mothers begin reading to their children at young ages, and expect children to give attention to books and acknowledge questions about books. Children are expected to be highly interactive and participative in book reading. However, Mainstream parents expect this role to change about the time their children reach the age of three. Then, children are expected to sit still and listen, until the story is over or until the adult signals a break in the reading. Children are coached, then, in appropriate listening behaviors.

Once Mainstream children are old enough to begin attending Sunday school or nursery school, these "listen-and-wait" patterns are replicated around extended talk, which accompanies book reading with adults. Mainstream children's roles, instead of active and participative, now become passive, as children are expected to be listeners and spectators.

Children learn to sit with others and listen until the story reader signals that it is time for questions for discussion. Then they can talk to the teacher to respond to a question or to contribute general comments in an open discussion of the story or book, so long as they take turns and do not interrupt each other; children may talk to each other as long as they do so briefly, quietly, and stay on the topic of the story.

As Heath explains, accompanied with story reading is a questioning and share session directed by the teacher. The teacher may ask questions about the story's content; the teacher may ask, "How do you know?" questions and prediction questions. The teacher then encourages children to share knowledge that they are reminded of by the story—the mention of a desert reminds a child of a car ride across the desert; a story about a dog triggers several pet stories. Through such questioning, Heath explains, "Knowledge from the story and from the child's background are constructed together" (1983, p. 255).

This knowledge is familiar to Mainstream children when they enter school. Mainstream children learn the rules for talking about and responding to books and writing tasks; they come to accept "retrieval of the structure and information of written texts as critical to the presentation of form and content in their oral texts" (1983, p. 262). Thus, in school, Heath describes how Mainstream children find continuity of these patterns of using language, "as well as an increasing emphasis on expository talk and writing around events or items not physically present, but referred to in written sources" (1983, p. 262).

Heath describes that reading lessons in the Mainstream school are very similar to bedtime story routines parents engage in with their children. Factual questions—Who? What? Where?--are followed by "reason" explanations—Why? Why not? How? And finally, questions of feeling are addressed: How did it make you feel? As Finn (1999) explains, "For Mainstreamers this seems natural. It's the only way they know, but since nursery school, kindergarten, elementary school, high school, college, graduate school, professions, management, and Western forms of wielding power are based on this model, it's the only way they need to know" (p. 108).

In addition, Mainstreamers are highly mobile, and look "beyond the primary networks of family and community for behavioral models and value orientations" (1983, p. 398). Mainstream parents are involved in voluntary associations such as the Elk's Club, Masons, YMCA, Junior League, churches, and tennis and swimming clubs across the city and region. Mainstream parents make it a point to get their children involved in after-school activities and programs as well. Mainstream parents spend a lot of time getting their kids to music and dance lessons, Boy Scouts, baseball, swimming, tennis, horseback riding, etc, and thus depend on rigorous schedules that require organization and planning.

Heath describes how Mainstream children form friendships with the children of their parents' friends and thus "rivalries among these mainstream groups of friends do not surface as

group rivalries, but as competition among individuals" (1983, p. 242). Heath explains how this sense of competition among individuals who strive to win largely by personality is linked to an air of entitlement, which Mainstream children develop through their school experiences. Mainstream children, then, grow up learning how to get ahead, learning what it means to be a member of group, and to choose, work with, and strive to be a group leader. Mainstream children sense that both themselves and their parents hold a great deal of power.

Roadville

Another community exists just down the road from the city where the Mainstreamers reside. Here, a discontent of "city life" marks the talk of old-timers, who can remember having to move to textile mills around bigger, more industrial areas during the Great Depression. They like Roadville just the way it is, and believe its rural orientation provides them with recreational opportunities like hunting, fishing, and "enjoying a slower pace of life" they wouldn't get elsewhere. People from Roadville value their solidarity, their sameness. As one woman interviewed in Heath's study explains:

> We, uh, mamma used to talk about how we [in the mill community] was cut from the same pattern. We all knowed what to expect. We learned at church and at home that things were either *right* or *wrong*; you did things the *right* way and you were *right*; you did wrong or said wrong, and everybody *knew* it was wrong. Most everybody accepted that; those that didn't just didn't fit in at all. I guess they became what you might call the black sheep. (1983, p. 143)

In Roadville, the elderly are highly valued, and men tend to "rule the roost." Heath writes: "There is to be no doubt about who is boss: old folks know more than young folks, and adults accept no challenges to this premise. The old know more than the young; men know more than the women; and in case of a difference in views, the word of the old and the male holds" (1983, p. 42). Gender roles, then, in Roadville households tend to be traditionally defined: men are expected to be the bread winners and work outside the home while women are expected to raise children at home.

Heath explains that Roadville wives tend to have more education than their husbands but "must keep their knowledge away from their husbands and exert their school knowledge in ways which their husbands will not notice" (1983, p. 46). Boys and girls, once beyond the age of two, are separated for play and their toys, including educational toys, are sharply differentiated. Girls learn to help their mothers can, cook, freeze, clean the house, and take care of other siblings; boys learn to help their fathers do house repairs, paint, work on the car, farm, etc.

For the residents of Roadville, schooling is something "most folks have not gotten enough of," but everybody believes will "do something toward helping an individual 'get on'" (1983, p. 29). Old-timers in Roadville believe children used to learn "a lot of lessons school can't teach" (1983, p. 35) and uphold mill life as something which gave them work when their large families needed support and the "mountains and the farm could not keep [our] children fed and clothed" (1983, p. 35).

Central to the valuing of the mill is the mill's demand for hard work; many "old-timer" residents expressed they had been prepared by their hard lives to "work all my life" (1983, p. 32). Roadville residents seem to live by the belief that work=money; "if one works hard enough, there should be enough money, and if there is not enough money, someone is not working hard enough" (1983, p. 41). Heath explains that in Roadville, there is usually not enough money, so the residents "pile jobs on in their hours free from the mill. The work builds up; the leisure time decreases" (1983, p. 41), and thus resentment and frustration build up.

This belief in hard work, however, translates into their encouragement to their children to "work hard" in school, and they ask for evidence of such hard work in practices familiar to them: "spelling words, 'learnin' lessons,' and doing homework" (1983, p. 46). Ultimately, however, Roadville parents cannot grasp the purpose of many of the activities their children are asked to do at school. As Heath explains: "These tasks ['looking up definitions all the time,' lookin' up answers to questions in science'] always seem to point to something else, to suggest that they will have some purpose, some place to be put to use. But neither parents nor children see and participate in these ultimate occasions for use" (1983, pp. 46-47).

When Roadville children begin school, their parents see their responsibilities as restricted to making sure their children attend regularly and stay out of trouble. Roadville children do not usually bring books home, or read for pleasure. Roadville parents expect their children to be good students, and they accept "C" students as good. They do not express dismay when their children get occasional "D's." They tend to be surprised when their children bring home "A's" or "B's" (1983, p. 45).

This might explain why the "average, even the good, students seem to do only minimally what is asked of them to conform" (1983, p. 47). Heath seems to believe, however, that Roadville children have a hard time seeing any "situational relevance" to what they learn in school:

> They do not engage themselves creatively in making use of school tasks, in plugging them into some activity where they might make a difference. They see no reason to use the word whose definition was learned in English class last week in either a conversation at home, or in an essay for this week's American History class.

> Roadville students' social vitality and creativity seem to turn back into their own sense of dress and talk of cars and music. By the time they reach high school, they have written off school as not making any difference for what they want. At their age, they feel sure success in school tasks will threaten their social relations with those whose company they value. The jobs they want seem unrelated to the tasks school sets up for them. They do not see that the skills and attitudes their teachers promote make any difference in the jobs they seek: flying, nursing, selling, etc. (1983, p. 47)

Roadville children may not do well in school because the discourse of school, Heath's analysis highlights, resembles the primary discourse of the middle-class Mainstreamers, which places an emphasis on children talking about books and participating in question-and-answer

routines when books are read. Heath's analysis makes clear that the discourses associated with Roadville do not revolve around a reliance on print.

Instead, story-telling plays an integral role in the lives of Roadville residents. A "story" in Roadville is "something you tell on yourself, or on your buddy, you know, it's all in good fun, and a li'l something to laugh about" (1983, p. 149). Usually someone who has heard a familiar story "invites" the telling of a story so others can hear it; such invites may sound like "Have you've burned any biscuits lately?" or "Brought home any possums lately?" The focus of the story is usually a "transgression, a deviation from the behavior expected of a 'good cook,' a 'good hunter,' or a 'good handyman" (Finn, 1999, p. 112).

Stories are to be told in strict chronological order, and any exaggeration is considered a lie. The point of a story is often left unsaid, and stories about someone are often told in the presence of that person and not "behind his back." Such stories carry subtle messages about the values and practices of the culture out of which the story comes. As Finn explains, "In telling a story, individuals show they belong to a group. They know and accept the norms that were broken" (1999, p. 112). A story told, then, triggers another story, reaffirming the familiarity of everyone in the group with the experiences being recounted. Stories express a group solidarity, and conformity.

Heath believes Roadville parents have a different attitude from middle-class Mainstream parents regarding communication with their toddlers. Whereas middle-class mothers may "scaffold[24]" to keep conversation going, Roadville parents will "take over" or interrupt conversation to take the opportunity to teach a child to "pay attention, listen, and behave."

In addition to "display" questions Mainstream parents ask their children, Roadville parents also ask questions that function like scoldings, directives or commands: "What'd you do that for?" or "Oh, Bobby, won't you ever sit still?" (Heath, 1983, p. 131). Parents tend to tell their children moralistic stories, which children are expected to remember. Morals may pertain to how to use certain items, when to use them, and where they should be kept (1983, p. 137). Play is often accompanied by language interaction and manual manipulation. A father playing with a toy work bench, for example, may show a child a hammer and say, "This is a hammer, see, I'm going to hammer Bobby's shoe. Hammer goes bang bang" (1983, p. 136). Bobby may then be asked, "What's this? Where does it go?" and the child is expected to know the object is a hammer.

Heath explains that question-asking, and emphasis on educational toys and play with children begins to diminish by the time children reach age four. Language becomes more implicit and context dependent. Heath explains by this age:

fathers take their sons into the yard to teach them how to play ball; they dress them in football jerseys and encourage in numerous ways their sons' futures as

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[24] Heath explains Bruner (1978) and Ninio and Bruner (1978) use the term "scaffold" to refer to adult-children interactions, which are pre-scripted by the adult, and involve the adult playing out the script initially, but gradually allowing the child to assume a bigger part in the performance of the script. (1983, p. 399)

football and baseball players. Fathers tussle with their sons, emphasize their toughness, and urge them to be able to stand on their own and fight. Little girls are increasingly left to their dolls, and doll houses, and begin to ask for 'little-girl' toys and games advertised on television. (1983, p. 138)

Book reading in Roadville, unlike in Mainstream, is not usually related to other events. Roadville parents do not remind children of things read in books when they see something in the real world that is similar. Heath explains most Roadville men and women do not like to read out loud or in public. By age three, most Roadville children can at least pretend to read. They can associate print on boxes and packages with items they contain.

Unlike Mainstream children, Roadville children are not introduced to sustained chronological narratives such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' at early ages; instead, they are introduced to to collections of one- and two-line descriptions of familiar objects, and discrete bits and pieces of books—the ABC's, simple shapes, basic colors, etc. Parents ask children questions about such things and expect the answers they taught the children. Heath explains that Roadville children have relatively little exposure to 'extended prose fictive or fanciful stories, either told or read to them.'

Roadville children are seldom allowed to tell stories, unless an adult 'invites' a child who has had something happen to tell them. Children are expected to 'stick to the truth' in their storytelling, and are often expected to repeat morals they have learned in other stories. In the following excerpt from Heath's text, Aunt Sue expects Wendy (who is five years old) to tell her story in a strict chronological order, to adhere to the correct facts of the story, and to 'detail her foolishness and to give a summary moral or a repetition of the moral the lesson of the story at its closing' (1983, p. 159):

Sue: Tell yo' mamma where we went today.
Wendy: Mamma took me 'n Sally to the Mall. Bugs Bunny was
Sue: No, who was that, that wasn't Bugs Bunny.
Wendy: Uh, I mean, Peter, no, uh a big Easter bunny was there, 'n we, he, mamma got us some eggs
Sue: then what happened?
Wendy (turning her head to one side): I don't 'member.
Sue: Yes you do, what happened on the climbing
Wendy: Me 'n Sally tried to climb on this thing, 'n we dropped, I dropped, my eggs, some of 'em.
Sue: Why did you drop your eggs? What did Aunt Sue tell you 'bout climbin' on that thing?
Wendy: We better be careful.
Sue: no, bout the eggs 'n climbing?
Wendy: We better not climb with our eggs, else 'n we'd drop 'em.
(1983, p. 158)

Roadville children are expected to tell such stories on themselves, and are often prodded until they construct the story along the model of adult stories. Heath explains that often adults

gently reprove children through the use of a saying, idiom, or proverb, which may have accompanied another story at one time, but eventually stands alone and is used to remind children of the message and moral of the story.

Such storytelling expectations and little exposure to sustained fictive narratives doesn't prepare Roadville children well for nursery school experiences where they provided with a wide variety of books about fanciful characters and often asked to tell stories. As Heath explains, "Nursery school teachers do not follow the story-telling norms of the Roadville community, but instead they begin rehearsing the preschoolers for the book-reading and story-telling experiences of the school" (1983, p. 161).

Roadville children, then, typically do well in school up to grade three. They arrive at school knowing their ABC's, colors, and shapes. They sit still, listen, and behave. As they proceed through the grades, however, they begin to flounder when the lessons call for independent thinking or action. When teacher talk and required reading becomes more explicit and context independent, the knowledge and habits they used in the primary grades begin to fail them. As Finn (1999) explains, "When asked to make up a story they repeat stories from their reading books. They rarely provide emotional or personal commentary in recounting real events or book stories. They do not compare two items or events and point out similarities and differences" (p. 117).

Unlike Mainstream parents who see school as a necessary prerequisite for success in later life, Roadville parents learn to resent school; they don't see their children do well in school and thus "blame teachers, school administrators, the blacks, and the federal government. Their children fail to get out of school what education always promised, and they wonder at their children's assertions that they do not need school to get ahead" (1983, p. 45).

The discourse Roadville children acquire, then, in their homes and communities conflicts with the discourse of the Mainstreamers, who train their children from very early ages to be comfortable with the discourse of school which, for the most part, mirrors the discourse of Mainstreamers. The classroom becomes a site where working-class Roadville children, who value and believe different things than the Mainstreamers, come into contact with, and ultimately conflict with, the discourse of the middle class and ultimately, of school.

This work supports the sociocultural view of knowledge as situated that is, part of the activity, context, and culture from which it is generated. Different activities, contexts, and cultures generate different meaning-making practices and knowledge. Like Scribner & Cole's work, Heath's findings demonstrate the importance of context to literacy learning and the diversity of literacy. As Heath explains:

> the different ways children learned to use language was dependent on the ways in
> which each community structured their families, defined the roles that community
> members could assume, and played out their concepts of childhood that guided
> child socialization. The place of language in the cultural life of each social group
> is interdependent with the habits and values of behaving shared among members
> of that group. (1983, p.3)

Scribner & Cole's (1981) work, along with Heath's, has been instrumental in the development of the current social practice perspective of literacy.

Literacy as Social Practice

This theoretical perspective, which often falls under the rubric of the New Literacy Studies (Gee, 1996; Street, 1993), continues to resist dichotomous definitions of literacy. Influenced by Brian Street's (1984) challenges to "Great Divide" or "autonomous model" theories of literacy, which attempt to binarize literacy and consider it a "decontextualized technology imparting influence on human culture and cognition" (Brandt & Clinton, 2002, pp. 337-338), the social practice perspective began first and foremost as rejection of oral/literate analysis.

In his book *Literacy in Theory and Practice* (1984), Street--an early critic of anthropologist Jack Goody's (1986, 1987, 2000), classicist Walter Ong's (1982, 1986), and psychologist David R. Olson's (1997, 1994) literacy work--took issue with these theorists' "ethnocentric" beliefs and challenged what he deemed an "autonomous" model of literacy.

Rooted in the work of anthropologist Levi-Strauss (1966), who used constrastive and evaluative terms such as "raw/cooked" and "uncultured/cultured" to divide those cultures he considered to be "savage" as opposed to those he considered to be "domesticated," Goody's work, especially, aimed such binaries at literacy, suggesting "many of the valid aspects of these dichotomies can be related to changes in the mode of communication, especially the introduction of various forms of writing" (1986, p. 16).

Street believed an "autonomous" theory with its hierarchical classification schemes inferred that literate people were more cognitively and culturally advanced than nonliterate people. Street explained that the "autonomous" model viewed literacy as the source of significant cognitive differences based on "authoritarian and unfamiliar" tests which more accurately test the "social conventions of a dominant class" rather than "universal logic" (p.25).

Street believed that even without the technology of literacy, people exhibited logical reasoning, historical consciousness, skepticism, differentiation, and complex organization (Olson & Torrance, 1991). To Street, reading and writing functioned in close proximity to speech. Using John Parry's anthropological research conducted on Brahmin culture as a basis, Street argued written language is just as "malleable" and "volatile" as oral discourse.

Street also believed the "autonomous" model held that because writing is more logical in function, interpersonal or social functions are held constant. Brandt & Clinton (2002) explain the "autonomous" model of literacy made the "decontextualized text all important, representing not only the capacity of written language to break free of the limits of time and place but also the capacity of print to reorient sense-making away from the interactive settings of speech and toward literacy words on their own. The decontextualizing powers of text were central to the claims that literacy induces changes in thinking and social organization" (p. 340).

Street insisted that texts couldn't be separated from the time and place in which they were created. He defined an "ideological" model of literacy, explaining that all literacies are embedded in ideology. He says, "literacy is a social process, in which particular socially constructed technologies are used within particular institutional frameworks for specific social purposes" (1994, p.97). Ultimately, an "ideological" model of literacy elaborates on the specific contexts which give meaning to literacy for those learning and using it.

Street, an anthropologist who had studied literacy use by Islamic villagers in North East Iran, and found that a "familiarity with sacred Islamic texts and documents facilitated the use of written records by a small literate class" and thus the gradual spread of "commercial" forms of literacy (1984, p.114), believed preexisting social formations in a particular place could serve as important receptors or even catalysts for literacy development. As Brandy & Clinton (2002) explain, "Rather than a brute consequence of formidable technology, the achievement of literacy appeared as a delicate interplay of social, cultural, economic, political, and even geographical forces. In other words, social context organizes literacy, rather than the other way around. This turn to context [illuminates] the diverse forms and meanings that literacy takes on" (p. 340).

Street, thus, refused the "supposedly technical and neutral nature of the autonomous mode of literacy" Goody, Ong, and Olson ascribed to the "technology of literacy," arguing that literacy cannot be extricated from structures of power in which it always operates. Street explains, "Literacy practice involves a socially variable set of conventions," and thus, "claims for its consequences" can not so easily be "disguised as universal truths. Such claims will be shown to rest, instead, on faith in the value, indeed superiority, of particular conventions" (1994, p.29).

Street's study, along with others in the New Literacy Studies tradition, "connects microanalyses of language and literacy use with macroanalyses of discourse and power…and connects literacy practices with identity and social positions" (Hull & Schultz, 2002, p.23). This work, then, as well as the work of Heath and Scribner and Cole, contributed to the rise of the social practice perspective of literacy which uses the term *literacy practices*, rather than *literacy* to stake the claim that what people do with literacy is shaped by local, social contexts, always already embedded in relations of power.

What are literacy practices?

New Rhetoricians claim, "A language is, in a sense, a theory of the universe, a way of selecting and grouping experience in a fairly consistent and predictable way" (qtd. in Berlin, 1982 p.775). Ann Berthoff explains: "Language does not correspond to the 'real world.' It creates the 'real world' by organizing it, by determining what will be perceived and not perceived, by indicating what has meaning and what is meaningless" (qtd. in Berlin, 1982, p.775).

In attempting to define *literacy practices*, rather than simply "literacy," I realize I argue for a "version of reality" (Berlin, p.766) that views language as dialectical interplay between an individual and the social world(s) he or she inhabits. A theory of literacy as social practice fits

this view, as it gives particular attention to people's use of oral language around texts, and to the ways in which the meanings and uses of texts are culturally shaped.

David Barton has studied literacy much of his adult life and understands literacy as "something people do...an activity, located in the space between thought and text" (1998, p. 3). In other words, literacy for Barton and other New Literacy Studies researchers doesn't reside in people's heads as a set of skills to be learned, nor does it reside on paper, captured as texts to be analyzed. Instead, literacy, like all human activity, is essentially social, and resides in the interaction between people. Thus, the study of literacy for Barton, and others aligned with a social practice perspective of literacy, becomes the study of *literacy practices*, or the general cultural ways of utilizing written language which people draw upon on their lives--what people *do* with literacy.

This notion of literacy practices offers a powerful way of conceptualizing the link between the activities of reading and writing and the social structures in which they are embedded and which they help shape. For the purposes of this study, literacy practices are limited to the activities of reading and writing that take place within an 11th grade English class in a small rural high school. However, a theory of literacy as social practice understands that the social structures in which reading and writing activities are embedded and help to shape are not limited to the institutional, i.e., the school; they also include other domains, and thus, discourse communities, which I describe in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Barton uses the metaphor of ecology to explain what he sees as a link between the activities of writing and reading and the social structures in which they are embedded, and those which they help shape. He explains:

> Originating in biology, ecology is the study of the interrelationship of an organism and its environment. When applied to humans, it is the interrelationship of an area of human activity and its environment. It is concerned with how the activity—literacy in this case—is part of the environment and at the same time influences and is influenced by the environment. An ecological approach takes as its starting-point this interaction between individuals and their environments. (1994, p.29)

Literacy, then, cannot be separated from its surroundings. It happens *somewhere*, and as Barton suggests, happens as a result of this *somewhere*. For the purposes of this study, this *somewhere* is Mrs. Taylor's 4th block English class, a contact zone where Mrs. Taylor's and her students' literacy practices, mutually shaping and constituting, are themselves mutually shaped and constituted by the social institution of Hilltown High School. Chapters 3 & 4 attempt to detail these relationships more fully.

Practices, events, and texts

While the study of practices ultimately aims to describe what people do with literacy, Barton cautions that practices are not observable. Practices are both internal, individual processes, which involve values, attitudes, and feelings, *and* social processes, which connect

people with one another and involve mutual, shared understandings represented in ideologies and social identities (see Street, 1993). Literacy practices exist in the relations between people, within groups and communities; they are not a set of properties residing in individuals.

Such an understanding of practices raises methodological questions: How do you know what a practice is if you can't see it? How do you trace a practice? Barton offers the concept of *literacy events* as aid: one can infer practices through observation of literacy events.

Barton, further situating the nature of literacy within the social, defines literacy events as "observable episodes which arise from practices and are shaped by them" (p.7). Heath (1983) used the term to define "any action sequence, involving one or more persons, in which the production and/or comprehension of print plays a role" (Anderson, Teale, and Estrada, 1980, p.59).

Barton explains that "there is usually a written text, or texts, central to the activity and there may be talk around the text" (p. 7). I define "text" in Bakhtin's (1986) terms "as any complex of signs" (p. 103). Allan Luke (1995) explains that texts are more than just spoken or written. Texts can also be made up of coherent complexes of signs that are visual, audiovisual, and/or gestural. Fairclough (1989) and Luke (1995) refer to texts as products or artifacts. As such, texts can be written or spoken. For this present study, the skit functions as both a written and spoken text, and my analysis centers on its written and spoken meanings. However, because I was not analyzing the skit as data when I observed it, I did not audio- or videotape it; thus, visual, audiovisual, and/or gestural signs as possible data are not included in my discussion here.

Barton also explains that events are "regular, repeated activities" which may be linked into routine sequences and may be part of the formal procedures and expectations of social institutions, i.e., answering comprehension questions after reading a text in schools, while others are structured by the more informal expectations and pressures of the home or peer group, i.e., a mother, rather than a father, helping a child do his homework (1998, pp. 7-8).

For the purposes of this study, the event is comprised of two activities: writing the persecution skit and performing it for Mrs. Taylor and the class. The skit is linked into the routine sequence of Mrs. Taylor's WebQuest assignment, and as I argue in Chapter 4, is also embedded in the formal procedures and expectations as represented in the pedagogical discourses of Mrs. Taylor and the school. However, I also see the event largely embedded in the "informal expectations and pressures" of home and peer groups.

Thus, data I present in Chapter 6 warrants my making the assumption that a literacy event can indeed be part of both formal (school/institutional) and informal (home/peer) procedures and expectations, as the event grafts the two together through relations of power; the event of the persecution skit represents multiple discursive voices positioning for recognition in the "contact zone" of the rural high school English class.

Barton also explains the notion of *literacy events* expects "a range of semiotic systems" (1998, p. 9) to surround a text. In other words, a literacy researcher can expect to see a mixture of written and spoken language, as well as "mathematical systems, musical notation, maps, or

other non-text-based images, etc." surrounding a person's use of a text. Indeed, I first saw the text of the persecution skit performed--physically embodied--and only came to understand the written text's multiple symbolic representations later through consideration of the talk (and silence) surrounding it. In a social practice perspective of literacy, a text's meaning (Scholes, 1985) is located in the *interaction* of texts and people; I would argue meaning is also located in the interaction among varying semiotic systems, and a literacy researcher must look at such interaction to better understand what literacy practices mean to the people who use them.

Barton maintains, too, that a social theory of literacy accepts the multiple functions literacy may serve in a given activity, and understands that literacy acts take on social meanings. Barton explains, "Texts can have multiple roles in an activity, and literacy can act in different ways for the different participants in a literacy event: people can be incorporated into the literacy practices of others without reading or writing a single word. The acts of reading and writing are not the only ways in which texts are assigned meaning" (1998, p. 11).

The persecution skit, both its written text and performance, certainly filled multiple roles, which I detail in Chapter 6. Both the written text and the performance of the skit fulfilled Mrs. Taylor's assignment, but the performance, especially, *as performance,* served as multiple forms of resistance through its unsolicited oppositional discourse; the skit also served to police and harass another student's behavior as literacy became a kind of group or community resource reliant on peer pressure to achieve its meanings. Too, Mrs. Taylor and Jenny were incorporated into the literacy practices of the male students who appropriated Mrs. Taylor's and Jenny's discourses into the written text and performance of skit; indeed, Mrs. Taylor and Jenny became the dialogized objects of the skit writers'/performers' own discourse (Bakhtin, 1981).

Domains

In addition to the belief that literacy is best understood as a set of social practices that can be inferred from events which are mediated by written texts, another tenet of Barton's social theory of literacy is the idea that there are different literacies associated with different domains of life, i.e., the home, school, and workplace. Barton explains that analyzing literacy events, and thus practices, can be accomplished by separating domains of activity, observing the events that arise there, and ultimately comparing them to each other, i.e., home to school, school to workplace. Barton & Hamilton's (1998) ethnographic study of community literacies in Lancaster, England, start with the home domain and "everyday" life. Thus, in their study, literacy practices include reading recipes, buying Boss's Day cards, and reading fanzines.

For Barton, and many current literacy researchers, this claim makes possible the identification and naming of literacy practices and their associations with particular aspects of cultural life beyond traditional and some would argue, more powerful, definitions of "schooled" or "sanctioned" literacy.

O'Brien (1994) defines "schooled literacy" or "school-sanctioned literacy" as including "literacy enactments characterized by conventional forms of practices and products found in school" (p.28). He goes on to list examples of reading textbooks, answering questions at the ends of chapters, writing themed reports and filling out worksheets. He furthers, "Officially, reading

and writing are viewed as either school subjects (e.g., developmental reading; remedial or corrective reading) or learning tools (e.g., comprehension strategies, study strategies) whose form and function are defined by teachers, curriculum directors, school boards, and administrators"(p. 28).

de Castell & Luke (1988) trace definitions of school literacy from the early nineteenth century and outline the influences of such current definitions of literacy as "functional" and "technocratic." These definitions describe a literacy:

> scientifically dissected into individually teachable and testable subskill units [where] every attempt is made to specify "behavioural objectives" in value-neutral terminology. The 'skills' to be taught are thus ideologically neutralized; lessons aim to improve students' ability to grasp 'word meaning,' 'context clues,' and 'decoding skills.' Literature study—the focal point of moral and social instruction in previous eras—is reduced to a body of neutral skills (for example, 'note the poet's use of animal symbolism,' 'use alliteration'). (pp.170-171)

In contrast, then, a social practice perspective of literacy has influenced such studies as Michelle Knobel's (1999) ethnographic case study analysis of the "everyday" literacies of four students coming of age in urban Australia. Knobel explains the term "everyday" is used "in terms of Ludwig Wittgenstein's conceptions of ordinary language and socially constituted meanings. That is to say, the everyday 'is simply what I do'"(p.16). Such "everyday" literacy practices include convincing parents to buy a pair of rollerskates, challenging a teacher's authority without jeopardizing academic success, entertaining peers and teachers to deflect attention from academic problems, and experimenting with different social identities (p.202).

Knobel, interested in the relationship between school learning and students' everyday lives, observes the domains of school and home and finds "sharp differences between each participant's exuberant, intertextual, and often witty language use outside formal classroom spaces and his or her (official) in-class language and literacy production, which was often minimal and usually bordered on the pedestrian"(p.202).

Influenced by Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences and Denny Taylor's research on family literacy, Voss (1996) does similar domain work as she explores the "hidden" literacies of three fourth-grade children. She explains that schools often "don't see and use all that children know" and thus, students have "hidden literacies which schools and educators miss" (p.188). Voss also uses such modifiers as "interactive," "multiple," and "home" to further describe the "hidden" literacies she observes and finds contradictory to school literacies. Voss writes:

> Kelly exhibited interactive literacy when she found ways for her various literacies—visual, media, consumer, oral—to come together and overlap. At home, craft projects tapped various literacies—from purchasing the craft kit (consumer literacy), to designing and making a product that mattered to her (visual literacy), to cooperatively working with one of her sisters or her mother (interactive literacy). (p. 99)

Focusing mainly on the domain of school, Amy Shuman (1993) describes the uses of 'everyday' writing and speaking in the lives of urban Philadelphia adolescents she observes in her 3-year qualitative study. By "everyday," Shuman explains she refers to "non-standard uses of both writing and speaking" (p.247). Using students' collaborative writings as her focus, she finds some of the students' collaborative writings "brought students together to contest, negotiate, or manipulate adult authority, and other collaborations reproduced or played with adult authoritative discourse" (p.248).

After 13 years as a language arts teacher, Finders (1997) moves to the back of the class and examines the "hidden" literacies that comprise the "underlife" of school for two groups of teenage girls in a junior high school. She explains "literate underlife" as "those practices designed to contest official expectations" (p.1).

Camitta (1993) looks at the "vernacular" literacies of Philadelphia high school students. She explains by "vernacular," she means "that which is closely associated with culture which is neither elite nor institutional, which is traditional and indigenous to the diverse cultural processes of communities as distinguished from the uniform, inflexible standards of institutions" (pp.228-229). She explains further the texts represented in her study are "not essays, the officially designated discourse genre of academia, but rather those that adolescents choose to write within the framework of adolescent culture and social organization, those that have come to be called 'unofficial'" (p.229). She says, "I [see] vernacular writing as literate behavior that conforms, not to the norms of educational institutions, but to those of social life and culture" (p.229).

Camitta observes students in three settings: school, before and after the "official" school day, in her classroom, and in their homes. She finds such examples of "vernacular" writing as poems given between friends as gifts, dialogue notes written during class, and "patchwork[25]" and "mosaic" texts. Students tell her they write "when they are bored or don't 'go out'" (p.240), to amuse themselves, to remember funny past experiences, to encourage intimacy, to testify, and to "find meaning, or truth" (p.232).

Hamilton (2002) describes "vernacular" literacies as ones not "regulated or systematized by the formal rules and procedures of social institutions but have their origin in the purposes of everyday life. They are not highly valued by formal social institutions though sometimes they develop in response to these institutions. They may be actively disapproved of and they can be constrasted with dominant literacies which are seen as rational, and of high cultural value" (p.3).

Barton (1994) suggests "unofficial" literacy is part of a "range of literacy activities" in the classroom. He explains: "…there is graffiti and doodling, names are carved on desks, secret notes are passed. Children read comics, and circulate illicit material, they have their own books and magazines brought in from the outside" (p.180). Similarly, O'Brien (1998) explains: "Each day in

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[25] Camitta explains such vernacular formats as the patchwork and mosaic texts date to the middle ages. Both are constructed through the appropriation of words and phrases from oral tradition, popular culture or literary texts. The mosaic text is different from the patchwork, however, in that mosaic texts are constructed entirely from materials appropriated from various cultural sources, whereas patchwork texts are original to the author with only occasional uses of appropriated material.

school, adolescents engage in unofficial literate enactments based on their lives and popular culture: They write notes or they bring in 'contraband' reading material from outside of school or texts related to their jobs to read during sustained silent reading"(p.31).

Myers' (1992) study of 140 students in six semester-long eighth grade language arts classes is concerned with "authentic" or "nonauthentic" literacy events. He uses Edelsky's (1991) three dimensions for distinguishing between the "authentic" and "nonauthentic": "1) *Meaning making*—for reading versus NOT-reading; 2) *purpose*—for exercise versus nonexercise; and 3) *position*—for subject versus object"(p.298). Myers goes on to explain the first dimension of *meaning making* as one where an

> interdependent cueing system (graphic, orthographic, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic) is used. If no text meaning is constructed, or some cueing systems are removed (e.g., flashcards for sight vocabulary practice many not involve syntactic and pragmatic cues), then the literacy event is NOT-reading. (p.299)

Myers then goes on to explain that the second and third dimensions "highlight social relations."

> If the purpose of the event is to comply with an assignment or to prove competence, although a meaningful text may be constructed, the literacy is clearly an exercise. Further, in such an exercise the control of one's reading and writing actions are in the hands of someone other than the reader, typically the teacher. "If someone else decides what literacy event will occur, how it will begin, what it will be about, when it will end, and so on, then the print user is positioned as an Object" in the social relations which frame the literacy event. Positioned as an object, rather than the 'literate-as-subject,' the reader cannot be an active self and participate in shaping the literate event. I believe this distinction represents what others have called ownership of literacy. If students set their own purposes, make their own choices, they will have a sufficient degree of ownership over the literacy to make it authentic. If someone else tells the student when and what to read or write, ownership is missing. (p.299)

Elizabeth Moje (2002) examines the "alternative" and "unsanctioned" literacy practices of "gangsta" youth in an urban area of Salt Lake City, Utah. She finds that the "alternative" or "unsanctioned" literacies used by the youth include not only "what one might think of as gang literacies (tagging, graffiti writing, hand signs, and dress and color codes),"but also other forms, i.e., poetry, journal writing, letter writing, to "communicate to peers, their 'homies' (homeboys or homegirls), rivals, and to family members"(p.661). She explains the youth don't simply "act in resistance,"but use literacy as a tool to "to be part of the story that [is] being written on a daily basis at their junior high school, in their families, and in their communities"(p.661). She furthers that the youth use "alternative,""unsanctioned" literacy practices to "claim a space, construct an identity, and take a social position in their worlds"(p.651).

This extremely brief tour of several different literacy researchers who claim to be aligned with a social practice perspective of literacy is not meant to posit their findings or definitions of literacy as necessarily antithetical to the theoretical framing of the present study, or to deny the

contribution of these and similar scholars' work in broadening understandings of literacy and social practices. Indeed, aspects of their work are used to critique and contribute to the conception of domains as it pertains to the understanding of literacy practices taken up in this study.

For example, unlike Knobel and Voss who clearly delineate between school and home domains, Finders', Camitta's, Shuman's, and Moje's, descriptions of literacy practices and findings seem to suggest that multiple domains, as places of cultural activity, can exist within the classroom, and that "official" literacies and "unofficial" literacies are symbiotic, that is, they function interdependently of each other, as each responds to and constitutes the other. I would argue in the present study that students do similar things as do the students in the studies described above, i.e., contest official expectations; accomplish negotiation, manipulation, and reproduction of authoritative discourses, and claim their own territorial spaces, but do so by grafting together both "sanctioned, schooled" and "unsanctioned" literacy practices within the domain of the classroom.

Therefore, I would argue that Camitta's (1993) and Hamilton's (2002) "vernacular literacies" do more than exist "within the framework of adolescent culture" (Camitta, p. 229) or merely "respond to formal social institutions" (Hamilton, 2002); the "unofficial" literacies of adolescent students are caught up within and are always already part of official, school literacies as they are systematized and regulated by the formal rules and procedures of the social institution of school, which *is part of the everyday life* of students.

And while Barton and O'Brien agree that students have their own "unofficial literacies" in the classroom, I would argue they are not always "brought in from the outside" (p.180) in the form of "contraband" reading materials, etc. As I observed, unofficial literacies can result from the appropriation of a teacher's well-intentioned assignment, and can be influenced by discursive desires that reach far beyond the classroom into the home, peer and community cultures. This leads me to rethink Myer's belief that students cannot be active selves, "own" the literacy event, or participate in shaping the literate event if someone else tells the student when and what to read or write (p.299).

Indeed, as I argue in Chapter 6, in the contact zone of the classroom, students and teachers can be positioned as both Objects and Subjects and be silenced and/or claim agency as they defy the binary oppositions of literacy practices created by a social practice perspective of literacy; such oppositions collapse as the tudents I observed, in a process of transculturation, create autoethnographic texts, much like Camitta's "mosaic" texts, and take up discourses of racism and patriarchy to resist adult authoritative discourses.

Thus, while I believe the above understandings of literacy practices outside of sanctioned, schooled spaces are integral to my own understandings of how practices get liquidated in the contact zone of the classroom, I would argue that such binary oppositions as "alternative" and "vernacular" vs. "schooled" and "sanctioned" do not adequately explain literacy practices as they occur in such a space as the classroom where multiple discourses come into contact, and often, conflict, with one another.

I would argue, too, such binary oppositions point toward the power relations inherent in the categorization of literacy practices into domains, which I feel contributes to the maintenance of literacy dichotomies, i.e., dominant vs. vernacular, where vernacular literacies are believed to be invisible and, thus unsupported. *Invisibility* implies that such literacies cannot be seen, that they are imperceptible; I would argue they are not invisible, but instead, not viewed as "official," and thus, *intentionally unrecognized*. This means that literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships, and some literacies become more dominant and influential than others because persons (usually in authoritative positions) *choose to recognize and notice some while they choose to ignore, dismiss, and silence others*.

Perhaps this is because our hierarchical categories paralyze us. We don't know how to see things/people/ideas as "both-and" constructions, and thus don't allow (don't know how to allow) for the complexities that surround literacy and power relations. Such limited ways of seeing stymie our ability to see "school" literacy as comprised and constituted by home, peer, and cultural practices. As St. Pierre explains, "Once a discourse becomes 'normal' and 'natural,' it is difficult to think and act outside it. Within the rules of discourse, it makes sense to say only certain things. Other statements and others' ways of thinking remain unintelligible, outside the realm of possibility" (2000, p. 495).

Pratt explains in "Arts of the Contact Zone" that Spanish officials, had they received Guaman Poma's bilingual and intercultural letter, wouldn't have understood it; likewise, her son's teacher doesn't understand the transcultural nature of his "helpful invention" paragraph , and thus, because both texts transgress normalized official and unofficial categories--both categories established by persons in "official" positions--the texts get ignored.

Contact zone theory helps us understand that classrooms are not closed spaces, with borders separating "official" and "unofficial" worlds; when literacy researchers, including Barton and other members of the New Studies group, insist that they are, however, and contrast official literacies and unofficial literacies, they maintain binary categories which don't allow for the possibilities that literacy can occupy multiple positions simultaneously, *in multiple domains simultaneously,* and in so doing, mutually constitute and inform each other. Teachers, then, aren't prepared to recognize, respond or react to, much less understand and appreciate, such phenomenon, and thus usually silence themselves and their students rather than seek out the possibilities of what can be learned from such phenomenon. I consider this in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

Domains, then, are not clear-cut. Boundaries between domains are permeable; there is leakage and movement between boundaries, and overlap between domains. Too, literacy practices may originate in one domain but be transported to another. Hull & Schultz (2002), researchers interested in literacy in out-of-school contexts, warn:

> There are some ways in which the distinction between in school and out of school sets up a false dichotomy. By foregrounding physical space (i.e., contexts outside the school house door) or time (i.e., after-school programs), .we may fail to see the presence of school-like practice at home (e.g., Street & Street, 1991) or non-school-like activities in the formal classroom. Such contexts are not sealed

tight or boarded off; rather, one should expect to find, and should look to account for, the movement from one context to another. (p. 12)

Indeed, I would argue, there is movement from one context to another, and one way to account for this movement, in addition to observing literacy events, is to trace discourses. A more thorough discussion of discourse is outlined in Chapters 4 and 5, as I attempt to portray the multiple discourses, representing multiple domains, that "clash and grapple" with each other through processes of negotiation and transculturation in the "contact zone" of the rural high school English class.

CHAPTER 4: LITERACY PRACTICES & DISCOURSES IN THE "CONTACT ZONE"

As Chapter 3 demonstrates, literacy theory and scholarship is characterized by a history of criticized binary constructions. Cognitive literacy perspectives arose in opposition to limiting views of literacy as either inherent or learned through behavioral conditioning. The social practice perspective arose from socioculturalists' beliefs that an individual's ways of using and learning language could not be separated from wider social frameworks of beliefs, actions, norms, and culture.

Social practice perspective researchers, then, cannot consider language use alone in attempts to conceptualize and understand relations between literacy and the social; thus, New Literacy Studies researchers and theorists make use of sociolinguist James Gee's concept of "discourse" as a theoretical and analytical tool for tracing connections between individual ways of using language and the social and cultural formation, circulation, and maintenance of such ways.

Chapters 4 and 5 provide an overview of Gee's major theoretical contributions to the concept of "discourse," as it is used to illustrate the multiple literacy practices, and thus discourses, Mrs. Taylor and several of her 4th block students bring to the classroom.

Chapter 6 layers poststructuralist definitions of discourse and power onto Gee's definitions, and presents data, gathered through interviews and non-participant observation, which attempts to make visible how conflicted the "contact zone" of the classroom becomes when, through processes of negotiation and transculturation rather than assimilation and acculturation, multiple discourses vie for recognition.

Gee's Discourses

While most work done within the social practice perspective takes "literacy" as its central unit of analysis, James Gee—a linguist central to the New Literacy Studies field—encouraged the use of a broader category, "discourse," as a frame for understanding the connections among literacy, culture, identity, and power. To think in terms of the larger construct of "discourse" insists that literacy is always about more than literacy; Gee's concept of discourse encourages us to think of literacy practices as part of a larger social network that includes "ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and 'artifacts,' of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting" (1996, p. 131). If, as Barton explains, *literacy practices* "involve values, attitudes, feelings, and social relationships," Gee's concept of *discourse*, particularly the notion of Primary and Secondary discourses, enables literacy researchers to trace and identify literacy practices as they connect individuals not only to larger social structures, but to fellow members of sociocultural groups who share such practices.

Discourse, then, is the larger structure, the larger social network, in which literacy practices gather themselves and are shared by members of a "socially meaningful group" (Gee, 1996, p. 131). With the notion of discourse, then, comes the understanding that shared literacy practices, constituted by particular sets of values, beliefs, expectations, and ways of using language, define and constitute sociocultural groups who can "inhabit" and "operate" discourses.

People who inhabit and operate such discourses act as, and are accepted as, members of the discourse, and each discourse is constituted by particular "ways of talking, acting, valuing and believing, as well as the spaces and material 'props' the group uses to carry out its social practices. Discourses integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes" (Gee 1992, p. 107; also 1996, pp. 122-148).

"Four-wheelin'" and motocross

The integration of "talking, spaces and material 'props' with "social identities" became visible to me in an interview I conducted with Jason and Donald, two student participants in this study, who attempt to explain motorcross to me:

1   Susan: So what kinds of things do you like to do?
2   Jason: I don't know, as far as activities, I like motorcross. I…
3   Susan: OK tell me about motorcross. What is that? Because you gotta understand…

4   Donald: She's out of it.
5   Susan: I'm out of the loop. I don't even know what that is.
6   Jason: It's motorcycles, dirt bikes…
7   Susan: OK what's the difference between a motorcycle and a dirt bike?
8   Jason: Dirt bike's made for dirt and motorcycles just street.
9   Susan: So like a mountain bike versus a road bike?
10   Jason: Yeah.
11   Susan: So do you ride, so you ride a dirt bike?
12   Jason: Yeah.
13   Susan: Now where do people, where do people, now, can I use it like a verb like, "Where do you motorcross?" (pause) Or is it more like an event that you participate in?
14   Jason: It's more like, it's an event.
15   Susan: Oh, OK.
16   Donald: Like, we just call it going four-wheelin'.
17   Jason: Yeah, when we go… around here, I mean there ain't nothing else to do. It ain't like we live in Storeysville where there's a skating rink down the road or something else, mainly that's what we do to keep ourselves occupied. Right across the street here we go over there riding in the field we got a jump over there, go over there and goof off.
18   Donald: Stuart's land over in Benton.
19   Jason: Yeah, and we got places… we just… probably about the only thing to do around here…
20   Susan: Wherever's there's land pretty much…
21   Jason: Yeah
22   Donald: We just ask permission and then we make trails.
23   Jason: If it's four-wheel drives, or dirt bikes, or four wheelers, or something like that.

24   Susan: So when people talk about four-wheelin' now that's not necessarily the same thing as this, that's more like. .

25   Jason: It's all combined. I mean, you can say we're going four-wheelin' and be in trucks, and then you can be on dirt-bikes and you can say let's go four-wheelin'.

26   Susan: OK

27   Jason: It's just .four-wheelin' is uh, I don't know. .

28   Donald: a general term

Donald considers me "out of the loop" (3) because, due to how Donald and Jason view me as an adult, teacher/researcher, and "outsider" to their community, I am not considered a member of this discourse, as becomes more evident when I do not understand what is meant by the term "motorcross" (2-5). In fact, I'm not even sure what part of speech the term indicates (13), and thus don't understand if the term is used to describe an actual physical activity or the event/site where such an activity is done.

Jason tries to explain to me that the term means "motorcycles, dirt bikes," (6) but then I'm confused again because I don't know if these two terms signify the same thing. I assume they don't when I ask, "What's the difference between a motorcycle and dirt bike (7)? When Jason explains the difference (8), I immediately associate it to a discourse I am familiar with: the discourse of cycling. Because I took up road cycling a year ago, I know there is a difference between a mountain bike and a road bike (9), and use this association to make sense of a motorcycle vs. a dirt bike.

When Jason tries to explain that motorcross is an event (14), Daniel jumps in with a "general" (28) term he and Jason (and I assume others who participate in this activity) use and understand. Daniel says, ". We just call it going four-wheelin'" (16). This involves "riding in a field" (17), "a jump" (17), land (18), asking permission to make trails (22), and other vehicles in addition to motorcycles and dirt bikes: four wheel drives, or four wheelers (23). When I express confusion about how four-wheeling relates to motorcross (24), Jason explains, "It's all combined. I mean, you can say we're going four-wheelin' and be in trucks, and then you can be on dirt bikes and you can say let's go four-wheelin' (25).

A term such as "four-wheelin'" makes sense to this community of people who, because of their geographical location in a place where there's no "skating rink down the road or something else" (17), participate in motorcross/four-wheelin' "to keep [themselves] occupied" (17). These young adults who participate in "four-wheelin'" or motorcross, know the terms don't point to one thing, but multiple things that together comprise an activity, experience, or way of being, that helps constitute the specific ways "rural" means to them; part of this includes living in a location where there are wider expanses of undeveloped land available than might be found in more urban or suburban areas; thus, such land is used for different kinds of recreational purposes than more urban or suburban recreational areas would be used for.

Another example of such integration of words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, social identities with space and material "props" is provided in Jason's and Donald's explanation of game weighing.

Weighing Game

On a drive around the community of Eagletown one afternoon, I stopped at the Eagletown Food Mart and noticed a government sign hanging in the window which read, "Weigh Station." I asked Jason and Donald what the sign meant and their explanation follows:

1   Jason: Yeah, you check in game. You shoot deer, you check 'em in there.

2   Susan: Why do you have to check them in?

3   Jason: Because it's against the law to shoot them without, that's why when you buy your hunting license, they give you, what, four tags, four doe tags, four buck tags, two bear tags, I think, and four turkey tags.

4   Susan: And that's all you can get?

5   Donald: I think you get squirrel tags.

6   Jason: Yeah, squirrel and rabbit, and some other junk like that. It's against the law if you don't check 'em in. It's against the law. You know, you'll see all these guys got antlers and shit when you drive by, and a game warden can stop and if he ain't got a tag for every set of antlers, he'll go to jail. You know, you're supposed to have a tag for everything.

7   Susan: So you keep the tag or..

8   Jason: You got two tags. The tags you get when you get your license, that's the tag you keep. When you shoot your deer you put that tag on the deer and you take it to the weigh station. The weigh station will write the tag number down, you know, if it's a buck, tell 'em how many points it is, if it's a doe, tell 'em how much it weighs and junk, and that's how they keep track of all this junk.

9   Susan: How do you know all that?

10   Jason: I just grew up hunting. I ain't never had to tag nothin' in. I shot an 8 pointer [a buck with eight antler points] last year and a doe.

11   Susan: Why didn't you tag 'em in?

12   Jason: 'Cause it's on family land.

13   Susan: So if it's not on public property

14   Donald: If it's on public property you gotta tag 'em in.

15   Jason: It's gotta be direct family. Your mother or your grandparents. Or your father's property. It's gotta be your property or direct descendants' property.

16   Susan: Do people always follow that law or rule?

17   Jason: I know a lot of people that shoot and don't tag. I mean, if it's a big buck or something I tag it in because if you go to a tournament they won't accept a deer, like, if you get the biggest deer out here, if you ain't got it tagged in and you take that thing up there and say I got the biggest deer, well, they think it's a joke. They want you to tag it.

18   Susan: What do you do with the deer when you shoot one?

19   Jason: Depends on what it is. If it's a doe, you know, I'll skin it, quarter it out, throw the bones away.

20   Susan: You freeze the meat? Cut it up?

21   Jason: Quarter it out. That's what you call it, quartering. Deer's thick around here now. You can tell it's hunting season.

The boys, especially Jason, talked to me about hunting in ways that exemplify they inhabit and operate a discourse influenced by its location in a rural setting. Gee's concept of discourse understands social identities are not fixed and unchanging, but are provisionally and repeatedly negotiated in "actual contexts of situation," practices, and histories (Gee, 1996, p. 131). Thus, it is within and through discourses "that we make clear to ourselves and others who we are and what we are doing at a given time and place" (p. 129).

To Gee, each discourse, or "identity kit," comes with certain recognized ways of speaking and acting, all of which are part of subscribing to a particular coordination of discourses. In addition, each social identity is constantly negotiated according to context, others present, one's own and others' purposes, memberships in other discourses, and other social and historical forces that shape, enable, and constrain the routines and conventional habits of being a particular kind of person (see Gee, 1993, 1996).

For Jason, hunting constitutes part of his social identity, and because this is a shared identity among his friends and family members, it becomes a discourse, much like the discourse of motorcross, which he inhabits and operates as a member. Again, I would not be considered a member of either discourse, nor a member of this particular shared "rural" identity, as I am unfamiliar with the terms, places, props, values, and beliefs associated with such discourses. As Jason explained, "You grow up around here, you just know these things" (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002).

"Forms of Life"

Gee likens discourses to "forms of life" which constitute particular and recognized "social identities" (Gee, 1992/3, pp. 13-14). An "identity" is "social" in that it is a sense of self constructed discursively in relation to social structures that organize relations of power (Weedon, 1987), by individuals who act with partial agency to create their own forms of meaning. Such meanings are influenced by individual and collective experiences, social institutions and economic structures, and mediate the production of race, ethnicity, class, gender, etc. (Hall, 2001).

Feminist poststructuralists often use the term "subjectivity" in place of "identity" to emphasize the influence of social context, i.e., history, economics, culture, on how individuals shape understandings of themselves and others. As I discuss further in Chapter 4, this shift in terminology points to the poststructuralist belief that individuals are simultaneously subjects who exercise power and subjects who are subjected to the exercises of power of others.

Foucault explains that power is not an object, a thing which people possess, but is instead, a "dynamic situation" that can come "from below;…there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled as the root of power relations…no such duality extending from the top down" (1980, p. 94). In Chapter 4, I attempt to show how it is several male students in

Mrs. Taylor's 4th block English class become powerful in the classroom through their gender and class positions, which enable them to appropriate Mrs. Taylor's and Jenny's discourses, and invert them with their own racist and patriarchal discourses.

"Forms of life," then, which Gee explains are composed of particular sets of values, beliefs, activities, conventions, words, ways of speaking, interpretations, bodily positions, etc., are tied to social action and thus, to literacy practices, but have a material, observable presence. Thus, examining discourses as a helpful way to identify literacy practices entails investigating "forms of life." Forms of life, like domains, are overlapping and fluid and an individual is rarely confined to a single form, or discourse. There are innumerable discourses and each discourse constitutes (patterns) opportunities for people to *be,* and to display being, a particular kind of person (Gee, 1996, p. 12).

For the purposes of this study, the discourses, or "forms of life," which include literacy practices, I attempt to illustrate are those represented and shared by Mrs. Taylor as a member of a White, middle-class sociocultural group and those represented and shared by several students who are members of a white, working-class sociocultural group located in a rural community.\

Defining Race and Class

While I realize multiple definitions of race exist, and that a person's race is often considered in terms of ethnicity, I believe race to be a social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on physical characteristics, i.e., skin color, eye color, form of hair.

While the common denominator, then, between Mrs. Taylor and her students would *appear* to be a common racial identity, poststructuralists believe persons are "intersections" (e.g., Crenshaw, 1995) of identities, and recognize the incredible degree of diversity and contradiction within any one self or in the lives of many categories of selves. This focus on differences within any one self or within categories is strategic, as differences are viewed as resourceful. Differences can provide a resource for recognizing and analyzing how society shapes particular lives differently.

Such differently-shaped lives, then, are made visible when, for example, the category of "White" is intersected by other categories such as ethnicity, i.e., Polish, Scottish, Irish, and social class. I limit my discussion here, however, to categories of race and social class because I do not know what ethnicities, (historical and ancestral geographical bases, i.e., Polish, Irish, Scottish,) either Mrs. Taylor or the student participants in the study claim as their heritage. In Chapter 4, I take up discussions of gender as it intersects race and class positions.

Yeskel and Leondar-Wright (1997) define five class categories: middle class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class, working class, and lower class/poor (p. 238). "Middle class" is defined as "the stratum of families for whom breadwinners' higher education and/or specialized skills brings higher income and more security than those of working-class people" (p. 238). "Upper-middle class" refers to the "the portion of the middle class with investment income" and "lower-middle class" is characterized by less stable incomes" (p. 238)

Mrs. Taylor defines herself as "upper middle class." She says:

> I mean, I'm not some, I'm not some rich, spoiled little brat. But, I mean, yes, we were upper-middle class, but to these kids I'm with now we were richer than a king, you know, but we weren't. Like Johnny Hutton, he's in my first block, he said to me the other day, "Do you drive a Volvo station wagon?" And I'm like no, no I drive a car that's about to break down. So I think the students' perception of me is really funny sometimes. (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

Mrs. Taylor's descriptions illustrate how such categories can lead to the creation and association of identity stereotypes. Mrs. Taylor feels it necessary to resist the stereotypes of "rich, spoiled little brat" who "drives a Volvo"--stereotypes it appears she has internalized-- as she describes how she believes her students, who fall predominantly in "working-class," if not "working poor," categories, view her and construct her identity in opposition to theirs. Such phenomenon evidence how categorical definitions gloss over the complexities, contradictions, and discursive forces inherent within any identity.

Yeskel and Leondar-Wright (1997) define "working-class as "the stratum of families whose income depends on hourly wages for labor" (p. 238). Donna Langston (2002) problematizes this category when she layers it with race, gender and ethnicity:

> If you are a person of color, if you live in a female-headed household, you are much more likely to be working-class or poor. The experience of Black, Latino, American Indian or Asian American working classes will differ significantly from the white working classes, which have traditionally been able to rely on white privilege to provide a more elite position within their class. Working-class people are often grouped together…but distinctions can be made among the working-class, working-poor and poor. Many working-class families are supported by unionized workers who possess marketable skills. Most working-poor families are supported by non-unionized, unskilled men and women. Many poor families are dependent on welfare for their income. (p. 399)

Thus, no identity is homogenous. When social class and gender positions intersect Mrs. Taylor's and her student's racial identities, differences abound that point toward persistent and pervasive inequalities of income, wealth, status, and social power, accomplished at individual, institutional, and cultural levels (Yeskel and Leondar-Wright, 1997).

Defining Rural

The word "rural," then, becomes problematic as well. Traditionally, in American education literature, the term "rural" is used to signify an isolated place where farming once flourished. Rural areas are characterized by low socioeconomic status (SES), disconnection from metropolitan or urban areas and low population density. Too, the "rural" is often romanticized as DeYoung explains, "Rural economies and rural life in the U.S. may still evoke feelings of nostalgia among those living in the cities. Yet, life in the countryside is not romantic where there are no sources of employment" (1995, p.312).

As Johnson and Howley explain, "Too much of what passes as 'rural education research' fails completely to imagine the complexity of rural life. Instead, 'rural' becomes a residual geographic or residential category, worthy of interest principally through charity" (2000, p.146). In their review of Raymond William's book *The Country and the City*, which is an exploration of 'persistent cultural images' of the (British) rural set within a context of literary history, Johnson and Howley explain how Williams looks back in time, through literature, and finds the rural 'present' of 1966, 1932, 1911, 1809, 1769, 1620, 1516, and 1370 isn't characterized by a romantic 'peace, innocence and simple virtue,' but by "social economic inequities and the exploitation of natural and human resources" (p.147). Johnson and Howley exhort rural education researchers to get past the "artificial cultural representation" (p.147).

Mary Bushnell (1999) problematizes the "rural" further with her ethnographic study of a 'reborn rural community' populated by former urban families who have migrated to homes 'surrounded by land undeveloped with buildings and industry other than farming" (p.80). These families, in contrast to other rural families, migrated from cities, have a high SES, and have chosen to live in the area because they desire "a quality of life presumed to be found in the country" (p.80). Such families often choose to send their children to more suburban schools.

While interviewing Max Herndon, a former newspaper reporter who lives in Eagletown and writes a bi-weekly column about life there for a local newspaper, he asked me if I knew how representative of the community Hilltown High School's student body actually was. When I expressed misunderstanding, he told me "only the poor kids go to Hilltown. Other kids go to Sutton or Bradley, [a nearby university town]" (Fieldnotes, October 20, 2002). This explanation proved inaccurate, however, as I later found students from more affluent Eagletown families attending Hilltown High School.

Other rural education research proved inaccurate, too, as I began to learn more about 'rural' youth through interviews and informal conversations I had with the student participants in this study. For example, DeYoung (1995) notes that to rural youth, staying close to family and friends is more important than high-paying jobs[26]. DeYoung (1995) explains, "Many rural residents think in terms of jobs that will allow them to stay near home, as opposed to careers that may lead them elsewhere. For even though wage labor is considered important, it may not be important enough to leave family, friends, and home" (69).

DeYoung and other rural education researchers claim low levels of formal education for rural youth are related to economic opportunities available to them in local communities. DeYoung (1995) explains, "Staying close to home may be important to rural youth, and given that there are typically few rural jobs that require an advanced degree, it is no surprise that fewer rural youth aspire to a college education when the local occupational structure seems not to reward such undertakings" (p. 69).

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[26] When such findings consider rural youths' decisions to stay near friends and families as individual acts and/or choices, rather than as negotiated responses to larger social forces, such phenomenon as "blaming the victim for their own circumstances" is encouraged, which I discuss in some detail later in this chapter.

However, one student participant, Donald, didn't match such descriptions. Donald indeed wanted to leave Eagletown in search of "jobs," and planned to go to college after serving in the military. He explains:

1 Donald: I like being busy and this place isn't busy. I'm totally opposite from just about anybody you find. I cannot stand it, this, on the farm, I'll do it, I like four-wheelers, that's fine, but I want to move away, I want to live in D.C., buy me a big house somewhere up there.
2 Susan: Do you feel like most people who live around here don't see themselves leaving?
5 Donald: Yeah.
6 Susan: Why is that?
7 Donald: Because they're raised around here.
8 Susan. You were raised here.
9 Donald: I wasn't raised on farming, though.
10 Susan: And there are a lot of people here that are?
11 Donald: Yeah. Some people won't ever leave here. But I want to move away somewhere where I can guarantee, you know, that there is going to be jobs. (Fieldnotes, October 29, 2002).

Donald proves such definitions and categories as "rural" and "rural youth" are inadequate, too simplistic, and unstable. Too, as I discuss more thoroughly in Chapter 6, with such simplistic categories come negative stereotypes and images: "rural" is often associated with "white trash and ecstatic fundamentalists," (Fine, 1995, p. 154) and, "rural Appalachia," with such images as the mountain hillbilly, "lazy and shiftless, quick-tempered and ready to grab a gun to settle differences" (Easton, 1996, p. 151). In foregrounding such images and illustrating the inadequacy of single identity categories, this research attempts to problematize, challenge, and disrupt such notions as participants shed light on the complexities and contradictions inherent in their lived experiences.

Finally, literacy researcher Elizabeth Moje and others see "community" as a "messy construct" that needs to be defined and complicated "because communities are becoming more complex, and sometimes less communal, with the diversity and rapid change of new times and fast capitalism" (Moje, 2000b, p.77).

Defining Community

Indeed, as example, I began this research believing the "communities" of Eagletown, Sutton, and Levittown--all communities in the eastern part of the county which comprise Hilltown High School's student intake area--were considered three separate communities. I was soon to be corrected, however; the following excerpt from an interview with Jason and Donald testifies to the "messiness" and complication of defining such "communities:"

1 Susan: I'm learning about the community and I realize that Sutton and Eaglestown and, is it, Levittown?
2 Donald: Yeah.

3   Susan: Am I pronouncing that correctly?
4   Jason: Yeah.
5   Susan: They're three separate communities.
6   Donald: We consider it one big one.
7   Jason: And Levittown's just a road.
8   Susan: A road?
9   Jason: Yeah, a road that just goes in a big circle.
10   Donald: It's considered a community.
11   Jason: Well, it's considered Eagletown. And Levittown is in Eagletown. I
        mean, if we're talking about a general direction, like everything down near
        Levittown, everybody knows where Levittown is so we know where we're
        talking about.
12   Donald: Yeah, you've lived here 17 years, you just know.
13   Jason: It's just like Benton. If you hear someone say Benton, Benton ain't a
        place, it's a road. And really, everybody calls Benton, it's really called
        North Bend. Benton's just the general area you talk about.
14   Donald: Yeah, we got terms for little parts and areas. Here's Benton, here's
        Sutton, you know, here's Alberton. (Fieldnotes, September 24, 2002)

After listening to the boys describe the areas they've had 17 years to get to know, (and seem to know by some kind of embodied instinct, rather than by formal boundary lines or town names), I was dizzy, but much more aware of the need to let the students guide me around with their own definitions and names for the "unfamiliar territory" I found myself in. I also became painfully aware of how inaccurate and inadequate my own prior definitions were.

The boys also pointed to what Moje describes as the increasing complexity and strained communal relations that come "with the diversity and rapid change of new times and fast capitalism" (Moje, 2000b, p.77). Gee describes a "new capitalism" as "flexible transformation of people, practices, markets, and institutions" with an emphasis on "crossing and destroying borders between people, practices, and institutions" (2000b, p. 187).

In one of his published bi-weekly newspaper articles, Max Hendron attests to such transformation and the destruction of borders in Eagletown, and alludes to oft-ignored tension and conflict that comes with the infusion of cultural difference into traditional homogenous communities. The article reads:

Now, I realize a couple of convenience stores being sold is hardly big news. But when there are only three such stores along the 12-mile strip of U.S. 11/460 between Franklin and Richard County, and members of the same family buy two of them and have their eyes on the third, and all this is happening in a tight-knit community short on ethnic diversity and long on long-established family homes and businesses. I think an introduction is in order. ("New store owners," 2002)

Thus, Herndon introduces to his readership an Indian family of two brothers and a sister, who moved to the area in 1995 after living in New Jersey for fifteen years. One of the brothers

worked in one of the local convenience stores he now owns and operates with his brother and sister.

This has indeed transformed the community, as more Indian families visit Eagletown; Hendron explains one of the convenience stores the Indian family bought is "now a food and entertainment bastion for some 200 Indian families in Storeysville" (p. 4). Perhaps witness to tensions in Eagletown, Herndon writes that the Indian family is interested in "getting involved in community affairs, possibly helping to sponsor civic or school events" and says, "Maybe they aren't the only ones who have an opportunity here" (p. 4).

Indeed, as I later found through interviews with student participants in this study, tensions did exist, as Jason and Donald attest to in an interview where I have asked them to describe their "community":

1   Donald: All the stores are owned by a bunch of guidos.
2   Susan: What do you mean "guidos?"
3   Jason: Towelheads.
4   Susan: Towelheads?
5   Donald: Arabs, let's just go that way.
6   Susan: OK
7   Jason: Arabs, I don't know. They all from Egypt or something.
8   Susan: Arabs live here? in Eagletown?
9   Donald: They own, they run that .hotel right in Sutton.
10   Jason: We've only got like five stores in Sutton and they own three out of
         the five.
11   Donald: They own all of them down through the main drag and the hotel,
         and they live in the hotel.
12   Susan: Do people pretty much leave them alone?
13   Jason: There's a lot of people give 'em .
14   Donald: Well, everybody used to go to the stores, you know, around here a
         lot, because they were owned by people who lived right in Sutton, now
         they just you know, these people took it over, they don't want to go. And
         uh, well, there's one store left and that's that country store.
15   Susan: What about since 9/11? Have things changed since then?
16   Jason: Oh man, you don't even. I'd hate to be one of the store owners
         around here, man, you know how much business they've lost? I know
         people who will drive all the way to Storeysville from here even though
         there are ten stores around here just so they won't, you know, Arabs and
         shit.
17   Donald: They come here from their country, get U.S. citizenship, and they
         don't have to pay taxes for four years. And they get a no interest loan from
         the government to buy up businesses. And guess what. I can't even get a
         loan to buy a car but they can get a loan to buy a couple of stores. That's
         pretty shitty.
18   Susan: Do people who aren't born in this area get treated differently than
         people who are born here?

19   Donald: I don't treat them differently. I won't be extra nice to them, but I'll be courteous to them as long as they're courteous to me.

20   Susan: Do your parents go in the local stores?

21   Jason: Not all the time. Just when it's convenient. I live directly across from the Eagletown food mart. The stores' on your right. I live on the left and so they know me by name there. So I'm up there saying "Raj," he's an old sandnigger or something. I don't know. But he's cool as hell, he's got this big golden loop in his ear and shit. I'm like, "What's up, Raj?" and he's like, "What's up, Jason?" (Fieldnotes, September 24, 2002)

The boys attest to a kind of border patrolling occurring in the community as long-term residents boycott the convenience stores because of the "Arab" ownership (14-16), yet the boys seem somewhat conflicted about the changes in their community. Donald seems threatened, and points toward the store owners as a source, perhaps, for lost social privilege and entitlement (17). Jason uses derogatory, stereotypical nicknames for one of the storeowners, but then describes him as "cool" (21). Too, despite resentment Donald might feel, he explains he doesn't treat them any differently than he does other people (19).

Mrs. Pruitt, a special education aide who grew up in Eagletown and now works at Hilltown High School, admitted she didn't see the community as very accepting of people who aren't born there, but says "a lot of people here are just like that with outsiders, period." She explains:

1   Mrs. Pruitt: It's like if people don't, they have to trust you, and if you're from the outside, they don't know if they can trust you and if they don't then their guard goes up and they're like porcupines with their prickles going out.

2   Susan: Has there ever been a time in the community where someone felt pressure to leave because they didn't fit in?

3   Mrs. Pruitt: Well, people in Eagletown just aren't very accepting of people who are different. And I know a lot of people in the community. African-American families don't move into Eagletown, they just don't, because they would, I don't know what they would do, and I've heard people say, 'Well, if they came over here, we'd run them out!' and they mean it. And probably Hispanic and probably other people, if you're not from here, or racially diverse, they're very unaccepting of that.

4   Susan: It's like being stuck in time in a way.

5   Mrs. Pruitt: It's really negative because when you're doing that you're cutting yourself off. A lot of the people, and I think the reason that people my age who've graduated from college and moved back to the community, is because they're not functioning very well outside of the community. And how they function in society is right there, the kicker, they're moving back and living beside their parents because they're not functioning out there real well. They're not dealing with people who are different from them very well. And they can live here and drive out and work at their job, not

their career, and come home and then they're here. You can resist a lot of change if you do that. (Fieldnotes, September 24, 2002).

Gee explains that membership in a discourse may be consciously decided or forced upon one, or one may be born into a particularly socially recognized group and/or identity. Jason and Donald seem to evidence tensions that can exist between such discoursal membership origins.

Gee's theory of discourses enables the exploration of multiple social identities and subjectivities by proposing that it is possible to be a member of conflicting, contradictory Discourses simultaneously. Gee's theory encourages us to embrace contradictions and even to expect them, rather than suffer to resolve them or despair that contradictions exist.

Primary and Secondary Discourses

As briefly described in Chapter 3, Gee sorts discourses into two main categories, primary and secondary discourses. Primary discourses are those people are born or initially socialized into. They comprise "our socio-culturally determined way of using our native language in face-to-face communication with intimates (intimates are people with whom we share a great deal of knowledge because of a great deal of contact and similar experiences)" (Gee, 1996, p. 7). Primary discourses enculturate new members into being a member of a particular family or family grouping within a particular sociocultural setting. This cultural apprenticeship provides and shapes new members' ways of speaking, habitual ways of acting, views, values, beliefs, experiences, and their "first" social identity" (Gee, 1996, p. 7)

Secondary discourses, as Gee explains, involves those "other discourses which crucially involve social instititutions beyond the family (or the private socialization group as defined by the culture), no matter how much they also involve the family" (1996, p. 142). Such secondary institutions, i.e., schools, workplaces, stores, government offices, businesses, churches, etc., share the factor that they "require one to communicate with non-intimates (or to treat intimates as if they were not intimates)" (p. 142). Gee explains that secondary discourses involve interaction with people with whom "one cannot assume lots of shared knowledge and experience, or they involve interactions where one is being 'formal', that is taking on an identity that transcends the family or primary socializing group" (p. 143). Discourses beyond the primary discourse are developed in association with and by having access to and practice with these secondary institutions.

Secondary discourses can be "local, community-based or more globally oriented ('public sphere discourses') (1996, p. 142). Secondary discourses are more "public" than primary discourses, and require members to act in ways that are strongly conventionalized and that are often under surveillance (cf. Foucault 1972, pp. 3-20).

Acquisition and learning

Gee uses the principles of *acquisition* and *learning* to describe how people become members of discourses. Drawing on the language work of Stephen Krashen (1982) and others, Gee defines acquisition as "a process of acquiring something (usually subconsciously) by

exposure to models, and process of trial and error, and practice within social groups, without a process of formal teaching" (Gee, 1996, p. 138). Gee explains that any discourse, primary or secondary, is for most people most of the time only mastered through acquisition, and not through learning. Acquisition, to Gee, happens in settings that are meaningful, where acquirers know they need to obtain particular things in order to function effectively and be recognized as a member of a particular social group. For example, a person's first language and customary ways of using the language are acquired in this way.

'Learning' is more conscious and formal than acquisition, and "involves knowledge gained through teaching (though not necessarily from someone officially designated a teacher) or through certain life-experiences that trigger conscious reflection" (Gee, 1996, p.138). Such teaching involves direct and explicit teaching, which Gee defines as "explanation and analysis, that is, breaking down the thing to be learned into its analytic parts" (Gee, 1996, p. 5). For Gee, this also requires "meta-knowledge" about what is being learned. Gee explains that apprentices learn both the theory and practice of their trade from experts, as well as how to talk about their tools, materials, and craft (cf. Lave and Wenger, 1991). To Gee, people must know how to "do" something before they can talk about what they do and why.

Gee explains that a person's primary discourse serves as a "framework" or "base" for their acquisition and learning of other discourses later in life, yet while acquired knowledge assists membership in secondary discourses, *full* membership requires learning and metaknowledge (Gee, 1996, p. 9). When knowledge and practices acquired in a person's primary discourse are considered useful and valued in secondary discourses, a person will have less to learn in order to master such secondary discourses than other people who, because of the "distance" between their primary and secondary discourses, acquire much less and therefore need to *learn* much more.

Tracing Discourses

In the discussion that follows, I rely on interviews with Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Pruitt, a special education teacher who grew up in Hilltown, and several student participants in this study, to outline what I believe to be aspects of Mrs. Taylor's White, upper-middle class Primary and Secondary Discourses and White, working-class Primary and Secondary Discourses. In so doing, I believe differences in values, beliefs, ways of being and thus, ways of using language, become visible among the social groups represented by Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Pruitt, and the students.

Mrs. Taylor and Mrs. Pruitt: Movement, mobility, and choices

Mrs. Taylor, after attending a private K-12 school in her hometown of Baltimore, Maryland, left home at 18 to attend an out-of-state public university. She explains, "I haven't lived in Baltimore since I was 18. I've lived in all these locations and had all these experiences" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003). Mrs. Taylor's Primary Discourse is comprised of the belief that a young person's goals, ultimately, should include moving away from home and family to go to college and "have experiences." She is frustrated by the students at Hilltown High School who, she says, "are not going to get out." Mrs. Taylor believes that if they don't ever leave their hometowns, they won't understand there's a world beyond Eagletown" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

Mrs. Taylor believes moving beyond one's hometown and family is important because doing so provides experiences which broaden a person's understandings and knowledge of the world and others[27].

Mrs. Pruitt, the special education teacher who grew up in Eagletown and works at Hilltown High School, seems to agree with Mrs. Taylor. She explains:

> You know, we moved to North Carolina and it was so hard for me when [my husband] was in the military and I had to move and like, it was probably the best thing that ever happened to me. It was the best thing for me because I made different friends with people who weren't from here! And I had different, and I'm so much more accepting and, om, I've really, really changed a lot about the way that I think because of the people, it's people who change you. (Fieldnotes, September 2002).

Mrs. Taylor expressed frustration that her 4th block students lived in such a "narrow bubble. They don't know, they don't know any black people. Forget another culture like an Indian. I mean, they're ignorant. And I don't mean that in a mean way. They don't have any, you know, knowledge of that. They are so unexposed to different cultures. They can't even, they make these assumptions they don't even have enough knowledge to make them" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

When Donald and Jason revealed racist attitudes in interviews, they made distinctions between Black persons who "acted white," by dressing "straight," and Black persons who "acted black" by acting "thuggish" and wearing baggy pants, even though they didn't personally know anyone who acted "thuggish" or dressed this way; in other words, they disliked certain *images* of Black people they'd seen on television or in movies. When Donald tells me about a Black teacher who had previously worked at Hilltown, but has since moved to another school, he explains:

1	Donald: He was whiter than half us here.
2	Susan: What do you mean by that?
3	Donald: He's black but he acted white.
4	Jason: There's a difference between black and white.
5	Susan: What does it mean to "act black?"
6	Donald: Act black or act white?
7	Susan: Well, you said that he acted white. What does that mean?
8	Donald: He was more white.

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[27] As I discuss in Chapter 5, I believe a middle class "fear of conflict," which Mrs. Taylor attests to having, encourages the adoption within middle class Primary Discourses of a rhetoric of tolerance and cultural pluralism. In her essay, Pratt explains that tolerance is tied to European bourgeoisie capitalist economics, where individuality is encouraged in order to maintain the semblance of a level playing field (Pratt, 2002). As Diane Penrod (2002) explains, "A rhetoric of tolerance avoids the 'messiness' of confrontation and conflict that individuality brings…likewise, tolerance helps those in power keep decorum, which keeps us all focused on our productivity" (p. 171).

9 Jason: It's a whole point of attitude. You see guys walking around here with their pants to their ass, they act thuggish and shit. And he was straight. Wore straight pants.

10 Donald: Wore ties all the time. He was clean-cut.

11 Susan: So, what you're saying, are white guys with their pants hanging down and stuff, are they "acting black?"

12 Donald: Look. You got black people, you got niggers. Black people are the kind of people live off Allentown Road, sit on the front porch every evening, wave at everybody, go to church every Sunday, they're real nice. Some people got their cars like this high off the ground, got their pants to their knees, and 500 Mr. T-looking chains on their neck.

13 Susan: People like that go to school here? Live here?

14 Donald: Nah, they won't, they get…nah.

15 Jason: That's the kind walk around with their hats all crooked, and hold their pants up by their nuts and drag their feet around and shit…that's what we was protesting about [in the skit]. (Fieldnotes, September 24, 2002)

Donald seems to hint at the possibility that if Black persons fitting the wrong image were to visit Eagletown, they would get hurt or harassed (14). The boys, then, point to the fact that their border patrolling of the community is aimed at anyone who does not "act White," or, it seems, does not act like them.

More of this becomes evident in an interview with Matt, one of the male students who wrote and performed the persecution skit:

1 Matt: As far as I'm concerned and I'll tell any of the teachers here, if they don't want to hear the word ['nigger'] they don't need to come down to Eagletown because Eagletown is just 99.9% rednecks and everybody, nobody around here likes black people. That's why we got like a total of three black people in our entire school.

2 Susan: How are they treated? I mean, do people give them a hard time?

3 Matt: No, I mean, because they are, they don't act like it, like if a black person come around here and they acted like a nigger, then yeah, they'd get it, but like a lot of the, we got three black people here and they don't act like a nigger. They just act like a black person, a normal black person.

4 Susan: What's a normal black person?

5 Matt: You know, not a gangster.

The boys I interviewed defined Black persons as either those who were "clean-cut," "wore straight pants," and "attended church," or as "thugs" wearing "Mr. T chains" even though the boys described no Black students at Hilltown as representing these images. Similar to white males in other studies (cf. Fine, 1997; Weis, 1990; Willis, 1977), the white, working-class males I interviewed for this study expressed racism toward, in particular, males of African-American descent. Like the males in Weis's study, Jason, Matt, and Donald seem to see themselves in the roles of police and protector of white females' behavior. As we see in Chapter 5 and 6, Jason,

Matt, and their friend, Alan, who holds much social power in Mrs. Taylor's 4th block class, will enact such roles and discourses.

Mrs. Taylor worried that students relied too heavily on images presented in popular culture media to provide knowledge of those different from themselves; she believed if they transcended their "narrow bubble," and met different kinds of people, they "wouldn't be this way" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

In addition to this assumed lack of awareness and tolerance of others, then, Mrs. Taylor explained that her 4th block students also didn't understand or know a lot of the terms she used because they had not experienced, or even heard about, similar things. Mrs. Taylor said she felt like a "foreigner," because "I'll talk about certain things and make connections that [my 4th block students] don't, they don't even have the background to consider something like that." She says she often doesn't talk about her experiences in college with her 4th block students because "they just kind of look at me like, and for me the words UVA or Wake Forest or Harvard are such a part of my existence, and for them I feel like I'm falling over myself to explain certain things. I barely talk about college because it's not even something in their world they can picture. It's really weird, and it's hard. (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

> Mrs. Taylor feels like a "foreigner" with other teachers at Hilltown, too. She explains: Um, some of the teachers, too, and I mean, I'm not like, well world-traveled or anything like that but someone came to do a study and they were making us make up this code for something and they said, "OK, your first initial and then how many kids you have," and all these different numbers for the code and one of the questions was "How many times you've been out of the country?" And I was like, *how many times have I been out of the country* and everyone else was laughing because they were like, "I've never been out of the country." They're like, "You have to think about this?" And yeah, I've been out of the country a few times and I had to think about it and I was mortified. And I was really upset about it. Because not only do I feel like a stranger to the kids, I feel like it with the faculty. And I don't feel like I should. (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003)

Mrs. Taylor feels out of place at Hilltown High School because her values about experiencing the world beyond one's home and family locations, and her opportunities to do so, do not seem to resonate with her 4th block students or other faculty.

Mrs. Pruitt, however, a special education teacher at Hilltown, who grew up in Eagletown but now lives in Storeysville, agrees with Mrs. Taylor and feels that some students at Hilltown don't do well and even get recommended for special education services because of a "lack of experiential knowledge." She explains:

> You'll find, I personally think that a lot of times, what shows up as a learning disability, when you measure IQ and achievement, a lot of times is the environmental deprivation, and where they were deprived from experiences and learning opportunities from the time that they were very young and that's showing up. Because we have a really high percentage of our students, like 20%, labeled

with some type of disability. Out of only some 250-300 kids, that's high. That's disproportionate to society. But, like, it's real easy to see kids who have not been exposed and don't know, you know, a lot of environmental words, like what a museum is, they've never been to one, they don't have anything real to attach to the word, but you know if that's, if you've been there, you would have seen, you know, and you travel and your parents take you out places and they explain things to you. (Fieldnotes, September 24, 2002)

Both Mrs. Taylor's and Mrs. Pruitt's descriptions place blame on working-class students who attend Hilltown High School for not wanting to "get out," and their parents for "depriving them of experiences," as if these are individual choices students and parents make instead of negotiated, constrained responses to larger social structures, i.e., economy.

Mrs. Pruitt, however, is also quick to explain she understands that most people in Eagletown do not feel they have the same choices she felt like she had because she "bought into those middle class values, you know, my whole life, as you can tell because I chose that path." Mrs. Pruitt explains, "The kids that I work with, so many of them have absolutely no direction or motivation, they feel like they have very few choices. They don't feel like the world is open and that it's their oyster and that is the most frustrating thing for me. (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002)

Gee explains that some social groups consciously fold knowledge and practices valued in secondary discourses into their primary discourses, so that primary discourses in some instances resemble aspects of practices or "ways of being" in secondary discourses. Gee uses the term *filtering* to describe the process whereby a social group builds into its primary discourse the practices and values of secondary discourses (1996, p. 158). Gee explains that "nearly all social groups filter some aspects of valued secondary public-sphere or community-based discourses into their primary discourses" (p. 158).

I would argue that, just as Donald and Jason have filtered in community-based secondary discourses to their primary discourses, Mrs. Taylor, a member of an upper-class social group, and Mrs. Pruitt, who describes herself as middle-class, although she grew up in a working-class family, have filtered into their primary discourses a secondary discourse of education as individual "betterment" or social progress that rewards self-reliance with numerous options, i.e., career choices, being made available. Such a secondary discourse of education as "betterment," I believe, resonates with the value and belief that one must choose to be mobile and "have lots of different experiences" which enables one to be tolerant of others and respect diversity.

For Mrs. Taylor, the secondary discourse of education as "betterment" can be seen in her beliefs that students should "be educationally literate," and "know who wrote *Moby Dick*" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003). Mrs. Taylor explains she has "high expectations" for the students and even feels she was hired to teach at Hilltown because her principal "values education and what it stands for, a better life." She says she feels he wants "these kids to be exposed to that" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003). She explains, "I think they were expecting big things from me, just because of my background and where I'd taught, and that I'd been successful" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

When I interviewed Mr. Simmons, the school principal, he explained he understands the purpose of education is to "prepare [students] for post-secondary education or to prepare them for job skills so they can move on out into the world and have a trade or vocation that they can work with and be successful with" (Fieldnotes, June 17, 2003).

Mrs. Taylor, then, represents to the principal and, I would argue, ultimately, to the students at Hilltown High School, someone who believes education can offer a "better life" than the one presently lived, as education will get one into college or, at least, job skills. Thus, Mrs. Taylor and the principal help constitute an educational discourse that sees education, as it takes place in the credentialing institution of the school, as necessary to "betterment." This belief in "betterment" is portrayed in the banners which hang in each of the grade-level "homes." Some of the banners read: "Success is the sum of small efforts repeated daily," "Education is the fuel for your future," and "Work for your Dreams." (Fieldnotes, September 23, 2002).

Thus, students are constantly reminded that if they simply work hard enough, and "fuel up" on education, they can and will obtain their dreams. Such rhetoric wrongly assumes, however, that many of the students who attend Hilltown High School have the same options available to them that middle and upper-middle class students might have, or that they view education in the same way.

Donna Langston (2000) explains that "Middle class people have the privilege of choosing careers. They can decide which jobs they want, according to their moral or political commitments, needs for challenge, or creativity. This is a privilege denied the working-class and poor, whose work is a means of survival, not choice" (p. 400).

Mrs. Pruitt, who grew up in a "working-class" family, explains that "students here [at Hilltown] look at jobs as work to get what is needed and not as careers or lasting, meaningful work." She explains:

> as far as jobs, I think a lot of their parents change jobs a lot and it's not a sense of a career, it's a job to get you the money to live, to pay your rent, and to buy your food. But it's just a job and so I don't think they value, like, careers and I don't think they look at work as being possibly fun and rewarding. I mean, they haven't had that experience, I mean, they watch, they live with their parents, their parents have lived that way all their lives and they, that's their experience. That's what they know." (Fieldnotes, September 24, 2002)

Mrs. Pruitt explains, too, how working-class students at Hilltown "don't believe in the American Dream," a myth that they can escape the fate that awaits them due to the class position they're born into if they merely work hard. She explains:

> So many people who live here do not value school and they don't buy into the whole "work hard" and you'll get your reward. They don't believe that. Kind of like, you might as well make your reward now because it's not going to happen. So live life to the fullest and you know, eat, drink, and be

merry. That's how they are and there isn't a lot of focus and there isn't a lot of discipline in their lives. (Fieldnotes, September 24, 2001)

As I discuss later in this chapter, critical theorists have long viewed schools as arenas where White (Euro- and/or Anglo-American), upper/middle-class literacy practices are privileged while non-White, middle class practices are marginalized. This privileging/marginalizing dichotomy is understood as an important social mechanism that contributes to the reproduction of middle-class, While-dominated interests, knowledge, and relations. According to Giroux (1987), "Schools often give the appearance of transmitting a common culture, but they, in fact, more often than not, legitimate what can be called a dominant culture" (p. 176). I discuss later in this chapter how such views of schools contributed to the production of critical pedagogy, which is often referred to as emancipatory and liberatory pedagogy.

Ideology and Institutional Discourses

To Gee, meaning and meaning-making occurs within or among discourses; discourse thus "provides a standpoint or position from which to put forward certain concepts, views, and values at the expense of others" (Gee, 1992, p. 111). A full member or "insider" of a discourse, then, must be seen to hold and act unquestioningly upon such values, beliefs, perspectives, ways of speaking and thinking, and so forth. As Gee explains, "any viewpoints that seriously undermine a discourse necessarily define one as an outsider" (Gee, 1991, p. 4). Thus, the nature of discourses and their socially constituted meaning systems exclude outsider viewpoints because "the discourse itself defines what counts as acceptable [and unacceptable] criticism" (Gee, 1991, p. 4).

Thus, a discourse can never be neutral. Members will always value or privilege particular meanings over others. White, middle class, Eurocentric discourses have long dominated education in the United States to the detriment of other discourses, especially discourses of non-white, non-middle class peoples. Thus, discourses are always ideological, "inherently" so, according to Gee (1996, p. 132).

Gee defines ideology as "a social theory which involves generalizations (beliefs, claims) about the way(s) in which goods [and services] are distributed in society" (1992, p. 12). "Goods" in Gee's sense pertain to anything that is deemed socially beneficial to have, experience, or lay legitimate claim to. Society, then, is construed as "any and all grouping of people who share beliefs about what counts as 'goods'" (Gee, 1996, 21). Gee explains that ideology also involves a "set of values and viewpoints...about who is an insider and who isn't, often who is 'normal' and who isn't" (1996, p. 132).

We can see such ideology play out in middle-class discourses of education as "betterment" and mobility. When students resist such discourses because of far more limited options open to them than middle-class students, or because they don't want to give up or deny their primary discourses, they are tracked into "regular" or "vocational" courses rather than advanced or college preparatory courses, or labeled as "failures" when they don't acquire or succeed in the school's discourse practices.

The research work of Shirley Brice Heath, which I briefly describe in Chapter 3, provides an example of how the middle-class townspeople folded into their primary discourse the secondary discourse of schooling. Mainstream parents' routines of bedtime reading and storytelling, as well as the belief that school was necessary for a full, successful "later" life, mirrored similar routines practiced and beliefs/values held by teachers Mainstream children encountered upon entering school. Thus, Mainstream children experienced little disconnect between their primary and secondary school discourses.

This exemplifies, I think, Gee's belief that discourses are ideological, and involve a set of values and viewpoints about the relationships between people and the distribution of social goods. Education, as a social "good," is valued by the middle-class, because education *has* helped middle-class folks maintain middle-class lives and achieve upper-middle-class lives. Education has not necessarily delivered such "goods" to working-class people, however; thus working-class people may not see the need to filter the discourse of schools into their own primary discourses and in fact, may appropriate such secondary discourses to meet their own interests.

Mrs. Pruitt exemplifies someone who has both acquired and learned a secondary discourse; ultimately, Mrs. Pruitt has filtered the secondary discourse of education as "betterment" into her own primary discourse. In fact, Mrs. Pruitt chooses to live half an hour away from where she grew up because she doesn't want her toddler son to come into prolonged contact with the primary discourse of the working-class she was raised in and surrounded by growing up. She explains, "I'm so scared it would go the other way with him. Scared to death of it. Because I feel like I really, the negatives are really there, and the biggest thing for me functioning outside of the community is that people feel like they can't move. I still feel like I can only move so far away. It's really magnetic" (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002).

At some point in Mrs. Pruitt's life, her primary discourse and the secondary discourse of education as "betterment" came into contact with one another. Gee explains that several things can happen when discourses "interfere" with one another. He explains that aspects of one discourse can be transferred to another discourse, i.e., transferring a grammatical feature from one language to another. Or, a person, in trying to learn a secondary discourse but failing, can "fall back on one's primary discourse, adjusting it in various ways to try to fit it to the needed functions" (1996, p. 143). Or, one may use a simplified or stereotyped version of the required secondary discourse. Gee explains such processes are similar to those studied by linguists, i.e., pidginization, creolization.

Perhaps Mrs. Pruitt's decision to align herself fully with the secondary discourse of education as "betterment" resulted from an understanding and awareness of the ideological nature of discourse, that discourses are intimately related to the distribution of social power and hierarchical structure in society. Perhaps Mrs. Pruitt realized at an early age, through observation of and guidance by teachers who enacted and carried out the practices and ways of being associated with a secondary discourse of education as "betterment," that through folding such ways of being and valuing into her own primary discourse she would be able to leave her primary discourse behind. Maybe Mrs. Pruitt believed that acquiring and learning the secondary

discourse would provide her opportunities to acquire social goods (money, power, status) that membership in her primary discourse would not.

Gee calls such discourses that lead to the acquisition of social goods in society "dominant discourses," and groups that have the fewest conflicts using them "dominant groups." Perhaps Mrs. Pruitt saw power symbolized in the "constant tests of the fluency of the dominant discourses" Gee explains dominant groups apply in society. Such tests in Mrs. Pruitt's schooling may have been tied up in the opportunities that made her feel she had choices, i.e., scholarships, academic recognition. She explains, "There were lots of positions if you were somebody who did well. I think the teachers here, there are so many kids who come from pretty desperate situations, have so many issues that if you are among the kids who do your homework and do well, and really work hard, the teachers appreciate that" (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002).

Doing homework, showing motivation and interest in school, working hard—these are "tests" of fluency in the dominant secondary discourse of education as "betterment." Mrs. Pruitt passed these tests, and thus demonstrated a willingness and ability to become fluent in the dominant secondary discourse of the school. Thus, because teachers enact ways of being and valuing in such a dominant discourse, indeed, help to maintain and enforce such discourse, Mrs. Pruitt's teachers appreciated her efforts and rewarded her by helping her move through the "gates" Gee explains such tests of dominant discourse fluency become.

Usually, these "gates," Gee explains, exclude "people whose very conflicts with dominant discourses show they were not, in fact, 'born' to them" (1996, p. 146). Such conflicts and tensions can arise between one's primary discourse and a dominant secondary discourse, since one's primary discourse often defines one's "home" or "cultural" identity and that of people with whom one is intimate and intimately connected.

As explained earlier in the chapter, Pratt's concept of the "contact zone" encourages us to understand there are always multiple discourses present in any community, including that of the classroom, and, thus, pedagogical relations involve the negotiation of learning and/or resisting multiple, rather than single, discourses at any given time. Jason Williams, introduced below, exemplifies such negotiation as he resists rejecting his primary discourses and partially accepts the secondary discourse of education as "betterment" on his own terms.

Jason Williams

Jason Williams, 16, is a short and stocky White male who is in eleventh grade at Hilltown High School. Jason has a sly grin, and because of a car accident he was involved in as a middle schooler--which put him in a body cast for 8 1/2 months--he has a crooked kind of look about him. Mrs. Taylor describes him, I think appropriately, as "scrappy." He has short, brown hair and brown eyes. He dresses casually, mostly in blue jeans, t-shirts, and tennis shoes. On one day I observed, Jason wore a pair of pants that read "US ARMY" down one pant leg and a navy blue t-shirt advertising Budweiser beer; on another day, he wore camouflage pants, which are pants-- usually Army green or dark brown in color, and made to blend in with outdoor environments-- typically worn by hunters, and a t-shirt advertising a brand of automobile parts.

Jason appears to be well-liked and everyone, including his English teacher, calls him by his nickname, Willy. In the introductory letter Mrs. Taylor required 4th block students write to her at the beginning of the semester, Jason writes:

Well I really don't know how to write this, so I'm just going to let it flow. I try to be a decent person and student. I try not to get on people's nerves because no one likes a headache. Well I have mood swings like everyone else, just I don't control mine as well. In the past that's got me in and out of trouble but I'll contain myself on those bad days but the good days I have I can do anything and be the funniest and nicest person to know. I have a weird personality that you'll see as the year goes bye. I try to be a cool layed back person.. (Fieldnotes, October 12, 2002).

Jason, indeed, was "cool" and "layed back." I wrote in my field journal at one point that he reminded me of a Zen master, as he often communicated sophisticated ideas about one's actions influencing later consequences for many, including the natural world. Unfortunately, however, Jason seemed to let his temper overshadow such Zen-like ideas; Mrs. Taylor attested to Jason's mood swings, and said that the administration didn't like Jason much because "he's made some bad choices." (Fieldnotes, May 28, 203).

Jason and his younger sister live with their father in one of the trailer parks not far from the school. Jason has lived his whole life in the area of Eagletown, as have his mother, father, and grandparents. Jason likes living in the area and says he can see himself living in Eagletown thirty years from now. Because of the car accident he was involved in when he was younger, Jason will receive some "pension money out of it" when he turns eighteen. Jason plans to "live on my own. I'll have enough to buy me a house and some land" (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002).

Jason has looked forward to being an auto mechanic since he was in middle school. His father is a mechanic and his neighbor who Jason describes as a "second dad," owns his own "garage" (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002). Jason explains he had planned to go into the Marines before a vocational education teacher told him about an auto mechanic school he could attend in Tennessee. Jason explains:

I wasn't planning on doing that [being an auto mechanic], was going to go into the Marines for a few years, get me an occupation out of the Marines, and go on about that, and then to be a mechanic, you got to be in school, I'm one of the top in my class, and he was showing me, said you know, started telling me about this school, and after you get out of this school, you're guaranteed so many sorts of jobs. There was a guy came in the other day from the school and was telling us what he did, and he was like, I wasn't even at the top of my class, and I got this and that, this and that, and I was like, "Hell yeah! That's what I need there!" (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002).

Jason explains that auto mechanics, to him, is "common sense." Jason doesn't understand why students are required to take maths like geometry or pre-calculus, which Jason struggles with. Jason explains:

As long as you got basic math you can be a mechanic. I don't see, I mean, unless you're going to college I don't see what the hell you need pre-calculus and all that shit. I can understand basic math, I can times and divide, I can do all that junk without giving you the square root of a 22-digit number (laughs). Quadruple that by so many times, and slash this times that, and all that's kind of getting out of hand. Math is just out there, and that's all it is. I struggle (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002).

Applying Gee's theory of discourses to data collected about Jason makes it possible to see that through his father, his "second Dad's" auto mechanics business, and a vocational auto mechanics teacher, Jason has direct and physical access to a real-world business discourse. Indeed, it can be said that Jason is being apprenticed to this secondary discourse in ways that promote acquisition and learning. However, the discourse of work and business are not the only discourses coordinating Jason's social identity. Unlike Mrs. Taylor and Mrs. Pruitt, who have filtered a secondary discourse of education as "betterment" into their own primary discourses, Jason negotiates this discourse with another secondary discourse, his "being a student" discourse.

In English class, Jason sits at a desk in a row close to the dry erase board at the far end of the room. On the days I observed his English class, he sat slumped in his desk, or with his feet propped up in the desk in front of him. Sometimes he slept. By his own admission, Jason 'tolerates' school, and often stops paying attention to the teacher and/or his work in English class. He explains: "If it don't catch my attention, I ain't got no attention on it." When I ask him if English "catches his attention," he explains:

1   Jason: English is just always there. I don't feel good about it, I don't feel bad about it. I just know it's there. We just got to get it over with. The years are flying by and here in two more years I'm going to be sitting on my ass at home, saying what I woulda did if I'd have done this instead of that. So I've been trying to make school tolerable.
2   Susan: How do you do that?
3   Jason: It ain't hard, I mean, everything's in your mind, but it's just some things don't catch my mind. And if it don't catch my mind then I'm not really good at it, I can't stand it, and it's a waste of my time. Because if it don't catch my attention the hell with it. I'm going to put it to the side and worry about it when I have to worry about it. But with English, I'm all right with it, I mean, I know I have to pass it. That's the only reason why I'm in here (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002).

The language of "passing" a test, or "passing" a course comprises a large part of Jason's student discourse (cf. Weis, 1990). Jason doesn't seem overly concerned about anything more than passing his classes and "getting through" high school.

One reason Jason "worries" about English, though, and desires to "pass" English is because his father expects him to. Jason, who lives with his father, explains his father would "whip my ass over school. I mean, that's 'bout the only thing he's strict on. I have to pass. As long as I'm passing,

he really don't say nothing to me" (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002). Jason has an interesting method of "passing" his classes, however:

1   Jason: There's this thing, man, where I'll slack off all year, won't do diddly, and then if I got an 'F' at the end of the last six weeks I'll start kissing ass and then Boom! I'll pass the grade and go on to the next grade. And then do the same thing all over again, slack all year.

2   Susan: So all you gotta do is kiss up to the teacher, right?

3   Jason: Not necessarily kiss up to the teacher, just I'll keep my grades at 'D' level, that way I'm passing, but I'm not doing nothing. I'm not proud of it, but I ain't took a piece of paper home in two years and I've passed every year. (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002)

In the contact zone of the classroom, Jason straddles multiple cultures and thus, discourses. Resistant to give up his primary discourse, which includes discourses associated with living and growing up in a rural, working-class area, Jason refuses to completely adopt the middle-class secondary discourse associated with and credentialed by the school. Instead, he does just enough to get by, to "pass," without having to work hard. Instead of being engaged in any substance of schooling, Jason and other students I observed are involved more in the *form,* rather than substance, of schooling (cf. Weis, 1990).

Thus, Jason doesn't completely reject the middle class secondary discourse of schooling as "betterment," but does tend to reject the competitive and individualistic ethos of schooling by a willingness to be simply "average."

Too, Jason may realize his acquisition and learning, and thus, gained entry into the secondary discourse of schooling will not bring him any recognition or social "goods" beyond the "pat on the back" he'll receive if he remains comfortably within his own primary discourse. Jason asks:

What's the use of putting forth all your effort getting 'A's' and getting a pat on the back, and not do a damn thing and pass and still get a pat on the back? You know, it's just a lot easier to do what I do, you know, I don't care (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002).

Jason's father doesn't seem to care if Jason gets less than "A's" or "B's," as long as he's passing, and Jason has internalized this and enacts this value/discourse through his "do just enough to get by" attitude. This "do just enough to get by" attitude/discourse resists the dominant discourse of the successful student. Yes, Jason is going to pass his classes and graduate from high school, but he's determined to do it on his own terms, without risking peer isolation or rejection and without having to "work" too hard.

"He Sits Me Where I Stand"

I believe another aspect of Jason's Primary discourses—that of a hypermasculinity or machismo—is illustrated in his understanding that his father will physically beat him if he fails any

of his classes. In a conversation about Jason's sample SOL writing prompt[28], which he wrote in preparation for the test, I told Jason it sounded like his dad and he had a close relationship. He hesitated, and I said, "Maybe close isn't the right word?" He explained:

1   Jason: He sits me where I stand.
2   Susan: What do you mean?
3   Jason: Like, I took his truck to go get something to eat, and I didn't go straight there like I was supposed to so I was late getting him his food and he said, 'If my food's cold, me and you going 'round.' I stood there, and he said, 'You're still going to stand there?' and I'm like, 'Yeah, I'm going to stand here to show you I ain't chicken.' And he said, 'Allright, if my food's cold I'm going to hit you square in your mouth.' And I said, 'I'm standing here, ain't I?' And he said, 'Get out of my face before I hit you in your mouth.'

4   Susan: Is that a pretty common way you two talk to each other? I mean, does he threaten to hit you and you just, I mean, or is that just a threat, like you know he wouldn't really hit you? Or would he hit you?
5   Jason: Oh, nah, he'll hit me. Here about a month now, I've been testing my bluff 'cause usually if he tells me to do something I'll go do it and won't say nothing to him. But here lately, I've been getting brave and ornery, you know, saying 'the hell with you.'
6   Susan: Why are you getting to be more like that?
7   Jason: Because he's trying to put me in my place. He's been trying to put me where I's supposed to be listening to him and here lately I've been making an ass of him. Testing him. We go up to drag race on the weekend and we's just goofing off, you know, I took his cigarettes. 'Give me my cigarettes back.' 'No, take 'em from me.' Here I am in front of all of his friends and I'm kinda making an ass out of him. And uh, he pushed me, I pushed him back, and he grabbed me by my throat and uh, tried to make me submit. I was laughing at him, and that ended up making him mad, made him more mad. He pushed me again, I pushed him and he fell flat on his ass. And then we just had to cool off. He knows he can still take me. I'm just trying to stand up for myself.

'Sitting a person where he or she stands," then, implies one person being able to force another person to submit to one's will. Jason, it would seem, has reached an age (or frustration level?) where he wants to "stand up for myself" and prove he's not a "chicken," or coward, to his father, and to other men. Proving oneself through force, disciplining and "making asses" out of others, then, comprise Jason's primary discourses, which he's acquired and seems to be in the process of learning well.

Combined with Jason's racist discourses, such masculinist discourses do not bode well for Mrs. Taylor or Jenny when Jason, Matt, and Alan use the "contact zone" of the classroom as a place to continue the border-patrolling and policing of others they accomplish outside of the classroom.

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[28] The prompt was to describe the most important person in your life; Jason wrote about his father.

Such appropriation of Mrs. Taylor's secondary discourses is what I believe happens in Mrs. Taylor's 11th grade 4th block English classroom which, inhabited primarily by working-class rural high school students and a middle-class teacher, becomes a "contact zone," where multiple, conflicting primary discourses and secondary discourses of both individuals and thus literacy practices, come into contact with each other *and* institutional discourses, and "meet, clash, and grapple" (Pratt, 1992, p. 4) through processes of negotiation rather than easy assimilation or acculturation.

Chapter 5 briefly outlines progressivist and critical pedagogical traditions, as I believe such traditions influence Mrs. Taylor's secondary pedagogical discourses. Chapter 5 also presents feminist poststructural critiques of such traditions, as feminist poststructuralist understandings of discourse, power, and subjectivity help to make visible the ways Mrs. Taylor's pedagogical discourses created spaces for student resistance.

Chapter 6 attempts to illustrate how conflicted negotiation can be in the "contact zone" of the classroom as students' appropriations and resistance of Mrs. Taylor's discourses are accomplished through "transcultural," "autoethnographic texts," which attempt to disrupt power relations inherent in the classroom.

CHAPTER 5: TROUBLING PROGRESSIVE AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGICAL DISCOURSES

A contact perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonizers and colonized…not in terms of separateness and apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings of practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power.
—Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone"

Gee explains a person's primary discourse can serve as a "framework" or "base" for their acquisition and learning of other discourses later in life (Gee, 1996, p. 9). I believe Mrs. Taylor's upper-middle class primary discourses, reflecting values of education as "betterment" and individual risk-taking, mobility, and tolerance of others, served as such a "framework" or "base" for secondary progressive and critical pedagogical discourses she acquired and learned as both a student and pre-service English teacher.

Mrs. Taylor's Pedagogical Discourses

Mrs. Taylor describes herself as a "writing-based teacher, doing creative [things], connecting to the kids' lives, bringing literature [into the classroom], building community, and making those connections that you don't always see with traditional workbook things like that" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

She describes the WebQuest assignment met many of her teaching objectives. She explains, "The idea for an English class is dramatic writing; it gets the kids up in a different setting, it's very student-focused, peers working together. So, writing a play, acting it out, being in front of the class—it covers, to me, English. (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

Such descriptions as "building community," "student-focused," and "peers working together" point toward progressive, expressivist pedagogies, which are rooted in Western conceptions of liberal individualism and understand a rational citizenry is developed through student-centered education.

Progressive/Expressivist Pedagogy

After World War I, English studies saw a turn to the concern for the unique individuality and creative potential of each student. Lawrence Cresmin explains a post-war "polyglot system of ideas that combined the doctrine of self-expression, liberty, and psychological adjustment into a confident, iconoclastic individuality" arose (qtd. in Berlin, 1990, p. 197). Thus, composition activities, especially, centered around expressive writing about personal experience. Berlin explains, "The insistence of liberal culturists on genius as the essential element of writing at its best was now given a democratic application. Each and every individual was seen to possess creative potential, a potential the proper classroom environment could unlock and promote" (p. 197).

Berlin explains that a "bowdlerized version of Freud that depicted the innate impulses of children as innately good," in addition to G. Stanley Hall's child-study movement, influenced such a turn to the individual. The classroom, then, became the place where such "virtuous and creative springs of feeling and conduct" could be unlocked in a "free and uninhibited environment" provided by teachers (Berlin, p. 197).

Such progressivist philosophies and approaches trace their central assumptions to 18th-century Englightenment notions of progress, where progress is considered inevitable in a society of rational individuals educated in methods of scientific discovery. As Fassio explains, "Early in the 1900's, progressivists began looking to educational reform for solutions to social problems such as juvenile crime, poverty, and adult aggression. Progressivists advocated pedagogies based on scientific (not religious) epistemologies that focus on the empirical and rational discovery of truths. Central to progressivist pedagogies is student (not teacher or adult) control of learning" (2000, p. 6). Walkerdine (1984) explains that developmental psychologists viewed authoritarian control over students as contaminating or obstructing what science had discovered to be "biologically influenced/natural stages of rational development" (qtd. in Fassio, 2000, p. 6).

In hopes to contribute to the development of a rational citizenry through student-centered education, one such literacy pedagogy—expressivism—arose. With its focus on each student's discovery of her essential, authentic self (Ward, 1994), expressivism allowed for individual self-expressions, i.e., self-selected and uncensored reading and writing, to become the vehicles for instruction. Learning, then, facilitates the free unfolding of authentic voices through self-expression (i.e., self-governed reading, writing, and speaking). Such approaches to literacy instruction claim to encourage student empowerment, contribute to the development of a more authentic democracy, and disrupt inequitable relations by celebrating the diversity in the classroom (i.e., through students writing and sharing their diverse experiences with classmates).

Democracy and celebration of diversity--an optimistic faith in the "social imagination" (Boler, 1999)--was also considered possible by progressivists through literature, touted by John Dewey (1938/1963) and Louise Rosenblatt (1938) as the channel through which students can identify with the "other" and thereby develop modes of moral understanding thought to build democracy (Boler, 1999). Rosenblatt explains, "[It] has been said that if our imaginations functioned actively, nowhere in the world would there be a child who was starving. Our vicarious suffering would force us to do something to alleviate it" (1938, p. 185).

Rosenblatt describes the experience of reading a newspaper in a state of numbness, what Boler (1999) deems "that all too familiar strategy for absorbing information without feeling it" (p. 156). Rosenblatt writes, "This habit of mind has its immediate value, of course, as a form of self-protection. Because of the reluctance of the average mind to make this translation into human terms, the teacher must at times take the responsibility for stimulating it" (p. 185).

English teachers, then, influenced by such discourse, were encouraged to help students become "literary judges," who could "comprehend the other through sympathy and fancy as well as rationality as the foundation for dignity, freedom and democracy" (qtd. in Boler, 1999, p. 156). Boler considers such pedagogy a "cultivating [of] democracy through particular emotions, of which empathy is the most popular" (1999, p. 156). Boler explains, "Across the political and

disciplinary spectrum, conservatives and liberals alike advocate variations of empathy as a solution to society's 'ills'. Finally, in the last fifteen years of Western 'multiculturalism,' empathy is promoted as a bridge between differences, the affective reason for engaging in democratic dialogue with the other. (p. 156)

Such a tradition of "cultivating democracy through emotions" continues, I believe, in Mrs. Taylor's persecution skit assignment, which began with an in-class reading of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. Throughout the reading, Mrs. Taylor explains she tries to "get the kids into it, I try to help them make connections," by stopping periodically to engage students in discussion about 'witch hunts' and McCarthyism; it would seem, then, Mrs. Taylor wants to "stimulate the students' habits of mind," and possibly, through encouraging student empathy with those who have suffered persecution, help students "bridge the differences" between themselves and those "Others" they may persecute with a lack of respect for and tolerance of diversity.

However, I believe Mrs. Taylor's pedagogic discourse is not solely progressive, or expressivist. As Mrs. Taylor explains:

We studied [Atwell and Rief[29]] in college, and one of my girlfriends tried to do a full writing-reading workshop for a whole year with an honors class and it was very successful. The parents loved it, she loved it, but the principal did not, um, because it wasn't very traditional and she got a lot of grief from it, but it was excellent for the kids. I don't think I'm, I don't think I could do that, I don't think I could go that far. I think with my personality, it's more controlling. I enjoy being up front, teaching my kids. I want it to be very student-focused, but I think with my personality, it's a mixture. (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003)

Throughout my conversations with Mrs. Taylor, she used the word "critical" to describe her teaching and the assignments she created. She wanted the students to "think critically" in the WebQuest assignment about the oppression and injustice experienced by persecuted persons throughout history. She explains, "There's some huge critical thinking skills of looking at former hate crimes and deciding if they were, will still continue in the future."

Before she and the students participated in a class reading of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, she explains she "talk[ed] about McCarthy, I mean, at the beginning I kind of frontload the whole McCarthy hearings and what, why Arthur Miller even wrote the play. Then they research and look up hate crimes, historical persecutions that have happened in the past. and then, they write a futuristic drama." (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

Mrs. Taylor explained to me that the entire WebQuest activity centered around the idea that "history repeats itself." She explained, "Although we should learn from history, somehow we

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[29] Nanci Atwell (1992/1987) and Linda Reif ( ) are considered forerunners in the "workshop" traditions of progressive, expressivist pedagogical strategies, influenced by sociocognitive understandings of literacy users' needs to study their own processes of reading and writing; Atwell and Reid advocated classrooms becoming workshops where students practiced their own processes independent of others' processes.

don't and we keep making similar errors. The *Crucible* was so much about persecution, so that was to be the theme of their own skits. We talked at length about the saying, and that is the main reason we did the drama—to look at persecution closely and see what could possibly lie ahead if we did not pay attention to our historical mistakes now" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

Such a statement would seem to point toward pedagogical goals beyond those of student-centered progressivism (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003). Mrs. Taylor, it would appear, encourages the students to explore social conditions and contexts which enable persecutions to happen in the first place so they can discover themselves existing within such conditions and contexts; too, Mrs. Taylor seems to want the students to understand changing such oppressive social conditions is possible if they change their own attitudes and beliefs.

Such ideas have been emphasized in the tradition of critical pedagogy, which grew out of neo-Marxist beliefs that ideological hegemony operates in institutions, like schools, through the rhetoric of meritocracy, standardized testing, and tracking through vocational training or college preparatory curriculum, to reinforce capitalist economic relations. Critical theorists define *ideological hegemony* as the "production of sense and meaning...and maintenance of domination not by the sheer exercise of force but primarily through consensual social practices, social forms, and social structures produced in specific sites such as the school" (McLaren, p. 182).

According to Gramsci (1971) dominate power relations are maintained through "spontaneous" consent and "coercive" force (p. 12). Gramsci explains that the culturally pervasive apparatus of coercive force exists "in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed" (p. 12). Thus, when groups or individuals fail to "actively or passively" consent to whatever serves the interests of dominant groups, the apparatus of state coercive power enforces disciplinary measures that mandate cooperation with its interests (p. 12).

Spontaneous consent is "given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group" (p. 12). Their consent is understood to be shaped by the "prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production" (p. 12). For example, individuals and groups with control over or access to media production and distribution (e.g., large corporations with majority holdings in major television networks or 11th grade students who understand the social power of literacy practices) have the advantage of access to and control over tools for shaping truths that will best serve their interests.

Gramsci's notion of hegemony as, in part, "spontaneous consent" to whatever promotes dominant interests is useful in explaining the seemingly counterintuitive notion that we willingly consent to interests that might run contrary to our own socially, historically, culturally, and politically shaped interests, or indeed, our very survival. Largely through the work of dominant discourses i.e., education as "betterment," "official" literacy, dominant interests and agendas are promoted, as dominant discourses encourage us to believe such agendas are universal and natural, and work to constitute and shape our desires and interests.

According to critical theorists, inequities established and maintained through dominant, hegemonic discourses can be challenged and disrupted. Critical theorists advocate the disruption of inequalities by raising the consciousness of those being oppressed. Influenced largely by Brazilian Paulo Friere's conception of "literacy," critical pedagogy empowers persons to not only recognize injustice, but also to seek justice and emancipation from domination, and then to *change* it. In schools, then, critical pedagogy shifts the focus from "fostering individual skills and dispositions.to pedagogical relations, between teachers and students and among students" (Burbules and Berk, 1999, p. 51).

Critical Literacy, Critical Pedagogy

Influenced by his adult literacy work within Latin peasant communities, Paulo Friere believed the capacities to read and write were tied to a person's sense of individual and collective self-esteem and confidence. To be illiterate, was to feel powerless; thus-- rejecting what he termed "banking" or "nutritionist" models of education where teachers possess objective knowledge and transmit it to receptive students considered "containers" and "receptacles" to be filled (Friere, 1995/1970, p. 58)--Friere's literacy campaign involved developing basic reading and writing skills in conjunction with developing self-confidence and a desire to change--not only one's self, but the circumstances of one's social group (Burbules and Berk, 1999).

To Friere, the goal of liberation was humanization, which he defined as seeing groups of people as subjects rather than objects. The pedagogical method Friere thought accomplished this best was *dialogue*. Friere explains that dialogue is not "a *mere* technique.we can use to help us get some results," or "a kind of tactic we use to make students our friends." Friere explains:

> On the contrary.dialogue is a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and remake it.through dialogue, reflecting together on what we know and don't know, we can then act critically to transform reality.The object to be known is *not* an exclusive possession of *one* of the subjects doing the knowing, one of the people in the dialogue. In our case of education, knowledge of the object to be known is not the sole possession of the teacher, who gives knowledge to the students in a gracious gesture. Instead of this cordial gift of information to students, the object to be known mediates the two cognitive subjects. In other words, the object to be known is put on the table *between* the two subjects of knowing. They meet around it and through it for mutual inquiry. (Shor and Friere, 1987, p. 13)

Through dialogue, then, people would be "conscientized" (Friere, 1970a, p. 47), brought to a "critical consciousness" of their oppressed situation as a beginning point of their liberatoy *praxis*. Change in consciousness and concrete action were linked for Friere.

Viewed as an "emancipatory political project," then, literacy could enable men and women to "assert their right and responsibility not only to read, understand, and transform their own experiences, but also to reconstitute their relationship with the wider society" (p. 7). In this sense, literacy is fundamental in constructing one's voice as part of a wider project of possibility and

empowerment. Giroux (1988) explains, "To be literate is to be present and active in the struggle for reclaiming one's voice, history, and future" (p. 65).

Giroux (1988a) explains critical pedagogy provides students with a "language of possibility" (p. 177). Giroux criticizes "languages of critiques" which fail to provide "counter hegemonic" discourses and, thus, practices in schools (p. 111-112), and explains developing a language of possibility is part of being critical and thus, a critical pedagogy "must take seriously the articulation of a morality that posits a language of public life, emancipatory community, and individual and social commitment. Students need to be introduced to a language of empowerment and radical ethics that permits them to think about how community life should be constructed around a project of possibility" (p. 72).

I believe Mrs. Taylor's pedagogical goals included developing a "language of possibility" with the WebQuest assignment, which asked students to consider their own "individual and social commitments" to preventing future persecutions of themselves and others.

As Walkerdine (1990) points out, the pedagogical discourse a teacher uses determines how she understands herself and her students as learners (p. 6). With her Primary upper-middle class discourses in place, Mrs. Taylor possibly acquired and learned a progressivist discourse through her own experiences in a private school she attended, where her own learning process was, as she describes, "student-focused." She explains she got to make a lot of choices in what and how she learned. She explains:

> Like for biology, it's built on all this farmland, and we had what's called a 'plot lab,' and you had a plot of land that you were assigned and I mean, we went down to those woods everyday taking temperatures, doing water, and that was just biology but every class was like that. In 11th and 12th grade [English], you took electives, so every, each six weeks. you picked a different one, so I took a Shakespeare course, I took an African-American writers' course. And I didn't read the canon in high school. I had a really electic, cool background" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

Several researchers (cf. Anyon, 1981, 1997; Finn, 1999) describe "affluent" schools where "individualism" and "humanitarianism" are major emphases, and "work is not repetitive and mechanical, not knowing the correct answers." Finn explains, "Emphasis in the classroom [is] on thinking for oneself, creativity, and discovery" (Finn, 1999, p. 18). It would appear such discourses held sway in Mrs. Taylor's private school and thus, as discourses associated with such secondary institutions, were there for Mrs. Taylor to acquire and learn as Mrs. Taylor participated in such institutions.

Similarly, Mrs. Taylor may have acquired and learned progressivist and critical pedagogical discourses through her association with another secondary institution: that of the public university she attended where, after spending time as a psychology major, and giving "a thought towards business," she decided to become an English teacher. Mrs. Taylor explains she also went into teaching because of the "influence of my phenomenal teachers. I had a lot of respect for them and the relationships we formed" (personal communication, June 4, 2003).

One of Mrs. Taylor's college professors, especially, stood out. Mrs. Taylor explains, "My main professor, she was brilliant and dedicated and wonderful, I mean, she was the best teacher I've ever had, a slave-driver, but you could just tell she was the kind of anti-traditional, you know, reading, answering questions at the end of the chapter, anything like that" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

Following graduation, Mrs. Taylor commenced on a teaching career, which has spanned almost a decade now. In those ten years, Mrs. Taylor has taught English at the public, high school level, in two different state school systems. Mrs. Taylor explains most of her career has been spent teaching Advanced Placement (AP) and honors courses to high school students. When she moved to Benton with her husband, a college professor, she expected to obtain a position at the local high school, teaching similar courses. When she didn't, and was hired by Hilltown High School's principal, she explains, "I really wanted to be at Benton. Just because it's what I'm used to. I think, that kind of school.'[Hilltown's] not where I intended at all, I mean, I live in Benton, my husband teaches at [the university], I've always taught those kind of kids and it was such a natural fit" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

"Those kind of kids" are, much like Heath's Mainstream children, predominantly White, middle-to-upper-middle class students who share Mrs. Taylor's primary and secondary discourses, understand education as "betterment" and social progress, and expect to be given learning opportunities that include decision-making, individual discovery, and development of empathy toward others.

"Those kind of kids," then, are not the kind of kids Mrs. Taylor finds in her 4th block English class; because they do not share Mrs. Taylor's primary and secondary discourses, she experiences what she describes as "cultural shock." She says:

> Both of my former high schools where I worked before were city schools and even though they weren't you know Alexandria, Virginia. or you know, Los Angeles, they weren't like that, but they were you know, there were traces of gangs, there were traces of, a lot of drug activity, they were fifty percent black, fifty percent white, there were some tough things, there were kids [there] that I would not want to run into in an alley, no way, no how, and these guys here are a buncha, they're a bunch of rednecks, if that's an OK term for it, and they know it, they pride themselves on it. And I don't think they're here necessarily to learn. Education's certainly not important. They're here because they have to be. I mean, they just, everything Alan, Jason, and Matt did was so half-assed and so last-minute, you know, it's laziness, and it's just doing just a little bit, and a lot of it's just a product of down, at that school. (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003)

Mrs. Taylor admits she struggled with her 4th block class in terms of getting them to do some of her assignments. She says:

They're so less willing to take risks and do anything. It's hard to even get them to read a chapter at home so you can discuss it the next day. And I'm not willing to let them sit and read a whole chapter, I mean, that takes forever in class. I mean, some of them, they're beyond functional literacy, but you know. they're good at copying things down, but they're not good thinkers. I mean, they're basically-skilled. And I think it comes from the culture, the background. (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003)

Mrs. Taylor expressed frustration at not being able to "connect with kids." She explained "I've always been able to connect with my kids" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003). Of course, Mrs. Taylor has previously worked with students who predominantly share her discourses. Mrs. Pruitt, a former student and present teacher at Hilltown, has seen many teachers come and go from Hilltown because of similar feelings Mrs. Taylor experiences at Hilltown. She explains:

You have to understand where these kids are coming in from, the trailer parks, I mean, you have to understand their perspective. You have to have a level of tolerance and patience and really be willing to understand people who don't value what you value to work here. If not, you're mad all the time, and there are a lot of teachers who are mad all the time because they don't understand it. (Fieldnotes, September 24, 2002)

Contact zone theory helps us understand that when classrooms are thought of as stable, unified, homogenous entities, contact between teacher and student is often assumed in terms of shared "single sets of rules and understandings, and the orderliness they produce. Discourses. are almost automatically seen as failures or breakdowns not to be accounted for within the system" and thus "preserve the presence of borders, rules shared among equal players. Despite whatever social differences might be at work, it is assumed that all participants are engaged in the same game and that the game is the same for all players" (Pratt, 1987, p. 51).

It would be easy to assign such "cultural shock" that Mrs. Taylor--and most likely her students--experience to the "failure or breakdown" of either's primary and secondary discourses because they cannot, nor want to, "play the same game the same way." Such simplistic notions usually place blame on those marginalized by dominant culture and discourses. Some literacy theorists and teachers reinforce such "deficit theories" when they attempt to teach their students "discourse conventions" (Bizzell, 1997), or help their students "learn school" (Heath, 1983). I discuss this further in Chapter 7.

Feminist poststructuralists, however, point fingers toward discourses themselves, and believe progressive and critical pedagogical discourses to be problematic because they assume unitary subjects making logical and rational choices, and ignore sociopolitical contexts inherent in any heterogeneous community, especially that of the classroom.

Thus, rather than encouraging the production of different discourses to be negotiated, progressive and critical pedagogical discourses provides opportunities for students and teachers to "reproduce those positions in those discourses with which they are familiar, where racist, classist, homophobic, and sexist relations are often normalized, i.e., understood as normal, and

are thus not open to scrutiny and transformation. Neither the [students] nor the teacher can change without the production of different discourses in which to read their actions, and to produce different actions and different subjectivities"(Walkerdine 1990, p.9).

Critiques of Progressivist/Expressivist and Critical Pedagogical Discourses

Pratt's concept of the "contact zone" emphasizes that multiple discourses representing multiple domains, i.e., home, peer cultures, are always already present in classrooms, where they "meet, clash, and grapple with each other"(2002, p. 4). Thus, progressive and critical pedagogical discourses are problematic because they view classrooms as "closed, sealed-off institutions" (Wilson, 2000), and "discrete, self-defined, unified, homogenous, and coherent entities" where rational, unitary subjects use their "authentic voices" to construct their own "true" meanings of texts, which are then treated as universal. But what if the texts students write and tell represent fragmented identities and strategic deceptions? Do universal truths still emerge?

Mrs. Taylor desires "building community," but contact zone theory helps us understand classroom communities refuse "community values" and a "hope for synthesis," and envision instead movement "*into and out of* rhetorics of authenticity" where "whatever one [says] is going to be systematically received in radically heterogeneous ways that we are neither able nor entitled to prescribe"(Pratt, 2002, p. 16). Thus, "spontaneous consent" is a fiction.

Failing to see classrooms as heterogeneous communities, as Freiberg and Freebody (1997) explain, assumes students to be members of "ideologically innocent subculture[s]"(p. 270). This apolitical view of students and the subsequent lack of teacher involvement in the politically charged content of their literacy practices can result in teachers unwittingly validating and participating in inequities (Lensmire, 1994) they may wish to disrupt. I believe such unwitting validation and participation occurred in Mrs. Taylor's 4th block English class as students appropriated Mrs. Taylor's pedagogical discourses inviting them to bring their personal experiences and authentic voices into the classroom and to choose their own writing topics in the persecution skit which, as I describe in Chapter 6, becomes an "autoethnographic text" disrupting power relations inherent in the "contact zone" of the classroom.

Personal Experience/Student Voice/Dialogue

Assuming students are rational, unitary subjects, with single and separate in-school and out-of-school identities, both progressive and critical pedagogies ask teachers to invite students' own "authentic voices" and personal experiences into the classroom. Progressive educators facilitate learning, i.e., student-directed reading and writing, so the authentic voices of individuals are free to unfold through self-expression, and diversity is celebrated as students write about and share their diverse experiences with classmates.

Nanci Atwell (1987/1998) explains she teaches writing in her writing/reading-workshop classroom by "modeling stories of personal experience because that's where I hope my kids will begin, by looking for the significances of the events of their own lives. I know this is where they

can begin writing confidently and well . I nudge toward what they know best and care about most—all the rich goings-on in their lives" (1987, p. 81).

Similarly, critical pedagogues invert their own "verbal domination" (Shor & Friere, 1987) in classrooms, and encourage students to speak in their "authentic voices" to express subjugated knowledges; students thus become visible as they "define themselves as authors of their own world" (Ellsworth, 1992 p. 100).

Mrs. Taylor gave her students multiple opportunities to bring their "authentic" voices and personal experiences into the classroom. At the beginning of the semester, Mrs. Taylor asked the students to introduce themselves to her in letters. Jenny's letter reads as follows:

> *August 21, 2002*
> *Well to tell you the truth, I am a good student. I will do really anything you ask*
> *me to do and I will do my best at most of it. My personality is good But I am going*
> *through so much right now that I wouldn't pick or Joke around with me to much.*
> *And I just need somebody to talk to real bad. But other than that I am cool to*
> *hang out with. I like to write about my life and how it's going. It's makes me feel*
> *good when I am finished because it makes me feel like I just talked to somebody*
> *and I feel like I let everything out. But I will write about anything the best I can.*
> *And about what I don't like to write about, well, anything sad. And my life is*
> *pretty sad right now but I need to get it out. Rather it's to you this paper or*
> *whatever just as long as I get it all out. I was really proud of myself because I had*
> *found a man who really loved me and showed me the up most respect. I trusted*
> *him and loved him so much and I still do love him but my parents don't agree*
> *with it. So I am in a real hard spot right now. And my parents like him and say he*
> *is a real nice guy all but one thing. And I will get into that later. But that's a lil*
> *about me so far.*
>
> <div align="right">Thanks, Jenny</div>

Jenny introduces herself as a "good" student; she's not a troublemaker and "will do really anything you ask me to do and I will do my best at most of it." She also expresses the fact that she has been silenced: she needs "somebody to talk to real bad." These introductory lines seem to place Jenny within rural education research profiles describing rural females as "passive" and "silent" (cf. Fine, 1987; Weis, 1990; Anyon, 1997). One such particularly haunting description bears repeating here:

> Patrice . says nothing all day in school. She sits perfectly mute. No need to coerce
> her into silence. She often wears her coat in class. Sometimes she lays her head on
> her desk. She never disrupts. Never disobeys. Never speaks. And is never
> identified as a problem. Is she the student who couldn't develop two voices and so
> silenced both? Is she so filled with anger, she fears to speak? Or so filled with
> depression she knows not what to say? (Fine, 1987, p. 172)

Indeed, in my own observations of Mrs. Taylor's class, Jenny's behavior resembled the 'Patrice' described above. She sat off by herself, often scrunched low in her desk, her baggy

sweatshirt or jacket hiding her, because Jenny had secrets, secrets she felt safe enough to let Mrs. Taylor know were there. Jenny indeed must have felt somewhat empowered by Mrs. Taylor's assignment, as she feels the introductory letter gives her a place to "talk to somebody and feel like I let everything out."

Only, as critics of progressive pedagogies explain, the classroom isn't a "safe" place because teachers and students bring into classrooms the "power imbalances evident in social relationships outside the classroom—imbalances based on gender, race, ethnicity, and class" (Ward, 1994, p. 8). When teachers encourage students to think the classroom is a "safe haven" (Finders, 1997), they render the political charge surrounding a classroom neutral "and "deny positions of power in the classroom and in the larger culture" (Finders, 1997, p. 118).

Often teachers are at a loss as to how to address or acknowledge the social and cultural histories of such power imbalances, or feel conflicted as to whether or not they have the responsibility to do so. Thus, teachers who view their roles as facilitators of the natural unfolding of "authentic" voices expressing universal truths and values might not be prepared to recognize their roles in unwittingly facilitating social injustices, i.e., sexism, classism, racism. Ultimately, then, the same personal writings progressivist teachers call for often get ignored, or "written off" as "assignment fulfilled." This happened in Jenny's case, when Mrs. Taylor wrote at the bottom of her letter: "Good Work!"

Thus, Jenny finds out the classroom is not a "safe place" as Mrs. Taylor contributes to the "conspiracy of silence" (Fine, 1987) surrounding the fact that Jenny is dating a Black male who does not attend Hilltown High School—(the secret Jenny doesn't yet feel safe enough to fully reveal). Jenny is being shunned by her peers and classmates, and silenced by her family, and she understands through Mrs. Taylor's lack of recognition that her silence must continue. Ultimately, Mrs. Taylor's failure to acknowledge the sociopolitical context of Jenny's text—to recognize Jenny's text at all-- contributes to her later victimization at the hands of several male students through the persecution skit.

Too, Mrs. Taylor's expressivist goals keep Jenny positioned within her own primary and secondary discourses, which normalize racism and sexism, and, because she writes as an individual, unified self, her "problem" is uniquely hers and hers alone. As Payne (2000) explains, "Writing about personal experiences encourages students to discover a unified, coherent, ahistorical and acultural self, a writing task that asks the student to turn herself into an object of analysis" (p. 9).

Finders (1997) explains that progressive pedagogies encouraging students to write about personal experiences in "risk-free environments" "privileges those who feel most at home in the classroom—those students who appeared to feel most comfortable, whose voices were loudest and quickest, were those who were generally regarded by their peers as holding popular power" (p. 119). As illustrated in Chapter 4, several male students held popular power in Mrs. Taylor's classroom and exercised this power as they used officially sanctioned literacy practices to draw on relations of power pervasive in their own discourses to oppress Mrs. Taylor and Jenny.

In similar critiques of critical pedagogy's calls for student voice, (see Ellsworth, 1989; Lewis, 1992; Orner, 1992; Ropers-Huilman, 1998; Walkerdine, 1992; Weiler, 1991), feminist poststructuralists challenge Enlightenment notions of fixed, coherent, essential individuals, and thus communities, objectively discovering universal truths. As mentioned in Chapter 4, feminist poststructuralists recognize the incredible degree of diversity and contradiction within any one self and thus use the term "subjectivity" in place of "identity" to point toward the belief that individuals can be both subjects and objects, exercising power even as they are subjected to the exercises of others' power.

Thus, subjectivities are understood as relational—embedded in social relations, shaped as they shape the multiple relations of power in which they are embedded (Davies, 1993, 1994; Walkerdine, 1990; Weedon, 1997).

As Orner (1992) argues, "When we focus on multiple voices and contradictions present in specific sites at specific historical moments, it becomes impossible to support calls for student voice" (pp. 80-81) Orner explains:

How power relations in the classroom are manifest is crucial. How do the subject positions inhabited by one student connect with the subject positions of everyone else in the room? How do these multiple identities and positions inform who speaks and who listens? Who is comfortable in the room and who is not? Who was insulted and who did the insulting in the hall just before class? It seems impossibly naïve to think that there can be anything like a genuine sharing of voices in the classroom. (p. 81)

As illustrated throughout Chapters 4, 5, and 6, there are many silences and voices in operation in the "contact zone" of the classroom on any given day. In Mrs. Taylor's 4th block English class, on the day Jason, Matt, and Alan performed their persecution skit, speakings and silences occurred in the context of shifting relations of power between and among the members of the class, including Jenny and Mrs. Taylor, in combination with a multitude of subjectivities and institutional constraints (Orner, 1992).

"Pedagogy of choice"

Critics of progressive pedagogies are also wary of strategies believed to facilitate individual self-discovery and student empowerment through student ownership of writing instruction, where students are given control over the content of their texts (Atwell, 1987/1998; Graves, 1983). As Walkerdine (1990) explains:

the pedagogy of 'choice' is a tool in the production of the rational ideal. Rationality, rational choice and decision-making are the ideal, the goal of the pedagogy. It assumes (following Piaget and many others) that this rational individual can be produced by leaving [students] alone to 'grow out of' the non-rational. Left alone, this will be worked out and not pushed down to fester in the unconscious. Through this process, [students] will come to act in a civilized

manner. They will become agents responsible for their own actions, whose interactions are based on rationality alone, having left the irrational behind. (p. 8)

But feminist poststructuralists are wary of humanist notions of rationality. As Lather explains, "Conceptions of reason and logic are not innocent. Standards of rationality have functioned historically to impose definitions of human nature from whence we deduce what we call common sense" (1991, p. 329). When students are asked to draw from their own truths and "common sense" to produce texts, then, they may very well draw from knowledge generated in contexts where racist, classist, homophobic, and sexist relations are normalized; a student's truths and "common sense," then, runs the risk of confirming the legitimacy of inequitable relations.

I believe such confirmation occurred through Mrs. Taylor's persecution skit assignment, where the students were given the opportunity to choose their own topics for the persecutions skit. Through Mrs. Taylor's "pedagogy of choice," Jason, Matt, and Alan became empowered agents, confirming the legitimacy of inequitable relations, as they appropriated Mrs. Taylor's pedagogical discourses (and possibly other institutional discourses) into their own racist, patriarchal discourses.

When asked how the boys came to write the persecution skit about Jenny, Jason explained, "Well, the day we got to choose our topic, it was the thing going on that day, and we were like, 'We'll write about that.' It was the topic of the day. We decided why not? We ain't got nothin' else to write about" (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002).

"The topic of the day"

The topic of Jason's, Alan's, and Matt's day had a lot to do with the "drama" of their own, everyday lives. Indeed, racial and ethnic tensions existing outside of the classroom were on the boys' minds, and had been on the boys' minds for some time, as their descriptions of the Eagletown community convenience stores' new ownership evidence.

When Jason explained how they decided on their topic, he said, "It was the thing going on that day." I asked if the boys had just found out about Jenny dating a Black male:

Jason: No, we've known about that for a while.
Susan: How long? Like all school year?
Jason: About a year now. It's been around for a while, it was just, you know, it'd gotten worse that day or we just, you know, something just went down that day or something. It was just the topic of the day.
Susan: What had gone down?
Jason: Something did, something happened that Matt and Alan was pissed off that day because of, and when she was like we get to choose our own topics, well hell, why not? Just the more reason for us to piss her off. (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002)

I never did find out what had "gone down" the day the boys chose their skit topic, but indeed, what the boys considered "racial problems" had indeed "been around for a while."

In the first group interview I conducted with Jason and Matt, they told me about an incident that had occurred at a neighborhood convenience store that left Alan with a black eye:

Jason: Have you heard Alan's sick drama about him getting in a fight and all that shit? It's because of that.we was talking about niggers one day at lunch and there's this girl that her boyfriend's black and she got a kid with him and junk like that.

Susan: Is the girl white?
Jason: Yeah, and well, she jumped into it, we weren't even talking to her, she jumped into our shit and started bitching at us, and then Alan went off on her and then it went from there and the next thing we know her boyfriend's out to get us.
Matt: Yeah, he caught Alan while he was at the gas station. And then he banged him like a pussy. Alan was inside his truck and he come up and hit Alan in the damn face and wouldn't let him out of the truck.
Jason: Yeah, banged him, the pussy. (Fieldnotes, September 24, 2002)

When teachers invite students to choose freely what they read and write, students will accept such invitations and bring out-of-school sociopolitical experiences to their in-school tasks. As Finders (1997) explains, "Free choices' are not free from the webs of social relationships" (p. 120). Lensmire (1994) explains:

The peer culture is an important backdrop upon which children's texts are written and given their local, particular meanings. Progressive approaches encourage teachers to know children, but this is usually thought of as knowing individual children, as if these individuals were not caught up in relations with each other. I am not denying the need for knowledge of individual children. I am arguing that such a focus can blind us to the ways children are connected to each other, blind us to the more or less shared meanings and values children bring to their activities and texts. (p. 145)

While I believe peer culture is more than a mere backdrop upon which students' texts are written[30], Lensmire's point that students are connected to one another and share meanings and values which they bring to their texts is evident in the boys' decision to "piss Jenny off" by making her relationship with John the topic of their skit. This decision, I believe, was prompted by the boys' racist beliefs that interracial dating is wrong and can't be tolerated; however, it was obvious to me other social relationships could have possibly influenced their decision, such as desire for revenge on the convenience store occurrence, and the desire to resist dominant discourses of tolerance and diversity expressed by school administration and through Mrs. Taylor's pedagogical discourses.

In the first group interview I did with Jason, Alan, and Matt, Jason complained:

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[30] I don't understand peer and school culture to be separate.

our generation, our year had to have it filled with a lot of. I mean, I couldn't count no more than three [Black people] at this school at one time since we been here. This year we got like five of 'em in the freshman class and so, I don't know, it's like a rise in the population. We've been able to walk around for, like ninth grade, we used to go walk and say "nigger" whenever we want to and nobody cared. There was none here to really say anything about it. (Fieldnotes, September 24, 2002)

While there may have been "none here to really say anything about it," the boys did seem to be aware of the increasing emphasis the school administration had put on an awareness and tolerance of diversity. Such an emphasis was probably precipitated by two separate, public events that had occurred a year prior at another local school. First, the school's community demanded that the school mascot be changed due to its disrespect of an ethnic group, and second, students attending a school play booed and caused other disruptions when an actor in the school production portrayed a gay male.

Both events made newspaper headlines for months, agitated the school and local community, and prompted many community members to question teachers' and administrators' readiness to handle issues of diversity in the school, and to demand the school board's involvement in a "diversity plan."

A "diversity plan" was created, which included requiring every county school to include a "diversity club" in the listings of extracurricular clubs available to students during the school day, as well as additions to student handbooks regarding "codes of conduct." In Hilltown's student handbook, for example, students would now receive a "corrective action[31]" for wearing "clothing, jewelry, or other apparel . . . which reflects adversely on others due to race, religion, nationality, or beliefs" (Hilltown High School Student Handbook, 2002, p. 3).

Jason and Matt both explained that Matt had been suspended from school for using language deemed "inappropriate" by the school's administration. Such an awareness of retaliation for racist actions they had previously been able to engage in, may have precipitated the students' decisions to disguise their resentment of and resistance to a progressive, critical discourse adopted by the school and exercised through Mrs. Taylor's persecution skit assignment. I discuss such resistance later in this chapter.

Thus, feminist poststructuralists remain wary of "pedagogies of choice" because in such assumptions of "rational" individuals presenting "common sense," "universal truths" in self-selected text topics, such pedagogies ignore inequitable relations that legitimate and maintain such oppressive "truths."

Too, feminist poststructuralists argue "pedagogies of choice," which intend to "empower" students, view students not as agents but as "subjects, to be empowered" (Gore, 1992, p. 57) Such

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[31] Such measures include "counseling, reprimand, parental conferences, detention hall, in-school-supervision, out-of-school suspension, recommendation for long-term suspension, notification of law enforcement, and recommendation for expulsion" (Milltown County Student Handbook, 2002, p. 6).

109

understandings about empowerment, then, understand power as something teachers can give away so as to avoid domination, as they try to 'empower' those less fortunate than themselves.

Critical pedagogy's image of the teacher, then, becomes that of a "joint learner with students, who holds authority by virtue of greater knowledge and experience" (Weiler, 1991, p. 460). Such an image fails to take into account the various forms of power held (and not held) by teachers depending on their race, gender, and the historical and instititutional settings in which they work. Weiler explains:

> As women, our own position is precarious, and the power we are supposed to exercise is given grudgingly, if at all. For our own students, for ourselves, and for our superiors, we are not clearly "us" or "them." The facts of class, of race, of ethnicity, of sexual preference—as well as gender—may cut across the neat divisions of teacher/student. (1991, p. 461)

As a female teacher in the "contact zone" of the classroom, where her own discourses mingle with those steeped in patriarchal relations (cf. Grumet, 1988), Mrs. Taylor feels any power supposedly granted her by her institutional position or her "greater knowledge and experience" is meaningless to Jason, Matt, and Alan, who blatantly dismiss it. She explains she feels she holds very little power in her classroom, because she is a woman:

> Fourth block for me was very hard. I loathed going to that class everyday. And I love the kids, there weren't discipline problems per se, but you never knew when Alan was going to blow up, you never knew when Jason was just going to be ticked off, om, that was just a really hard class. I mean, someone walking into your class ten minutes late daily?
> Susan: Do you think there was a lack of respect there?
> Mrs. Taylor: Yes. Absolutely.
> Susan: Because you were a woman?
> Mrs. Taylor: Yes, yes. Absolutely. I absolutely feel that way because there were so many times I would be talking, or I would address Matt and Jason, for example, and say, 'You guys, you guys.' They would keep on talking until they were done. I mean, it wasn't like this, 'Oh, sorry,' or anything like that. When they were done, then it was OK for me to talk. I very much felt a gender difference there.
> Susan: Even more so than other male students you've taught?
> Mrs. Taylor: Absolutely. There were many times when I felt like I wished I was not a woman. (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003)

Weiler (1991) explains, "The authority and power of the woman teacher is already in question from many of her students precisely because she is a woman" (p. 461). Mrs. Taylor's power is certainly in question. She admits to getting through the semester "handling them with kid gloves. I felt like I was constantly walking on egg shells. There were so many problems in that room. These three boys that are inseparable, in and out of the class, outside of classrooms, to be in that one class, even thinking about them exhausts me" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

Several researchers (cf. Hall, 2000; Weis, 1990; Willis, 1977) attest to working-class youths' identities being partially constructed "in reaction to the ideologically constructed identity of females" (Weis, 1990). As Weis explains, "Basically white working-class males affirm a rather virulent form of assumed male superiority which involves the constructed identity of female not only as 'other,' but also as 'less than' and, therefore, subject to male control" (Weis, p. 39). I discuss further in Chapter 6 how such "assumed male superiority" by Jason, Matt, and Alan enables the constructions of Mrs. Taylor and Jenny as "less than" and "other" in the "contact zone" of the classroom through their "autoethnographic" text.

According to feminist poststructuralists, because we exercise varying degrees of power, and are both Subjects and Objects simultaneously, (in any of the multiple subject positions we find ourselves, we often simultaneously--occupy positions that could be described as both dominator and dominated.

Feminist poststructuralists, then, do not consider power solely a product of agency, a "universal resource to which all humans *qua* humans have access" (Butler, 1995, p. 136); feminist poststructuralists understand power as something all of us possess and deploy. Thus, power doesn't belong to an individual.

Foucault (1997/1984) theorizes that power exists in *relations*; therefore, he hardly ever uses the word "power" but speaks of "power relations" or "relations of power." The following quotation describes Foucault's (1997/1984) theory of power relations:

When I speak of *relations of power*, I mean that in human relationships. power is always present: I mean a relationship in which one person tries to control the conduct of the other. these power relations are mobile, they can be modified, they are not fixed once and for all. [they are] thus mobile, reversible, and unstable. (p. 292)

Foucault explains that power relations "don't take the sole form of prohibition and punishment, but are of multiple forms," and although such relations "delineate general conditions of domination," such conditions are accompanied by "inertia, displacement, and resistance; hence, one should not assume a massive and primal condition of domination, a binary structure with 'dominators' on one side and 'dominated' on the other, but rather a multiform production of relations of domination" (p. 142).

Finders (1997) explains that students can attain power in classrooms through "physical appearance, socioeconomic status, and athletic prowess—attributes all gained beyond the classroom walls" (p. 119). Mrs. Taylor explains similar ways she thinks one of the persecution skit writers, Alan, is able to hold and yield power over her and other students:

Susan: What is it about the boys, how does Alan pull so much power over the other kids?
Mrs. Taylor: I don't know. When he came to Eagletown, he came from New York, so he came from a different location, so right there he has an aura about him because he knows bigger things. he's got natural prowess on the athletic field. He's a

great football player. He's very good. So that holds weight. Um, in whoever's eyes, he's good looking. He's charming. I guess the biggest thing is his confidence. I mean, he's got more self-confidence that I've had on a good day. He holds power. I mean, he holds a lot of power in that school. (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003)

Thus, relations of power "are never stable," and most importantly, "come from below; there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled as the root of power relations. no such duality extending from the top down" (Foucault, 1976/ p. 94).

Central to feminist poststructuralists' understandings of power, then, are understandings of resistance as always, already possible and present in relations of power.

Resistance

Feminist poststructuralists understand that if one can never be outside relations of power, then resistance is always possible. Indeed, Foucault's theory of power relations presupposes resistance. Foucault explains, ".in power relations there is necessarily the possibility of resistance because if there were no possibility of resistance (of violent resistance, flight, deception, strategies capable of reversing the situation), there would be no power relations at all" (1987/1994, p. 292).

Foucault furthers that "[Resistances] are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised; resistance to power does not have to come from elsewhere to be real, nor is it inexorably frustrated through being the compatriot of power. It exists all the more by being in the same place as power" (1972/1980, p. 142).

Ethnographic researchers who locate their analyses of working-class culture and identity within critical theory frameworks (cf. Hoggart, 1954; Willis, 1977) often explain domination in terms of its "naturalization," where students come to understand and accept their oppressed positions as "natural" and "normal" and thus, incapable of change; therefore, there is no resistance.

However, James Scott (1990) explains there is always "pushing and shoving" inherent in power relations, which makes "any static view of naturalization and legitimation [of domination] untenable" (p. 197). He furthers:

A dominant elite under such conditions is ceaselessly working to maintain and extend its material control and symbolic reach. A subordinate group is correspondingly devising strategies to thwart and reverse that appropriation and to take more symbolic liberties as well. The material pressure against the process of appropriation is, for slaves and serfs, nearly a physical necessity, and the desire to talk back has its own compelling logic. No victory is won for good on this terrain: hardly has the dust cleared before the probing to regain lost territory is likely to

begin. The naturalization of domination is always being put to the test in small but significant ways, particularly at the point where power is applied. (p. 197)

Traditional Marxist theory also views resistance in terms of "freedom" and "liberation." St. Pierre (2000) explains those often concerned with social justice view power as "resistance to domination" as something "practiced by self-contained, autonomous individuals in response to an oppressive force from the outside, a force that challenges both the natural and political liberty of the individual. In this sense, resistance is thought to be an act of negation that nullifies or counteracts an infringement of rights" (p. 489).

Such beliefs are problematic for several reasons. First, resistance is considered an act of liberation against some "outside oppressive force" rather than among or between persons specifically situated historically and geographically within such places as classrooms, (and even ourselves, as Audre Lorde explains, "the oppressor within us" [1984, p. 37]). Too, such beliefs about resistance assume freedom is "some shining, elusive ideal that manifests itself in revolution or reform" (Rajchman, 1985, p. 6). To Foucault, however, "freedom is not liberation, a process with an end. It is not liberty, a possession of each individual person (qtd. in Rajchman, 1985, p. 7). Instead, freedom is "rebelling against those ways in which we are already defined, categorized, and classified," a "constant 'civil disobedience' within our constituted experience" (Rajchman, p. 6).

Assuming poststructuralist understandings about resistance and freedom, then, "we cannot read every resistance as having revolutionary effects; sometimes resistances have 'reactionary' effects" (Walkerdine, 1990, p.3).

Chapter 6 takes up such understandings of reactionary resistance within the power relations of the "contact zone" of Mrs. Taylor's 4th block English class in discussion of the "autoethnographic text."

CHAPTER 6: THE AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC TEXT AS RESISTANCE
IN THE CONTACT ZONE

While the imperial metropolis tends to understand itself as determining the periphery…, it habitually blinds itself to the ways in which the periphery determines the metropolis.
--Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone"

Mary Louise Pratt uses the term *contact zones* "to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many of the parts of the world today" (2002, p. 4). Pratt understands such social spaces as "colonial frontiers," where "peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict" (1992, pp.6-7).

Using as example the asymmetrical power relationship between Spanish colonizers and Andeans living in Cuzco, Pratt exemplifies how such power relations may show themselves in the matter of who controls the language, whose language is heard. Where those in power believe that their voice is the only legitimate one, that "the situation is governed by a single set of rules or norms shared by all participants" (1991, p. 38), the result is often a mistaken view (from the top) of the contact zone and its language as homogenous, where in fact it is not[32]. Pratt derides this notion of the "imagined community," the assumption of a "unified and homogeneous social world in which language exists as a shared patrimony" (1987, p. 51).

In contact zones, then, there will always be active resisters such as Guaman Poma de Ayala, the Andean who, through an intercultural "autoethnographic" text, tries to rewrite and make heard the story of Andean culture and the Spanish conquest (1991, pp. 34-37; 1992, ch. 1). Thus, relations in the contact zone presuppose subordination and resistance.

This chapter attempts to show, then, how such resistances are enacted in the "contact zone" of Mrs. Taylor's 4th block English class where, I would argue, "peoples geographically and historically separated," and their multiple, heterogeneous, literacy practices, come into "contact" and do not simply just "get along," as students resist what I consider a kind of "discursive colonialism," attempted in the "culturally imperialistic" (Brown, 2000) discourses enacted by Mrs. Taylor and the social institution of the school.

Chandra Mohanty (1991) explains that "colonialism" is often considered as a "mostly physical practice which involves political, economic, and social systems of overt domination" (p. 53). While I believe this definition is appropriate in describing how rural areas and rural people are positioned and targeted for exploitation and colonization by capitalist economic interests (cf. Johson & Howley, 2000), I do not attempt to explore these relations in this present study.

Instead, I consider another form of colonialism Mohanty, referring to Western feminist scholarship, describes as "discursive colonialism" which, in its practices, reproduces unequal

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[32] cf. Pratt, 1992.

114

relations of power by "casting, unwittingly or otherwise, the West as the unacknowledged Subject/norm and the 'third world' as an artificially homogenized Object/other, where Western feminists deny women in the third world discursive subjectivity and status as active agents in the world" (p. 53).

I appropriate Mohanty's definition to explain how I believe pedagogical discourses can cast students as "artificially homogenized Object[s]/others[s]," while casting themselves as the "norm," and thus pedagogical strategies aim to help students assimilate to "normal" discourses, i.e., middle-class discourses of education as "betterment." What I attempt to illustrate in this chapter, however, and what poststructuralist theories of subjectivity, power, and resistance help us understand, is that students, though casted as "homegeneous Others," resist such discourses and do act as "active agents" in "determining the metropolis" (1992, p. 6).

One such way Mrs. Taylor's 4th block students use literacy practices to resist "discursive colonialism," then, in reactionary rather than revolutionary ways, is through the autoethnographic text.

The transcultural, autoethnographic text

In her essay, *Arts of the Contact Zone,* Pratt tells the story of a Peruvianist named Richard Pietschmann who, in 1908, discovered a letter which had originated in the city of Cuzco in Peru, in the year 1613, some forty years after the Spanish conquest of the Incan empire. The letter, written in a mixture of Quechua and Spanish, was addressed to King Philip III of Spain and signed with an Andean indigenous name: Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala. Because "Quechua was not thought of as a written language in 1908, nor Andean culture as a literate culture," the letter never found its way to the King and instead ended up in a museum in Copenhagen, where Pietschmann found it almost 300 years later (1992, p.34).

Pratt goes on to explain the letter Guaman Poma wrote King Philip III of Spain included two parts, the first entitled the "New Chronicle" and the second entitled "Good Government and Justice," which includes a mock interview between Poma and the King. (I return to the second half of the epistle in Chapter 6). What is important to note here is that Guaman Poma entitled the first part of the letter he wrote to King Philip III of Spain the 'New Chronicle' because, as Pratt tells us, the chronicle was the "main writing apparatus through which the Spanish represented their American conquests to themselves. It constituted one of the main official discourses" (p. 34).

In his version of the "chronicle," Guaman Poma appropriates Spain's official discourse to "rewrite Christian history of the world from Adam and Eve, incorporating the Amerindians into it as offspring of one of the sons of Noah" (p. 34). He identifies and links five ages of Christian history with five ages of Andean history, and ultimately constructs an encyclopedia of Inca and pre-Incan culture. Pratt explains, "The depictions resemble European manners and customs description, but also reproduce the meticulous detail with which knowledge in Inca society was stored on quipus and in the oral memories of elders" (p. 35).

Pratt furthers that in his chronicle, Guaman Poma writes:

In all Castille, there was a great commotion. All day and at night in their dreams the Spaniards were saying, 'Yndias, yndias, oro, plata, oro, plate del Piru' ('Indies, Indies, gold, silver, gold, silver from Peru'). The Spanish, he writes, brought nothing of value but 'armor and guns con la codicia de oro, plata, oro y plata, yndias, a las Yndias, piru' ('with the lust for gold, silver, gold and silver, Indies, the Indies, Peru'). (p. 35)

Pratt explains the words she quotes exemplify how Guaman Poma "parodies Spanish history," as Poma uses "the conqueror's language to contruct a parodic oppositional representation of the conqueror's own speech" (p. 35) Written in the context of colonial subordination and resistance, Guaman Poma's letter is an example of active self-representation; Poma constructs an Andean image "[the Spanish] often suppress and will therefore surely recognize. and mirrors [it] back to the Spanish (in their language, which is alien to him). Such are the dynamics of language, writing, and representation in contact zones" (p. 35).

Pratt calls Guaman Poma's letter an "autoethnographic text," by which she means a text "which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them" (p. 35). She explains:

If ethnographic texts are those in which European metropolitan subjects represent to themselves their others (usually their conquered others), autoethnographic texts are representations that the so-defined others construct *in response to* or in dialogue with those texts. (p. 35)

With such a text, Guaman Poma exemplifies the fact that the conqueror's representations are arbitrary human creations--impermeable, contradictory, shifting, multiple, rather than unitary, and vulnerable to appropriation. Indeed, Guaman Poma's appropriation of an official Spanish discourse constructs an entirely new picture of the world as he sees it, one that decenters Europeans and thus creates a space for him and his fellow Andeans.

I would argue Jason, Matt, and Alan desire to construct an entirely new picture of the world as they see it, too, and accomplish this through the writing and performance of the persecution skit which, when Jason, Matt, and Alan appropriate institutional and Mrs. Taylor's pedagogical discourses into their own racist, patriarchal discourses, becomes an 'autoethnographic text," resisting others' representations of them as "tolerant" "non-racist," "non-sexist" students; in doing so, the students harass and oppress a fellow female student, as they claim space in the classroom, and in such discourses colliding there, where their own voices will be heard and recognized.

Foucault explains resistance to asymmetrical relations of power is "distributed in irregular fashion: the points, knots, or focuses of resistance are spread over time and space at varying densities, at times mobilizing groups of individuals in a definitive way, inflaming certain points of the body, certain moments in life, certain types of behavior. Are there no great radical

ruptures, massive binary divisions, then? Occasionally, yes. But more often one is dealing with mobile and transitory points of resistance" (1978/19876, p. 96).

Thus, while we may understand resistance is always already present, we are not able to know when, where, and how it will organize (Foucault, 1997/1984). If we look, however, as Scott suggests, to the "point where power is applied," in the assignment of the persecution skit as representative of progressive and critical pedagogical discourses intersecting broader institutional discourses and the students' discourses, we see at least two ways student resistance organizes: 1) through disguise and anonymity, and 2) through appropriation.

Resistance through Anonymity and Disguise

Pratt's description of Guaman Poma's letter as a "parody of Spanish history" points toward a resistance practiced by subordinate groups who are usually vulnerable and rarely permitted the luxury of direct confrontation. Such resistance must be subtle; while the powerful can be direct and less inhibited, the powerless must practice restraint, self-control, and indirection. Ideological resistance must be disguised, muted, and veiled for safety's sake. (Scott, 1990).

Bakhtin explains the roots of parody reach back to ancient Rome and Greece, but it is in "sacred parody—or to be more accurate, parody on sacred texts and rituals" of the Middle Ages where, he explains, parody is used to "degrade[e] and ridicul[e] higher powers" (p. 71). As example of such a text, Bakhtin presents the *Cena Cypriani* or *Cyprian Feasts*:

> The entire Bible, the entire Gospel was as it were cut up into little scraps, and these scraps were then arranged in such a way that a picture emerged of a grand feast at which all the personages of sacred history from Adam and Eve to Christ and his Apostles eat, drink and make merry. In this work a correspondence of all details to Sacred Writ is strictly and precisely observed, but at the same time the entire Sacred Writ is transformed into carnival, or more correctly into Saturnalia" (p. 70).

Bakhtin explains "this manuscript tradition of "parodia sacra," [testifies] to an intense struggle and interanimation among languages. (p. 77). Bakhtin explains:

> Another's sacred word, uttered in a foreign language, is degraded by the accents of vulgar folk language, re-evaluated and reinterpreted against the backdrop of these languages. The sacred Latin world was a foreign body that invaded the organism of the European languages. And throughout the Middle Ages, national languages, as organisms, repulsed this body. It was not, however, the repelling of a *thing*, but rather of a conceptualizing discourse that had made a home for itself in all the higher reaches of national ideological thought processes. The repulsion of this foreign-born sacred word was a dialogized operation, and was accomplished under cover of holiday and festival merrymaking. (pp. 76-77)

117

The fact that parodic dialogization had to be accomplished "under cover of holiday and merrymaking" testifies to the reciprocal power relations of subordination and resistance always already present in relationships involving language, and thus culture.

While Bakhtin explains the Middle Ages "respected the freedom of the fool's cap and allotted a rather broad license to laughter and the laughing word," this "freedom" of appropriating the official, authoritative and sanctified word of the Bible could only be experienced in an unofficial atmosphere of holiday feast days and school festivals. In fact, church officials expected the creation of parodies and travesties for such festivals, and it was only during this time that the direct sacred word could be "born again out of the grave of authoritative and reverential seriousness" into a "parodic-travestying mask (p. 74).

Such parodic masks, then, were permitted at festivals and the ritual carnival, which Bakhtin saw as sites for uninhibited speech, "realms of release" for the lower classes, whose lives were predominantly spent under the tension of subordination and surveillance (1984, p. 154). Bakhtin explains, "Officially the palaces, churches, institutions and private homes were dominated by hierarchy and etiquette, but in the marketplace a special kind of speech was heard, almost a language of its own, quite unlike the language of the church, palace, courts, and institutions. It was also unlike the tongue of official literature or of the ruling classes—the aristocracy, the nobles, the high-rank clergy, the top burghers" (1984, p. 154).

Such a "special kind of speech... almost a language of its own" was a blend of official and unofficial discourse that found freedom through anonymity and disguise in the marketplace. Scott (1990) explains:

> What is so interesting about carnival is the way it allows certain things to be said, certain forms of social power to be exercised that are muted or suppressed outside this ritual sphere. The anonymity of the setting, for example, allows the social sanction a more full-throated voice. Among other things, carnival is 'the people's informal courtroom' in which biting songs and scolding verse can be sung directly to the disrespected and malefactors. The young can scold the old, women can ridicule men, cuckholded or henpecked husbands may be openly mocked, the bad-tempered and stingy can be satirized, muted personal vendettas and factional strife can be expressed. Disapproval that would be dangerous or socially costly to vent at other times is sanctioned during carnival. It is the time and place to settle, verbally at least, personal and social scores. (p. 173)

In carnival, then, space exists for a dialogue between the orthodox and heterodox to take place as normal relations and hierarchies are inverted. Subordinate class figures take on dominant power figures through satiric verses and parodize sermons praising thieves, etc. It is important to remember, however, that such freedom of speech one or two times a year, (albeit a freedom achieved only through anonymity and disguise) was the product of a suppressed or blocked lack of speech the rest of the year. Thus, as Scott explains, the "grotesquerie, profanity, ridicule, aggression, and character assassination of carnival make sense only in the context of the effect of power relations" (1990, p. 176).

The persecution skit assignment, I believe, turned the contact zone of the rural high school English class I observed into a space much like the marketplace where festivals and carnivals allowed reversals of power and the public speaking of "truth to power" (Scott, 1990) through a text embedded in social dialogue (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986).

At once subordinated subjects and objects of Mrs. Taylor's (and the school's) discourses, Jason, Matt, and Alan became powerholders in the contact zone of the classroom through anonymity, a disguised form of resistance the students employed (and were given the opportunity to employ) through the writing and performance of the persecution skit.

Scott (1990) calls such disguised resistance "infrapolitics." He explains:

The term *infrapolitics* seems an appropriate shorthand to convey the idea that we are dealing with an unobtrusive realm of political struggle. For a social science attuned to the relatively open politics of liberal democracies and to loud, headline-grabbing protests, demonstrations, and rebellions, the circumspect struggle waged daily by subordinate groups is, like infrared rays, beyond the visible end of the spectrum. That it should be invisible is in large part by design—a tactical choice born of a prudent awareness of the balance of power. (p.183)

Anonymity, as a form of infrapolitics, is undertaken by subordinate groups out of fear of retaliation. E.P. Thompson explains, "It is exactly in a society, where any open, identified resistance to the ruling power may result in instant retaliation, loss of home, employment, tenancy, if not victimization at law that one tends to find acts of darkness; i.e., the anonymous letter" (p. 399). Anonymity becomes an enabling mode of protest in conscious response to political constraints realistically faced. Much of the fear of retaliation subordinates fear is dissipated, however, when the identity of the persons practicing such resistance can be disguised.

When I asked the boys why they wrote the skit, they explained they wanted to "piss Jenny off.'cause she knows what she's done. She knows we don't approve of it" (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002). When I asked the boys why they needed to "piss Jenny off" through the skit, instead of talking directly to her, Jason explained, "We could say it in front of everybody and not get in trouble." When I asked how they would get in trouble, Jason explained:

1   Jason: Matt's gotten in trouble numerous times cause of it. He'll holler out 'nigger fucker' or something like that, he'll get in trouble.

2   Susan: And he gets in trouble with teachers? Or principals?

3   Jason: Teachers'll come up and say, see, Jenny's his cousin, and nobody in her family approves of it so Matt ain't getting in trouble for it, so you know Matt'll go right on, 'Nigger! Nigger! Nigger!' and whatever he gets wrote up

for, he don't get in trouble for it at home 'cause his dad don't approve of it. All's he got to say is, well, it was Jenny. (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002)

Matt corroborated Jason's explanations. When I asked Matt why they wrote the skit, he explained:

Just to get the point across, our point, like what we thought, what we think about the whole deal and what pretty much everybody around here thinks about the whole deal. 'Cause she knows what she's done. She knows we don't approve of it. She's my cousin, so she knows how my family is, she knows that we're totally against, I mean, I'm going to tell somebody, I'm prejudiced, I am. I'm real prejudiced and she knows it and then she goes and does this and goes against the family and all. (Fieldnotes, October 15, 2002).

When I asked Matt why he couldn't "get his point across" by talking to Jenny directly, he explained he used the skit:

1   Matt: Just to let her know. When I found out I just got real mad and I mean, if it wasn't against school rules to say a lot of the things you can't say she would have heard a whole lot more than just that skit.

2   Susan: What kind of school rules?

3   Matt: Well, this year I got suspended like a day, two days for saying "nigger."

4   Susan: Did you say it in a particular class or outside of class or...

5   Matt: I got in an argument with one of the girls who's dating one, another one. In the lunchroom, and then like my freshman year, I got suspended for saying "jigaboo."

6   Susan: So it's the teachers hearing it?

7   Matt: My freshman year a teacher heard me say it and then I got wrote up because she heard me say it. And then down there, when I was arguing with that girl, Mr. Knapp heard me say it so he was like, he took me to the office and he said I've got to suspend you for all that. And I mean, as far as I'm concerned and I'll tell any of the teachers here, if they don't want to hear the word they don't need to come down to Eagletown because Eagletown is just 99.9% rednecks and everybody, nobody around here likes black people. That's why we got like a total of three black people in our entire school.

8   Susan: Is there a policy in the school handbook about using words like the ones you used and got suspended for?

9   Matt: I don't know.

10   Susan: I mean, if Mr. Knapp wrote you up, what did he say he was writing you up for?

11   Matt: He just said cause I used the word "nigger." And I think there is a thing in the handbook saying how you're not to use any kind of words to discriminate any ethnical groups or just any kind of, like, disgracing somebody.

12   Susan: So basically you had used that language in the past and gotten in trouble for it. And so, the skit was a way for you to say what you wanted to say in school without getting in trouble for it?

13   Matt: Yeah.

The boys, then, feared retaliation they knew would come in the form of school suspension if they engaged publicly in racist discourse. As part of a county-wide "Six Year Plan," Hilltown High School's principal, Mr. Simmons, explained the school had made several efforts toward increasing an awareness and tolerance of diversity in the school. Mr. Simmons explained, "We should be raising the awareness level, we should be raising the conscience level, we should be challenging students to think about how they treat humanity" (Fieldnotes, June 17, 2003). One such awareness-raising effort focused on the creation of a diversity club, as explained in Chapter 5.

Another effort directed toward raising the students' awareness level of diversity focused on enforcing "what is appropriate and inappropriate language" (Fieldnotes, June 17, 2003). Mr. Simmons explains:

Inappropriate language could have to do with sexual harassment or bullying, or it could be as simple as using the "n" word, but our tolerance level with that is very low. In other words, we're saying to students it's inappropriate, we've worked with you long enough, it's in the code of conduct, and you know it's a type of hateful speech and/or action slash language that's unacceptable from anyone of any race, it's not just black and white. Uh, you know it could be red and yellow, it could be whatever, but it's a type of language we're not going to deal with. We just try to say to students we're not going to tolerate it. if it's hurtful, or else it's hate speech to someone else, then there's going to be disciplinary action. I remember a kid saying to me, 'You can't suspend me because of that,' I can't remember what the word was, but I said, 'Sorry, but you've just been, you're gone, you're out'. We've just been pretty much hard core, hard line, saying 'No, you're not going to use that kind of language here.' (Fieldnotes, June 17, 2003)

The boys' awareness level had definitely been raised, but what the boys did instead of think about alternative ways to "treat humanity," or use literacy practices to create a new and different future where history doesn't repeat itself, was to manipulate a realm of ordinary

classroom activity that was open to them and code it with racist, sexist meanings in an attempt to claim space in the English classroom where their voices would be heard, where they could dialogue with power, even as they tended to the business of events occurring in their everyday lives. The persecution skit assignment provided such a veiled, "safe" space in the classroom, where Matt, Alan, and Jason could conceal their identities and thus exploit their understanding of the fact that they could not be held personally responsible for their words.

Both Mrs. Taylor and Jenny knew retaliation for the skit would be awkward to achieve. Jenny explained to me she wanted to go to the principal and explain what had happened but said she didn't "because I can't prove anything. My name's not in the skit even though everyone knew it was about me" (Fieldnotes, October 17, 2002).

Mrs. Taylor admits she knew what the boys were doing with the skit, and understood the skit was about Jenny and her boyfriend. She explains, however, she didn't know how to intervene or interrupt the boys' writing or performance of the skit because, technically, the boys fulfilled the assignment requirements and, too, the skit allowed for anonymity. She says:

> I didn't feel like there was a very real way I could stop it. Because in their defense they would have said, 'This is a persecution.' Um, there was nothing wrong with their skit from what I had asked them to do. And Jenny has a point, I mean, of course it was about her. But you know, and I mean, I didn't know what to do with it. I mean, um, and I think it keeps going back to you know it was, they did what the assignment asked them. I didn't have a lot of room to stop them. Um, but if I had said, 'OK, we're stopping the play, you can't do this, then the next comment, I mean, Alan would've asked 'Why?' and I'd say, 'because it's hurtful to someone,' you know, and he'd come back with, 'Maybe it's not about her. This is a persecution about black and white. That's racism, that's persecution.' And I don't know what I could say to that. (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003)

Realizing they could suffer at the hands of administrators' suspensions if they were caught using "inappropriate language" that "disgraced" another student, the boys knew they would have to "go underground" to voice any resistance. When given the opportunity to pick their own persecution skit topics, they realized they had the perfect chance to accomplish their own political agenda: to "talk back" to official school policy and the discourses, including Mrs. Taylor's, which aimed to represent them as having values more aligned with middle-class ideals about multicultural tolerance.

But the boys' political agenda also included continuing their out-of-school racist and sexist policing and border-patrolling inside the classroom; they wanted to punish Jenny for "going against the family," for being "nasty" by dating a Black male. As explained below, the boys appropriate the official, sanctioned literacy assignment of writing a futuristic persecution and set their own shared meanings to it.

Resistance through Appropriation

Pratt's definition of "autoethnographic texts" also includes the following description:

Autoethnographic texts are not..what are usually thought of as autochthonous [native; indigenous] forms of expression or self-representation. Rather they involve a selective collaboration with and appropriation of idioms of the metropolis or the conqueror. These are merged or infiltrated to varying degrees with indigenous idioms to create self-representations intended to intervene in metropolitan modes of understanding. (p. 35)

The persecution skit is not an "autochthonous form of expression," which I understand 'unofficial' or "alternative" literacy practices to be more representative of, i.e., graffiti, secret notes, dress and color codes, etc. The persecution skit is a text which connects "official" and "unofficial" worlds, dissolving classroom boundaries; to it the students bring from their unofficial worlds their own discourses and purposes and use them to stake claims on and "de-privilege" the official school world "by playing with it" (Dyson, 1993, p. 19).

Pratt uses the term "transculturation" to describe a process where subordinated or marginal group members select and invent from the materials a dominant or "metropolitan" culture transmits to them. Guaman Poma constructed his text by appropriating and adapting pieces of the 'representational repertoire of the invaders. He does not simply imitate or reproduce it; he selects and adapts it along Andean lines to express (bilingually, mind you) Andean interests and aspirations" (p. 36).

The term again points to the fact that colonized peoples, as Pratt explains, do not simply and passively give themselves over to their conquerors through acculturation and assimilation. Pratt explains, "While subordinate peoples do not usually control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to varying extents what gets absorbed into their own and what it gets used for. Transculturation, like autoethnography, is a phenomenon of the contact zone" (p. 36).

The persecution skit acts as a transcultural, parodic opposition, then, as it selectively and partially collaborates with and appropriates Mrs. Taylor's pedagogic discourses and institutional discourses, grafting the students' "unofficial" literacy practices onto "official" literacy practices sanctioned by Mrs. Taylor through the persecution skit assignment.

Jason, Matt, and Alan infiltrate such "official" literacy practices, and merge them with their own "unsanctioned" purposes to symbolize the fact that very little of Mrs. Taylor's pedagogic discourse-- which encourages student choice and a multicultural empathy--will be absorbed into their own, and, instead, will be resisted as they objectify her and Jenny through their own patriarchal, racist discourses. Through appropriating Mrs. Taylor's discourses, Matt, Jason, and Alan are able to persecute Jenny in the classroom, which Mrs. Taylor's pedagogical discourses say is a "safe" place.

Bakhtin, Dialogical Engagement, and Inherent Power Relations

The persecution skit, then, as a transcultural, autoethnographic text responds to and engages dialogically with both Mrs. Taylor's classroom pedagogic discourse, and Jenny's personal experiences that are occurring outside of the classroom. In an attempt to define "dialogic," as well as to illustrate such power relations as subordination and resistance presupposed in dialogic processes related to language and culture, I turn to Bakhtin (1981), who first conceptualized heteroglossic dialogization in the 1920's.

Bakhtin envisioned texts as embedded in social heteroglossic dialogue where multiple, divergent voices are in constant contact and interaction, struggling for meaning. Our words (which are our parents' words, and their parents' words, and so on) are always tangled with others' words:

> As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. (p. 294)

When a speaker populates another's words with her own "intentions, accents" and thus "appropriates the word, adapting it to her own intention," dialogization has occurred. Such a process occurs through the autoethnographic text as colonized subjects adapt and twist the conquerors' words to their own intentions in order to create their own self-representations.

If we consider students (and teachers) in the contact zone of the classroom not as unitary subjects, but as both subordinated subjects and powerholders simultaneously, we can see how the dialogization process occurs not just between teachers and students, but between students as well. Lensmire (1994) reminds us that students "work with material from their experiences. [our students'] material is half someone else's, and appropriate it for their own purposes" (p. 19).

As illustrated above, Bakhtin describes one such literary arena where appropriation takes place: parody. Bakhtin explains, "One of the most ancient and widespread forms for representing the direct word of another is *parody*" (p. 51). Bakhtin uses as example the parodic sonnets which begin *Don Quixote* to explain:

> "In a parodied sonnet, the sonnet form is not a genre at all; that is, it is not the form of a whole but is rather *the object of representation*…In a parody on the

sonnet, we must first of all recognize a sonnet, recognize its form, its specific style, its manner of seeing, its manner of selecting from and evaluating the world—the world view of the sonnet, as it were. A parody may represent and ridicule these distinctive features of the sonnet well or badly, profoundly or superficially. But in any case, what results is not a sonnet, but rather the *image of a sonnet*. (p. 51)

In appropriating Spanish discourse and form in his "new" chronicle, Guaman Poma had to recognize the chronicle as an official, sanctioned genre, recognize "its form, its specific style, its manner of seeing, its manner of selecting from and evaluating the world"—the colonizing world view of the Spanish. In essence, Guaman Poma had to understand the Spanish chronicle in its official form as a record of conquest and find it unacceptable and inaccurate. Then the process of infiltrating and adapting such a text to his own Andean image could begin.

Similarly, Jason, Matt, and Alan recognize the form of discourse they are to adopt as expressed through Mrs. Taylor pedagogical discourses: they are to take up Mrs. Taylor's beliefs that persecution is bad, and that persecution can be stopped if we become tolerant and accepting and work to change the course of history. The skit, then, is where the boys realize they are to transfer such discourses and thus represent themselves as understanding and accepting of Mrs. Taylor's discourses.

However, the boys adopt the skit's form and purpose, and parody Mrs. Taylor's discourses through it as they create an "object of representation," an "image" of her discourses turned upside down, her pedagogical symbols inverted. Pratt discussed how resistance is achieved through Guaman Poma's letter through "symbolic inversion," or "turning the world upside down."

Pratt explains the transcultural character of Guaman Poma's letter is apparent in the visual component which accompanies the written text Pratt explains the genre of the four hundred line drawings is European, but depicts specifically Andean "systems of spatial symbolism that express Andean values and aspirations" (p. 36). Pratt explains:

In figure 1, for example, Adam is depicted on the left-hand side below the sun, while Eve is one the right-hand side below the moon, and slightly lower than Adam. The two are divided by the diagonal of Adam's digging stick. In Andean spatial symbolism, the diagonal descending from the sun marks the basic line of power and authority dividing upper from lower, male from female, dominant from subordinate. In figure 2, the Inca appears in the same position as Adam, with the Spaniard opposite, and the two at the same height. In figure 3, depicting Spanish abuses of power, the symbolic pattern is reversed. The Spaniard is in a high position indicating dominance, but on the 'wrong' (right-hand) side. The diagonals of his lance and that of the servant doing the flogging mark out a line of illegitimate, though real, power. The Andean figures continue to occupy the left-hand side of the picture, but clearly as victims. Guaman Poma wrote that the Spanish conquest had produced 'un mundo al reves'—a world in reverse. (p. 36)

We can understand Guaman Poma's drawings of a "world upside down" as a form of protest and "cultural negation," only if we begin with "the world right side up of which it is the mirror image" (Scott, 1990, p. 168).

Scott furthers that symbolic inversions are important because they "play an important imaginative function. They do, at least at the level of thought, create an imaginative breathing space in which the normal categories of order and hierarchy are less than completely inevitable. When we manipulate any social classification imaginatively—turning it inside out and upside down—we are forcibly reminded that it is to some degree an arbitrary human creation" (p. 168). Again, such a "breathing space" where customary relationships of hierarchy are reversed was created through the persecution skit.

Jason, Matt, and Alan, indeed, turn Mrs. Taylor's discourses upside down. In the persecution skit-as-parody, Mrs. Taylor's pedagogical discourses have been inverted. Instead of fictional characters depicting a fictional persecution set in some futuristic setting, the boys locate the skit within their own sociopolitical contexts. In it, they do not present characters who wish to change social conditions that allow persecutions to happen; instead, they bring their own racist, sexist discourses to it as they persecute Jenny for her "inappropriate" behavior.

The narrator begins, "Jamal and Jill are your ordinary happy couple. Well, I wouldn't exactly use the word ordinary, see, Jill is white and well, Jamal he's black." As two males walk by Jamal and Jill in the park, one of the walkers says, "Dude, that's nasty," and then, "I wonder what her daddy says about that?"

In just these few short movements in the skit, the boys express their beliefs that a white female dating a white male is not "ordinary," and is, instead, "nasty," and, thus, subject to discipline and harassment. In the boys' world, White does not mix with any other color. As illustrated in Chapter 4, Jason answers, "White women with white men" when I ask him why the boys wrote the skit. Later in the skit, the male walkers explain Jill and Jamal have "problems" because they are not the same color.

Too, the males present their patriarchal positions as they worry if the female's father knows about Jill dating a Black male and, later in the skit, when the male walkers encounter Jill's brother and say, "I hate to burst your bubble and all man but you wouldn't believe who I seen your sister cuddled up with." This points toward the border-patrolling and policing behaviors the boys adopt in their community, and in the school, as though they see it as a duty to protect white females (cf. Hall, 2000; Weis, 1990).

The skit also presents Jamal speaking in a stereotyped way: "Yo what they say? They talkin' 'bout us?" and "Yeah fa real yo." As described earlier, the boys know few actual Black males and depend on media images for their descriptions of anything "Black."

The skit ends with Jill's brother "storming off to find his sister" who is prompted by the narrator, "(Okay Matt say what you would to your cousin. No cussin!!!) Obviously, as the written portion of the skit was intended to be seen by the boys only, this lack of anonymity evidences this scenario, while fictional, was not based on fictional events. Jenny's cousin, Matt, didn't

approve of her dating a Black male, and had estranged himself from her because of it. As explained earlier, he participated in the writing of the skit because in his eyes, she was "going against the family," and needed to be punished for it.

While the boys understood they could be reprimanded for "cussing" in the performance of the skit, they knew they were safe from any reprimand or punishment as the skit was, as Mrs. Taylor explained, "what I asked them to do," even as it was merely an "image" and "inverted symbol" of what she asked.

Finally, Pratt explains Guaman Poma's letter, as a heterogeneous text, is a metaphor for cultures which aren't discrete, coherently structured, monolingual edifices" (p. 36). As such, the text will "read differently to people in different positions in the contact zone. Because it deploys European and Andean systems of meaning making, the letter necessarily means differently to bilingual Spanish-Quechua speakers and to monolingual speakers in either language; the drawings mean differently to monocultural readers, Spanish and Andean, and to bicultural readers responding to the Andean symbolic structures embodied in European genres" (p. 37).

I would argue the persecution skit the male students wrote is just such a "heterogeneous text" and serves, too, as a metaphor that the classroom is a site where multiple discourses, and thus literacy practices, come together and clash. The skit merges official and unofficial literacy practices into a text, while resisting Mrs. Taylor's pedagogical discourses, and, indeed, "reads" differently to people in different positions of the contact zone of the rural high school English classroom.

To Mrs. Taylor, the skit was an assignment fulfilled, and as she admits, "They did what was asked of them. I mean, they did a great persecution. There was nothing wrong with their skit from what I asked them to do" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003). In addition to being an "assignment fulfilled," however, the boys meant for Mrs. Taylor and Jenny to "read" the skit as a symbol of their powerlessness in the classroom, most visibly expressed in both Jenny's and Mrs. Taylor's inability to respond to, intervene, or interrupt the strategic deceptions of the skit.

Jenny understood such symbolic reversal in her "reading" of the skit; she was offended by the skit and after its public classroom performance, ran crying out of the classroom. In essence, the skit was meant "to piss [Jenny] off," which it did; only, Jenny explains she was accustomed to the boys harassing her for dating a Black male, and wasn't as upset about that as the fact that Mrs. Taylor didn't intervene, even when she knew what the boys were doing, nor punish them for it afterwards.

Jenny explained, "Mrs. Taylor could have stopped it. She knew what it was about, but she let it happen anyway" (Fieldnotes, October 12, 2002). Jenny expressed that she had wanted to go to the principal and explain what happened but admits she didn't because "I can't prove it. Their names aren't on the skit, even though everyone knew it was about me" (Fieldnotes, October 12, 2002).

When I asked her why she thought Mrs. Taylor didn't intervene or punish the boys for writing the skit, Jenny explained, "She lets them get away with murder. The boys can cuss and get up and walk out of the room without getting in trouble, and do stuff like that skit. But let me do that and I'd be written up in a heartbeat" (Fieldnotes, October 12, 2002).

Such a comment attests to the power relations inherent in the "contact zone" of Mrs. Taylor's classroom where male students claimed and applied power while female students were expected to be obedient. As a dialogic response to Mrs. Taylor's pedagocial discourses and Jenny's behavior, the boys manipulated an in-class text to claim a space to negate Mrs. Taylor and Jenny, to "talk back" to representations of themselves they found unacceptable and intolerable— representations which tried to paint them as empathetic, non-racist, and tolerant of others.

The skit could be "read" yet another way, I think, as evidence of a collective, cultural group solidarity among the male students who wrote the skit and the other students (minus Jenny) who watched and condoned the performance of the skit. Scott (1990) uses the term "communities of fate" to refer to socially cohesive, homogenous, isolated, subordinate groups who typically "share a clear, antagonistic view of [dominant group members] and act with solidarity" (p. 134). Scott explains such communities:

> . . . are all under the same authority, run the same risks, mix nearly exclusively with one another, and rely on a high degree of mutuality. They develop their own codes, myths, heroes, and social standards. The social site at which they develop [opposition] is itself uniform, cohesive, and bound by powerful mutual sanctions that hold competing discourses at arm's length. [Such] isolation, homogeneity of conditions, and mutual dependence among subordinates favor the development of a distinctive subculture—often one with a strong 'us vs. them' social imagery. Once this occurs, of course, the distinctive subculture itself becomes a powerful force for social unity as all subsequent experiences are mediated by a shared way of looking at the world. (p. 135)

Mrs. Taylor's fourth period could be considered a "community of fate," as could any classroom community. However, while the students may be brought together randomly through administrative scheduling decisions, the students in Mrs. Taylor's class knew each other well, some as family members, and brought shared histories and cultural values with them into the classroom, including what Mrs. Taylor felt was a shared racism. Mrs. Taylor explained in an interview:

> They're very, I mean, they're so racist, even though they don't know, they don't know any black people. Forget another culture like an Indian, they, I mean, there's such a narrow bubble. And their parents are like that, I mean, their grandparents are like that. And, I mean, so many of them are related to one another that I didn't even know, that I still don't know, the connections. I had no idea that Matt and Jenny were related. I mean, I know that now, but especially being new there, I didn't know who goes with whom. I mean, at all. (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

I would argue in a classroom populated by a "community of fate" which shares cultural values and discourses, the possibility for the creation of a "uniform, cohesive social site, bound by powerful mutual sanctions, at which to develop resistance and opposition," and "hold competing discourses at arm's length" is already in place.

Scott explains that in such a site, subordinates "do their own patrolling, . singling out anyone who puts on airs, who denies his origins. and punish those who deviate," with sanctions that "may run the gamut from small gestures of disapproval to a complete shunning, and of course, to physical intimidation and violence. What is being policed by pressures of conformity within the subordinate group are not simply speech acts but a wide range of practices that damage the collective interest of subordinates as they see it. (p. 130)

Scott explains such policing usually occurs through linguistic practices, i.e., derisive nicknames, slanderous stories, and rests heavily on social, peer pressure (p. 130). I believe Jason, Matt, and Alan, familiar with border-patrolling and policing behaviors outside of the classroom, used the persecution skit as a form of such linguistic policing in the classroom where they held power among their peers, and felt supported by those peers.

Evidence that the boys were supported by their peers is provided in Jason's explanation of a kind of peer-policing of Jenny that went on outside the classroom, on the school bus.

Jason explained that Jenny, who used to sit with him and Matt at the back of the morning bus they rode to a local vocational program, had recently moved to the front of the bus. Jason explained:

1   Jason: Half of the girls that go up there [to the vocational program] are
        racist so all of us in the back going "Nigger, Nigger!" and all that, and they
        all sit in front of us doing the same thing.
2   Susan: Who sits in front of you?
3   Jason: There's a couple of girls. There's Sarah, you know Sarah. From
        class.
4   Susan: Yeah, I think so.
5   Jason: She's wide open. She'll holler out "Nigger!" She ain't afraid to. "Nigger-
        fucker!" And she'll look at Jenny and say, "Yeah, bitch, I'm talking to you!"
        And it's just funny as hell, man. (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002)

Jenny now sat alone on the bus, just as she did in the English class I observed, where she rarely talked to anyone. In an interview, Jenny explained to me she used to have friends, but they began to shun her when she started dating John. She explained the only person who "stood by her" was her older sister. Her mother had forced Jenny to quit the girl's basketball team and a day-care job she loved so she could go to work with her mother at a local restaurant and be under constant supervision. Her father had threatened to "disown" her if she didn't stop seeing John.

As discussed in Chapter 5, Mrs. Taylor contributed to this "conspiracy of silence" (Fine, 1987) as she ignored Jenny's introductory letter and, too, chose not to intervene in or interrupt the boy's writing and performance of the persecution skit. Ultimately, Mrs. Taylor participated in legitimating the normalized inequitable relations enacted in the persecution skit—relations the skit was meant to challenge.

Why didn't Mrs. Taylor do anything?

In "Arts of the Contact Zone," in addition to Guaman Poma's letter, Pratt introduces another text to the reader: a paragraph her son, Manuel, wrote to fulfill a school assignment.

Manuel's fourth-grade class had been asked to "imagine a 'helpful invention,'" to guide the students, the teacher had asked them to respond in single-sentences to the following questions:

What kind of invention would help you?
How would it help you?
What would it look like?
Would other people be able to use it also?
What would be an invention to help your teacher?
What would be an invention to help your parents? (2002, p. 14)
Manuel's reply read as follows:

A grate adventchin
Some inventchins are GRATE!!!!! My inventchin would be a shot that would put every thing you learn at school in your brain. It would help me by letting me graduate right now!! I would need it because it would let me play with my friends, go on vacachin, and do fun a lot more. It would look like a regular shot. Ather people would use to. This inventchin would help my teacher parents get away from a lot of work. I think a shot like this would be GRATE! (pp. 14-15)

Pratt explains the assignment received "the usual star to indicate the task had been fulfilled in an acceptable way. No recognition was available, however, of the humor, the attempt to be critical or contestatory, to parody the structures of authority" (p. 15).

Guaman Poma's letter fared much worse; it received no recognition until almost 300 years after its creation, when it was discovered in a museum in Copenhagen by Peruvian explorer, Richard Pietschmann. Pratt then provides an interesting note: in the same year Guaman Poma sent his letter, another Peruvian's text, the *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, written in official, standard Spanish, without illustrations, "was adopted in official circles in Spain as the canonical Christian mediation between the Spanish conquest and Inca history" (p. 10).

Pratt explains, "The *Royal Commentaries* was edited and reedited in Spain and the New World, a mediation that coded the Andean past and present in ways thought unthreatening to colonial hierarchy. The textual hierarchy persists; the *Royal Commentaries* today remains a

staple item on Ph.D. reading lists in Spanish, while the *New Chronicle and Good Government*, despite the ready availability of several fine editions, is not" (p. 11).

Manuel's and Guaman Poma's texts represent what Pratt terms "autoethnographic" texts, which do not simply imitate or reproduce the discourses imposed on them; instead they adapt them to create bilingual, intercultural, "heterogeneous" texts to represent what Pratt calls "unsolicited oppositional discourses," which go unrecognized because they don't resonate with—indeed, often resist--official, sanctioned discourses, usually defined from the point of view of those in positions of authority.

Mrs. Taylor, too, like Spanish royalty, ignored the parodied persecution skit. After the students performed the skit and Jenny left the classroom, Mrs. Taylor walked out after her, then came back into the classroom, and asked the special education aide (Mrs. Pruitt) to pass out self- and group-evaluation rubrics. Mrs. Taylor explained students would score themselves on their skit performances, but that Mrs. Pruitt and she would score them, too.

Mrs. Taylor told the students she wanted them to include in their evaluations a "meaty" paragraph including such information as: 1) how the group worked together; 2) what grade each group member deserves and why; 3) the group's overall grade, and 4) what they thought of the WebQuest activity. She told the students, "What I don't want is for you to say you didn't have enough time. I gave you ample time—we spent four days in the library. Remember what I said Friday: you're going to have to do some work outside of this class. You may not be used to that, but you need to get used to it" (Fieldnotes, September 23, 2002).

About twenty minutes later, after the students had completed the evaluations and turned them into Mrs. Price, Mrs. Taylor made announcements about upcoming ASVAB and PSAT tests, an upcoming field trip, and then told the students they could talk quietly at their seats for the last five minutes of class. The female student who had left the class did not return by the time class dismissed.

Pratt explains that "unsolicited oppositional discourse" often goes unrecognized because of its heterogeneous nature; teachers, assuming classroom communities are homogeneous and fraternal, assume that literacy practices will be that way, too. Because English teachers are often in positions to define "official," "school" literacy, when they find such literacies "infiltrated and merged" by more "unofficial" literacies, they may choose to dismiss and reject them, even if they do recognize them as "hybridized" practices. As Pratt explains, "If a classroom is analyzed as a social world unified and homogenized with respect to the teacher, whatever students do other than what the teacher specifies is invisible or anomalous to the analysis" (2002, p. 14).

Mrs. Taylor admits to understanding the text of the boys' skit was heterogeneous and sociopolitical in nature, however. She says, "I had gotten wind of it...and I talked to [Jenny] right before they kinda went on...and I kind of pushed her to be tough and act like it didn't bother her. I didn't want, and this was very hard, I didn't want to make a bigger deal out of it than it was going to be" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003). Mrs. Taylor knew the boys were writing about Jenny and the fact she was dating a Black male, and she allowed them to continue and ultimately perform the skit for the class.

I believe Mrs. Taylor's decision to allow the boys to write and perform the skit may have had something to do with what she explained as a "fear of conflict" and a belief that her regular-level students couldn't "handle discussions about racism, sexism and stuff" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

Mrs. Taylor explained she respected the girls she saw at Hilltown because, "In some ways I really respect, but it's something so different from what I was raised, they are willing to fight each other verbally without holding back at all. I've never verbally argued with anyone. I'm scared of conflict. I hate conflict and there [at Hilltown], it's such a part of their existence" (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003).

When I ask her if this keeps her from having discussions in her classroom about racism, sexism, and classism, she explains:

> I've done tons of sexism stuff with my 10 honors when I did "Doll's House" and there's certain moments, but that's what's missing from my regular classes. They have opinions on things that sometimes it's hard to get to places where I can discover those things. I mean, and maybe it's with what I'm teaching, I mean, I hope I can do that whenever I can, but I don't just come in and say, 'Let's talk about racism,' I mean, there has to be an incident, or, um, and I try, I mean in everything I do to let them see the human side of it, you know, not color, or gender, and I think a lot of what I do, and I've always felt this way is to teach by example. And who I am and what I stand for. I know who I am, I know a lot of what I believe in and I hope that I have imparted some of that on them, at least to think about. (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2003)

I believe, too, Mrs. Taylor's decision to allow the boys to write and perform the skit were negotiated responses to her positions within her own pedagogical discourses. Walkerdine (1990) explains progressive pedagogical discourses:

> give children the power to define what they do within the limits of the pedagogy in that they can choose, and cannot be stopped in their choosing…such discourses produce and facilitate in the teacher collusion in her own oppression, since if she reads actions as normal and natural, and suppression of those actions as harmful, she is forced into a no-choice situation. She cannot but allow them to continue, and she must render harmless their power over her. (p. 8)

Mrs. Taylor, perhaps, felt she had provided the opportunity for the persecution skit to happen, as illustrated earlier, felt powerless in her own classroom and, thus, unable to challenge the boys. Their voices, then, get heard and recognized while she sits mute, beside Jenny.

In Chapter 7, I attempt to outline pedagogical strategies that may help teachers, who find themselves in heterogeneous "contact zones," face, rather than fear, conflicted negotiation as multiple discourses collide and grapple with each other.

CHAPTER 7: TEACHING IN THE CONTACT ZONE

Well, let me tell you:
I am from here,
I'm not like that
and I am damned tired of being told I am.

"#16" from Jo Carson's *Stories I Ain't Told Nobody Yet*

Pratt's "Arts in the Contact Zone" explains Guaman Poma's letter to King Phillip of Spain was of two parts, the first of which entitled the "New Chronicle" is described in Chapter 5. The second part Guaman Poma entitled "Good Government and Justice," as Pratt explains, it "combines a description of colonial society in the Andean region with a passionate denunciation of Spanish exploitation and abuse" (2002. p. 7). This second part also contains Guaman Poma's argument that the Indies would best be administered through a "collaboration of Inca and Spanish elties" (p. 8). Pratt explains:

> The epistle ends with an imaginary question-and-answer session in which, in a reversal of hierarchy, the king is depicted asking Guaman Poma questions about how to reform the empire—a dialogue imagined across the many lines that divide the Andean scribe from the imperial monarch, and in which the subordinated subject single-handedly gives himself authority in the colonizer's language and verbal repertoire. (p. 8)

Learning School

Other researchers and teachers who find themselves in contact zones have imagined such dialogues. In hopes to build a "two-way channel between communities and classrooms," Shirley Bryce Heath's work led to teachers helping non-Mainstream students "learn school" (1989, p. 281). This included teachers allowing students, whose ways of learning language were "dependent on the ways in which each community structured their families, defined the roles that community members could assume, and played out their concepts of childhood that guided child socialization" (p. 3) to "articulate how what they knew related to what the school wanted them to know. children had to reformulate to different degrees their home habits of handling knowledge and their ways of talking about knowledge" (1983, p. 354-355).

Similarly, when Bizzell (1997) grew unsatisfied with prevailing "deficit" theories used to define problems her basic writing students experienced with academic discourse, she suggested teaching "academic discourse conventions," and explaining to students "their writing takes place within a community, and what the community's conventions are" (1997, p. 380). She explains:

> To point out that discourse conventions exist would be to politicize the classroom— or rather, to make everyone aware that it is already politicized. World views would become more clearly a matter of conscious commitment, instead of unconscious conformity, if the ways in which they are constituted in discourse

communities were analyzed. Through discourse analysis we might offer them an understanding of their school difficulties as the problems of a traveler to an unfamiliar country—yet a country in which it is possible to learn the language and the manners and even "go native" while still remembering the land from which one has come. (p. 386)

Both Heath and Bizzell, then, seem to believe boundaries exist between classrooms and peer and home communities, but those boundaries can be removed by encouraging students to assimilate to school ways of using language. Such approaches, however, maintain binary notions that separate students' outside social worlds from official school classroom worlds, and contribute to the "discursive colonialism" that attempts to silence marginalized voices as it dismisses and fails to recognize "Other" discourse community allegiances students bring with them to school.

Hay (1996) explains colonial discourses "presuppose moral and intelligence standards based on levels of civilization, and assume moral roles based on power positions" (p. 4). I describe Mrs. Taylor's progressive and critical pedagogies as "colonial" because, while claiming to be "student-centered," they ignore the specific historical, geographical, and sociopolitical contexts and ways of learning and using language the students bring with them to the classroom. Any local knowledges and "ways with words" Mrs. Taylor's 4th block students brought with them to the classroom are dismissed as they are expected to accept and assimilate to Mrs. Taylor's moral education, which is, of course, located within broader social and political discourses of education.

Students' difficulties can not simply be viewed as those of assimilation, then, but rather as those of active negotiation between the pressure to enter the discourse communities validated in schools and the force of their ongoing, and perhaps competing, allegiances to others ways of using language. Students may indeed consider classrooms "unfamiliar country," but "learning language and the manners" of such territory, if indeed students choose to do so, is more often than not accomplished on their own terms. Too, students resist "going native," and rather than merely "remembering the land from which they come," bring those lands with them (Bizzell, 1997, p. 386).

As the students demonstrate through the mimicry of the persecution skit, they are not willing to passively play by dominant discourses' "rules;" instead, as they encounter culturally different discourses, they read their perceptions of their differences into such discourses, manipulating them and reassigning their own culturally learned assumptions to them. Thus, such progressive and pedagogical discourses, which set out to "change students' minds," fail to do so, as students reinscribe their previously-held views onto such discourses. Such phenomenon attests to Pratt's concept of classroom communities as heterogeneous "contact zones," where contestatory "multivocal texts" reside rather than "uniform and obedient students" (Miller, 1994, p. 402).

Pratt's suggestions to teachers "contact zones," then, include acting less like Spanish kings and finding places for the "arts" of the "contact zone"—"unsolicited oppositional discourse, parody, resistance, critique" (2002, p. 15) in the re-imagined classroom community. Too, Pratt suggests

teachers and students construct "safe houses" in the classroom, which she defines as "social and intellectual spaces where groups can constitute themselves as horizontal, homogeneous, sovereign communities with high degrees of trust, shared understandings, temporary protection from legacies of oppression" (2002, p. 17).

There are no "Safe Houses"

But, as the persecution skit and Scott's discussion of "communities of fate" illustrates, there are no "safe houses," as Brown (2000) explains, Pratt's idea encourages a "no-contact zone": a depoliticized, deconflicted refuge from the lived realities of oppression" (p. 117). Such "safe" rhetoric, I believe, echoes in Mrs. Taylor's pedagogical discourses and pretends the classroom is such a "deconflicted refuge." The "place" for Pratt's "contact zone arts," then, in the "deconflicted refuge" becomes one where racist, sexist, and oppressive relations are practiced and unwittingly maintained by teachers who usually don't know how to produce a "real, substantive response" (Anson, p. 4) to reactionary "unsolicited oppositional discourse" (Pratt, 2002, p. 7).

As illustrated in Chapter 6, Mrs. Taylor's options for providing an effective response within her current pedagogical discourses are limited. She may either ignore the skit, and "look away from what the students' writing is attempting to do at the havoc it is trying to wreak and restrict comments to the surface features and formal qualitities" (Miller, p. 127), which is actually what she does, or choose to punish the students by removing them from the classroom, and turning them over to school administrators who will suspend them for being "inappropriate."

Mrs. Taylor seemed to know she had few choices, but in choosing to "look away," she contributed to the victimization of Jenny and, I believe, her own oppression. Similarly, as described in Chapter 6, simply removing students from "contact zone" sites contributes to the "conspiracy of silence" surrounding larger social and political issues which conflicted negotiations in the classroom always point to.

I believe such actions hold serious implications for teachers and teacher educators who must learn and teach "different discourses" so reactionary, oppositional discourses aren't ignored and simply "reacted" or "responded" to, but included and contested in pedagogy that takes as a subject the way language wields power in the world.

As Walkerdine (1990) explains, "Leaving the children alone to their own devices means that they will reproduce those positions in those discourses with which they are familiar, and are thus not open to scrutiny and transformation. Neither the children nor the teacher can change without the production of different discourses in which to read their actions, and to produce different actions and different subjectivities" (p. 9).

Such teaching would, to appropriate Freire's vision of dialogue as a pedagogical tool, turn conflict into "the object to be known" mediating the varied and multiple subjectivities present in the classroom. Conflict would be "put on the table" *among* multiple ways of knowing. Students and teacher would "meet around it and through it for mutual inquiry" (Shor and Friere, 1987, p. 13).

Teaching the Conflicts

Conflict-oriented pedagogy, then, would start with students' own writings, which teachers could place beside other texts where the written word is powerful. Miller describes such pedagogy as:

> pull[ing] the paper out of the private corridor running between student writer and the teacher and mov[ing] it into the public arena. This approach turns [student writing] into a 'teachable object,' enabling an investigation of the writing's performative aspect—how it does its work, what its imagined projects might have been, and who or what might be the possible subjects of its critique. (2000, p. 129)

Revisiting *The Crucible*

As example, Jason's, Matt's, and Alan's persecution skit could have been positioned alongside legal definitions of hate speech and, even, resituated alongside Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, and the *Malleus Maleficarum,* a document created in the 1400's, on papal orders, to define witchcraft and describe its ritual and content. In the Dark Ages, few people read and books were hard to come by. Yet, as Dworkin (1974) explains:

> the *Malleus* was printed in numerous editions. It was found in every courtroom. It had been read by every judge, each of whom would know it chapter and verse. The *Malleus* had more currency than the Bible. It was theology, it was law. To disregard it, to challenge its authority, was to commit heresy, a capital crime. (p. 129)

Dworkin goes on to explain how the *Malleus* "explains most aspects of biology, sexology, medicine, and weather in terms of the demonic," and contributed to the Judeo-Christian "myth of feminine evil which in turn justified several centuries of gynocide" (p. 134). Dworkin explains:

> Witchcraft was a woman's crime. Subject to women's evil designs, [men] were terrified victims. Those men who were convicted of witchcraft were often family of convicted women witches, or were in positions of civil power, or had political ambitions which conflicted with those of the Church, a monarch, or a local dignitary. Men were protected from becoming witches...by virtue of superior intellect and faith...and because Jesus Christ...died 'to preserve the male sex from so great a crime: since He was willing to be born and die for us, therefore He has granted to men this privilege.' Christ died literally for *men* and left women to fend with the Devil themselves. (p. 130)

Arthur Miller's *Crucible* character of Proctor, whose wife is accused of witchcraft, finds himself accused for refusing to acknowledge witches exist at all, and thus threatens the Church and the court, two discourse-influencing institutions believed to serve the common good, which

insist witchcraft exists and that witches are, predominantly, women. Proctor explains, "I like not the smell of this 'authority,'" (Miller, 1981/1959. p. 28), and promptly hangs.

By situating the boys' skit in relation to such texts also puts the students in a position to consider both how words can work in the world and why that work has been regulated.

While the idea of situating such texts beside one another and attempting to participate in discussion about how such texts work and get read in heterogeneous ways may frighten some, Pratt's contact zone theory explains "that the point of such discussions is not to establish a community where a simple pluralism rules and hate speech is just one of its many voices, nor to create an environment that is relentlessly threatening, where not feeling safe comes to mean the same thing as feeling terrified" (Miller, 2002, p. 129).

A different kind of "talk" is needed and, as Carico (2001) suggests, "students need to be assisted in learning how words affect both listener and speaker, and how the words of those in positions of power, however slight, can have a disproportionate influence. it may take a conscious study of communication patterns and styles and how to deal with them" (p. 516).

However, such pedagogical strategies as mentioned above, even as they encourage acknowledgement of power relations inherent in language, can run the risk of treating student texts as isolated anomalies, which continues to ignore the sociopolitical and cultural contexts from which and in which the texts get written and read. The racism, sexism, and violence that pervades the boys' persecution skit do not represent some "unique and private hatred" of African-Americans; rather, "cultural commonplaces" are described and for these reasons, it is important for teachers and teacher educators to think of ways of, yet again, "different discourses" that enable us to create classrooms where "part of the work involves articulating, investigating, and questioning the affiliated cultural forces that underwrite the ways of thinking that find expression in student [texts]—a classroom, in short, that studies the forces that make such thoughts not only permissible but prevalent" (Miller, 2002, p. 131). As the conclusion of Pratt's article makes clear, there is still a great deal of work to be done in constructing the "pedagogical arts of the contact zone" (Pratt, 2002, p.17).

The remainder of this chapter focuses on my own efforts to consider a pedagogical practice that allows the classroom to function as a contact zone where the central activity is investigating the ways reading and writing occurs inside and outside the classroom, and our ways of talking about such ways within asymmetrical power relationships.

Resisting/Rethinking Stereotypes

I begin, then, with the stereotypes of "rural" and "rural Appalachian" peoples presented in local and national media, which the students I interviewed seemed to have internalized. In describing some of the students, Mrs. Pruitt explained:

> if they think you're going to make fun of them, cause it's sort of, they know that
> they're not like, that polished, and they know that maybe they think they're stupid,
> you know, and if they think you're going to laugh at them they'll just hate you. I

mean, I think they see teachers as just being on a totally different level than them, and you have to come down and show them you're interested in what they're interested in. (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002)

In an interview with Donald, he explained he wanted to leave Eagletown because: my parents want more for me than what they have. I just can't get that here. I mean, people look at you and know you're from Eagletown and OK, Redneck Hick, let's not hire him, you know. I'm going away and I can make myself. I might come back, if I can succeed in my goals. I'll be the first person from Eagletown to ever go to West Point, ever be a Navy SEAL, the first generation, you know. I'd like to be able to come back and say that, I'm the only person whose ever done it from this school. (Fieldnotes, October 29, 2002)

Jason, explaining why he tried to "tolerate" English class explained, "If they didn't think we needed it they wouldn't make us take it." When asked why teachers and administrators might think students "need" English, he replied, "I'd rather not be out in a crowd talking all illiterate[33] and stuff" (Fieldnotes, October 14, 2002).

Jason, Mrs. Pruitt and Donald point toward beliefs some of the working-class students at Hilltown hold about themselves: that they are "rednecks," "hicks," "not polished," "illiterate," and "stupid."

Perhaps the students have internalized such negative stereotypes perpetuated in local and national media. In 2002, local politicians placed signs throughout the county declaring they were "good 'ole boys," committed to "keeping rural places rural," and a local automobile company continues to advertise through radio commercials where stereotyped hillbilly voices argue with each other over cars. Just recently, on a walk through the only local mall in the county, I noticed posters in a computer store advertising a new video game called "Hillbilly Truckdrivers," with the drivers represented as buck-toothed, tattooed, long-haired, and shirtless men hanging over their driving wheels, thumbs in air, yelling, "Yee-Haw!"

Similarly, as Rachel Tompkins, president of the Rural School and Community Trust explains, "We have these stereotypes in the national view about what rural is. And they tend to either be on one end or the other of the spectrum. We call them the 'Ain't it grand?' or 'Ain't it awful' stereotypes. Either it's all lovely out there, you know, it's nostalgic, wonderful, bucolic land or it's awful, it's terrible, it's the most depressing places you've ever been" (transcript, February 25, 2003).

In January, 2003, National Public Radio aired a story about CBS television network's plans to remake its 1960's sitcom "The Beverly Hillbillies" by sending "a real hillbilly family" to Beverly Hills. As Martha Woodruff reports:

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[33] Jason's explanation points toward the reasons I describe educational discourses as "colonial," in that they attempt to make "illiterate" persons "literate," echoing much of the rhetoric of Great Divide literacy theorists who measured the "cultured" and the "noncultured" by users' cognitive literacy abilities.

Woodruff: In early November, a CBS casting director on the hunt for just the right rural family to be the real Beverly hillbillies popped into Pat's Fashion and Tack Service in Pineville, West Virginia, and asked owner Pat Armstrong if she could post a flyer.

Ms. Pat Armstrong (Pat's Fashion and Tack Service): I asked him if they were looking for people on welfare, toothless, chewing tobacco, what? And they said, 'No.' They assured us they did not want anything like that. They wanted somebody with high moral standards. They said they wanted a family that had a son older than a daughter. (Transcript, January 26, 2003.

Woodruff reports Mr. Dee Davis, President of the Center for Rural Strategies, an organization that advocates on behalf of rural communities, was skeptical about CBS's intentions and said, "This is taking a real family and laughing at them because they don't fit the standard demographic that CBS cares about" (Transcript, January 26, 2003). Woodruff also reports controversy over CBS's president of alternative programming's comment, which he let slip in an interview: "Imagine the episode where they have to interview maids" (Transcript, January 26, 2003).

Writer and Commentator Bob Sloan wrote this following protest to CBS's idea, which was aired on National Public Radio in February, 2003:

In the 21st century, nobody'd dare try such a thing with black people or Arabs. Hillbillies, though, we're fair game for anybody to insult. CBS will find what it's looking for. You want hillbillies who will trade a payday for a ridicule, you can find someone to act ignorant, talk funny and go big-eyed over a ride in a stretch limo. The real Beverly Hillbillies won't know how to use the appliances in their mansion and they'll dress like their clothes came from a Goodwill store.

One family in Pike County is semi-famous for being in three documentaries about Appalachian roots. If they wanted to, CBS could find a few black people in Chicago who'd shuck and jive for a camera if the money was right. They could go to a reservation and somebody might rain dance on command for a big check. But the bigots who thought up the "Real Beverly Hillbillies" know they better act like they respect those groups. They're sticking to safe targets, like hillbillies. (Transcript, February 4, 2003)

Another text reinforcing rural stereotypes Sloan critiques is Bill Bryson's bestselling book, *A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail* (1998), described as a "perceptive look at the strange territory where forest and American culture collide" and advertised as a "hilarious travelogue." Its humor, unfortunately, relies on stereotypes of the "Appalachian mountain loony hillbilly."

Bryson describes the "real" characters he meets in his travels: There's Rayette, the waitress, who "coos, honey" (p. 33). Darren and his girlfriend, Donna, are Wild Turkey-slugging newlyweds on their way to "some desperate-sounding community—Turkey Balls Falls or Coon Slick" (p. 62).

Bryson sees Hiawassee, Georgia, as a "dusty, queer-looking town in northern Georgia" that makes him think of *Deliverance*. He states, "It must be said that people have been appalled by northern Georgians for 150 years" (p. 64). And there's the Georgia Mountain Restaurant, whose parking lot is "crowded with pickup trucks, and inside it was busy with meaty people in baseball caps." Bryson has a feeling that "if he said, 'Phone call for you, Bubba,' every man in the room would have risen" (p. 66).

Denise Giardina again attempts to resist such stereotypes in a letter she wrote to *The New York Times* and in her novel, *Storming Heaven*. In her letter to the *New York Times*, Giardina explains that "Appalachia has always been distinctly 'other' in the American imagination," and such "'otherness' rests on the belief that Appalachians are solely responsible for their poverty, that they are 'simple throwbacks to the past, inhabitants of a land time forgot, lazy and shiftless, quick-tempered and ready to grab a gun to settle differences" (Easton, 2001, p. 151). Easton explains Giardina letter is "a response to the 'culture of poverty' theory espoused since the 1960s" and that her "larger aim is to demonstrate that Appalachians themselves are not responsible for their poverty. Rather, Giardina asserts that the myths and stereotypes of Appalachians mask an economic structure that functions precisely to create poverty and injustice in Appalachia" (p. 151).

Easton explains Giardina's novel, *Storming Heaven*:

can be used to think about the class situation which was produced in Central Appalachia during the turn to industrial coal mining in the region. What comes out of this type of textual analysis is a kind of literary criticism enabling us to understand various aspects of the socioeconomic history of Central Appalachia. Moreover, viewing *Storming Heaven* through a class-based lens provides an opportunity to use an historical novel to better understand working peoples' struggles for justice in a decidedly unjust place and period. Through her fictional depiction of the region and its people, Giardina not only illuminates working people's lives and struggles for justice, but she also makes it necessary for readers to question the stereotypes of the Appalachian 'other.' (p. 152)

Such texts that attempt to represent rural people from both near and afar are precisely the texts I'd bring into the classroom for students to read. Pratt explains intercultural texts are "heterogeneous on the reception end as well as the production end" and will be "read very differently to people in different positions in the contact zone" (2002, p. 10). Too, as Herzog explains "Appalachian students may come to a deeper understanding of global issues of race and equity when presented with information showing how people from their own culture have been the target of prejudice. They may learn that the emotions inherent in hatred and bigotry are the same regardless of target" (1999, p. 127).

Discussing such local texts as politicians's signs, video game advertisements, transcripts of radio automobile advertisements, transcripts of commentary and critique of CBS's ideas for their remake of the "Beverly Hillbillies," Bill Bryson's text, the 150 Amazon.com reviews which described it in "overwhelmingly positive responses," the 30 that didn't (Herzog, 1999, p. 125), Denise Giardinia's novel, and her letter to the *New York Times,* might bring Pratt's definition to

life in the newly re-imagined classroom community, where "hope of synthesis" is absent, where "one has to work in the knowledge that whatever one says is going to be systematically received in radically heterogeneous ways that we are neither able nor entitled to prescribe" (2002, p. 16).

Here, then, is writing for the contact zone that is simultaneously oppositional, parodic, resistant, and critical. How texts engage us, how texts position us, and how we read such texts would be the center of analysis and discussion in this newly re-imagined classroom community. For example, teacher and students could explore and, thus, begin to deconstruct, the common framework of knowledge, priorities, and beliefs such texts assume, while also discussing how such texts unsettle us or make us feel comfortable. Such exploration could begin with the following questions: What is the text assuming about us, what we know and/or value? How does it make those assumptions? What information and ways of knowing does the text offer us? And, most importantly, why?

Pursuing such questions in relations to the above-described texts helps to illustrate, I believe, the fact that no writing is without its conventions, nor is any writer every fully able to control those conventions. Once the student recognizes that all texts are heterogeneous in their production as well as their reception, it becomes possible to talk about the range and kinds of choices available during the acts of reading and writing.

However, when students are given opportunities to "detect and exploit ambiguitites in texts," Miller (2002) explains, "meanings are up for grabs" and "there is always the danger that such work will quickly produce a classroom situation where any reading is seen to be as good as any other reading. Thus, it [can be] difficult to get students to move beyond developing an interpretation…to staking out a position in relation to their interpretation" (p. 138).

He suggests not only asking students to write about the difficulties they encounter in reading a text, but also to "outline a plan of action for addressing the difficulties they encounter" (p. 142). He explains, "The goal is not to invite students simply to record their various levels of rage, incomprehension, and despair with a text, but rather to have them reflect on how their own ways of reading are disclosed and complicated during this textual transaction. The results of having the students read their own meanings and chart out alternative ways of returning to the text can be startling indeed" (p. 142).

Requiring self-reflexivity, then, may be a way to teach and learn in contact zones, as we learn "different discourses" which enable us to "reposition" ourselves relative to the heteroglossia of the multiple voices that "mingle, clash, and grapple" for recognition in re-imagined classroom communities.

CONCLUDING/BEGINNING REMARKS

Probably one of the most exhilarating yet frustrating aspects of poststructuralist educational research is that there are no conclusions. Meaning is tentative and unstable, likely to shift and morph even as it stabilizes just long enough for you to see a shape you think you know. I liken poststructuralist theory and research to cloud-watching—the rabbit I see is an ice cream cone to someone else, and then-poof!-the cloud's gone or has become something else entirely.

This incredibly humbling idea means that everything written here in this work is also tentative, and that my interpretations and meanings can be deferred to the next reader, and the next, and the next, all of whom I expect will have very different interpretations than I. With that said, I hope readers of this work will understand that while the data analysis presented here may encourage readers to believe that conclusions have been reached, they, indeed, have not. I realize that instead of answers or solutions, I have more questions as my own interpretations and understandings have begun to shift.

But I don't feel frustrated. I'm inspired by Morwenna Griffith's words in *Educational Research for Social Justice* (1998), "Establishing social justice is less about particular outcomes than about processes, including processes which may overturn themselves. A socially just state of affairs is one characterized by a continual checking and adjusting" (p. 12). This study, then, while it appears finished and complete, is still in process. I imagine it always will be.

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