GETTING SCHOOLED ON RESISTANCE: DOMINANT AND COUNTER NARRATIVES OF WRITING AND THE CIRCULATION OF POWER IN URBAN SCHOOL REFORM

by

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ABSTRACT

CYNTHIA DIANE URBANSKI. Getting schooled on resistance: Dominant and counter narratives of writing and the circulation of power in the figured world of urban school reform. (Under the direction of DR. LIL BRANNON)

Michel Foucault argues that power is everywhere, all of the time. He describes it as concrete, "capillary," acting in, on and through the actual body. All "knowledge" and "truth" is an effect of that power which is why power and knowledge are integrally related. Power/knowledge produces social positioning. In this study I use Activity Theory to describe how power/knowledge works in the figured world of an inner city urban middle school that has been “marked” as underperforming by the institutional discourses of urban school reform and how that marking produces the types of interventions the school receives as well as the identities of the people in the school when these interventions “fail.” The study documents how power/knowledge positions the principals, teachers, National Writing Project consultants and children, and how power acts in, on and through their words and bodies. The research explores how the principals, teachers, and writing consultants negotiate dominant school reform narratives alongside counter narratives of writing and ways of being in the world as they work with children to become writers in social studies classes. By using Critical Discourse Analysis, I describe more specifically how four girls improvise their identities as writers in order to perform “good student” in the figured world of the school. This three-year qualitative study demonstrates how children’s and teachers’ resistances to the objectivist reform agenda make visible possibilities for educational change.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to resistant students everywhere.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Educational visionaries do not simply slot children into narrow roles determined by those in power; they help children and society reinvent our lives, generating structures that reflect our deepest values.

Ayers and Ayers, *Teaching the Taboo*, p. 19

On the one hand, any analysis of texts which aims to be significant in social scientific terms has to connect with theoretical questions about discourse. On the other hand, no real understanding of the social effects of discourse is possible without looking closely at what happens when people talk or write.

Norman Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*, p. 3

Michel Foucault argues that power is everywhere, all of the time. He describes it as concrete, "capillary," acting in, on and through the actual body. All "knowledge" and "truth" is an effect of that power which is why power and knowledge are integrally related. Power/knowledge produces "prescriptions for relations of power" or social positioning (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 45-48). In this study I will describe how power/knowledge is working in an inner city urban middle school, Rosa Parks Middle, a school that has been “marked” by the district and state as underperforming, what in the discourse of school reform might be called a “turn around” school. I will describe how power/knowledge functions to position principals, teachers, writing consultants and children in relation to different school reform agendas, and I will describe how power acts in, on and through the words and bodies of those involved, particularly the children as they write in two social studies classes.

Power/Knowledge and the School Reform Agenda

Chicago, November 2011 7:30 a.m.

I rush to a called meeting of people involved with the National Research Study of Writing Project sites. This study was the reason I got involved with Rosa Parks Middle School. Rosa Parks was part of a national randomized control study and was designated as a “treatment” school, meaning this school would receive professional development following the Writing Project model, rather than being the control site, where no professional development in the teaching of writing would occur. I breathe a sigh of relief as I spot eggs, fruit and coffee on the buffet. In March the National Writing Project’s direct federal funding was eliminated, and at that time we weren’t sure whether or not we could finish the study. Evidently, the study was completed. NWP might be broke, but at least the independent research group still had the cash to feed NWP teacher consultants breakfast if they are going to share the preliminary results of this three-year study with us at the crack of dawn.

It felt surreal to be in the Palmer House meeting room. Over the past three years the research firm, “outsiders” to NWP, had become familiar names on emails where I would send information about, and reflections on my work, and real people at meetings like this one, where they would tell more about the study. Participating in a national study was like nothing my local Writing Project site had ever done before. One major oddity for us was that the Writing Project site had to find schools for the study that we had little contact with. The site had to form relationships with the teachers in a school from scratch before beginning any professional development work. Typically, our site developed partnerships with schools where a group of Writing Project teacher consultants already clustered. Another discomforting piece was that one major measure of the quantitative research design of the effect of the Writing Project professional development on the middle school was the score students earned on their state-wide writing tests as well as writing prompts uniform across all the schools in the study.

It bothered me that this writing was taken out of the context in which it was written, but it is a hallmark of objectivism to measure student growth in this way. Objectivism sees language as a tool - a mechanism - for conveying thought and writing as a set of quantifiable skills. Objectivists separate the writing from the conversations of which it is a part of in order to measure growth “objectively” by outsiders who are not invested in the conversation or its outcome and who can look without bias at various features of texts and rank their quality. Objectivists work “scientifically” by training readers to pay attention only to measurable features whose qualities are delineated in rubrics and keyed to anchor texts preselected by the evaluators as having the qualities that are sought. The readers are calibrated to read consistently and their inter-rater reliability (their ability to read as calibrated) determines objectivity.

As a constructivist, because I view language differently, I question the validity of such measuring of student writing. Within constructivism language constitutes thought (rather than merely conveying it). I see writing as ideologically laden rather than neutral, its effectiveness dependent on the context. Writing is always value laden within any context and power/knowledge operates contextually. In “exam” contexts within objectivism—the power/knowledge is masked with reference to reified categories generalized from features of texts and with the predetermined texts used to anchor readings. The skills and features being measured are often thought to be “universal.” One such category might be “coherence.” The “objective” exam makers determine what “counts” as “coherence” (texts with transition words like first, second, third). The exam maker then constructs or finds texts that match this notion of coherence and writing is "measured" by its conformity to coherence devices delineated in the assessment rubric. “Coherence” in a constructivist model is a subjective concept: what seems coherent to one reader in one context may not to another reader and may not in another context (transitional words in themselves do not cause ideas to cohere; the reader's and writer's transactions with the text, their knowledge of the subject matter, and their knowledge of the conversation - the audience and purpose of the writing - constructs coherence). But in the context of an objectivist exam coherence is a thing that objectively “is.” Coherence is then reified and pointed to as a textual feature that can be measured.

My work with students and teachers at Rosa Parks was very much on my mind. I carried some of the student work with me to Chicago and I felt immersed in the deeply situated conversations. The students' writing, for me, is embedded in the lived experiences of those particular classrooms. Throughout the study, the research company listened to the teacher consultants, the teachers, the principals, as we explained our work together and the ongoing work of the school. They always seemed receptive and interested, and as I sit nervously wolfing down my breakfast and waiting for the meeting to begin, I wonder how this is going to play out in the report.

Schools in the national study represent just about all of the possibilities for public 7th and 8th grade schooling in the United States. There are rural, suburban and urban schools. Some of the schools serve 6th though 8th grade students while others serve K-12 populations. Some of the students are quite affluent while others are desperately poor. Some are decidedly middle class. Rosa Parks Middle, an urban school in a southeastern school district serving a large metropolitan area, is described by the numbers as 97 percent minority, 90 percent in poverty, and "low performing" in terms of standardized test scores. In my experience, these are some of the hardest working, dedicated educators I have ever met with and the students, some of the most complex and savvy. I'm wondering too, about how this national study will tell the story of this richly complex school.

The presentation begins. Power Point slides printed out on paper are read to us. We are walked through the quantitative data presented as scatter plots. The speaker says, "the research group will be reporting out averages rather than individual site data." Then she chuckles and says, "of course, there *is* no average among these sites and this work. What we've learned is that each Writing Project site is as unique as the schools they are working with, and that makes it difficult to report the ‘average’ in a way that reflects what is actually happening.” I smile. This is sounding hopeful!

“But,” she continues “requirements of random trails for such a large national program means that we report out the average.” My colleague Lauren and I exchange raised eyebrows as I get up to get both of us more coffee. These “averages” will make some things visible, but they will leave out, even hide others. They will quantify for the federal government that the National Writing Project is or is not “effective” based on “objective” analysis. And this objectivity will paper over and hide the rich, unique details about the students and teachers at Rosa Parks and the unique work of our Writing Project site in that school.

* * *

In this study, I want to claim the voices of Rosa Parks Middle School, the educators and the children. I want to look deeply at their narratives that work along with, and often against the school reform narrative, a narrative that uses objectivity to shape educational programs to prove direct impact on student learning. I want to show how this fuller, richer understanding of “what’s happening” calls into question the restrictive framework that objectivism claims.

In the emblematic story above, The National Research Study of the National Writing Project Sites is part of the school reform narrative. Objectivity and scientific study are constructed as the only way to determine success of federal programs. The belief in the ability of “objective” “scientific” process to “uncover” truths that already exist in the world (such as whether or not a program "works") is entrenched in the success of our nation. It is the rhetoric of progress and growth. It has become common sense that figuring out what skills are needed and then testing for those skills is the way to "improve." Objectivism is credited with successes like the Industrial Revolution and the Space Race (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1993, p. 85). Once the skills or steps are figured out, there is no reason to deviate. They become reified. Objectivism has the power to report out averages because the details, (and the fact that none of the sites or schools are average) do not "count" in this kind of metric. They are "outliers" or too far out of the ordinary to be "useful" in figuring out what works.

Objectivists believe that knowledge is unmediated - a mirror of the world that people can see and understand. Empiricists accomplish this "knowing" and "understanding" by separating the subject (person studying) from the object (thing being studied) through controlled studies. Observation and experimentation are done with the goal of finding "interpretation free brute-facts." Language is merely transmission of fact (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 31). The "details" of each of the schools in a study of this size would muddy the waters. Those are the things that must be separated. By that logic, standardized tests, written by people who have no contact with the children - separate the subject from the object, scientifically proving whether or not the child has learned. Writing, read by people who have no idea of the context the student is writing in, and then scored on a rubric, after the scorers have been "taught" to score "properly" does the same thing. It is logical and fair because it is "objective." And then the averages scientifically tell us "what is happening" or more specifically, what "thing" works, and what "thing" doesn't. For the objectivist, all of this knowledge is neutral. It's not constructing anything or affecting anything. It just "is," and it is fair, unbiased rather than subjective or discriminatory.

In our consumerist culture, the “thing” that works then becomes a product to be sold. It is no secret in our age of accountability that test making and scoring is big business, as is educational product making. These products, these commodified “things that work” are then marketed as tools to enable schools to “produce” engaged, talented students for the future workforce. Students who “get” the commodified literacy “thing” show that when they pass the standardized test, those who “don’t get it” according to the test are labeled as “low-achieving.” Because the tests are “unbiased,” and “scientific” those who don’t “get it” only have themselves to blame for not working hard enough with the “things” they were given.

The Writing Project site where I work has principals much as mine, built on constructivist logic. As a group, we see knowledge as socially constructed and power laden and calls the objectivist narrative into question. The Writing Project site sees writing as highly situated in conversations, making the “details” of the context in which the writing is happening of the upmost importance. For constructivist, it is impossible to separate the subject from the object. In fact, there are multiple subjectivities in dialogue and constructing the object. The researcher is constructing the object. To separate those “details” is to create a false representation of the object.

For an over-simplified example, think of a physicist Arthur Stanley Eddington's (1928) mathematical representation of an elephant sliding down a grassy hill. One can use physics to figure out the velocity times the weight of the object and plot its course accurately. However, what we don't know from the numbers is whether it is an elephant, a hippopotamus, semi-truck or a grand piano that is coming down the hill. Objectivism does not see that information as important. However, the home owner at the bottom of the hill might find that information very important when trying to determine whether or not the object could be lured to a different path or if she should just hightail it out of there and call the insurance company.

The Writing Project narrative of literacy and the objectivist narrative are a part of the same school reform narrative. Power/knowledge produces "prescriptions for relations of power" or social positioning within social relations (Foucault, 1977). The Writing Project narrative is positioned differently because of the hegemonic power of the objectivist narrative that says these details aren't what are reported out, because in a national study one is supposed to report the averages. Objectivism governs colleges of education, assessment, business and industry. It dwarfs work that challenges its limitations. It has the power to name, with claims to science and "objectivity," fairness, and truth. It also has the power to name the details it chooses to include and in the case of the national study, does name the NWP as a "successful" program and therefore a good use of federal funding.

That is one material result of the institutional power, but it also names a school like Rosa Parks, whose test scores do not go up when the Writing Project is there, as deficient. They have been "given" a "program that works" and yet, they still "failed." It's their fault for not "getting it." They have been given the scientifically proven tools, so the only way they could fail is to not "work" hard enough, not implement well enough, or just simply be below average and just not smart enough. The objectivist narrative names the school, and the people in it as low performing, where the "details" left out of the averages could name it differently and explain more complexly what is working and what is not - what's really going on. In essence the objective narrative produces one "truth" about the school, but because of the hegemonic power of the institution, that is considered "The Truth."

The ramifications of this naming doesn't seem so bad on the surface, especially for the National Writing Project since the study gave it a positive evaluation. On average, the Writing Project does great work on various areas of the teaching of writing (including the areas indicated in the research company's bar graphs) and even on standardized measures of various sorts. At Rosa Parks, the focus was entirely on standardized measures, except for experimentation with writing around the edges or in the underground work of the teachers. On the scatterplot, Rosa Parks fell well average. The school was an unnamed outlier on the chart. The national study can't explain what this Writing Project site was doing "wrong." It can only say in certain categories, the Writing Project didn't measure up. The idea then would be for the site to focus on areas where they needed to “improve.” For Rosa Parks and its students who are named as deficient, the study held little consequence. But the effects of objectivism of which this study was part certainly directly effected what happened there. It compelled a pedagogy focused around having the students repeat back information given to them in text books and by adults who told them the facts. Children were compelled to give back what was given to them without questioning it, or synthesizing it with things they know. Instruction became about passing the test and that solidified the social positioning of the children in the school. While students in other “high performing” schools were being pushed to be the “innovative,” “creative” people the corporate world says we need to stay “competitive” as a nation, the children at Rosa Parks were being taught that innovation and creativity is “wrong” and “disruptive.” And no one was allowed to question how these children’s “hard work” would translate to “success” in the way the American Dream promises.

Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (1988) describe social relations as being constructed in figured worlds, “socially and culturally constructed realm[s] of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others” (p.52). They describe these figured worlds as narrativized. “Narrativized . . . convey[s] the idea that many of the elements of a world relate to one another in the form of a story . . . a ‘standard plot’ against which narratives of unusual events are told” (p. 53). These narratives are not prescriptive, but are “significant as a backdrop for interpretation” (p. 54). The objective, scientific narrative of what counts as “knowledge” is then a part of the “standard plot” of Rosa Parks Middle. Some of the narratives working within or against that standard plot are the Writing Project narrative of what counts as “knowledge” as well as the narratives of the teachers and students in the building who are also trying to figure out how to perform school identities. The objectivist narrative has more institutional power than any of these other narratives and from this position it gets to name and choose what knowledge “counts” and has the material result of focusing the administrators on test scores and marginalizing the other narratives working in and through the school.

Foucault views power as “inhabit[ing] everyday practices” and views both knowledge and truth as effects of power (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 46). Power and knowledge are intimately connected in what he calls power/knowledge. Power is therefore not simply repressive as described through Gramsci’s (1971) hegemony, but also productive in that it produces knowledge. Within this understanding of power and knowledge, “Truth with a capitol ‘T’ or even local truths” cannot be claimed, but only “truth effects” about what is “normal,” how one should behave, or the way the world is viewed (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, p. 47). Language and discourse are implicit in the creation of and legitimization of “truth claims.”

Foucault’s discursive theory describes knowledge claims as *recording* “truth effects” which are produced, legitimated and “naturalized” within specific “regimes of truth” or “discourses.” For Foucault, discourse is more than language or text, it is also ways of thinking, talking, being and acting, consciously or unconsciously. Discourses are “grids of specification” that enable people to understand and categorize what is “normal” and what is “deviant” in a given socio-historical context. Language and knowledge claims are not neutral. They are forms of power/ knowledge that inscribe and produce the individual and the collective social body. Reproduction of the status quo happens through discursive and material practices in everyday life within the ever-present context of society, not just through the hegemony of the institution. They do legitimize the institution and the way people are positioned within the institution (Foucault, 1977 in Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, p. 47).

People are then a part of multiple discourses all the time and these discourses are constantly interacting and producing “truth claims” and “legitimizing narratives” (Lyotard, 1984) about what is natural and legitimized. Foucault explains this as an inner war for the production of meaning. It is here that Foucault’s discourse producing power/knowledge intersects with Bakhtin’s (1981) socio-historical/ ideological theory of language and ideological becoming. Bakhtin explains that words and utterances are not neutral; they contain worldviews. Those worldviews are created through a constant “process of assimilating our consciousness to the ideological world” (p. 341). This ideological becoming is “an intense struggle within human subjects for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions and values” (p. 346). Bakhtin’s ideological becoming describes the *multiple* “regimes of truth,” “discourses” or “narratives” operating in us all the time to produce “knowledge” that legitimizes claims about “normal” and “deviant” behavior. His social theory of language explains how those “truth claims” infuse utterances. The study of language then, is key to critical social research that wants to inquire into how goods and resources are distributed and social positioning happens in society (Fairclough, 2003).

Sociologist Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argue that the school world works to reproduce dominant ideology. Bourdieu and Passeron also point out that the dominant ideology is arbitrary and socially constructed. School ways of knowing and being are created by the dominant group and thereby reflect and legitimize the ways of being in the world of that group. The socialization process is a part of the “hidden curriculum” of schools described by critical theorist and education researcher Henry Giroux (1983). Foucault (1977) names the school as one of the great “normalizing” institutions of what he calls the carceral society. He believed that these institutions actually produce delinquency. In this way the power of the carceral society produces “truth” about what is and what is not considered delinquency. Student discourse that does not “fit” into or disrupts the socialization process of school marks that student as deficient and delinquent.

So, while the institutionalized, objectivist school reform narrative is indeed acting on and through the people in Rosa Parks, the unique life histories of these people are acting on and through that narrative when they respond to the way the institution positions them. In her study of the way class affects women’s identity construction, Bettie (2003) describes this phenomena of institutional positioning as making a person feel as though she is “passing in drag” when she attempts to be a part of a new social situation. It is the institutional power to inscribe identity that makes an individual “feel” as if she “doesn’t belong.” Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (1998) describe these unique and agentic responses to positioning (identity formation), where life histories bump up against new narratives, as "improvisations” which have the potential to alter the hegemonic "regime of truth." These improvisations then are a sort of best guess based in what is known as a person encounters new, or unknown social relations. The power of those improvisations though depends on how recognizable they are in the figured world. If no one recognizes the improvisation, then the person is marked as an out-sider or “wrong” (Gee, 2010).

In this study, I look closely at the ways in which the students in the school are caught in the struggle between the objective narrative of literacy, particularly as that narrative positions them within the urban school reform narrative, and competing narratives of literacy that call the objectivist narrative into question. In the study, I look closely at four students who are negotiating these narratives of literacy in two social studies classes that invite them to engage with the content of the course by connecting it with their experiences outside of school. They respond to that "new" situation with various improvisations that are discounted by the test scores claimed by the objectivist narrative. School writing requires students to negotiate the various narratives (their genres and forms), while also engaging in other narratives of the content area, the school, the classroom, and their worlds outside of school. In this study I am interested in how those negotiations hold the potential to marginalize students when their improvisations are not recognizable in the figured world of the school, or when they provide students and teachers with a way to inquire into legitimizing narratives and create possibilities for new positioning.

Foucault (1977) calls on researchers to map the “micro-powers” at work in the world. The mapping of the ways students are positioning themselves and being positioned by various conflicting narratives in the institution of schooling in the United States is the missing key to the project of educational reform. My mapping of Rosa Parks is a representation of the school that seeks to bring into the focus the complexities that are lost in the “averages” representation of the school. My representation affords me a method by which to focus on the way power is working in Rosa Parks Middle School as students negotiate multiple, conflicting narratives in order to write and enact “school writing” identities. In this study I examine and map various narratives that appear in the school world and narratives in students’ writing in social studies classrooms. I focus on the instances where the students’ improvisations in negotiating these narratives disrupt the socialization process of the classroom.

The objectivist narrative of school reform also has the power to name “what counts” as “school writing.” At the time of this study, in the state in which this study takes place, “writing” doesn’t actually appear in the standard course of study for social studies. The real reference to writing instruction is found under the "Writing Instruction System" on the state’s Department of Education website that is under the heading “Accountability Curriculum and Reform Effort.” Here, the site explains that content specific writing is supposed to be uploaded for assessment into the “Writing Instruction System” and that it should be a "natural part of the classroom." The message is that writing isn't part of the standard course of study, but it is a big part of accountability, so it needs to be measureable, which lends itself to five-paragraph theme writing across the curriculum. Students need to be writing in a "standard" format and saying standardized things in order for the writing to be measureable under the objectivist narrative. Proponents of the five-paragraph essay argue that "some students" (this is often code for working class students, students of poverty, and/ or students of color; like the students at Rosa Parks) need the "structure" the practice provides. Brannon, Courtney, Urbanski, and colleagues (2008) argue that such efficiency models of writing instruction "in fact [employ] the 'efficiency excuse' to rationalize sorting students into the haves and have-nots" (p. 19). The body of work surrounding the accountability trends in the narrative of school reform in the United States and its links to the trends of standardization and efficiency in neoliberal economic policy explains how this sorting is a growing part of educational policy (ex. Gallagher, 2011; Comstock, Cain & Brannon, 2010; Horner and Lu, 2009, Lipman, 2004, Welch, 2007). The standardization and efficiency narrative is deeply linked to the objectivist narrative in school reform. It names the children and educators in Rosa Parks as being in need of careful structures in order to efficiently turn around test scores. Standardization makes it easier to objectively and scientifically score writing and "see" if the students are learning to write and that money is being spent wisely, not wasted. Standardization makes "sorting" efficient. The material result at Rosa Parks is five-paragraph theme writing, as well as the purchasing of highly efficient computer programs produced by private companies that tell students what to write and then score it. These private companies also have the to power to name what “counts” in school writing and school “knowledge” and writing becomes a “commodified thing that students “get” if they work hard “enough.” In this study, I will be looking at what happens when other conflicting narratives of school writing call the objectivist narrative of writing into question with a focus on what happens when students are negotiating those narratives when they write in a social studies class.

In order to understand the way students’ linguistic and discursive moves are operating within and against the socialization process of schooling, I will focus on the theories that underpin an understanding of the school as a figured world, and the impact on children as they negotiate this world. In particular, my questions focus on 1) How various narratives construct the figured world of Rosa Parks Middle School; 2) How children use writing to negotiate their ideas within and against the narratives of their school world; and 3) What disruptions various narratives bring to the socializing activity system of the school word.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In what follows I will explore the body of work in school reform, composition, literacy and genre studies discussing the complexities of opening up classrooms to students' lived experiences in ways that hold the potential for transformation of student positionality in the material world. From there I will begin to offer possibilities for working with students to map the "micro-powers" at work in their language and texts as instances of the ways they are being positioned by the institution of schooling so that teachers and students might imagine alternative structures.

Urban School Reform

Language, power and the reproductive potential of schooling I mentioned in Chapter 1 are evident in a close look at the literature on school reform. Right now, reform is talked about in terms of standards, accountability and competition in the form of Common Core Standards adopted in 48 states and Race for the Top funding. Since the signing of the *No Child Left Behind Act* in January 2002, educators have been warned of what will happen if their schools don't succeed, meaning raise test scores. The scientific objective measure of school success through standardized test scores is the dominant narrative of school reform. The objectivist discourse along with market education produces the common sense notion of consequences of "failure" to raise test scores. Parents have the option to transfer out of that school (assuming that there are enough seats in a higher performing school in their district to house all who want to transform) and the state will "take-over" the school in order to "fix" the problem. The standards based movement establishes a binary between "good" and "bad" students, teachers and schools, or in power/knowledge terms, the language of accountability produces and legitimizes "truth effects" about delinquency or normalcy in schools based on standardized test scores. "Good" teachers, (aka teachers with high test scores) are allowed to make decisions in their own classrooms. "Bad" teachers (aka teachers with low test scores) are handed "teacher-proof" lesson plans and told not to deviate from them. The December 8, 2008 issue of *Time Magazine's* cover touts "How to Fix American's Schools" and teases a story about the head of Washington DC's schools' "battle against bad teachers." It all sounds very logical and efficient. "Bad" schools, teachers and students are lacking what is necessary to succeed. "Bad" schools, teachers and students are deficient. They need "fixing."

As a part of the body of work on assessment that critiques the objectivist, standards, efficiency and competition based narrative of school reform, Knoblauch and Brannon (1993) explain that objectivisms' claim to empirical studies as the "gold standard" is based in the notion of "unbiased observation and systematic argumentation." The idea is that results would be "supposedly" free of "beliefs, superstitions, emotional excesses, and prejudices" that would be present in subjective studies (p. 84). They argue though that this "objectivity" is a fiction because all knowledge is power laden and socially constructed. Claims of "objectivity" simply cover up the way power is working.

In a recent essay critiquing assessment, Gallagher (2011) explains how objectivism in the form of the assessment and accountability reform agenda is linked up with neoliberal economic policy. Neoliberalism is concerned with keeping as much of social life as possible in the hands of private interests. Its economic policy is based in faith in a free market, competition, and supply and demand to balance social life. It however fails to address the issue that in order for there to be winners, there must also be losers. And in the case of education reform, that means there must be high achievers and low achievers for the system to work. Gallagher points out that accountability and standardized testing are quite useful for the neoliberal agenda in that it keeps education "in crisis," provides surveillance, promotes self-regulation and supposedly requires technical skill that only private vendors can give us (p. 454). Foucault (1977) would say that the objectivist accountability narrative serves as a perfect Panapticon, normalizing the behavior of people and ensuring that they stay in their social positions no matter how hard they work.

Looking beyond the seductive logic of the objectivist standardized test score data one notices that the vast majority of "bad" teachers are working in large urban school districts, in buildings that are falling apart, with class sizes moving past 40. It is suspicious that the conditions Jonathan Kozol described in his 1991 best seller *Savage Inequalities* are markedly similar to the conditions he describes in his post NCLB book (also a best seller) *The Shame of the Nation*

(2005). Further investigation of these “failing” schools reveals the racial and class sorting of the accountability model as described by Lipman (2009) in her study Chicago Public Schools. Here she is using Foucault’s power/knowledge lens to discuss standardized tests as “a ritual of power.”

> It embodies the power of the state to sort and define students and schools, creating and reinforcing oppressive power relations (Carlson, 1997) of race and class. “Failing” schools and “failing” students (and by implication, “failing” communities), most African American and Latino/a, are measured against the “success” of schools that are generally more white and middle class (p. 370-371).

Lipman’s words point to the material results of a standards-based accountability program that fails to look at the complexities of race and class in education. It produces, or in the case of “failing” urban schools, reproduces social inequality.

In her book *Ghetto Schooling*, Jean Anyon (1997) traces the failed history of urban school reform in Newark, New Jersey and illustrates the material results of that failure in one elementary school. Anyon points to social isolation in the form of ghettos and the schools in them that separate and keep separate poor minorities from the rest of the city as the real barrier to urban school reform. Through Marcy School, Anyon tells a story of how this social isolation leaves the teachers and students with curriculum and materials that are inappropriate and unusable for the students, extreme frustration on the part of the administrators, teachers and students and over all a hostile work and learning environment. She calls for reform, without apologizing for her "idealism," of the political and economic forces that create these isolated ghettos to begin with.

Payne's (2008) post NCLB reflection on the Chicago City Schools' reform project echoes Anyon's discussions of the socio-cultural gulf between reformers, or "suits" and the teachers, parents and children they mean to work with. Both author's explain that until that gulf can be bridged, until both the white, suit wearing executives and university faculty and the minority community activists and teachers can find a way to talk with, learn from and trust each other, nothing will actually change. In an impassioned Foucaultian argument about the social reproduction in the current school reform agenda in the United States Ayers and Ayers (2011) explain that only real result of the accountability and standards agenda has been to focus educators on how to pass the test rather than on questioning whether or not the test is measuring what we want to measure if the goal is actual reform of urban schools.

Anyon points to disillusioned teachers working in a hostile environment as a barrier to Urban reform. Payne explains that the "consequence" method of the standards movement is making this worse and certainly not alleviating the actual issues causing it in the first place. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) points out that "too often teachers have a poor opinion of themselves and their profession" (p. 34). Kozol (2005) argues "Few teachers, of whatever age, can take it as an evidence of even minimal respect for their intelligence to be provided with a 'teacher proof' curriculum" (p.268). He then goes on to marvel over how administrators at state and local levels embrace and champion such programs. In the large southeastern district in which this study takes place, memos to teachers detailing prescriptive teacher requirements are labeled ominously as “non-negotiable.” Teachers in these schools, like the teachers a Rosa Parks, are stripped of their status as knowledgeable professionals capable of thinking critically and collaboratively about the needs of their students and then seeking and creating knew knowledge that address those needs. Both the students and the teachers are labeled as deficient, broken, not capable of sharing ideas worth hearing.

Milner (2008) describes deficit discussions as focused on what marginalized populations do not do and have rather what they have to offer, and then put blame on these populations “rather than focusing on systemic, institutional, and bureaucratic barriers that can prevent teachers and students in urban education from realizing and reaching their potential” (p. 1575). Deficit notions do not take the social conditions of marginalized populations into account. The objectivist narrative of school reform says that these conditions do not matter. National news magazines give front-page coverage to leaders who say that all that matters is the results on those tests. A good teacher will work hard; will stop at nothing to help students succeed in the face of horrific conditions. What we need are super teachers, teachers as martyrs (Ripley, 2008). Then we will not have to deal with the conditions. As Anyon explained in 1997, such notions serve to maintain these poor conditions and therefore the, culture of power.

There is a large body of current literature offering scathing critiques of deficit models of education as instruments used by those in power to keep control of cultural capital and the culture of power. The literature urges educators and researchers to stop blaming marginalized students and work instead to study the social conditions that work to keep them in their marginalized positions. (eg. Apple, 1995, Anyon, 1980, Aronowitz,S. & Giroux, H. 1985; Brannon, Courtney & Urbanski, 2008; Delpit, 2005; Dutro, Kazemi, Balf & Lin, 2008; Dworin and Bomer, 2008; Fairbrother, 2008; Kozol, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Milner, 2008; Teale, Paciga, & Hoffman, 2007) In fact, the June 2007 edition of *The Urban Review* is centered around Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain's (1988) concept of figured worlds and how the knowledge that we are all actors in these socially constructed worlds is conducive to the potential for social change. The articles in the edition focus on the concepts of student identity in the figured worlds of urban schools as a way to de-bunk deficit models and draw our attention to the social conditions in which students are functioning (Hatt, 2007; Michael, Andrade, & Bartlett, 2007; Rubin, 2007;Urrieta, 2007). But these important works fall short of looking closely at deficit constructions of teacher.

Milner's (2008) study, however, focuses on teachers by beginning a discussion on teacher counter-narratives that connect with urban students and what they have to offer to the classroom. Milner adds an important critical layer to the mythical notions of martyrdom, optimism and hard work that are a part of the objectivist layer of school reform in the conclusion of his study "They [the teachers] remain as I do, critical of current social, historic, economic, and political ills and also optimistic and hopeful about the transformational change that can emerge when we refuse to be defeated" (p.1597). He acknowledges that such work does require significant effort and hope, but that a critical look at the social conditions and efforts towards transforming those conditions is the place for hard work and hope.

Rather than looking carefully, at the social conditions at work to keep urban teachers, and through them, their students, in their marginalized positions, the remedy offered for “bad” teachers has long been the myth of the teacher as martyr. Objectivism works to scientifically find the “things” that will “work” for students. “The super teacher” then needs only to work hard to get these “things” to her students. If the students are “getting it,” or aren’t “succeeding” on the test, then the teacher must be lazy and bad. Hard work is the keystone of the American Dream and objectivism gives people the “things” they need to “produce” and “succeed. Super teachers or martyrs, individuals who sacrifice everything, who put their students before family, career, and even their own health, are prevalent in popular culture. However, movies like *Lean on Me*, *Dangerous Minds* and *Freedom Writers* cannot be held totally accountable for the construction of the martyr teacher. We see the myth perpetuated in education literature where it is held up as the only alternative to the deficient “bad” teachers; where teachers are blamed for being “quitters or failures” (Haberman, 1985) or “uncaring” Valenzuala, 1999). The objectivist narrative produces that common sense that teachers need to simply follow scripted curriculums created by bureaucrats who rarely visit classrooms (Carnoy, 2007). In chapter four, I will look at the way the objectivist urban school reform narrative is operating in and through the administrators, teachers and consultants at Rosa Parks Middle School.

Contexts and Conversations

The objectivist urban school reform narrative is also operating on and through the students at Rosa Parks Middle School. When students write in service of learning at Rosa Parks they are entering a conversation about social studies from the context of students learning about social studies in school in the United States, where this urban reform narrative is dominant. Compositionists Judith and Geoffrey Summerfield (1983) argue that "any role, and the context that requires or provokes it, takes effect not only in action but in language, or speech acts" (p. 27). The Summerfields point out that people are always participating in some role, whether they realize it or not. In fact, people move through many different roles within a day without consciously thinking about it. However, people notice how role, context and discourse intersect and work together to make meaning when someone says or does something that does not fit in that context. When the words or action do not "fit" the context, people feel uncomfortable for the person who committed the faux pas, or may even take that as a sign that the person does not belong in the context.

Coming from the fields of anthropology, sociology and psychology, Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (1988) use Bakhtin's (1981) theory of language along with Vygotsky's (1978) ideas of the socio-cultural nature of language and literacy as a mediating tool to think about roles and contexts in the broader landscape of day-to-day existence. Their concept of figured worlds as "socially and culturally constructed realm[s] of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others" offers a way to think about people's roles in these fictionalized, narrativized worlds (p. 52). (italics are mine) Drawing on Bakhtin in their discussion of how people author themselves within figured worlds Holland et al. say that " . . . the author works within, or at least against, a set of constraints that are also a set of possibilities or utterances." These social constraints or "enabling constraints" as the Summerfields call them, allow people to be recognized in a context or figured world. However, these figured worlds or contexts and the roles people enact within them are not static nor are they isolated. People bring all of their roles with them into each social world they inhabit. Often, social roles collide with one another. Someone may be scholar, teacher, mother, and child from a working class background all at the same time. Each of those roles informs and potentially transforms the other.

Gee (2010) frames these figured worlds we inhabit as "simplified theories of the world that are meant to help people go on about the business of life when one is not allowed the time to think through and research everything before acting" (location 1910). These simplified theories of the world are narratives that people hold to be "typical or normal" in their minds (location 1920). But, as Foucault (1980) explains, "normal" is power laden. "Normal" is different for different groups of people because "normal" is based on experience and what society dictates to be normal or typical. Gee's (2010) use of Holland et al.'s figured worlds as a context building tool for the analysis of language through critical discourse analysis places emphasis on the "ways in which people picture or construe aspects of the world in their heads" based on social constructions of "right" and "normal" (location 2043). In this way, Gee is using language and text to track or map the social construction of "normal" in a specific language moment. He is examining what language does in the social, historical and material world. Gee provides a way of thinking small interactions at Rosa Parks, and the multiple narratives there "as they operate to create the complex patterns of institutions and cultures across societies and history." (Gee, 2010, location 2052).

Allen Luke's (1992) critical sociological study of literacy in Australian schools provides an example of research into these narratives, or as he describes it "the complex fabric of texts and discourses through which social representation and reproduction is affected" (p 108). Luke situates the micro, in this particular study, the discourse in a whole language classroom, as an instance of the macro, the larger social institute of schooling. By paying particular attention to the intersecting and conflicting narratives in these classroom moments as an instance of the larger institution, Luke illustrates the "productivity" of power at work in the students. They were not merely "repressed" in the classroom-reading environment. They were "produced" in that they came to actually "desire" certain kinds of reading practices in the collective identity of "readers" in the classroom. Using Foucault's ideas of power/knowledge along with Bourdieu's theory of habitus, Luke explores the "regimes of truth" or normalizing narratives that are legitimized, naturalized and *inscribed* on the children's actual bodies. The "correct training" in the everyday practices of the classroom inscribed institutional power on the children. The classroom is contributing to the collection of narratives that the students put into practice in the figured world of literacy.

Luke illustrates the way that even the most seemingly emancipatory classroom practices like whole language reading instruction in the case of his study, or classrooms that attempt to connect student lives to classroom material by inviting them to use forms of composing as in the case of my study, are still sites of socialization. Luke explains that people cannot ever really escape the socialization process of school; however, people can be aware of the process and critical of the way the power of the dominant group is operating here.

Studying these moments of entering a social context and negotiating for recognition, and the "micro-powers" at work in that context holds potential for transformation of that context. Transformation happens when "whatever you have done is similar enough to other performances to be recognizable" and "different enough from what has gone before" (Gee, 1999, p. 27). If what a person is saying, writing, or doing is not recognizable, then she is not "in" the conversation. If her improvisation is not recognizable within the figured world, she is an outsider/ other in the figured word. The potential for outside-ed-ness is present in the most well-meaning and emancipatory of classroom practices. In chapters 5 and 6 I will examine 4 students improvisations when writing in social studies in order to think about moments of outside-ed-ness and transformative potential.

Funds of Knowledge and Conflicting Narratives

Over a decade ago, Derrick Owens (1994) wrote about what happens when we as teachers do not turn a critical lens on the socializing nature of schooling with his work documenting the narrowness of practices in composition and the socializing nature of the types of writing typically “allowed” in writing classrooms. He notes that when teaching practices try to “make students look, write and talk like us,” when those practices do not value student improvisations and the potential for new ways of being, meaning and knowing that accompany them, those practices are inculcating students with only the school way of being and knowing. But what of the students who cannot locate their own stories in this one way of being and knowing? Owens charges teachers of writing to delight in the conflicting narratives in their classrooms, to see the possibility in them, and to position them in a way that makes that possible, valuable and important, rather than attempting to smooth out, ignore, or hide those conflicts. In that same year, Moll & González’s ground breaking study (1994) looked closely at “language-minority” children and the possibilities that exist when the ways of knowing and being from their typically marginalized homes and communities are re-visioned as assets to students learning. Their study illustrates that in order to tap into the transformative potential present, there is work to be done beyond recognizing, valuing and delighting in those conflicting narratives because the narratives that counter those of the school world are still outside the narrative of the school world and therefore carry a lesser value.   Moll & González posit that a careful examination of counter narratives in order to locate the recognizable intersections between the worlds the narratives represent has the potential to yield new ways of meaning, being and knowing.

More recently, a large body of work in literacy studies argues for the opening up of the classroom to the funds of knowledge students bring with them to school. Moje, Ciechanowski, Kramer, Ellis, Carrillo, & Collazo (2004) define funds of knowledge as the "systems and networks of relationships that shape the oral and written texts that students make meaning of and produce" (p. 38). The funds come from families, peer groups and a vast number of other social contexts. These funds have a direct impact on narratives of the "appropriate way" of acting, thinking, talking, reading, and writing students are "try [ing] to learn" or being socialized into in school (Moje, et al, 2004, p. 38). Arguments continue to be made for consciously bringing these funds of knowledge already impacting student learning into the classroom so that students might access them to learn content. This study will agree with and then complicate these arguments arguments by taking a critical stance towards the tendency to romanticize these funds of knowledge and blame schools for not recognizing them, rather than thinking about the way power works to position children in the school and society.

Such bringing together of funds of knowledge has been talked about as creating a "third space." Moje et al. (2004) offer an intensive review of the literature on third space and point to three understandings of the term. One is a building of bridges between home and school knowledge, another as a way of navigating across and being successful in varied discourse communities, and a third as a way of creating new knowledge and discourses by bringing together competing ways of knowing and being. They draw on all three notions in order to be change agents by using third space as a scaffold that will help students better negotiate different discursive spaces and then focus that on a model in which conflicting narratives are used to create “new texts and new literacy practices.” Fitts (2009) extends Moje et al.’s study with her examination of third space in a 5th grade bilingual classroom. Fitts draws attention to Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1990) idea of arbitrary nature of the dominant narrative. The narrative is dominant because of the legitimization of that narrative by society. Its dominance is in fact socially constructed. Fitts explains that in order to truly create opportunities for third space and through that “bicultural ways of knowing” (location 313) teachers must encourage styles of classroom participation, relationship building and narratives that are *outside of* the arbitrary dominant narratives, not simply for the sake of expression, but as a valued part of the business of teaching and learning. Fitt’s (2009) extension of third space highlights the arbitrary nature of dominant narratives and offers a foundation from which educators might re-vision the colliding and marginalized narratives Owens and Moll & González mention. By thinking about how dominant narratives are arbitrary, students and teachers can begin to think about how conflicting narratives are always working on and through that dominant narrative transforming it in small ways.

Highly contextualized New Literacy Studies like those of Mahiri (2005) and his students in What They Don’t Learn in Schools add another layer of validity and complexity to the argument for value of inviting “outside” funds of knowledge and the literacy practices that inform them into the classroom with a look at the rich and sophisticated nature of many non-school, often vilified, literacy practices. In this collection, the authors look closely at the complexity of the literacy practices surrounding things like “Street Scripts” (Mahiri, 2005), low-rider culture (Cowen, 2005) and romance novel reading (Stanley, 2005). The studies in Mahiri’s collection raise the question of what is and is not appropriate in school. The students and the literacy practices under study are all marginalized by the dominant culture represented in school. Stanley makes an important argument in her piece about how romance novel reading can be an act of resistance and an act that reproduces the marginalizing power of the dominant culture at the same time. The same could be said for the poetry and songs in “Street Scripts” as well as drawings and writings present in the low-rider culture.

Moje’s (2000) study of the literacy practices of gangster adolescents describes the argument Stanley is making in a startlingly clear way. Moje notes that though these literacy practices are powerful for marginalized youth attempting to “be a part of a group that valued their experiences even as they lived in a community and school culture that devalued, dismissed and vilified them on the basis of their color, culture, or class” (p. 680), they “also serve to reinforce and reproduce negative, stereotypical, and misleading images of young people . . . that support their continued marginalization” (p. 681). Reading Moje’s words I was struck by the vicious cycle these texts can create for the students I worked with at Rosa Parks. On one hand the students in Moje’s study are carving out a place for themselves in the story of society that works to shut them out. On the other hand she points to how that very act is forcing them out of the center of society and onto the margins. The problem is that schools hold the promise that if the students could just “get” the “right” language, they would be in the center of society, but in fact that isn’t true. School is socializing them into being on the margins, where they belong.

Yosso (2005) adds a pertinent critical race theory lens to the discussion of working with students’ marginalized funds of knowledge. Yosso critiques the way the dominant narrative ignores Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1990) fundamental assertion about the arbitrary nature of the dominant discourse while taking up their notion of cultural capitol in a way that serves to marginalize non-dominant ways of knowing and being and solidify the legitimacy of the dominant narrative. She points to the issue of white middle class ways of knowing and being as the “standard by which all others are judged” (location, 293). The “others” are then constructed as being without cultural capitol and therefore in need of direct instruction in order to “get it.” Yosso puts forward the notion of “cultural wealth” as a direct challenge to this deficit view of communities of color and the marginalization enacted through current ideas of cultural capitol as the middle class ways of knowing and being that must be obtained in order to have any chance of social mobility. Yosso’s critique offers another theoretical lens through which to think about Moje et al’s (2004) discussion of how students construct their own third spaces within classrooms and observation that while funds of knowledge can be powerfully helpful to students seeking to acquire a discipline-specific literacy, these funds of knowledge must be carefully invited into the classroom for students to make the most of them. The funds of knowledge must be intentionally viewed as cultural wealth and the notion of non-dominant ways of knowing and being as deficient of culture capitol must be debunked.

Lee's (2007) cultural modeling framework asserts that all students come to school with valuable cultural resources from their experiences outside of school. She goes on to say that "It is the job of schools (and those who research learning and development) to understand those resources and their application to the demands of school-based learning" (p. 10). Lee points out that most of the research surrounding theories of teaching and learning are based in white, middle class populations and that "theories of deviance" are centered on people of color. Her framework illustrates how the cultural funds of knowledge, specifically those of poor black youth labeled as "struggling readers" directly address the critical thinking and problem solving skills required of high school students.

Most recently, the April 2010 issue of *English Education* and the November 2010 issue of *Research in Teaching English* are devoted to the study of not only inviting student funds of knowledge and thereby outside Discourses in to the classroom in order to express these differences, but a valuing of them at the level of Lee's (2007) Cultural Modeling framework. Particularly notable is Martínez's (2010) study of Spanglish as a potential tool for developing academic literacy. She extends Lee's work with African American students to focus on ways to leverage the cultural ways of knowing Latino and Latina students bring to the classroom with them. She, like Lee and Dyson (2010) also problematizes the dominant understanding of "academic literacy" thereby seeking a critical literacy where students can learn to use the dominant discourse in order to disrupt and critique its arbitrary, dominant nature.

In his discussion of the importance of discourse analysis in Critical Social Research, linguist Fairclough (2003) discusses the way discourses have the power to act as “imaginaries” that “imagine possible social practices and networks of social practices” (p. 207). These discourses then can become a means by which people form new ways of knowing and being and new identity formation. Fairclough points to how a “stage” of this complex process is “rhetorical deployment” wherein “people may learn new discourses and use them for certain purposes while at the same time self consciously keeping a distance from them.” (p.208) The “distance” is the key here. The students in Moje, Mahiri, Cowen and Stanly’s studies, and researchers like Lee, Dyson, and Martínez are trying to carve out a space for themselves and students in a society that doesn’t value their discourse practices, but in doing so, they are reinforcing the marginalization imposed on them by the dominant narrative. Fairclough points to this distancing as a stage in inculcation of new ways of being and knowing imposed by discourses as imaginaries, and once people are “through” this stage of discourse and take ownership of the discourse, they are then unconsciously positioned within that discourse. Funds of Knowledge researchers are working to bring that positioning to a conscious level so that transformation of the dominant narrative can happen. Chapters 5 and 6 will look closely at the various narratives the students are negotiating in their writing and how that is positioning them in the world of the school.

Identity Formation and Transformative Potential

James Paul Gee (2011) defines identity as “being recognized as a certain kind of person in a given context.” In this way, Gee is describing the multiple subjectivities that make up identity rather than a static essence or way of being. As I mentioned above, Holland et al. use Bakhtin’s idea of authoring of the self in order to describe how people form identities in a given social context or figured world. They explain that identity is in fact situational in that people are propelled by the subject position in which they find themselves. These subject positions matter quite a bit as “selves” are formed by history, society and culture and therefore some have more power than others.

When people find themselves in an unfamiliar social situation or figured world, they “become caught in a tension between past histories that have settled in them” and the present narrative that somehow attracts or requires their participation (Holland, et al., p 4). In order to participate in that narrative, the person must improvise their identity or role in that world because they are in a situation for which they have no known narrative to follow. If that improvisation is recognizable enough in that world, it holds the potential to transform that world (p. 18). Gee (2011) offers a framework for using identity as an analytic lens by sketching out four ways to view identity. These categories are not static and most identities makes use of all four, but focusing on a specific category enables researchers to complexly map identity construction in a given context. The Nature-identity is developed from forces of nature. The Institution-identity is inscribed on a person by the power of the institutional authority. The Discourse-identity is recognized in discourse and dialogue with other individuals, and the Affinity-identity is share by participating in Affinity groups. This study will make particularly use of the I (Institution)-identity and D (Discourse)-identity as analytic tools in chapters 5 and 6.

There is a rich body of work that examines such improvisations as people negotiate various competing narratives in order to function in the world (ex. Cintron, 1997; Bettie, 2003; Kirkland & Jackson, 2011; Lindquist, 2002; Wray 2006). These works examine what happens when the improvisations disrupt the dominant narrative, and how people are positioned in these negotiations. Lindquist, explains the potential for change in these negotiations in her study the performance of argument in a working class bar. The "regulars" argue in a way that helps them to understand who they are and while individuals arguing in the bar do not really change each other's world views, the solidarity of the bar group goes with the individuals when they leave and inhabit other worlds. In their stance, they have possibility of change, collectively over time. As Linquist states the group "construct [s] a safe place where it can explain itself to itself and to say 'what if." (location 3172). Improvisations are moments of potential for change.

Moje (2000) ends her article with a call for critical literacy in classrooms serving adolescent students. She explains that romanticized notions of gang related literacy practices are as dangerous to youth as the vilified notions of the same. Drawing on the work of Lisa Delpit (1988) as well as critiques of expressivist notions of literacy instruction that simply invite students to express themselves freely based on their "own" essentialzed experiences without taking into account the social construction of identity and the world, Moje asks us to envision classrooms where students and teachers examine their literacy tools and learn to improvise and use them across multiple contexts and conversations and ultimately transform the dominant narrative that marginalizes them. As I've mentioned above, the recent body of work extends that vision to argue for a classroom that engages students first in an understanding of the arbitrary nature of the dominant narrative, then makes use of the dominant narrative to debunk its position of power. Students and teachers can work together in classrooms to understand how discourse is always in flux because of the hybridity of all language, because of the way people bring all of their roles into a given moment and context. For this reason, there is always a possibility for change. This is the modicum of agency Holland et al. explain people have in socially constructed worlds. These moments then hold transformative potential that is possible through collective action over time.

Rowsell and Pahl (2007) provide a theory and methodology for thinking about such a classroom with their notion of text making as sedimentation of identity into that text. Essentially, "texts can be seen as traces of social practice, and their materiality is important in revealing those traces" (pg. 388). For Rowsell and Pahl the materiality of texts equates with the multimodality of texts. They explain how all of the modes that are employed to make a single text (orality, written, etc.) reflect the text producer's identity. Beyond putting forward a theoretical framework for literacy studies, they encourage teachers to use student texts to trace students' cultural patterns. Rowsell and Pahl show, like

Luke, that highly contextualized case studies are instances larger social practices with histories are enacted in day-to day practices. The notion of sedimented identities in texts can be used to trace students positioning of themselves in the world with a cultural historical lens and the way society's reaction to that positioning constructs the students in turn. Sedimented identities in text can perhaps make use of the "stage" of inculcation in discourse that Fairclough (2003) describes where the discourse is used intentionally in some situations while maintaining a distance and through that potentially bring small changes to the discourse.

Bartlett and Holland (2002) raise an even more complex issue with the notion of critical literacy/ literacy for liberation and identity with their study of adult literacy programs in Brazil. They point to the social practice of shaming in Brazil and illustrate how the literacy coaches are actually reinforcing the dominant ideology of one correct way to speak and thereby mean. Speaking "improperly" marks people as "uneducated" and they are positioned on the margins of society through public "shaming." This social context makes it difficult for the students to "cultivate identities as educated people that will persist beyond the classroom" (p. 18). Not only do the external constructions of "uneducated" exist there, but the students talked of living in fear of being viewed in this way and "shamed" in public.   In the study, Bartlett and Holland explain how the literacy coaches attempt to deal with the culture of shaming by inviting friendship (implying equality among students and teachers) and talking and listening in the classroom in order to help the students feel as if they had something to say. Bartlett and Holland echo the concerns of critical race theorists like Lisa Delpit (1995) when they point out that simply talking and listening in the classroom does not deal with the way the students will be received outside of the classroom any more than simply inviting students to share their non-dominant narratives of knowing and being through literacy practices might.

Bartlett and Holland argue that in order to effect change, educators and their students must find ways to "interrupt or call into question the way students [have] been historically been positioned" (p. 19). This interruption begins with an examination of what exactly qualifies in the dominant narrative as the school appropriate ways of being and knowing and then an examination of how those values are limiting and limited. Then teachers and students can work towards re-imagining the socially and historically constructed figured world of school and students can find ways to "reposition themselves socially through the use of cultural artifacts" (p. 20). In this case, the cultural artifacts are the literacy practices that bring non-school sanctioned notions into the school world. Holland and Bartlett's assertion that sometimes the artifacts themselves need to be refigured echoes Moje's (2000) assertion that ways must be found to help students use their literacy skills across contexts and conversations and Lee's assertion that it is the job of teachers and researcher to do so. Rowsell and Pahl point to student texts as a beginning point for teachers and students who wish to engage in such work.

Which Genre? Genre as "Othering"

The body of work I've examined thus far envisions and argues for classrooms where the teacher's goal is to create a community of practice where students can examine and use their literacy practices and think about how small improvizations hold the potential to chance classroom cultures by giving students and teachers different ideas of themselves and different ways of being in the world, rather than feeling helplessly trapped in the status quo of the dominant discourse. These different ideas of self and ways of being in the world are always problematic in the way that they are situated within the dominant narrative, but they are what make change possible. Bazerman (1997) paints a picture of possibility for such a classroom through the use of genre study with his claim that "If we provide students some analytical vocabulary to reflect on how genres relate to the dynamics of situations, they will be able to observe and think about their new situations with some sophistication and strategic appropriateness" (p. 10).

Bawarshi (2003) explains that genres "help us to function within particular situations at the same time as they help shape the ways we come to know and organize these situations." (24) The traditional, "container view" of genre seen in many classrooms ignores the social function of genre and its ability to aid in the generating of new knowledge rather than simply containers for pouring knowledge into (23). If we view genres as sites for action, as "forms of life, ways of being," as "frames for social action" rather than containers, bearing the "stigma of shallow formulaicness" (Bazerman, 1997, p.3) then there is potential for change, when one views ideas and information through the different lenses present in different ways of acting through genre. Genres cease to be simply containers for knowledge. They are frames of intelligibility.

Bazerman (1997) connects genre to rhetoric by pointing to the way a writer can hold ideas up to the light and see them from different perspectives, through different ways of meaning that intersect, compete and collide with the ways of meaning she originally brought to those ideas. In her discussion of the practice of asking students to explore a topic through several different genres, Dean (2007) points to the fact that "because genres represent . . . modes of acting, they can provide a variety of lenses for viewing the world." (77). When genre is positioned as a site of action, a way of being, meaning and knowing, the study of genres as frames of intelligibility, and the combining of those genres can make the hybridity in all writing more transparent for students. Studying genres can enable writers to gain agency within the world of academic writing, push against the dominant narrative that resides there, and open up new possibilities. But a container view of genre, or the study of genre simply as forms of literature in the old understanding of the concept; poetry today, fiction tomorrow, script writing next week, will fail to value and examine the competing narratives of the writing classroom.

In a discussion about how texts organize people and activities Bazerman (2004) points to how understanding genres and how they work as frames of intelligibility cannot only help people successfully negotiate rhetorical situations and understand why "seemingly well-written texts go wrong," but understanding the way a form works within genre and figured worlds can help people "understand how to disrupt or change the" worlds and generating tools for "social creativity in making new things happen in new ways" (location 6476) thereby disrupting social facts that position certain populations on the margins. In his essay about uptake in a special edition of *CCC's* Bawarshi (2006) talks about the way we move between and react to genres. He talks about the space where that happens as "uptakes." These "uptakes" are normalized by dominant society and can therefore be reproductive of that dominant society. Drawing on Lu's (2004) essay on "Composing Fast Capitalism," he discusses how even when we interrogate dominant uptakes with students, "we stand to reproduce them, as we and our students play out remembered, institutionally sanctioned exchanges" and these overpower our attempts to present alternative ways of moving between and reacting to genres (location 52). It is here where genre theory and the current scholarship concerned with finding ways to disrupt the common sense views of "The" dominant narratives and "other" narratives intersect. In Chapters 5 and 6 I will examine how the container view of genre is implicit in the marginalization of two students when they improvise in the way they "fill" it, and the genre becomes a sight of action when the students bring narratives from other ways of being into the assignment.

Conclusion

Students are indeed being socialized into the arbitrary dominant way of knowing and being by the institution of education in the United States and all of the intersecting activities within that massive institutional activity system. That socialization is inescapable and necessary if they are to find ways to function within the figured world of schooling. However, they also have the potential "to choose how to interpret their positioning" within a social and historical context "and imagine how to alter the context that made that positioning available in the first place" (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis 2005, p. 49) through meta-linguistic and meta-discursive knowledge.

In the following chapter, I will explain the context of my study, describe the participants, and outline my methodology. I will also offer a sample data analysis in order to illustrate how this study will attempt to map the ways students are positioning themselves and being positioned by various competing narratives in the institution of schooling in the United States.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study is based on the tradition of qualitative research that grew out of a constructionist epistemology that views meaning as historically and socially constructed as human beings interact with, live in, and work to represent their experiences in the world around them. Qualitative research "attempts to understand, interpret, and explain complex and highly contextualized social phenomena . . ." (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 17).

In addition to claiming a constructionist epistemology using a qualitative research design, I am adopting a critical post-modern paradigm with this study, thereby examining issues of power, the social conditions that create feelings of power and powerlessness, and the political ramifications and potential for transformation implicit in the examination of these issues. I am aligning the study with Kamberelis and Dimitriadis's (2005) chronotope IV of qualitative inquiry, a paradigm of power/knowledge and defamiliarization based on Foucault's (1977) ideas of power knowledge and Lyotard's (1984) understanding that consensus is not only less than ideal, but "elicits complicity with totalizing regimes of knowledge and truth" where those with the most power get to name "truth" and "knowledge" (p. 45). In this paradigm, the subject is not the helpless victim of hegemonic ideological reproduction nor is the subject an individual essence working from her "own" isolated thoughts and feelings. Instead, subjects are "subjectivities" rather than selves, and are sites of multiple intersecting socially constructed ways of knowing and being. They "assume responsibility for their positioning within a moving historical context, choose how to interpret that positioning, and imagine how to alter the context that made such positioning available in the first place" (Kamberelis and Dimiridadis, p, 49). A critical post-modern paradigm seeks to deconstruct totalizing régimes of truth (Foucault 1977) and legitimizing narratives (Lyotard, 1984) and map counter-narratives of truth in order to imagine the new possibilities these counter-narratives create.

I am using case study in order to gain an in-depth understanding of various narratives and counter-narratives students negotiate when asked to use writing in service of learning in the context of middle school in the southeastern United States. I am interested in the rich details of this instance. As Merriam (1988) points out, case study is far more interested in process, context and discovery rather than confirming a specific outcome through the examination of a specific variable (p.19). Case study allows for the deep contextual examination and thick description of context sought by a critical qualitative research paradigm.

I am a participant researcher in this study and the impetus of the study is my positioning within the context of school based professional development. By adopting a critical qualitative paradigm, I seek to imagine possibilities in the existing context of the institution of schooling in the United States and work towards transformation of that context. As I worked with the students and teachers in the school I began to notice that the students were negotiating multiple narratives and counter narratives (Foucault, 1977; Alexander, 2011) all the time.

Due to my work with professional development around the teaching of writing, I was particularly interested in the narrative negotiations that happened when students wrote in service of learning. The "success" of their negotiations and improvisations seemed to align with the way the teachers and administrators in the building viewed their writing and constructed them as students. In order to understand the way students' linguistic and discursive moves are operating within and against the socialization process of schooling I am seeking to answer the following questions; 1) How do various narratives construct the figured world of Rosa Parks Middle School? 2) How do children use writing to negotiate their ideas within and against the narratives of their school world? 3) What disruptions do various narratives bring to the socializing activity system of the school world?

Description of Site and Participants

A thick description of the context of this study is key to the research findings because of the power/knowledge and defamiliarization paradigm of the study. Chapter Four will be devoted to this context and how it is situated in the larger context of the institution of schooling in the United States.

Briefly now, the study was conducted in a middle school in a large urban southeast district serving a high needs population. In this study, I will refer to the school as Rosa Parks Middle School. The school has been given labels by the district and state that mark it as a "low-performing" school. A large percentage of students in the school underperform on state end-of-the year exams and therefore the school has not made "annual yearly progress" as required through state and federal mandates. The school was also given these designations because it has a

97 percent minority student population of poverty indicated by 90 percent being on free or reduced lunch according to statistics from the schools' 2010 progress report. 60% of the students identify as African American and 33% identify as Hispanic.

Rosa Parks Middle School was placed on a list of underachieving schools in both the district and the state, so teams from the state and the district collected data and planned teaching interventions each quarter. The primary focus of these quarterly assessments was writing, reading and math, which were aligned specifically to learning goals that teachers were to address each quarter according to a pacing guide. The assessments are old released copies of the statewide reading and math tests the students will take at the end of the year.

Teach for America, with the focus on efficiency, accountability and standardization that is a part of their program, is very active in this school with several teachers in each grade level for any given year. In the 2009-2010 school year, the average experience for the teaching staff was 9 years, with 28% of teachers having earned advanced degrees and 7% having National Board Certifications. There was a major shift in staff at the end of year two when the district placed a new principal in the building as a part of a "strategic staffing" reform initiative in the spring. Strategic staffing allows for the principal to involuntarily transfer teachers to other buildings and hire his or her teachers for the school (the state in which this research occurred is non-unionized). At the beginning of the third year of my time in the school, the school opened with only one of the original assistant administrators remaining, two new assistant administrators, a new academic facilitator, and nearly 60% new staff. Several teachers who remained were given different teacher assignments.

Rosa Park Middle School's district places a heavy emphasis on "safe and orderly schools" and this is actually a rating on an annual report card that is published about each school at the end of the year. Much time and energy is devoted to creating and enforcing the appearance of orderliness, which translates to "safety" in the jargon of the "safe schools" rating for this school. Students are to be silent in the halls. They are to line up on the second linoleum block and wait to be escorted from class to class with hands held behind their backs in order to be certain the hallways are not vandalized. They are to wear uniforms. They must be escorted to the restroom, the lunchroom, and to supervised "healthy active child time" (HAC). Lunch is often a silent affair because students are being punished for breaking the "silent in the hall, silent in the classroom, silent in the bathroom" rules. It is significant that middle schools in the same system serving upper-middle class students receive the same "safety" ratings while allowing students to move freely from class to class, and choose their own school clothes.

At each grade level, Rosa Parks Middle School offers single gender classes in English, math, social studies and science. The school defines gender biologically, rather than on socially constructed gender roles. In general, students with lower test scores are in the single gender classes and the students who are showing higher achievement on those same standardized test are in mixed gender classes. Students are further grouped into Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, or SIOP classes. These are core classes specifically designed for students speaking languages other than English. Many SIOP classes are also single gender courses.

I had been working in this school as a facilitator for professional development for the past three years as a part of a national evaluation study focused on the effects of school based National Writing Project Partnerships on the writing of children. As a participant researcher in this study, it is significant that I am a white, middle class woman and the teachers in the study are African American men. The students are African American and Hispanic girls. Prendergast (1998) points out that to gloss over the materially real results of racism in the United States on the lives of the people in my study is to contribute to that racism, by being implicit in the construction of its "normality." A significant narrative for the African American (and Hispanic to a differing degree, constructed by a different history in the United States) students and teachers then, in talking with me, the white researcher, is the negotiation of "strategies for dealing with the basic inconsistencies and inherent contradictions that critical race theorists identify as the experience of double-consciousness" (p. 48).

Participant Selection

During years 1 through 3 of the study, I was working with teachers as part of a local National Writing Project site. I was also a part-time doctoral student during my time in the school. Because of my doctoral studies and the focus of NWP partnerships, I began to think as an inquirer/researcher along with some of the teachers in the school. In year two, I became more deliberate, thinking that a more formal research positioning of myself was important to develop and sustain.

I applied for and received IRB approval to study the school formally and began visiting classrooms and collecting data.

In the spring of year two, my colleague and I facilitated an after school workshop about ways to include writing in service of discipline specific learning entitled “Using Genre to Act on Content Knowledge.” At the time, I was working with genre theory and looking critically at the practice of asking students to write to learn using different genres. The workshop was based on our thinking about genre study as holding potential for students to gain agency in the academic writing world and push against the dominant discourse that resides there as I’ve discussed in Chapter Two. However, our representation of genre fell short of genre II and while teachers were very interested in trying different (other than 5 paragraph essay) “genres” in service of discipline specific learning, they understood genre as form or container rather than frames of intelligibility.

After attending the workshop, Samuel, a 6th grade social studies teacher, asked his students to write a diary entry (form) as if they were victims of the Jewish Holocaust of World War II after viewing *Children’s Diaries of the Holocaust,* a CBS After School Special. This was a marked moment that I used to collect some very specific data. For the first time all year (this was in March) the students all did their homework. Samuel was so thrilled with their writing that he invited me in to see and talk to the girls. I became fascinated with what the girls were saying about their writing, and the writing itself. This moment offered a way of narrowing my field, and so I used the data I collected there as phase I of the research.

I chose three students to work with closely based on their willingness and their parents' approval for them to participate in the study. I was also interested in how Samuel responded to their writing. He had a range of reactions to their work from acceptable to unacceptable. The "acceptable" papers emulated the film perfectly, almost to the point of plagiarism. The "unacceptable" papers used street language. Samuel did not mention one student's work at all. The data from phase I of the study enabled me to narrow my focus to examine the various narratives the students were negotiating when asked to write in service of social studies knowledge and the result of that negotiation on the construction of their student identities.

Phase II began in the fall of year three where I narrowed my focus to one 7th grade social studies classroom. Ronald was selected as the focus teacher because he was one of the very few teachers who stayed at the school (Samuel stayed, but left the classroom to become Dean of Students) and Ronald also attended a summer workshop with the local National Writing Project site conducted by my colleague, Tallulah, who had also been working at the school along with several other NWP teacher consultants. When I visited the school during the fall professional development work, he invited me into his classroom and welcomed my observing his teaching during the school year. The students in phase II were selected based on their willingness and the willingness of their families for the students to participate in the study. Two of students had participated in phase I.

Teacher Participant Selection

As Social Studies instructors in a school being monitored by both the district and the state, the teachers in this study take full responsibility for literacy instruction in addition to their content. Samuel was teaching 6th grade at the time of my interviews with and observations of him and with his students. He is an African American male with nine years of teaching experience. Ronald, a seventh grade teacher, was teaching 7th grade social studies. He, too, is an African American male with two years of teaching experience. He came to teaching through Teach for America with advanced degrees outside of the social studies licensure area. Samuel feels unsure about himself as a writer and writing instructor while Ronald identifies his writing identity as the key to his personal success.

Student Participant Selection

Aaron has been a part of the study in both 6th and 7th grade. On the day the Holocaust dairies were due, she showed her writing to Samuel before school. Her work generated the original excitement around this moment in the school. Aaron is light-skinned and soft spoken. She is of Latina and African American decent. Her teachers describe her as a good student and she says that she spends the majority of her time after school caring for her little brother. Before the diary entry assignment, Aaron had been keeping a personal journal. Over the summer between 7th and 8th grade she began researching and writing historical fiction on her own. She identifies herself as a writer and has asked me to look at several pieces that she wrote outside of school. She is not confident in herself as a student, and describes her classes as “hard” and “confusing.” She typically wears the official school uniform of a pleated skirt and a plain loose fitting polo shirt.

Jada is also a 6th grade student from phase I. She is a tall, thin African American who seems quite confident in herself and her goals, often evoking the theme of hard work and social mobility in her interview and in her writing. She wears her hair swept back in a low maintenance ponytail. In my interview with her, she spoke in mumbled tones, often looking down. She spoke of doing homework after school and one day going to college. The tenor of her voice gave me the impression that she was telling me what the adults want her to say. Her writing is full of images of hope, joy and strength. Her teacher, Samuel, did not mention her dairy entry. She wears her uniform with few accessories, but in a fitted style.

Leslie is a 7th grade African American girl who participated in phase II of the study. She wears her hair in long careful braids and carries herself with ease and comfort. Her daybook is filled with writing and her responses to the topics they are asked to write about are triple the length of the rest of the class. She says that she would like to be a singer when she grows up, but that she realizes this would be difficult to accomplish. She has plans to attend George Washington University and double major in Forensic Anthropology and Musical Arts. Forensic Anthropology is her back up plan. She says she spends her time outside of school doing homework and attending choir and dance rehearsals at a local arts university. She follows the uniform requirements closely, adding the department store shirt and sweaters occasionally.

Abigail is in the “top” class for 7th grade, but she does very little writing in response to Ronald’s assignments. Her style and demeanor is very similar to Keisha’s and she exhibits quiet confidence. She asked why she had been chosen for the study and was visibly disappointed when I said it was because she and her family had returned the form. She also mentioned to me that they are “supposed to be [a]smart class.” This status marker is very important to her.

Data Collection Methods

Before data collection began, I obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board at my university as well as from the school system that the middle school is a part of. Both teachers signed consent forms and their students were invited to participate in the study as well. The students and their parents then signed consent forms. Originally 26 students agreed to participate in the study. As data collection continued, I narrowed the study down to 3 students. Three students from phase I were chosen because of the way the Samuel reacted to their dairy entries. The other four were chosen for phase II because they were students in Ronald’s class and they and their families agreed that they would participate. The data in this study were collected predominantly through classroom observations and interviews. I also collected student writing samples and test scores as well as teacher made lesson plans and lesson materials.

After receiving IRB approval, I began collecting observation data each time I visited the school to work with teachers, administrators and students. I was in the school for a full day twice each month. After each bi-monthly visit I recorded and reflected upon the ways of knowing, being and doing that I noticed in the language, actions, dress and body language of the students, teachers and administrators in order to compile rich data about the context of the school as a whole. I shared my reflections with my colleague who was also in the school to verify my thoughts and ideas and with the Director of the NWP site to think with me about my constructions of teachers and students in the school.

In the spring of my second year in the school, the moment of the Holocaust dairy writing offered a way to narrow the focus of the study. My colleague and I were invited especially into Samuel's classroom to think about ways to publish the diaries. Samuel and the academic facilitator were thrilled with the writing and had called us to come to the school that day to see what the children had written. At the school when we met with Samuel and the Literacy Facilitator face to face, they spoke of their concerns about the conventions of the writing and some of the content, which they found inappropriate. We decided to create a short movie of the girls reading excerpts of their work and talking about what it meant to them. This instance marked a dramatic moment in the culture of the school and I became interested in which dairies where viewed as acceptable, which were un-acceptable, and which were not mentioned at all. I wanted to know what the students who wrote them thought about their writing, how it was received in the classroom, and why they made the rhetorical choices they had made.

I interviewed Samuel specifically about his design of the Holocaust diary assignment, his thoughts and the results of the assignment, and the place of writing in Social Studies teaching. I then collected the diary entries the students wrote and interviewed three students; one who was extremely successful, one that had concerned Samuel with her response, and one who was not mentioned by him.

As I collected the phase I data, I began to notice that the students were negotiating multiple narratives about writing, being a student and success in life. The "success" of their negotiations and improvisations seemed to match with the way the teachers and administrators in the building viewed their writing and constructed them as students. The narratives students were negotiating started to become more visible and important to the study, particularly as they were using writing in service of learning as well as when students negotiated multiple, conflicting narratives, particularly when these conflicting narratives disrupted or caused tensions in the socialization process of the classroom.

These questions arising from phase I led to phase II, during the third year where I looked closely at one social studies classroom to think about the various narratives that were present, both in the classroom and particularly in the students' writing, how students were negotiating them, and any tensions that were occurring. I began by interviewing Ronald formally in the fall about his planning and his thoughts on the place of writing in the discipline of Social Studies and then informally over the course of the school year as we worked together. Ronald shared his lesson PowerPoint presentations with me and we e-mailed often about what was happening in class and what the students were saying in interviews.

Between September and March, I visited the school for a full day 2 to 3 times per month as a part of my involvement with professional development.

Each time I was there, I spent an hour in Ronald's classes collecting observational data and building rapport with the students. In March, I spent three weeks observing the West African Slave Trade Unit. At this time I collected writing samples, including dairy entries written as if the students were slave traders, slaves and slave ship captains from 4 students' daybooks, 2 of whom had been a part of the phase I of the study. I interviewed the 4 students over lunch about their thoughts on the class, writing in general, and what they did in their free time outside of school. I then conducted follow-up interviews after that based on those findings as well as the results on the end of unit test.

Data Analysis Methods

I began my data analysis with the use of open coding and constant comparative analysis of preliminary and phase I data. As I collected interview data, I transcribed each interview, coded them for themes and verified my codes with a colleague who was also working with professional development in the school. I then began collecting observational data and re-defining the codes based on what I was seeing, again verifying my coding. I continued this process as I collected further observational and follow-up interview data as needed. I wrote extensive analytic memos and shared them with colleagues, re-thematized the data again and narrowed my field further. After coding my data, I used Activity Theory as a macro analysis tool in order to situate the students, their teachers and Rosa Parks Middle School within the larger context of the institution of schooling in the United States.

Macro Analysis

Activity Theory originates in the cultural-historical school of Russian Psychology with the work of Vygotsky and Leont'ev and Luria. Leont'ev named the theory and it relies heavily on Vygotsky's developmental concept of zones of proximal development which makes a distinction between what a child can do on her own and what a child can do with mediating tools and the help of those around her. It affords a method with which to examine the multi-layered, multi-voiced ways that people construct their worlds, and the material reality that is created as a result of that constructing. It also affords a way to look at the world through a critical post-modern lens that sees the subject as constructed by Foucault's discursive systems and articulating multiple subjectivities. As a methodology, activity theory answers the critique of post-modern thought not attending to the actual material reality that happens as a result of human beings interacting socially, historically, and culturally while still viewing human agency as a factor in the construction of the world. It affords an analysis of the dialogic construction happening between multiple sites of subjectivity, the community, the division of labor, the social rules and the mediating tools that are being used in service of a motivated outcome.

In my use of Activity Theory as well as the understanding of agency described above, I am drawing heavily on Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain's (1998) concept of figured worlds, as described in Chapter Two. Holland et al. describe a "modicum of agency or control over their own behavior" for people when they understand themselves as actors in “socially and culturally constructed worlds” and make use of Vygotsky’s semiotic mediating tools to

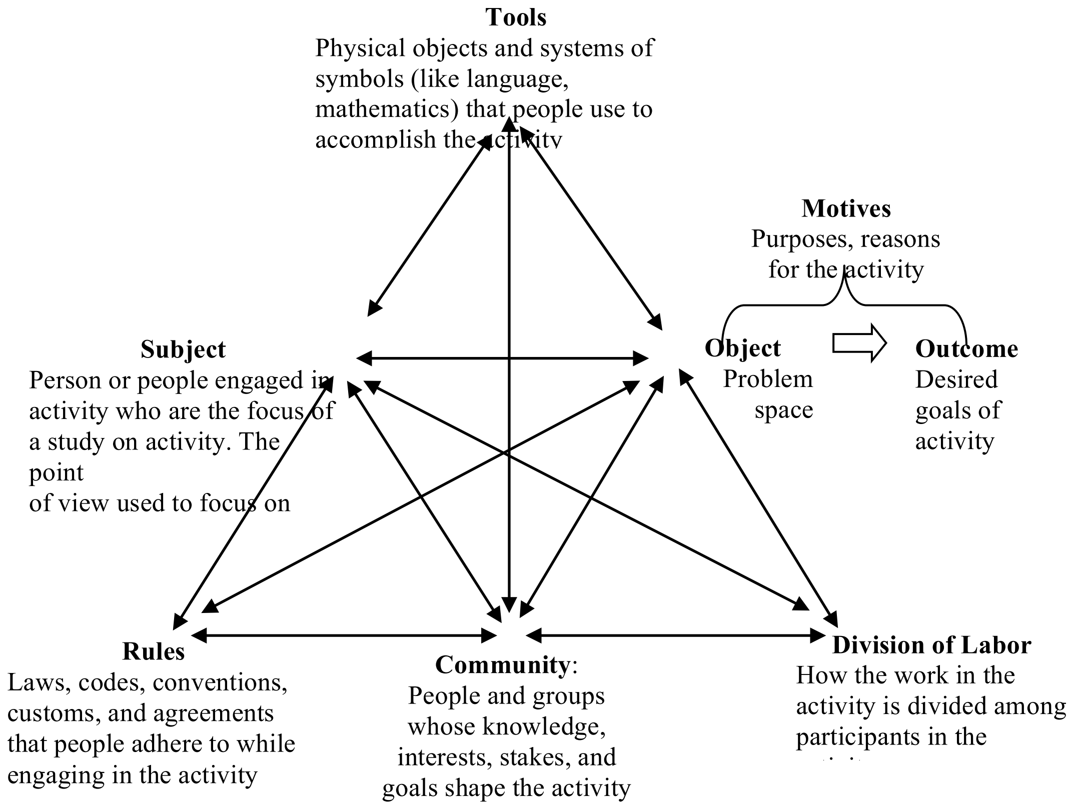
Tools
Physical objects and systems of symbols (like language, mathematics) that people use to accomplish the activity
Motives
Purposes, reasons for the activity
Subject
Person or people engaged in activity who are the focus of a study on activity. The point of view used to focus on
Object
Problem space
Outcome
Desired goals of activity
Rules
Laws, codes, conventions, customs, and agreements that people adhere to while engaging in the activity
Community:
People and groups whose knowledge, interests, stakes, and goals shape the activity
Division of Labor
How the work in the activity is divided among participants in the

Figure 1: Activity

change that behavior (p. 40). Holland et al call these “socially produced, culturally constructed activities,” in Leontiv’s understanding of “activity,” figured worlds. (P. 41)

Engerstrom’s model of activity theory in Fig. 1 acts as a metaphor for the social relations that make up activity systems or figured worlds. The double ended arrows illustrate the ways in which Subjects, Tools, Rules, Community, and Division of Labor and Objects are all in constant dialogue to make up the Outcomes, which are ways of being in the activity system or figured world.

These ways of being are always and forever becoming and make up the material reality of what people are doing in any one moment.

In using Activity Theory, I can position myself as the researcher within the context of this study as I think about the educational researcher's role in the Activity System of the institution of schooling in the United States "in ongoing dialogue within and between collective activity systems under investigation" (Engerstrom and Miettinen, 1999, p. 10). My role is not to reveal and represent (which would also be socially and historically constructed), but to look at what different subjectivities, myself included, are *doing,* the actual use value of those actions, to think about the counter-activities, counter-motives present, and to understand how my presence, (my activity), in the activity system is working in dialogue with these activities.

Using Activity Theory, I can focus on the activity of the actors in the figured world of Rosa Parks Middle School and think about the differing motives and outcomes that are a part of the larger activity system or figured world of the institution of schooling in the United States as well as the multiple intersecting activity systems or figured worlds at work within that system, along with the way that many of those systems are using the same mediating tools with differing motivations and outcomes. Engerstrom and Miettinen (1999) explain that these differing motivations, or "internal tensions and contradictions" are implicit in all activity systems and these tensions are motivation for change in the activity system through Vygotsky's expansive cycle (p. 9).

Holland et al. align their concept of figured worlds with Leontiv's idea of activity systems. Here forward, to avoid cluttering the text, I will use the term figured world to describe the activity system because of the careful extension figured worlds adds to the examination of the division of labor within activity systems and other activity systems that intersect with them. Holland et al. explain that the identifiable social types and roles through which people are distributed are "not simply differentiated by some abstract division of labor" but are "specifically historical developments, grown through continued participation in the positions defined by the social organization of those world's activity" (p. 41). Holland et al.'s understanding of actors within an activity system or figured world as having "a "modicum of agency" (p. 40) due to their use of mediating tools is key to understanding the narratives of the socializing activity of schooling in the US as they are intersecting and in dialogue with and conflicting in the figured world of Rosa Park Middle School. These dialogues, intersections and conflicts, and the ways in which they are using the same mediating tools but with different goals and differing outcomes represent the productive tensions within the narratives in the figured world, which hold potential for transformation, rather than being simply reproductive. These intersecting narratives from intersecting worlds make up the "background" Dyson and Genishi (2005) are speaking of when they say of the subject of a case study. " . . . each case becomes . . . the foreground – against a particular back ground" (p. 43).

Micro Analysis

I have selected relevant language data to further examine at a micro level using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is concerned with the way language-in-use distributes social goods through the use of the "grammar of our language to take a particular perspective" on the world (Gee, p.5). In doing so, language in use marks what is "normal" or "right" or "valued" in the worldview of the speaker. Gee (2010) explains that what is constructed as "normal" or "right" has everything to do with the figured world in which the speaker is acting as well as the intersecting figured worlds or activity systems in dialogue within that world (location 2039). He also explains these figured worlds as an important point of analysis because "they mediate between the local interactional work" of people and "Discourse (language and everything else as defined in Chapter 2) as they operate to create the complex patterns of institutions . . ." (location 2050).

Fairclough (2003) explains that language has constructive powers and the way people talk about the world forms their common sense notions of it. CDA offers a tool set for mapping the way people are talking about their worlds, analyzing that talk for what is assumed, what is said and what is left out and what its seen as "truth" in order to understand what language is attempting to do socially and politically (meaning the distribution of social goods.) Fairclough solidifies the importance of looking at language in Critical Social Research by pointing to it as "a crucial aspect of the social transformations which are going on" within the larger figured world, or activity system. He adds "one cannot make sense of them without thinking about language" (p. 203).

I am using James Paul Gee's (2010) critical discourse analysis because of his understanding of situated language and what the language is doing within a figured world and the activity of that figured world. For Gee, people function in the world by living their theories –in- use, constructing narrative worlds in which they operate. Gee's "seven building tasks" are tools for analyzing the Discourses of a particular figured world and looking at the Conversations of that figured world will enable me to situate the language moments in the larger social context and think about how those moments are building the larger social context.

Gee (2010) explains the importance of figured worlds as a tool of inquiry because they serve as a mediating tool between the local (micro) level of human interaction and the institutional (macro) level. He states "they mediate between the local interactional work we humans do," meaning what language builds, and "Discourses as they operate to create the complex patterns of institutions and cultures across society and history" (p. 76). Gee's CDA focuses on seven building tasks that enable the analyst to look closely at the way in which language is building the figured world or activity system.

For Gee, people use language to build seven things or "seven areas of 'reality'" that come together in the performance of identities and power negotiations within a figured world (p. 17). These things or "building tasks" are significance, practices or activities, identities, relationships, politics or the distribution of social goods, connections, sign systems and knowledge (pp. 17 - 20). The way language builds these seven areas of reality in terms of what is "right" and "normal" in a figured world determines the power structures of the figured world. Gee's CDA asks questions around these seven building tasks in order to analyze the identities that are being constructed and the power negotiations that are happening in a piece of language and thereby how that language is building the figured world or activity system it is operating in.

Sample Data Analysis

Phase I data collection began in the instance of the Holocaust Dairy writing assignment where students were constructed as "good students" or "bad/ problematic students" based on their written responses to the assignment. However, their identity construction is actually much more complex in that it is based on more than the words they choose to put on the page, but also the way that language is situated within the activity (the social relations) of the figured world of a classroom, the school building itself, and more broadly within the socializing institution of schooling in the United States. Further more, there are numerous other figured worlds intersecting with and in dialogue with those figured worlds of schooling and as Holland et al. explain, activities are social encounters where position matters and they are socially organized and reproduced in the usual institutional sense (p. 40). There are therefore many competing narratives working on the students in the study. Social practices (figured worlds) construct identities. Phase II data collection was focused on good/bad student construction based in the student writing and these social practices even more purposefully. Here, I will explore the "Good Student" identity that is being constructed as a student in Ronald's class who participated in only phase II of the study, Leslie, negotiates the competing narratives present in the socializing figured world of schooling.

For this sample analysis, I have chosen one piece of Leslie's from an interview about writing in social studies to analyze through critical discourse analysis (CDA) in order to begin to look at the competing narratives she is negotiating in her writing and talking around that writing. In this piece of language, she is talking about the writing she is doing in connection with the West African Slave Trade unit in Ronald's class. However, a micro analysis of the language is not enough to fully map the complexity of her narrative negotiations, so I am also going to use activity theory in order to analyze various narratives that exist in the figured world of the school. In order to give an example of how I plan to use these tools in my study, I am going to focus here on the mediating tool of school uniforms as a part of the activity (social relations) in this context and the way this tool mediates and is implicit in the construction of the student as "good" or "bad" in the students performance of identity of self.

Even by focusing only on the one mediating tool, the different categories in Engerstrom's model begin to slip and move. Different subjects and different stakeholders have differing motives and outcomes. There are also the multiple figured worlds in dialogue with the mediating tool of school uniforms. There are multiple stakeholders, rules, and subjects at work in each figured world. There are multiple other figured worlds intersecting with and in dialogue with the stakeholders, subjects, and rules. The division of labor for each world within the larger figured world also intersects and overlaps in a constantly shifting and folding dialogue and in all of this shifting, intersecting and folding, producing material outcomes of human socially, historically and culturally constructed activity. In this way, to map activity using Engestrom's model, one would need to move it off of the two dimensional page and onto a moving, shifting, orbiting three dimensional structure. In my analysis of the way the mediating tool of school uniforms is functioning in the socializing figured world of schooling in the United States in Chapter four I focus on the different motivations and outcomes for the students, the administrators and the school reformers, particularly within the intersecting figured world of creating "safety and order" as detailed in my earlier description of the school. Johnathan Kozol (2005) describes this institutionalized world as "The Ordering Regime" where one of the theories in use is that students in underperforming schools require extreme models of standardization and efficiency if they are to be successful. Here, I will offer a brief sample of analysis. The complete analysis is in Chapter four.

Macro Analysis: Activity Theory

The Rosa Parks Middle School uniforms are light blue collared polo shirts and Khaki pants or skirts modeled after what the American corporate world calls "business casual" attire that is worn by middle management. The uniform policy states that students' shirts must have collars and that pants, skirts and shorts must be no more than 6 inches above the knee and must be belted at the natural waistline.

Using the mediating tool of the school uniform, the socializing activity system of schooling is inscribing middle management values on the actual bodies of the students in one view, but in another, reminding them that they do not fit in these clothes and therefore these identities. Creativity and non-compliance through dress are considered deviant behaviors. Standardization, order and compliance are the desired outcome and in this way the uniform can also be viewed as prison garb. Rosa Parks Middle School has a uniform policy because of its low performing status. Other schools in the system not labeled in this way, (and also serving predominantly upper middle class populations) are not viewed as “needing” uniforms. The narrative theory-in-use of the intersecting figured world of school reform as ventriloquated in conversations with the school’s administrators and teachers as well as district officials and local news articles is that uniforms are needed in this school in order to standardize dress and prevent distractions to learning, such as the comparing of socio-economic status, the wearing of overly revealing clothing, and the display of gang colors. These same “distractions” are of course present in all schools, but they are considered a problem that must be addressed in this school. The uniform style was chosen by the school system in accordance with the school colors and the social rules about school uniforms in US public schools, which differ from the private prep school uniforms with blazers, ties and knee socks that symbolize the difference between the business casual wearing middle management or service worker and the suit and tie wearing CEO.

Activity theory also offers a way to look at the counter activity of the students and their families as well as the school staff because of the way it looks at the shifting and moving motives and outcomes (ways of being) of each subject (multiple subjectivities) within an activity system and those that intersect and are in dialogue with it. The school staff allows students the ability to “accessorize,” as the secretary explained to a less than enthusiastic new student one day when I was signing into the building. The accessorizing takes on the ways of knowing and being of the students’ cultural, historical backgrounds. Some students comply completely with the middle management expectation. These students are more often found in the “upper level” classes. Others accessorize with sweatshirts that mark them as identifying with their Latino/Latina peers or with hip-hop culture or other groups in the school. Some of the girls wear their polo shirts and khaki skirts and pants in a form-fitting style that exposes cleavage, disallows buttoning, and accentuates hips. Some of the boys wear their business casual khaki pants low around their hips, exposing designer labeled boxer shorts underneath. Students further accessorize with shoes, jewelry and hairstyles that identify them as members of different social groups and serve as socio-economic markers. The result is anything but standard and for many, far from what would be expected in a middle management job.

The students’ counter activity of identity construction creates tension within the socializing activity system of schooling. Their dress, along with the staff’s sanctioning of their dress, resists the middle management identity that is being forced onto their bodies as a daily reminder that the clothes do not fit. The students and staff are negotiating their culturally, historically formed understandings of ways of being in the world with that of the dominate ways of knowing and being in the world of the dominant socializing system. They are pushing at the boundaries of the “regime of truth,” and the statements it is making about the social position the students “should” be accepting. The students and staff are still recognizable in this regime of truth, but with very different ways of using the mediating tools, with different motivations for differing outcomes.

Micro-analysis: Critical Discourse Analysis

As an example of the ways in which I use Gee’s (2010) CDA as a micro-analysis tool in order to look at the way language moments are building the larger socializing activity system of schooling in the United States in the way students are negotiating various narratives in their writing, I analyze below a short piece of the interview data between Leslie and me. In this analysis, Leslie’s talk about writing in Ronald’s social studies class is an instance of negotiation between two conflicting narratives of writing within the activity of socialization into the dominant idea of “normal” and “correct” as it constructs good and bad students within the context of order and compliance. Additionally I am looking at the ways this instance is connected to the ways in which the students’ and staff’s counter activities in the school world are negotiating with their historical and cultural ways of being with that régime of truth while remaining recognizable.

In a group interview I asked the students if there was anything different about the writing in Ronald’s social studies class and any other social studies they had before. Leslie talks to me about the warm-ups the students do at the beginning of class and the homework that they do. She ventriloquates what I observed Ronald telling the class about the purpose for these assignments in her response. Ronald has explained to the students that these assignments come from his work with me. She makes a bid for “good student” in this moment by restating what Ronald has told her and telling me how these “things” help her learn “better” without question. She understands my role as one who is bringing “things” to help, and therefore repeats to me the narrative that the “things” I’ve brought are indeed helping her.

> Leslie: Yeah and um, the warm-up, it helps me and the homework, it helps me understand and I didn’t really like understood what they went through, like last year, I feel like I never really understood that, but now, I, do.

Stanza I: *I understand now*

1. Yeah and um, the warm-up--it like helps me
2. And the homework, it helps me understand
3. and I didn't really like understand
4. what they went through like last year
5. like I never really understood that,
6. But now, I do.

For the purposes of explaining how Gee’s CDA works using the seven building tasks, I am going to think through each question here using Leslie’s language. In the actual analysis of data in chapters 5 and 6 I merge the analysis for coherence of the argument. Below I illustrate how each piece of language was analyzed using Gee’s building tasks. .

Significance: *How is Leslie making the warm-up and homework significant?*

In line 1 Leslie re-names the warm-up activity as “it” and then explains that “it”-- this thing-- “helps” her. In line 2 she renames homework as “it” and explains that “it” helps her “understand.” So while the warm-up “thing” is significant because “it” is “like” a thing that is helpful, the homework “thing” is significant because it “helps” with understanding and is the thing that helps. In line 4, she makes the homework and warm-ups significant “things” for understanding “what they went through.” That’s what she did not understand “last year,” but as she says in line 6 “now” she does.

Practices (Activities): *What social practices or activity is Leslie enacting (or getting others to recognize as going on) in her language?*

Leslie is enacting learning from the writing consultant and her teacher. She names two activities that she knows I have shared with her teacher, the warm-up in line 1 and homework in line 2. She also constructs this “thing” homework as helpful and warm-ups are like helpful things, but are not helpful things in themselves. She enacts the activity of learning by explaining in lines 3 and 4 by repeating her “like” metaphor, albeit temporizing word used by many teens, but functioning here to bracket off her lack of understaning--that “last year” she didn’t “like understand” – and then to bracket “what they went through.” She further explains in line 5 that she “never really understood that” and then in line 6 “now” she does. She is constructing a difference in her understanding about what people went through by using these new “things,” given to her by the interviewers, and through that enacting learning by doing what she was asked to do.

Identity: *What identity is Leslie trying to take on or enact (or get others to recognize as operative)?*

Leslie is enacting “good student” by pointing to the “things” she sees as given to her by her teacher, warm-up (line 1) and homework (line 2). She further explains how these “things” help her by ventriloquating what her teacher has told the class they are for in line 4, understanding “what they went through.” However, she does construct a difference between the warm-ups that “like, help” and the homework which “helps.” Then she explains that while she “never really understood that before” (line 5), now, she does (line 6). In her language, she is enacting good student by pointing to her ability to learn.

Relationships: *What sort of relationship is Leslie trying to enact in regards to the other students, to Ronald, and to the consultant?*

Leslie is enacting a cooperative relationship with the consultant and her teacher. In line 1 she acknowledges my question with “Yeah” and then collects her thoughts before answering with “um.” She then points to two activities that she knows I have been working on with her teacher, the warm-ups in line 1 and the homework in line 2. She also develops these “things” as helpful or “like” helpful to her “understanding.” In line 4 she ventriloquates her teacher when she explains what these things help her understand when she says “what they went through.” “They” is ambiguous here. It could be “they” referring to the Africans sold into slavery. However, “they” could also be the students who wrote the Holocaust diaries in Samuel’s class last year. Leslie had a different teacher and did not participate in those assignments that where such a big deal in the school and to the students. Those students continued to talk, even as a part of this interview, about how that assignment helped them “understand what people went through.” In this construction, “they” represents both groups of people. Leslie’s language constructs understanding what people went through in the past as an important part of social studies learning, and therefore enacts agreement with her teacher. She ends by saying that now she does understand in line 6. She never directly mentions the other students in the class; rather, she always uses “me” and “I” throughout this piece of language. In doing so, she constructs a distanced relationship with the class.

Politics: *What implications for the distribution of social goods does Leslie’s language have (what is being implicated as “right” or “normal”)?*

Leslie’s language constructs the acts of using homework and warm-ups as “things,” as she re-names them, as “like” helpful in line 1 or helpful in line 2. The fact that they help, or “like” help her to understand “what they went through” is also constructed as “right” in line 4 because she has already described the “things” as helpful to her. She implicates not understanding this last year as “not right” in line 5. So in this construction, using homework and warm-up things, to understand what people “went through” is the right thing to do in social studies class.

Connections: *How is Leslie connecting things or making them relevant or irrelevant to other things?*

While Leslie's use of "like" may seem typical of many teens, Leslie nonetheless constructs metaphors to connect things in this piece of language and to place emphasis (lines 1, 3, 4, and 5 by using the word "like.") In line 1 warm-ups "like, help" her. There is a connection between what "it" does and help, but it's not quite help. In line 3, she says that she "didn't really like, understand," constructing a connection between what she did not "do" and "understanding" while explaining that what she was not doing isn't quite "understanding." She uses this construction again in line 4 with the phrase "like last year" connecting last year to a time when she didn't understand, but not the only time. Finally in line 5 she says "like, I" when talking about not understanding before. Here she disconnects herself, "I" from not understanding by saying it was "like I" but not really "I."

Sign Systems and Knowledge: *How is Leslie privileging or disprivileging specific sign systems or specific ways of or claims to know and believe?*

In her language here, Leslie is privileging the idea of using the warm-up and homework "things" to understand in lines 1 and 2 because she constructs these things that she has re-named as "it" as helpful or like helpful things. In lines 3 and 4 she says that "last year" she didn't understand "what they went through" constructing these "things" that she has now as what "helped" or "like" helped her with that. She also privileges the idea of understanding what "they" went through as important in social studies knowledge. Whatever the knowledge was that she has last year is disprivileged in this construction.

Some repetition and overlapping occurs when using the seven building tasks to analyze a piece of language; however, using the tasks in this way enables the researcher to isolate what the language is doing and what world the language is constructing, rather than focusing on what the person is saying. In Leslie's piece of language above, CDA shows that she is building a figured world where good students repeat what they are told by their teachers, are cooperative, use the commodified "things" that are given to them and understand what people went through in other places and cultures. She enacts "good student" in this world by taking an agentic stance in the "do-ing" of understanding and using things similar to warm-ups and homework-things in order to do so. When she was not using these "things" before she was still a "good student" because she wasn't "like" understanding. She understood, but what she was not doing was "like" understanding. Leslie performs good student by repeating what she's been told by the adult she perceives as in charge in that moment and doing what that person asks. She does not question the differences in the narratives and what may be perceived as "counter-activity" in the writing assignments Ronald gives. She does not question the fact that this year's writing is very different from last year's, (and different from the writing she does in English class as I will show in Chapter 5). She does not question the necessity of learning what people "went through" rather than facts and dates. She simply conforms. Her commodification of the writing "things" brought by the consultants is emblematic of student negotiation of the competing narratives of writing in the school. She is "accepting" and "using" some of the ideas brought be the consultants and their narrative of writing, but her construction of these ideas a “things” that help represents the dominant objectivist narrative of writing in the world of the school. I will examine these narratives much more deeply in chapter 4.

Conclusion and Implications of Sample Data Analysis

In the both the macro analysis of the counter activity of uniform wearing by the student body and staff of the school and the micro-analysis of Leslie’s activities in writing, the subjects are negotiating multiple subjectivities and narratives all at the same time. The tensions present in these negotiations are the points of potential change in the figured world of schooling in the United States in that they are recognizable enough to be considered a part of the figured world of school, but different enough to push at the “truth effects” about what is “normal”, “right” and “acceptable.” The counter activities in the macro analysis and Leslie’s conformity through negotiation of conflicting narratives of writing in the micro-analysis construct alternate views of “acceptable” behavior from the views of the dominant views of passivity and compliance as imposed and inscribed upon the children through school reformers. These counter-activities also construct alternate views about educational researchers’ and professional developers’ ideas about how writing can connect students’ lived experiences to discipline-specific learning. They make visible the very sophisticated and complex negotiations such a practice requires of students. I am interested in the material effects of these negotiations on the student’s identities as actors in the institution of school in the United States.

Presentation of Data

Chapter Four is an in-depth analysis of context of the school as it is positioned within the large figured of the institution of schooling in the United States. Chapter Five will offer a micro-analysis of three students performing various versions of "good student" identities that reproduce the socializing narratives of the world of the school. Chapters Six offers a micro analysis of an improvisation of "good student" identity by a "resistant student" that has transformative potential for the world of the school. Chapter Seven will explain the implications of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: MAPPING THE FAIRY TALE FOREST: CONTEXT OF ROSA PARKS MIDDLE

Urban Schools is a curious term. It is often code for schools in city neighborhoods where the poor reside. It conjures images of a rectangular gray multi-storied building with small dirty windows secured behind a chain link fence on black asphalt and dirt: dark halls with broken fluorescent lights and graffiti covered walls, police cars out front with blue lights throwing blinking images onto the black and brown faces of the students sitting sideways in the rows of old desks with wobbly legs ignoring the teacher at the front of the room who is shouting at them to “quiet down” and “pay attention.” The term evokes images of hard faced adolescents and others who have made their way into the building to sell drugs and weapons, dressed in sagging pants and “do rags,” chains hanging from their waists, revealing shirts and tight jeans or short skirts, fighting their way through these dark halls, banging into the gray, dented lockers and paying little mind to the clanging bells that direct them to the next class, leaving trash and blood shed in their wake. It is the term used to describe these dark, hopeless images of schooling in the inner cities of our country where one hero teacher, usually a white woman, but maybe a black man with a big stick and no life, comes in and saves the students from themselves and all of the other horrible educators in the building.

While Rosa Parks Middle School is certainly an urban school in that it is located in a large metropolitan neighborhood and serves an economically poor minority population, it does not fit into this stock image. The school is situated at the top of a hill on a large grassy campus in the center of a neighborhood. The one-story brick building has massive windows lining its long rectangular sides. There is a sweeping covered walkway into the main corridor at the center of the building. A black-tar paved roadway with a circle drive leads to the school with parking lots on both sides to accommodate car pool, buses and staff vehicles. At the front door, signs remind visitors to come to the main office to the left of the entryway and receive a visitor's pass. To the right is an internal window that allows everyone to see the large media center filled with books and wooden tables and comfortable chairs for study. Four hallways extend from the lobby toward the classrooms, the ends of which are visible from the lobby. Each hall is lined with shiny royal blue lockers. The style of construction is replicated in many new suburban schools in the district. The walls are freshly painted white, the linoleum floors are waxed and clean, and the windows bring in sunlight. There is no trash inside or outside the building.

There are bells that tell teachers and students when the school day begins and ends, and when to move between classes. Children in khaki pants or skirts and blue argyle sweaters and polo shirts move in orderly lines led by teachers from class to class for subjects like social studies, math, science, language arts, music, art, PE and computer. Classroom walls have rules and consequences clearly displayed and white boards and smart boards at the front of the room give the agenda for the day, homework for the evening, and notes for the class in session. The images don't match with our cultural narrative of urban school, nor do they match the neighborhood the school is in.

In this school everyone is working very hard on behalf of these children in this community, a community whose streets are named Snow White Drive and Prince Charming Lane to reflect the fairy tale narratives that serve to mask the poverty and neglect of the people living there. The school rises above the community like Sleeping Beauty's castle on an expansive grassy hill in a contrast to the families in the valley below whose neighborhood of small single family homes are built on tiny, cramped lots with overgrown yards, and beat up furniture on the front porch.

There is much at stake in the narratives evoked by the term "urban schools" and the material realities—the competing, conflicting and counter narratives—that work within and against the normalizing narratives of our culture. At Rosa Parks Middle School, they animate each other in a struggle for what Foucault (l980) calls "truth claims," the naming of this world, its participants, the rituals of schooling, and concepts like order and responsibility that circulate there.

Truth claims are forms of power/ knowledge that inscribe and produce how the participants see one another and understand how children learn and the role of literacy in that learning. Truth claims produce the official discourses of schooling and urban reform and are the normalizing story lines by which people understand what happens in the school and how to "be" there. In this way the competing narratives and normalizing storylines of the participants in the school construct the world of Rosa Parks and legitimize the institution of schooling. Socio-historical theories of discourse and language (ex. Foucault, 1980 & Bakhtin, 1981) explain that there are multiple narratives, or socially and historically constructed "regimes of truth" (Foucault, 1980) that are constantly operating in and through people that produce their understanding about how to "act" in a particular world as it is constructed by the competing narratives and normalizing storylines of the participants. Holland et al. (1984) explain how people participate in multiple worlds, which the authors have labeled figured worlds in order to denote the social and historical construction of these "realms of interpretation" (p. 52). The school participants, then, have multiple narratives from multiple figured worlds in addition to the ones of the school world that are operating on them and are in dialogue with, in conflict with, or counter to the narratives of urban school which are also working on, in and through them. All of those multiple narratives are in a constant struggle for hegemony and are in that way constantly forming each participant's storyline, for how to be a teacher, administrator, consultant or student in the figured world of Rosa Parks Middle School.

The larger educational reform narrative in the United States is a part of the competing and conflicting narratives that make up the social construction of Rosa Parks Middle School. This narrative is composed of the accountability narrative of No Child Left Behind, which claims that educators must be motivated through the "incentive" of high stakes testing and punishment for failure. It is also composed of the competition and accountability narrative of Race to the Top that pits schools, districts and states against one another other in the quest for funds through their ability to produce “better” results in achieving the Common Core Standards than their fellow educators. The narrative of educational reform, and particularly the narrative of urban school reform, views the students, teachers and administrators through a deficit lens, as people incapable of doing, or simply not caring enough to do, the hard work it takes to teach and learn enough to pass the tests, and it views standardized “objective” tests as the gold standard for “scientific” measurement.

In these narratives, school reform has become big business in the quest to find “the program” that “works”; the magic product that can produce results and “turn around” failing schools and the people who work and learn there. In this narrative, CEO’s like Bill Gates become the authority on what can produce a “turn around” education and he knows the “right” direction to be heading in. As I explained in Chapter 2, production of results and “correct” direction is measured objectively through test scores. In this way, education reform becomes commodified. It is about finding the “thing” that produces the product. The product is test scores. In this narrative, test scores “turn around” the constantly turning and churning social issues of poverty, neglect and inequality. The participants simply need to turn around and go the “right” way and the test scores will point them there. The objectivist educational reform narrative has labeled Rosa Parks as a failing school and the state has sent in “turn around” teams to help the students move in the “right” direction. The label was given to the school when the students' test scores fell into the category of "low performing" for the third year in a row.

The larger school reform narrative is also a part of The Writing Project consultants work in the school. In an effort to prove that their resources were being spent on programs that produced good results in "turning around" writing programs in schools, the federal government gave money to the National Writing Project to hire an "objective" "outside" firm to measure their results in a "randomized control study."

The narrative of urban reform is present in the common sense idea that participants need to be carefully and "scientifically" watched to be "sure" that they are doing their jobs and that their "product" of success is something that the teachers or students can "get." It is also about the appropriate use of federal resources going to non-competitive national programs. The outsiders evaluating the Writing Project were being paid hundreds of thousands of dollars in order to prove that federal resources were being used wisely.

The narratives circulating in the school- narratives of democratizing education, measuring growth and development, learning to read and write- compose the larger narrative of urban school reform. In Rosa Parks, the troubled school and the "insiders" there are being acted upon by outsiders brought in to change the culture of the school, a "culture of failure" brought about by "poor teaching," to turn the culture of the school in the "correct" direction. The two different principals where charged by the district leadership to bring order to the school and to bring up the test scores. The second principal was even given the power to strategically staff the school, removing those teachers who had not or could not perform well with these children and bring in those that could. Both principals mandated the district pacing guide and scripted lessons so that teachers would challenge the students and work together toward common district-mandated quarterly tests and high stakes end of grade tests in May. To the principals, the pacing guides and scripted lessons represented the “correct” direction.

The consultants, too, were trying to control the curriculum so that writing could happen in this same world and they could prove their professional development and methods of democratizing education to be effective. They saw the principals’ order and control as “prison like” in that it seriously limited teacher leadership and professionalism and student engagement. In their view, the principal had the school heading in the wrong direction; the consultants wanted everyone to turn around and go “their” way. These competing and conflicting narratives construct not only who has power and who does not in the world of the school, but also what it means to “be” in this world. In the figured world of Rosa Parks and in the narrative of urban education reform both the principals and the consultants were right and both the principals and consultants were wrong in their views of control and oppression. And as the participants negotiated these competing narratives of exactly which way they should be “turning around” and what they should be moving towards, they were caught in a figurative pinball game that seemed never ending.

In this chapter, I begin by showing the complexity of the narrativized figured world of Rosa Parks by looking at how the competing narratives construct the reality of the school and produce what happens there by looking at several constructs of the school through the differing lenses of the administrators and the consultants

Rosa Parks Through the Eyes of the Administrators

The principals of Rosa Parks Middle School were invested in turning around the lives of the children in the neighborhood according to official federal, state, and district mandates. I place emphasis here on "turning around" because the images of this place put pressure on the culture of the school to be different, to move in a different direction from, the surrounding environment. Rosa Parks was built in the center of a high poverty neighborhood that appears in the local paper and on the six o'clock news nearly nightly with reports of shootings or other violent crimes. The principals wanted Rosa Parks to be different, and so set out to build this school as a safe haven for the equitable education of the children. The school was built in 2005, after the district lost a federal case that eliminated school busing for desegregation and that, in effect, segregated the district with neighborhood schools. Prior to this case, the children had been bused over an hour to the suburbs to school. Now in a neighborhood that was considered a hub for gang activity and where city buses do not run on the streets after dark and where police sirens are reminders of rape, murder, and larceny, the children needed a safe space to focus, a place to change direction, to turn around and to move out of the culture of violence that the principals saw as surrounding them.

The principals thought of the school as a beacon on the hill pointing to the right direction and a safe haven for the children and their families. The suburban school architecture of the building reflects that mission. The campus is on a well-kept expansive, grassy park that rises on a hill over the neighborhood, offering the students and their families an image of the success that education can bring. The first principal named the school after a major figure in the Civil Rights movement as a symbol of the culture of hope, non-violence and excellence he wanted to create in the school.

In order to further inspire the students, the walls of the school are kept clean and bright and are decorated with laminated motivational posters purchased by the school such as a kitten hanging from a branch by both paws with the words "Hang in There" across his belly, or a breath taking scenes of nature with words like "perseverance" or "endurance" across the top and definitions for these words in smaller print at the bottom. The bulletin boards, carefully crafted by the staff, display similar posters and sentiments.

Structures for Students

Rosa Parks Middle School's district places a heavy emphasis on "safe and orderly schools" and this is a rating on an annual report card that is published about each school at the end of the year. As a part of creating this safe and orderly environment in the midst of a poor and violent neighborhood, the students at Rosa Parks wear school uniforms. The district leadership knew that the majority of students would come from families who were struggling to make ends meet. They also knew that in this neighborhood, gang activity was prolific and that middle school-aged children were in danger of being swept up into that lifestyle. School uniforms would equalize things for the poor children as well as keep children safe from gang activity and disputes over designer clothes, while also enabling students to come to school prepared to do the job of learning much in the same way adults dress for work.

The first principal, a middle aged white man, was very successful in his leadership of an elementary school serving this same neighborhood, and he brought some of those traditions with him to Rosa Parks. In the elementary school, the staff evoked children's imaginations, when they wanted students to move from their classroom to the lunchroom, by asking them to pretend to make "duck tails" with their hands and bubble lips with their mouths as they moved through the halls. This same idea was part of the culture of Rosa Parks. However, the lines still needed a bit of structure, so the children were asked to walk on the second linoleum block from the wall. Having hands in place, lips together, the orderly lined transitions eliminated pushing, or racing to classes. Following the linoleum blocks away from the walls also kept the beautiful new walls scuff-free. The principal also gave the teachers megaphones to help to make themselves heard over the din of middle schoolers, reminding them to keep their hands in place and move on to their next assignments.

The students move about the building in this manner to the restroom, the lunchroom, and to supervised "healthy active child time" (HAC). The lunchroom is also orderly and quiet. Teachers are assigned lunchroom supervision and monitor the behavior of the children as well as maintain silent lunch for those students who had exhibited inappropriate behavior earlier in the day. The children are not asked to take home the schools' textbooks because with few parents home to help them with schoolwork, the risk of loosing them is too great. The lockers are left empty and unassigned because middle school children might loiter there and/or stash contraband.

Structures for Teachers and Consultants

The teachers and the staff, connected as people with the first principal. He was devoted to and protective of his staff and students. He understood and accepted the job the district charged him with, which was to turn around the lives of his students by raising scores and creating an orderly, predictable learning environment. He identified himself as a bit of a maverick, unlike many of the suits downtown who didn't understand and expect enough of the kids from the neighborhood. He had worked prior to starting Rosa Parks at an elementary school and was very successful there by district standards. But, in the first few years the school was open, he had been unable to raise the test scores, which he saw as "problematic" and "not indicative of what these kids can do." He often spoke of the faith he had in each of them and the importance of that faith in the "tough" environment—the tough culture—in which they worked, studied, and lived. He saw the school surrounded by conflict, so he wanted to make the school a place of shared purpose, even camaraderie among the staff.

The principal was not totally aware of what the Writing Project was, and agreed to be a part of the grant because a trusted mentor encouraged him to do so. He knew that the school's writing scores were low, and he hoped that this group would be able to help with that. He viewed the Tallulah and I as one of the many intervention teams in the school, and handed us over to his academic facilitator and other teacher leaders to facilitate and organize their work. However, he made himself available to talk to us when we asked him to and over time, we found ourselves connected with him in the same way the staff and students were. He began too to recognize us as “on his team” and scooped us under his protective shield.

At the end of the second year of the partnership, the principal was asked to use his experience in opening schools to open a new magnet school in the district and so a second principal was assigned by the district in the fifth year. Despite the first principal’s efforts, along with ours, those of the staff and teams from the state, the children’s test scores still marked the school as “low performing.” The new principal, a black woman, who had proven herself as an effective and efficient leader in a district level position, used her “strategic staffing” privileges to make quick decisions to remove any teacher or administrator and bring in those she felt better suited her leadership style and the needs of the students. She committed herself to understanding every aspect of each of the constantly shifting and moving parts of the school, and then making that information easily accessible to her teachers and staff. She was also committed to streamlining the many, often conflicting, initiatives at work in the school so that her teachers would not be “pulled in so many directions” but heading in the same “correct” direction together. She viewed the Tallulah and me and the Writing Project as one of the many groups of people coming into the school to help. She saw us as "idealist" and "do-gooder" liberals and one more group over burdening already busy teachers with more to do.

Students and staff alike always addressed the new principal formally and she saw decorum among students and staff as integral to the creation of a safe and orderly learning environment. The megaphones were abolished on her first day in charge, though she kept the orderly transition procedures of hands behind one's back and mouths closed. She brought order to the staff as well, with reminders about the teachers' duty to come to work each day, on time. She reminded them that sick days, by law, were not to be used for other personal reasons. She also insisted on quiet, attentive behavior in all staff meetings and team planning meetings, which were carefully planned, organized and supervised by the administrative staff, as well as professional development sessions Tallulah and I led.

The school was an even quieter, more orderly place with the second principal in charge and the district was pleased when officials made visits early in the school year. In a staff meeting in the early fall, with Tallulah and I waiting in the wings to facilitate a workshop, she congratulated the staff on their efforts, acknowledging openly that they did not like her rules but that they had paid off as the district was congratulating them all on the order and efficiency of the school. The end of this study coincided with the end of the new principal's first full year. The school was still designated at low performing and the principal dismissed several more teachers as well the three new academic facilitators she had hired.

Structures for Writing

The school's "low performing" designation due to the fact that the students were not able to show annual yearly progress on their standardized state assessments made those assessments the focus of instruction in the eyes of the principals. Those scores were of the upmost importance if students were going to be able to move on to high school and if teachers and administrators were going to be able to keep their jobs and receive bonus pay. For that reason, when Tallulah and I first came to Rosa Parks Middle School, writing and writing instruction happened solely in 7th grade English Language Arts classes where students took the state mandated writing test. The other courses focused on the multiple -choice reading and math state assessments. The 7th grade students practiced writing the "structured essay" with a thesis statement, a main idea at the beginning of each paragraph followed by three pieces of evidence to support the main idea, and a conclusion. Each paragraph was to have three sentences and each paper should have four to five paragraphs.

The state began to require writing in all subject areas shortly after we arrived, and so the teachers worked to bring these structures to all subject areas in order to help the children be successful on the test. Further, after the switch in administrators, the new assistant principal in charge of literacy instruction "raised the bar for writing" by insisting that argument be taught in all classes at all grade levels. She wanted the children to reach beyond doing well on the test towards being prepared for college level writing. She explained to us that she did not want the students' or teachers' valuable instructional time to be wasted on writing that would not help them to attain that important goal. Additionally, a computerized literacy program, *Achieve 3000*, was purchased and adopted in order to help the teachers and students work on writing in a more efficient manner. Each day, the students received a non-fiction news item, written on their Lexile level, in an e-mail. Students spent 45 minutes of each day reading the article and taking notes on the computer when prompted. At the end, they answered multiple-choice questions, and then put their notes into the outline provided by the program in order to write an essay. The computer then scored the writing for the teachers, leaving them free to work with the other important things they needed to do for their students. When the pressures of the state tests approached, *Achieve 3000* became the most important writing experience for the students because there was no more time available during the school day for writing of any other kind.

Rosa Parks Through the Eyes of the Consultants

The first day that Tallulah and I drove down the fairy tale named streets lined by single-family homes cramped next to one another—the irony did not escape us. The boarded up houses and those remaining with bars on windows and over grown yards was no “sleeping beauty” and we certainly didn’t imagine ourselves as Prince Charming charging on the scene to wake her up. In fact, we were hoping to drive by unnoticed. The school appeared to us as walled off from the rest of the community. We had to enter the property through a gate that was locked after hours, and Tallulah commented on the fence surrounding the property. The police car was parked in the drive near the entry way. The school seemed out of place to us, appearing to mock the people who lived around the school in its privileged position towering over them.

There was an antiseptic feel to the school inside. The walls were sterile and the absence of student work was unwelcoming to us. Hanging on the walls were motivational posters, the iconic one with a cat holding on to a pole, with the inscription “hang in there” and the pink horse in full cantor, with mane and tale floating-saying “If you can dream it you can achieve it”. The irony didn’t escape us there either. This stoic place did not look like it would welcome frivolity like pink horse riding and kitten shenanigans in the halls!

The Writing Project came to Rosa Parks Middle eager to work with urban middle school teachers and their students and excited about the possibilities. Tallulah and I had both taught for years in urban schools, so we felt going into this project that we would be with colleagues and that we could work together to engage their students as learners and writers. We were anticipating having a large group of colleagues with which to talk to face-to-face. We wanted to “turn around” the corner facing isolation we had felt in our own buildings. We wanted to turn the teachers towards the kinds of conversations we often Skyped one another and our Writing Project colleagues about after hours, to think together about the work that we had been doing behind our closed doors. A building full of teachers working openly together to think about engaging children in writing in transformative ways was the “right” direction to be heading in our view.

As a part of our work and conversations with our Writing Project site and in a graduate program, Tallulah and I had been thinking deeply about the importance of dialogic teaching and constructing our classrooms that way. We were working to turn away from banking concepts of teaching and learning where the instructor deposited the knowledge into the students and towards a concept that recognized that both teacher and student had important knowledge to share and that both would learn by sharing that knowledge through equal dialogue with one another. Dialogic teaching also fit with our sites' understanding of the National Writing Project principal of teachers teaching teachers. Tallulah and I had knowledge to share in this school as teachers, and so did the teachers in the school. We saw our professional development work as a dialogue, an exchange of ideas where we all learned from on another, sharing our expertise together as colleagues interested in children's writing and thinking and learning. Like the administrators, we did want to "turn around" writing instruction in the school; however, we were turning in a very different direction.

In Rosa Parks, we were "outsiders," and our ways of being in the school and our reasons for being there marked us that way. Our email conversations with each other and the Writing Project site director were often about being misunderstood or ignored or seeing things differently from the insiders in the school world. It wasn't just the visitor's sticker that marked us at first, or the escort that took us to the classrooms we were visiting, or the conversations in the lounge where we explained again and again that we were not there as "inspectors" from "the state" but as teachers, as colleagues interested in thinking with other teachers about writing and learning in the school. Nonetheless, the teachers packed up their lunches from the microwave and went to eat together somewhere

where we were not. Our "outside"-ness was even deeper than that. The direction we were asking them to turn to, the destination we were asking them to go, seemed impossible to the teachers and the children. The empty composition notebooks we gave them to fill with writing were another burden, another thing they had to do, another thing miring them in place.

Structures for Students

Tallulah, and I were startled by the operations of the school on our first visit. We had been reading a lot of Foucault and with that critical lens firmly affixed, we saw middle school children moving through the halls with their hands behind their backs like prison inmates as teachers spoke to them through bullhorns like prison guards. We saw children dressed in ways that conflicted with the rich cultures of their homes. We saw panopticon surveillance, where children were not trusted to go to the restroom without strict adult supervision and had no space to talk with each other. We saw children who were not trusted to take the school's books from the classroom or use the lockers to store them so that they might study at home. In classes, we saw students regurgitating text book information poured into them as if they were empty vessels with no thoughts and ideas of their own. It seemed like the children were being trained for a life in prison, and it was difficult for us not to think that prison was what society expected of them, what it was turning them towards.

Structures for the Teachers and Consultants

In an effort to work with the teachers' overloaded schedules, Tallulah and I devised a plan to work individually with teachers during their planning periods and during scheduled “content meetings.” We were hoping to make use of already scheduled “meeting” time but turn it towards what we saw as a more productive direction. We worked to familiarize ourselves with the ever-changing meeting schedules of the school and find a way to work within it. Our scheduled plans were bumped often by everything from state intervention teams, to Personal Education Plan documentation that had to happen immediately, because the academic facilitator and teacher leader placed in charge of the program did not have the power to protect the time from other administrators and their initiatives. And yet, there were teachers who found a way to turn in our direction. We began to see that some of our most fruitful conversations happened in the hall, when teachers heard that we were in the building and came out of classrooms to stop us and ask a question, or pulled us in to show us this “cool writing thing” the students were doing, or when we went to lunch with the teachers and their students. We felt like these conversations were productive and valuable, but we constantly struggled with feeling that the time was inefficiently spent as the careful, orderly plans we made for workshops and meetings were pushed aside and we were only able to really work with the teachers one-on-one. We wanted to turn the whole school around.

Structures for Writing

When the research team conducting the National Evaluation study visited the school for the first time, they contacted us and asked if we were sure that we wanted to be in this school. They had seen almost no writing while they were there. In our own initial visit, we saw narrow practices of teaching, particularly in writing, that required students to regurgitate the information given to them by the teacher, to fill in blanks, that left almost no space for critical thinking. We said to ourselves, “it’s no wonder the children ‘don’t write’”!

We were eager to turn around the formulaic notions of writing in a direction that connected students’ daily lives with school information and work with students and teachers to use writing as a way to inquire into legitimizing power structures that we saw as marginalizing the students as well as the staff of the school. We were thrilled to have three years to think deeply with teachers about what was happening in their classrooms, and ways in which to bring a culture of writing to the school.

We started our work with the teachers by inviting them to a “writing retreat” on our campus before school started. The irony of “getting them out of there” and turning them towards yet another castle on the hill *did* escape us. The teachers worked together as a team, wrote themselves, and were given daybooks to collect their thoughts. Our plan was to give them a space to be writers. The teachers appeared excited by the experience and we thought that this would translate quickly to their work in the classroom, work that we felt they were not doing and needed to do. But when we went to the school a few weeks after to retreat to check in with the teachers, it was almost as if the writing we did never happened. Nothing in the teachers’ practices had changed. The writing didn’t materialize in their classrooms because the “retreat” did not map on to the teachers’ school world. It was outside of its scope.

Seeing the mismatch between the teachers' realities and the direction we had offered in the summer, Tallulah and I began to observe classes, teach model lessons during classes and meet with teachers during their planning periods in an attempt to walk in their shoes as teachers in the world of Rosa Parks Middle. We saw formulaic five paragraph essays being assigned in order to meet what the teachers and administrators saw as the requirements of the state test. Tallulah and I got out the proverbial tour guide flags and tried to turn the teachers towards a view of writing where forms other than "the essay" could require careful, critical thinking on the part of the writer and in many ways required much more than the formulaic, fill in the blank, essay assignment while at the same time engaging students much more deeply. We met stony-faced, and very vocal resistance. Many of the teachers were offended and angry. For them, "real" school writing did not include forms like letters, blog posts, and poetry. In their view, our flags were turning them off the road of academic achievement towards a playground meant only for students who were "incapable" of writing essays. They felt that Tallulah and I were merely appeasing and entertaining the students rather than preparing them for the rigors of higher education, and in that way, suggesting that the students were simply stuck in their current lives of poverty and violence.

Tallulah and I had the same goals for the students as the teachers and staff; however, we all vehemently disagreed on the direction to turn them around towards. Rather than being in dialogue about how to best serve the students through writing instruction, we were standing in the middle of the road arguing over which map was "right."

When the writing practices of the school narrowed even further in the third year with the "argument only" policy and the adoption of *Achieve 3000*, Tallulah and I cringed, took a deep breath and then continued to push the teachers in the direction of *our* product of writing instruction. We offered a nuanced definition of "argument" that included many forms of argumentative writing as a counter to the five-paragraph argument the administrator was insisting upon when she told us that the children had no time for the frivolities of creative writing. We offered a series of workshops on "rigorous writing" in order to put our definition of argument and rigor on the map of the school and think about ways in which digital composing could be on the path. However, with the adoption of the computerized writing program, computer lab space for Writing Project ideas of writing became unavailable. We saw students spending their "technology time" regurgitating the ideas presented them by the software company rather than thinking, questioning and composing about their thoughts on the content they were learning. We didn't see them moving anywhere at all, just simply turning in endless circles.

We continued to work with a few individual teachers, on the margins, as we bumped into them in the halls, but we were puzzled and frustrated. They would ask us for something to do, an activity or lesson plan, while we were wanting them to think more holistically about changing their practices as writing teachers. The teachers who were "with us" had bought into our brand of success and were using our "things," but they had not changed their thinking in a way that would allow them to craft more ideas and lessons together. In our minds, they were still on the “wrong” road, one that zig-zaged between our road and the road of the administrators like pinballs in a machine. The numbers of those “with us” teachers dwindled as they were administratively reassigned and left the school, or began to look for other jobs. In the end, the teachers we had worked most closely with left the school during the year or at its end. The multiple choice test scores still marked the school as low performing and we were told that no one in the school had time for writing at all. We wondered what, if anything, we’d actually done there.

Moving Towards Analysis

In the narratives above we see a lot of people working very hard for the children in this school. Even while the narratives constructed by the differing lenses of the administrators and the consultants are competing with one another, both narratives were tied to the corporate logic of order, efficiency, and success—the success that can be measured—and that requires a commodified education. Both narratives are trying to turn the school around. The administrators, charged with turning theses students’ lives around, see higher test scores as pointing to the “right” way. The writing consultants, charged with turning writing around see their brand of classroom practice as pointing in the “correct” direction. The consultants worry that they are being paid by the hour, and that these hours aren’t being used efficiently by the school and so they will not look effective in the study. The school worries that teacher and student time is not being used efficiently because the consultants’ “things” such as the blank composition book that they call a daybook where students could think out loud on paper, do not fit with their narratives of the kinds of “things” that will help the students do well on the multiple choice test and send them in the “college ready” direction. The students are turning around, and around, bumping into the direction changing commodities that promise success, but send them winding through the machine of society, keeping them moving, and masking the fact that they are stuck in the fairy tale haunted forest of poverty.

These commodified “things” in the narrative of education reform serve to reproduce social inequity rather than change the lives of children. The narrative of “use these things and you will succeed” shifts blame back to the administrators, teachers, consultants and students when they do not succeed because the children failed to “get” what was bought for them and the principals and consultants failed to turn the school and the children there, in the “correct” direction. This narrative papers over the reality with the appearance of a happily ever after promise of things that will put people on the right path to get out of the poverty forest. Under the paper, consultants are being paid to help with writing in a school where no one writes, the school is in order, but the children are in disarray, and children who all look alike are vastly different.

However, it is in the intersecting and competing narratives that the children are working within and against, where they are constructing other competing narratives. They negotiate their social and historical narratives of how to be a “student” in the school with the dominant narratives of school. Within these competing narratives, the students (and teachers, consultants and administrators) find themselves in situations that they have no set response for.

They then must improvise in order to author themselves in this world, and these improvisations have the power to refigure and transform that world.

The larger narrative of educational reform is built on consumerist culture—on a business model—where competition ensures higher quality of product production in the most efficient manner. In this consumerist culture, the people with the money to invest in production have the power to decide what is produced. And what is produced, or reproduced in education is the hegemonic power and position of the privileged through what Foucualt calls the great normalizing institution of school which works to legitimize the privileged group's Truth about the direction schools need to turn to in order to succeed and the literacy commodities they need to "get" in order to find the path. And when the children don't "get" what they are "given" then it's their own fault that they are stuck.

In Rosa Parks Middle School these narratives work to produce a certain way of being and knowing. Those narratives are inscribed on the actual bodies of the students, they produce certain ways of doing work and certain narratives of writing. Below, I will analyze the ways these narratives are figuring the world of the school in order to map narrative negotiations and improvisations, and isolate and examine some of the ways that micro-powers are working in and constructing the world of the school.

School Uniforms: Inscribing Narrative Theories-in-use on Students' Bodies

The uniforms of Rosa Parks Middle School are illustrative of how narratives for participating in the role of "student" in the figured world Rosa Parks Middle School are literally inscribed upon the body of the students through order and control of student dress. A close look at uniforms, how the policy was created, how the uniforms were chosen and designed, followed by how the uniform code is actually interpreted and enforced by the students and the staff of the school illustrates the competing narratives at work in the construction of the "student" role at Rosa Parks Middle School.

The Rosa Parks Middle School uniforms are light blue collared polo shirts and khaki pants or skirts modeled after what the American corporate world calls "business casual" attire that is worn by middle management. The uniform policy states that students' shirts must have collars and that pants, skirts and shorts must be no more than 6 inches above the knee and must be belted at the natural waistline.

Using the mediating tool of the school uniform, the figured world of schooling is inscribing middle management values on the actual bodies of the students in one view, but in another, reminding them that they do not fit in these clothes and therefore these identities. Creativity and non-compliance through dress are considered deviant behaviors. Standardization, order and compliance are the desired outcome of the uniforms. Rosa Parks Middle School has a uniform policy because of its low performing, "at-risk" status. The fact that other middle schools in the system not labeled in this way, (and also serving predominantly upper middle class populations) are not viewed as "needing" uniforms makes the uniform policy reminiscent of prison garb. The narrative of the figured world of urban school reform in the U.S. as ventriloquated in conversations with the school's administrators and teachers as well as district officials and local news articles is that uniforms are needed in this school in order to standardize dress and prevent distractions to learning, such as the comparing of socio-economic status, the wearing of overly revealing clothing, and the display of gang colors. These same "distractions" are of course present in all schools, but they are considered a problem that must be addressed in *this* school.

The uniform style was chosen by the school system in accordance with the school colors and the social rules about school uniforms in US public schools, which differ from the private prep school uniforms with blazers, ties and knee socks. These differences in requirements symbolize the difference between the business casual wearing middle management or service worker and the suit and tie wearing CEO.

Another figured world intersects and is in dialogue with the mediating tool of school uniforms at Rosa Parks Middle School in the form of a large high-end, family owned regional department store helping underprivileged children. The company donated the designs for the polo shirts as a compliment to the "plain" light blue version available at discount department stores. Students voted on designs that were approved by the school board and then the store donated one shirt in that design to each student.

The "winning" design has the school emblem embroidered on it along with an argyle stripe. Students' families can purchase more of these shirts from the department store through the school. The store has also designed argyle sweater vests to compliment the shirts. In this way the students are branded with the school logo and the department store's argyle. No other logo is allowed. The store gets nearly free marketing for helping under-privileged children while corporate values continue to be inscribed on the children's bodies through branded marketing.

The division of labor in the use of the mediating tool of the school uniform positions the central office and the dominant knowledge claims of urban reform and public schooling in the United States in the position of power to decide what the children should wear to school. The central office and school board must approve all uniform designs and colors before the school administrators can begin to make their choices. In the case of the designs the children voted on from the department store, the only choices where those sanctioned by the school board. The students (and the school staff for that matter) had no input in the initial designs that were presented for approval. The school administrators and teachers have the job of enforcing the dress code and the students and their families have the job of complying and cooperating.

However to get a full picture of the way the mediating tool of school uniforms are working to inscribe theories-in-use on the bodies of students, it is necessary to look at the way the narratives of the students and their families as well as the school staff are constructing the figured world of the school through the school uniform. The school staff affords students the ability to "accessorize," as the secretary explained to a less than enthusiastic new student one day when I was signing into the building. The accessorizing takes on the narratives of the students' cultural, historical backgrounds. Some students comply completely with the middle management expectation. These students are more often found in the “upper level” classes. Others accessorize with sweatshirts that mark them as identifying with their Latino/Latina peers or with hip-hop culture or other groups in the school. Some of the girls wear their polo shirts and khaki skirts and pants in a form-fitting style that exposes cleavage, disallows buttoning, and accentuates hips. Some of the boys wear their business casual khaki pants low around their hips, exposing designer labeled boxer shorts underneath. Students further accessorize with shoes, jewelry and hairstyles that identify them as members of different social groups and serve as socio-economic markers. The result is anything but uniform and for many far from what would be expected in a middle management job.

The students’ actions of resistance to the middle management identity that is being forced onto their bodies as a daily reminder that the clothes do not fit, along with the staff’s actions of encouraging and allowing these actions, exhibits tension within the figured world of schooling in the United States. The students and staff are negotiating their culturally, historically formed understandings of ways of being “student” in the world of the school with that of the dominate ways of knowing and being “student” in the world of the dominant socializing system. They are pushing at the boundaries of the “regime of truth,” and the statements it is making about the social position the students should be accepting. The students and staff are still recognizable in this regime of truth, but with very different ways of using the mediating tools, with different motivations for differing outcomes. The ability to be recognizable can be a productive tension that holds transformative potential for what it means to be “student” in the school world in that it disrupts the socialization process of the institution of schooling that says these students should be inscribed with middle management values and accept that social position.

Planning Meetings: Order and Control over the Work in the Building

The instructional planning meetings at Rosa Parks, particularly after the district appointed the new principal, are illustrative of how competing narratives of order and control construct the role of "teacher" in the figured world of the school. These narratives offer competing views of what counts as knowledge and who gets to decide what counts as knowledge in the school.

The teachers at Rosa Parks Middle School were always expected to plan together during scheduled meetings. Administrators looked over the plans and planned with teachers regularly. However, when the new principal came with the job of turning the school around, she chose to use the activity of teacher planning to create further order and control in the building through careful surveillance of the teachers' work.

When the school opened in her first full year of leadership, she and her fellow administrators created a careful matrix of meetings (see Appendix A) with very specific purposes, which encompassed all but one teacher planning period per week and each afternoon after school save Friday. An administrator attended each of these meetings and ensured that the participants stuck to and took careful notes on the required agendas. Teachers were expected to plan and teach with their colleagues so that each student in each course on each grade level experienced the same lessons, at the same time, delivered in the same way. The time to discuss this planning was in the meetings, not in the halls when teachers were to be monitoring students. In this way, the administration hoped to insure that every student in every class was receiving equal instruction. The administrators were insuring the quality of that instruction by being a part of the planning of lessons. Teachers turned in their lesson plans in a form specified by the school (see sample planning documents for the West African Slave Trade Unit in Appendix B) and the administrators sat in on the planning meetings to discuss and critique the plans. For the administrators, the planning matrix and the planning forms are mediating tools to ensure the outcome of order and control over the activity of teachers as well as uniformity in information delivery and the definition of what counts as “knowledge” in each classroom.

The teachers were only “allowed” to talk to one another in these supervised planning meetings and the talking was expected to follow a protocol put in place to ensure uniformity in these meetings. Any disruption to the agenda, whether that was talking about an objective out of order, sharing a personal story, or talking about students not listed on the agenda was not allowed. Teachers were heavily reprimanded for breaking these rules.

The planning matrix and the careful supervision of meetings and lesson planning values uniformity in instruction and one specific view of what should be happening in the classroom. Creativity in planning and non-compliance with agendas is considered deviant behavior. The activity of planning and teaching in the building takes on the top down, widget making values of the business world. Teachers are not trusted to think as professionals and know what their students might need at any given moment. They are to follow the careful agenda to plan a lesson that they all must follow. The assumption is that all students and teachers are the same and knowledge is a commodified "thing" that students and teachers "get." An additional common sense storyline here is that if teachers are not carefully told what to do and then carefully watched, they will not do their jobs; they will not teach.

The writing consultants also had a role in the activity of planning at Rosa Parks Middle School. We brought a competing value system about the roles of teachers in the activity of planning from the world of the National Writing Project and the core idea of teachers teaching teachers along with our work with Paulo Freire's problem-posing, dialogic education. We felt that endless meetings during their planning periods were wasting the teachers' time.

We wanted to re-figure that time by using it for professional development. However, while we were operating in the narrative that our information was important enough to share during this time, the administrators' were not. Though we asked the teachers what they would like to work with in regards to writing instruction, we did not provide much space for the work of the teachers when we didn't like their "help with the tests" answers. We were attempting to control planning and curriculum by coming to planning meetings with our own set agendas for the time, expecting the teachers and administrators to follow it. We expected the teachers to excitedly embrace our notions of writing and writing instruction. Our narrative was that the students and teachers would want to be pushed to critique power structures at work in their lives, and that they would embrace our ideas of writing instruction. We had to constantly remind ourselves to consider the differing stakes of such critique for white middle class women with university jobs and minority administrators, teachers and students working and learning in a school constructed as "failing" in the midst of a neighborhood constructed as violent and dangerous.

Talluhlah and I struggled to listen to the teachers and administrators when they pointed this "difference" out to us, saying that we were "do-gooders" who did not expect enough from the students. We slipped time and time again into a deficit construction of the dissenting administrators and teachers, and a commodified notion of our professional development when we became frustrated with people not "getting it." We were constantly having to work with our colleagues outside of the school to re-affix our own critical lenses to see the material reality of the tensions they were pointing out to us. While our brand of surveillance did not involve bullhorns, or pink slips, it was there in our affirmations of "good job" to those who did what we were suggesting, and our pursed lips and red faces, or "no but" conversations masked in "what if" phraseology when others resisted.

The figured world of the testing industry in the United States also intersects with the activity of the planning meeting at Rosa Parks Middle School. The students' performance on tests designed by the corporation mark the school as "failing" and in need of intervention, in the form of administrators carefully monitoring planning and instruction. The agendas of the planning meetings surround "covering" standards that will be tested, and collecting data in the form of practice tests to show whether or not the children have mastered the standards. In this way, the test makers determine what will be discussed in the meetings and what will be taught.

The division of labor in the use of the mediating tool of "planning meetings" within figured world of Rosa Parks middle school positions the testing industry as having the power to decide what teachers should be teaching and what children should be learning. The administrators have the power to decide how information will be delivered. The university consultants are allowed to have a voice in the interventions, but anything they offer that does not directly address testing in the eyes of the administrators is dismissed. The teachers have very limited power over what they teach, especially if it differs from the ideas of the testing industry and the administrators. Students and their families have no power in determining what is taught. The administrators must carefully watch the teachers' planning and teaching. Teams from the state and the district must carefully watch the administrators. The success of all of this watching is measured by the testing corporations who create the year-end standardized tests and the research corporation that evaluates the Writing Project.

The teachers shifting motives and outcomes for the activity of planning, work within and against the competing narratives of planning and instruction in the figured world of the school. In compliance and resistance with the controlled planning, the teachers developed a narrative of off the clock "sharing." Their narrative is that the official meetings are a "performance" of the administrative sanctioned planning. The "real" planning has to happen around the margins of the workday. The teachers who came to see us as “with them” talked with us in the halls or after meetings. In my interviews and observations of both official planning meetings and other interactions among teachers, I learned that the teachers text each other on their drives to school in the morning, on the way home in the afternoon, as well as during the school day, sometimes surreptitiously under desks during “official” planning meetings. They whisper together about ideas and students at the start of official planning meetings with one eye on the door, ready to defend their behavior should an administrator come in. They take their one free planning period per week to talk together behind closed doors and in hushed voices, with reminders to “watch out” and “don’t tell . . .” They also critique the uniformity being demanded, using the language of the intervention teams. They point to all that they have been told about differentiation by the administrators, the central office and the consultants when they deviate from the scripted lesson or the ways of writing suggested by the consultants. They discover ways to meet the needs of their students and explain this work as “what they’ve been asked to do.” When no one is watching, the teachers’ reflect, plan and think together about what they want their students to learn and how they can help them to do that, in negotiation with and compliance with the planning and instructional delivery design of the school.

The teachers resist the order and control imposed on their work environment by the testing industry, the administrators and the university consultants by closing their doors and teaching in ways that they feel, as professionals committed to their students, are important. They participated in the narrative of commodified education by inviting in the consultants when they felt their methods would be sanctioned because they were using a thing or an activity the consultants had given them, but they also often felt that these things were not sanctioned by the building or district administration and so they discussed them together behind closed doors or on their “off” work time. This narrative of resistance to outside intervention in classrooms is recognizable as “what teachers do” in the figured world of schooling in the U.S.

At the same time, the narratives of compliance are also recognizable in the world of schooling in the U.S. where if teachers work hard and do as they are told, their students will pass the test. And if the students’ don’t pass the test, then it is the students that are to blame, not the compliant teacher or the supervising administrator, and certainly not the testing industry itself. The tension exhibited between the various socially, historically constructed narratives of order and control of planning and instruction at work in the different actors in the figured world of Rosa Parks Middle school informs participants’ understanding of how perform the role of teacher (as well as that of administrator, and consultant) in the socializing world of Rosa Parks and is situated in the socializing world of schooling in the United States.

An important tension exists within the narrative of order and control of planning and instruction in the world of schooling in the United States as the staff at Rosa Parks Middle School, composed predominantly of minority teachers, serving a population of poor minority students, are supervised and controlled while the white teachers in the school down the road serving upper middle class students talk to one other freely. Teachers in other buildings are constructed as “creative and brilliant” when they deviate from scripted plans to meet the needs of students while the deviating teachers at Rosa Parks were viewed as “problems” and removed from the school. The white middle class consultants in some ways want the teachers at Rosa Parks to resist openly the order, control and uniformity imposed on their planning by the administrators, except when that resistance keeps the consultants from controlling the instruction and curriculum in the ways that enable writing to happen in the school. The teachers carefully negotiate within and against these narratives of control over planning and instruction in order to teach in ways that they feel are important to students. Their work pushes at the boundaries of the regime of truth that says teachers must be controlled and watched in order to insure they are teaching.

Computerized Writing Instruction: Order and Control over Writing Instruction and Writing

The school’s adoption of the computerized literacy program in the third year of their partnership with the Writing Project consultants in indicative of the competing narratives of order and control over writing and writing instruction in the world of Rosa Parks Middle. An analysis of the narrative of writing produced by the mediating tool of the program, with an eye towards writing as a mediating tool in the activity of knowledge making and knowledge sharing in the figured world of the consultants, illuminates the narratives of writing students negotiate in the school world when asked to write.

As I mentioned above, in the third year of this study, Rosa Parks Middle School adopted a highly efficient literacy producing and monitoring software program called *Achieve 3000* (2011). *Achieve 3000* is approved for school purchase by the state and encouraged in schools bearing "low performing status." At Rosa Parks, each student spends 45 minutes, or half, of their English Language Arts class in the computer lab each day working with the article assigned by the computer. Students silently read and answer the multiple-choice questions, then fill in the blanks when prompted with information from the article in order to complete an essay. The computer then scores the essays and sends the report to the teacher, the administrators and the district office.

At Rosa Parks Middle School, the teacher's role is to monitor the students while they work. Teachers are to walk up and down the line of computers, checking to see that the students are on task. They are also to monitor the reports that the program creates for each student. Administrators access the reports to monitor the teachers. They let the teachers know that *Achieve 3000* time is not "free time." They are not to use this time to converse with colleagues, grade papers, or plan lessons. Teachers are not to use this important time to conference with students about their writing or their ideas.

The theme of order and control is present in this narrative of "school writing" in the figured world of Rosa Parks Middle school. When the consultants first came, they learned that writing in this world was to follow a rigid form and that form was to be filled in with the "right" ideas as decided by the teachers, who were being monitored by the administrators, the district, the state and the testing industry. With the addition of *Achieve 3000*, the software corporation had great power in deciding what ideas were "right" and which blank they belonged in. When the consultants left the school at the end of the three year study, the dominant narrative of writing in the figured world of the school was that students do not do it when asked, and that "it" (meaning the structured, corporate (objective) narrative of writing) is something that they "need" in order to be prepared for the rigors of tests they will take in high school if they are to go to college. Within this narrative, the state determines that students should write in all subject areas, but it does not define that writing. The software corporation determines what "non-fiction" information students read and write about and how they write about it.

In conflict then with the intersecting figured worlds of the testing industry, the software corporation, schooling in the US and urban school reform, is the narrative of writing in the figured world of the writing consultants who were invited in to help with writing in the school. The consultants viewed writing as a mediating tool, not an outcome in and of itself. In this narrative, writing is about the sharing of ideas, and thinking of and bringing forward new ideas. It is a mediating tool that can connect students' daily lives to the information of school. It is a mediating tool with which to inquire into legitimizing power structures. This narrative of writing then is in conflict with that of many other narratives of writing constructing the school world. Still the writing consultants slid into a commodified narrative of writing as well when teachers and administrators constructed them as do-gooders and they, in turn, constructed teachers and administrators as simply not getting “it” – the “thing” the Writing Project was promoting.

There are narratives of writing at work in the world of Rosa Parks that critique the dominant corporate (objectivist) narrative of writing. They exist in what the teachers are doing in their classrooms behind closed doors, what the students are doing in their writing in and out of school, and even in the ideas of writing that the university consultants were attempting to put forward. However, students whose thoughts in writing did not fit into the schools world’s socializing narrative of “right” were constructed as “problematic” as seen in the Holocaust diary writings that caused concern due to their “inappropriate” content. The students were aware of what “counted” as school writing as is noticeable in their interviews as well as in the differences in the various narratives that appeared in their “school essay” writing assignments and the other forms they engaged with in and out of school. I will examine these writings in much more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

Negotiating Narratives in Student Writing

In the previous sections, I have examined how the corporate (objectivist) narrative of efficiency, order and control are being inscribed on children’s bodies through school uniforms and how they are constructing the work of the building as well as the “knowledge” of teachers and students through the planning matrix and high stakes testing results, and then how those themes are also present in the school’s narrative of writing. In each of these illuminating moments, there are tensions present created by the intersections of other figured worlds with that of the school itself. In these moments, the reproductive power of the dominant group as represented by the world of schooling in the US, urban school reform, and corporate America is quite visible in that the ideas of order and control create very narrow understandings of what counts as "knowledge" and what children are to do in school. However the tensions that are also quite visible show that this order and control is in many ways simply an illusion. The administrators, consultants, teachers and students are pushing at the boundaries of what is recognizable as knowledge and knowledge making and creating possibility for transformation.

All of that is quite a bit for a middle school student to negotiate when they are asked to sit down and write in school. This study is focused on various narratives and the negotiation of those narratives in student writing, particularly the narratives that disrupt the socializing narrative of schooling. Sociocultural theories of language, identity and development (Bakhtin, Foucault, Holland et al. & Vygotsky) explain that the narratives of the figured world of Rosa Parks Middle School are shaping the students' narratives and theories-in-use about how to be a "good" student. In this chapter I have developed various narratives in the world of Rosa Parks. Appendix One focuses the narrative lens to the figured worlds of Samuel and Ronald's classrooms and two assignments that the students in the following chapters were working with. For more details about the contexts and narratives the girl's are negotiating, look there.

In the next two chapters, I will examine the writing of several students as they work within and against these narratives of orderliness, specifically in writing, in order to think about what happens when student writing disrupts the socializing narratives of schooling using Gee’s analytic tools of identity and Critical Discourse Analysis to look closely at the world the students are constructing with their language. Chapter Five will examine three students performing “good student” identities through various narratives and Chapter Six will examine a non-compliant student as an image of hope.

CHAPTER 5: REPRODUCING “GOOD STUDENT” WRITING

Foucault argues that the institution of school is one of the great normalizing institutions in society. As I’ve described in Chapter Four and in Appendix C, there are multiple and in many cases, conflicting narratives of schooling within the figured world of Rosa Parks Middle School, with the narrative of urban school reform in the United States being the dominant one. In order for students to be recognizable in the school world, they must negotiate these conflicting narratives that are inscribed on them along with the lived narratives of their histories in order to compose themselves, or their identities, as students in this school.

Gee (2011) defines identity as “being recognized as a certain ‘kind of person,’ in a given context” (p.99). People have the agency, or as Holland et al (1985) describe, a modicum of agency, to construct their identities, within the confines of the institutional framework that inscribe structures on them (Foucault, 1977; Bettie, 2003; Holland, 1985). Bettie argues that while there is no essential self, the fixed nature of institutionalized constructed subjectivities make people feel as though “temporal ‘real’ self” is some how “who they really are.” So, when they attempt to construct an identity that differs from that inscribed on them by the institution, they feel like they are “passing in drag” or pretending to be someone they are not. This feeling of not really belonging brought on by the institutional identity is what reproduces class structures because people stay where they feel they "belong," understanding that positioning as connected to an essential, unchangeable "self." Foucault's concept of the carceral society explains how normalizing institutions, like schools, produce "Truths" about the normalcy of class positioning.

The three girls in the analysis below have been constructed as "at-risk" by the "normalizing" institution of schooling in the United States through the narratives of urban schools and urban school reform in pop culture, and in common sense understandings of school, based on their attendance in a school serving a neighborhood of poor, minority people where violence often occurs. In their bids for "good student" they are negotiating with this "at-risk" identity and how it tempers "good student" for "kids like them." Gee (2011) labels this sort of identity construction as Institutional Identity or I-Identity, where the power of construction is located in the institution.

However, Bettie, 2003 argues that when people do attempt to "pass" in social situations where they feel they do not belong, they open up possibility for change in that structure. In order to "pass" people must negotiate known narratives of how to "be" in a context with new ones. Holland et al (1998) talk about this negotiation of narratives in terms of improvisation, where people preform "self" by bringing the lived narratives of their histories into a new social situation. The students and teachers in the narratives in Appendix C are not new to the school or the community, but they are new to the narrative of writing brought by the Writing Project consultants and the writing assignments that the teachers are creating based on that narrative. The students then have to improvise in order to perform “good student” identities in these “new” social situations. Holland et al point to improvisation as having transformative potential. Improvisation opens up space, much like Bettie’s concept of “passing,” for change. Over time, the improvisations of earlier generations can become the expectations of the next (p. 18). Gee (2011) refers to this negotiated identity as Discourse-Identity or D-Identity in that the negotiation of narratives must be recognizable by others in order for it to be an identity, so the power for identity construction lies in discourse or dialogue with other individuals. These identities are not distinct from I-Identities, and so institutions certainly make use of recognizable ways of being and knowing, or Discourses, in order to solidify the institution’s social hegemonic position. For this reason, improvisation does not guarantee change, or transformation; it simply has the potential for it because we are constantly making and remaking scenes in our daily lives.

In the following analysis I will examine how three girls are negotiating competing narratives of writing and how to be a student at Rosa Parks both in their Holocaust dairy entries for Samuel, and in their daybook entries for Ronald’s class in order to produce “good student” identities and the different material realities each student’s construction of “good student” produces. Using Gee’s (2011) categories of identity as an analytic tool, specifically I- Identity and D-Identity, I will argue that these girl’s improvisations and performances of “good student” identities are reproductive of the I- identity (Institutional Identity) of “at-risk" that has been inscribed on them by the normalizing narrative of schooling in the United States.

The girls perform "good student" as defined by the institution's construction of them, in essence, "good at-risk" student, in that for each of them, in the figured world of Rosa Parks, being a good student means repeating back what they've been told by the adults or the text. Good students in the figure world of schools not labeled as "low performing" by the urban reform narrative are expected to be "creative" or "innovative." They are expected to synthesize known information with new information and make new knowledge from that synthesis. In the business model of the United States, the narrative of successful person is also that of innovation and creativity. However, the middle management worker, the service worker, or the prison inmate is expected to follow orders, do as they are told and take all information given to them by a person of authority as "Truth." When the girls negotiate the various narratives of the school along with their lived histories to improvise in this new narrative of writing and new social situation of talking with the university writing consultant, they improvise. However, their construction and performance of "good student" D-Identity (discourse identity) is heavily inscribed by their "at-risk" I-Identity (institutional identity). The narrative of urban school reform as inscribed on these three girls reproduces their socio-economic positioning.

In the sections below, I will use Gee's Critical Discourse Analysis in order to examine how each girl's language is constructing and performing "good at risk student" in different ways as they improvise in these new social and writing situations in which they find themselves.

Leslie: Good Student Writers Repeat

Leslie was a 7th grade student in Ronald's social studies class. She is admired by all of her teachers, at the top of her class in GPA, and scored a 95% on the test for the unit about the West African Slave Trade that I observed. Her negotiations of the various narratives of the school, her D-Identity embodies her "good at-risk student" I-identity as inscribed on her by the narrative of school reform. Leslie wears the school uniform, including the argyle shirt, in the clean, pressed form of business casual performing "good student" as designed by the school board and department store. Her hair is neatly and carefully braided, performing the neat, clean-cut expectation of the middle management business narrative. Orderliness, control and uniformity are inscribed on her body in the way she carefully follows the school's uniform policy with no deviations.

Leslie's outside of school activities are orderly and controlled. She explains that she has no free time, and that her life is going to school, doing her homework and getting to her activities, like soccer, church and music lessons at a local private college. The urban school reform narrative views unstructured after school time as one of the things that lead to crime and poverty for students in low income neighborhoods like Leslie's. Leslie is performing good "at-risk" student by keeping her time structured. When asked about why she participates in so many activities, Leslie explains that she intends to go to college, and these activities are needed if she is to get a scholarship, which she needs because her family can't afford tuition. Leslie does not question how these activities will get her to college, or if others might serve her in the same way. She and her family "do" what the school,– the castle on the hill – tells her will make her successful.

In her writing, Leslie evokes the narrative of school learning that "good students" give back the information presented to them by their teachers. Giving back is what the urban reform narrative expects of "good at-risk" students as is illustrated by the dominant narrative of "learning" in the corporate (objectivist) test industry and specifically the *Achieve 3000* narrative of writing at Rosa Parks Middle described in Chapter Four. Leslie's daybook is filled with careful, neat writing and every assignment is completed. In her daybook, "giving back" with order and control is just as apparent in her personal writing as it is in her writing about the content of social studies. For example, she "agrees" with the class motto and writes about "working hard" and "studying" in order to get a 100 on the unit test. (See Appendix G for Oct.15 entry). Leslie negotiates the conflicting narratives of writing in the school world to performs a D-identity that matches the I-identity inscribed on her, repeating back what she's been told, that hard work and doing well on a test will bring her success.

In her content writing, she uses the words in the question to answer the question.

> How were civilizations developed through human-environment interaction?
>
> The civilizations develop through human-environment interaction by just using your environment/ or like we said "interacting."

Her answer doesn't really explain what human-environment interaction is or what it might have to do with civilization. She simply repeats what she has been told, filling in the blanks with information given to her by her teacher or the text, much like the *Achieve 3000* program asks the students to do. In the figured world of Rosa Parks, this is the response that marks a person as a good student. In the narrative of urban school reform, it marks her as "good at-risk student."

Leslie's negotiations of the various narratives of Rosa Parks Middle as she works to enact good student in a group interview about writing in Ronald's class solidify her I-Identity as "at-risk." Being interviewed by "the writing consultant" who is a "university researcher" is a new situation for Leslie. In order to participate in the interview, Leslie must improvise, drawing on her known experiences in order to decide how to perform here. She is negotiating the narrative of urban school reform, and the objectivist narrative of writing, order and control in the school, along with the new, conflicting narrative of writing brought by the writing consultant in the school where writing is used to explore ideas and think about things on paper through informal writing in composition books called "daybooks." This narrative is something new and different that they are "doing" in social studies. In the improvisation below, Leslie continues to perform the "good at-risk student" in that she repeats what Ronald told the students about the "new" daybook writing on a day I observed in class, blending the new experience with the narrative of orderly, controlled reading and writing in the school. She also constructs writing as a "thing" a commodity that will "help" students, ventriloquizing the urban reform narrative of literacy.

In response to my question “Can you tell me a little bit about writing in general in this class?” she says:

> Writing, uh, helps you organize your thoughts and how you felt towards a certain subject or topic. And it helps you understand the text or what you are reading better, but writing, writing’s good.

In this articulation, Leslie ventriloquates the urban reform narrative offering a “thing” to do that will solve a problem and writing as a separate activity from reading. Her narrative commodifies writing by making it a “thing” that “you” need in order to be organized and to help “you” understand the things “you” read in school.” She also constructs the writing in social studies as “different,” negotiating what she understands as the “different” narrative of writing that I, the writing consultant who is interviewing her, have brought into the figured world of Rosa Parks. In Leslie’s narrative of writing, if “you” write, “you” will be organized and understand reading in “certain” instances. Writing is the commodity that does that for “you.”

Below I have broken Leslie’s language up into lines and stanzas in order to isolate the language in order to show how her words-in-use construct writing in Ronald’s class.

Stanza I: *Becoming the teacher*

1a. Writing, uh,
1b. helps, uh,
2. organize your thoughts and
3. how you felt towards
4a. a certain subject
4b. or topic uh,

Stanza II *Becoming the reading specialist*

5a. it, um
5b. it helps you understand
6. the text or what you are reading
7. um, better, but

Stanza III *Becoming the good student*

8. writing,
9. writing's good.

Throughout the transcript, Leslie distances herself from the activity of writing in social studies class by using "your" in line 2 and "you" in lines 3, 5b and 6 rather than "I" or "we." Through this distancing she enacts teacher, offering writing as a solution to "you" and ventriloquating Ronald. Writing then is something "you" need, but not her, not the teacher. She constructs writing as a "thing," a commodity by placing "writing" in the subject position in line 1. Here, "writing" has the power, rather than "you" performing the act of writing. "Writing" is the thing that organizes your thoughts (line 2) and feelings (line 3). Without it, "you" are disorganized in "your" thinking and feeling, so "you" need writing. Or at least "you" need it in "certain" situations. In line 4 she uses the adjective "certain" in order to describe "subjects." She does not say that writing does this for "all" subjects or topics, but she does not say which "certain" topics. Her use of the term "certain" signals a difference between writing in social studies, what I've asked her about, and writing in other situations, constructing a difference in the writing consultant's narrative of writing and the dominant narrative of writing in the school.

In stanza two Leslie shifts to reading specialist, continuing to build her argument for writing by offering writing to help “you understand” (line 5) “text or what you are reading” (line 6) and again ventriloquating Ronald, who I observed using similar words to explain daybook writing to the class. Her language constructs a difference between reading and writing in that reading requires actions by “you” to be helpful, as, “you” appears in the subject position in line 5b, constructing writing as a tool that “you” can use in order to understand. Writing here becomes something that must be used in order to produce results. Writing on it’s own can “organize” thoughts and feelings, but in order to help with reading, “you” must use it. This necessity of a “you” to “do” something also appears in the way “Text” is constructed as different from “what you are reading” by her use of the word “or” in line 6. The text is just there and can be understood by writing. Writing about a text, whether the student has read it or not, can “help” with understanding, while “reading” requires action in addition to writing if “you” are going to “understand” “better” as she states in line 7. The word “better” constructs “you” as already understanding before writing about it, but when “you” write, “you” add to “your” understanding. She is constructing “writing” as necessary for “better” understanding and evoking the objectivist narrative of schooling that says reading is about “understanding.”

Finally, in stanza three Leslie constructs writing as “good.” She doesn’t say how it’s good, or what’s good about it. It’s just good and there is not reason to question its goodness. She begins this argument about writing in line 8 with the single word, “writing” and ends it in line 9, placing “writing” in the subject position and then judging it as "good." Here, Leslie ends her argument by constructing her identity as "good student" because she writes in social studies and writing is "good."

The commodified narrative of writing that Leslie ventriloquates is reproductive in that when the reform narrative tells children to write, the children "do" writing, and if they are still unorganized or fail to "understand" what they are reading "better," then there must be something wrong with the student. Leslie doesn't question this narrative. She simply repeats it, much like her daybook answer above. She participates in extracurricular activities, just like the narrative of urban school reform tells her. She does everything, just as she's told, listens carefully and repeats back all of the information she is given, and trusts that this will get her to college. The Institution is constructing her identity and in doing so, making it even more difficult for her to compete with the "creative," "innovative" students in the upper middle class school down the road for university seats or for scholarships.

Aaron: Good Students Write Researched Historical Fiction

Aaron was in Samuel's class as a 6th grader and in Ronald's class as a 7th grader. She was moved into the "advanced" group after her 6th grade year. Aaron's performance of self in school is quiet and shy. She wears the basic school uniform, typically a pleated kakhi skirt and plain blue shirt rather than the department store argyle. The orderliness of the school uniform is inscribed on her body, but she resists this inscription with her almost too big clothing and her soft hair, neatly brushed, worn loosely and covering her face. She says that her outside of school activities are centered around caring for her younger brother while her parents work, doing her homework and after the Holocaust Diary experience, writing historical fiction. Like Leslie, her time is filled, but with the responsibility of child care rather than a plethora of activities meant to get her to college. In this way, Aaron's outside of school activity is recognizable in the I-Identity (Institutional) of "at-risk" student as inscribed by the narrative of urban school reform in that she is working quite a bit of the time rather than attending enrichment activities. Ronald identifies Aaron as a great writer, while Samuel and the academic facilitator were surprised by her success with the Holocaust narrative the year before. As a 7th grader, her teachers describe her as a "good kid" who will do well. She scored an 85% on the West African Slave Trade Unit and her over all GPA is a solid B.

For Aaron being a writer and a "good student" means following the plot line of the "film" or historical narrative and not wavering from it. However, her performance of writer and "good student" does not include the daybook writing assignments or other writing assignments in school. In her negotiation of the various conflicting narratives of the school world, the other assignments do not carry the same value as the historical narratives do for her. Her performance of self is that of a "confused" student in other areas. She tells me that 7th grade is "hard" because she doesn't "understand decimals" in math. Also, when I ask her about the document-based essay questions Ronald is working with in social studies she says "it confuses me." She doesn't mention writing in other classes beyond shrugging. Her student identity has been constructed by the marked moment of the Holocaust diaries. It is there that she feels confident and identifies as a good student, so she keeps replicating that experience over and over again. In other areas of school when she tries to enact "good student" she feels like she's "passing in drag" as Bettie would say. She's not confident as good student in the context of the school and does not feel like she belongs there. And so, she hides behind her hair and her shyness and in that way negotiates a D-identity of "good student" in the context of the school

Aaron's Holocaust diary entry was showcased throughout the school. Below is the section that she read multiple times in class and for the video. This is also the section that the academic facilitator read to me over the phone (See Appendix H for her complete diary entry.)

> Today my birthday was a horrible nightmare, suddenly a Nazi officer came up to me screaming and pulled me away from my parents. I was dumbfounded he took me to a gigantic factory, he put me to cremate bodies suddenly my brothers body lay there agonizing with a bullet through his head blood still gushing out, in his hand was the small red toy car that I had given him for his birthday. As I took it from his hand he pressed my hand he was alive, but then he vanished I cried hard enough to make a river. As I took the car I though of all the memorable moments. Tears came to my eyes as I remembered all the happy family moments. Tears came to my eyes I did the job. When I was done my brother was gone as I gave him my last good bye and a kiss on a cheek. I put him in the flaming fire I cried as I did this. I went back to my parents showed my

> mom the toy car and we started to cry. I hope we got out soon but for now we have to live here until the Nazis get tird of us.

Aaron’s writing about finding her brother was moving for all in the room on the day she read it aloud. The scene she describes is quite graphic, but it also emulates the film the students watched, *Children Remember the Holocaust*, in that there is a picture of bodies being prepared for the crematorium shown while a young girl’s voice tells of having to do the job. The camera then pans to a close up of a small toy. Writing in social studies, and writing a diary in social studies was “new” to Aaron. She draws on her experience with school writing, “giving back” information much like Leslie, and replicates the film narrative. She captures that narrative down to the behavior of a Holocaust survivor in the film and the toy among the ashes. She receives a good deal of acclaim for this improvisation, another new thing for Aaron, and it becomes a marked moment for her in which she feels confident in her “good student” performance.

I interviewed Aaron one week after the Holocaust dairy writing and reading event, and in response to my first question, “Tell me a little bit about yourself please” she says “I like reading and sometimes I like to cry to get out of . . . to stop being angry.”

Stanza One: *Good students cry, they don’t get angry.*

1. I like reading and
2. sometimes I like to cry to
3. get out of
4. to stop being angry.

Aaron’s performance of self while interacting with the university writing consultant is bound up in the activity of crying, in that it is the second thing she tells me about herself. She cried as she read her holocaust diary along with the rest of the girls. The crying was a part of that moment as indicated in Tallulah’s story in Appendix C of being in the classroom. Her diary entry moved her teachers and classmates to tears and she was noticed for that.

In line 1 Aaron performs reader, though not a writer, as she describes herself as “like”ing to read. And then in line 2, she performs crier, by connecting herself with the activity of crying in the classroom and the event I am there interviewing her about, connecting my question about her to her involvement in the classroom event. In lines 3 and 4 she constructs crying as an activity that enables her to deal with anger. In the world she’s building, it is more acceptable to cry than it is to be angry. Anger is something she needs to “get out of.”

Aaron sees crying about the events of the Holocaust as “acceptable” and anger as “un-acceptable.” Good students then cry; they don’t get angry, even if the assignment calls for envisioning the death of one’s brother. Here, Aaron performs good “at-risk” student as inscribed on her by the institution of school, doing as she is told, not questioning the fact that one should simply cry and not get angry about envisioning the death of a brother.

After this event, Aaron began to write from the perspective of young women in different historical contexts during her free time outside of school, sometimes sharing bits and pieces of that writing Ronald, her 7th grade social studies teacher, or with me. She is constructing and negotiating an achieved D-identity of “good student” in that she is making a bid to be recognized in the world of the school as a good student, even though she doesn’t feel like a “good student” and in fact performs “confused student” in other areas based on the narratives of her lived experience with the dominant objectivist narrative of school writing that she has encountered in these areas of school. Her stories are generally sad and overall follow the same structure as the original Holocaust narrative in that they take a moment from a historical context and re-tell the details through the eyes of a young woman. In an interview one year after the Holocaust Dairy moment, I ask Aaron about writing in Ronald’s class. She responds first by telling me about writing she does at home that is quite similar to what she did with the Holocaust Diaries, included watching a movie, *Titanic*, to get inspiration. She adds that she has decided to add research to her process; however when I ask her about what she’s finding, in her research she says she can’t find anything. She does not feel like a good student as the institution of school inscribes it on her, but she negotiates the urban reform narrative with that of the Holocaust diary experience, which she understands as the writing consultant narrative, and repeats that narrative over and over in order to be recognized as good student. She has heard that good historical fiction is researched, and so she tells me that she does this with her own. However, when asked about what she’s finding, she says “nothing.” Her bid for good student, like Leslie’s, is reproductive in that she repeats what’s been given to her, without question, making her recognizable as a “good at-risk student” rather than “good innovative student.”

The interview continues after this, with the vast majority of Aaron's answers coming in short burst, carefully answering only what I've asked her and elaborating very little. However, when I make a second attempt to ask her about writing assignments in Ronald's class, she tells me about a diary entry that she's writing for the West African Slave Unit. She enthusiastically tells me the entire story with no prompting. Below is her re-telling of her diary entry.

> A. Umm, a girl, she was forced into marriage. She's from Morraco. Her name is Nina. Um, her parents died in an accident, so she has to take care of her three year old sister. And um she has to take her with her to the Sahara Desert, but she doesn't want to, because she's too small. But she ends up taking her and then um, uh, the people from Ghanauh they have a salt and gold trade, but they can't make it, so everybody's worried, because that's what they mainly trade, salt and gold. So, um, uh they start trading and she trades half of her live stock for water, and uh the other half, she wants to trade for diamonds and ____, but there's a rumor going around that Egyptians are um, at night, they set up their tent to go to sleep and um, the Egyptians, go and um, they kill the parents and they take their little kids and they uh sell them as slaves.

Aaron's re-telling here has similar themes to her Holocaust diary. She has included details that were a part of the lesson that I observed in Ronald's class, particularly the difficult decisions about trading. Also, the main character is taking care of a younger sibling after being forced away from her home, this time by a forced marriage rather Nazi soldiers. In this story, the parents are dead rather than the sibling and in the end, the children are sold into slavery rather than being imprisoned in a concentration camp.

Again, she tells me that she did some extra research, but when I press her on what she found she says "Oh, I just wrote it down" and doesn't say anymore about the details, only that she did it because she wanted more information for her diary and "didn't want to make it up."

For Aaron, performing good student, particularly for me as the university consultant, is about this one type of writing, even a year later. Her performance of good student is caught up in writing historical narratives that are "researched" inside and outside of class. However, when I looked in her daybook, the notebook that Ronald is using everyday in class and is so thrilled with, (see Appendix C) and the "thing" that I have been working with in the school, there was almost nothing there. She told me that she had another daybook at home that she would bring, but she never did. I asked her specifically about the daybook towards the end of the interview after I had asked several times about writing in Ronald's class, and she had not mentioned it. Below is her response.

C. Tell me a little bit about how you guys use this notebook (her daybook) in class.

A. Umm sometimes, if it's Monday, he says to write about our weekend. Or if we had a Spring Break or something we have to write about what happened. We had a good time or not.

C. Okay. What else do you write in there?

A. Ummmm We do a lot of writing in here, I don't really know where it is, but we had to umm either write a story or um just tell what it means. And this is what I wrote. (Looks through notebook and then closes it.)

C. Alright. Is there anything else you want to tell me about your writing in class? Anything in particular I should look at when I start digging through your notebook?

A. No

Aaron constructs the daybook as an activity in her performance of self in our interview. In the portions below, she starts to talk about how the class uses the daybook to write about life, ventriloquatng Ronald. However when I signal to her that I'm looking for another answer concerning the writing they do about the content of social studies, writing I've seen Ronald ask the students to do (stanza 2), she starts to flounder, trying to negotiate what she perceives as what I want to here. Feeling unsuccessful in this narrative, she ends our conversation, eventually telling me that there isn't anything I should see in her daybook.

Stanza One: *Being a good student*

Tell me a little bit about how you guys use this notebook (her daybook) in class.

1. A. Umm sometimes,
2. uh if it's Monday,
3. he says to write about our weekend.
4. Or if we had a Spring Break or something we have to write about what happened.
5. We had a good time or not.

Stanza Two: *Being a writer*

6. C. Okay.
7. What else do you write in there?
8. A. Ummmm
9. We do a lot of writing in here,
10. I don't really know where it is,
11. but we had to umm either write a story or um
12. just tell what it means.
13. And this is what I wrote (*she looks through the notebook and closes it*)

13. C. Alright. Is there anything else you want to tell me about your writing in class? 14. Anything in particular I should look at when I start digging through your notebook?
15. A. No

In lines 1 and 2 Aaron constructs daybook writing as happening "sometimes" if it's a Monday. In line 3 she says "he says to write" not, I write, or we write, signifying that this is assigned, but she may or may not actually do it. In line 4 when she's explaining an assignment about "Spring Break or something" she says we "have to write" She does not say we "get" to, or we/ I write, constructing daybook writing about "Spring Break or something" is something she is and the students in her class are compelled to do, not something she wants to do or feels connected with. She does not mention writing about the content of the social studies class in stanza 1 at all, connecting daybook writing in social studies only with things from life outside of school like breaks and weekends.

There is a shift in stanza 2 when I signal that her answer is not what I'm looking for by answering "okay" in line 6 and asking about what else she writes in line 7 without taking up anything she has previously said. In line 8 Aaron enacts searching for the "right" answer with "ummmm" and a long pause. Then in line 9 she constructs the daybook writing as a large part of what she and the other students do in class with her response "We do a lot of writing in here." However, when she acts as agent in line 10, using "I" she says doesn't know where "it" is. Not stories, not words, but "it" an unnamed thing. In lines 11 and 12 she is attempting to describe an assignment to me, still enacting compliant student, but her voice softens to barely audible and she pulls the daybook off of the desk between us onto her lap. Finally, she stops speaking all together and closes the notebook, keeping it in her lap. Then in line 15 she constructs her daybook as not valuable to me by responding “No” to my question about anything else she might want to tell me or show me.

Aaron’s negotiation of the various narratives of school writing results in her bid to be recognized as “good student” and to construct a good student D-Identity. These negotiations are bound up in the one activity with which she felt success. Her negotiation between the conflicting narratives of writing in the world of Rosa Parks Middle leads her to understand that good students repeat what is given to them, and that she is successful, a new social situation for her with this in this “new” narrative of writing represented by the Holocaust dairy, that was recognized both by the dominant narrative of writing in the school, and the new narrative of writing of the writing consultants. She is uncomfortable in the roll of good student as inscribed on her by the dominant narrative of school reform. She enacts that in the way she wears her uniform, as required, but a little too big and with the plain shirt rather than the status marker of the department store argyle shirt. She hides behind her hair. She hides from my pressing questions about her daybook.

For Aaron, the diary and historical fiction writing, has become the commodified “thing” that will bring her success. She, like Leslie, focuses that activity around replicating and repeating the information she has been given, but she only sees her performances in historical fiction writing and diary writing as valuable in her performance of good student. She is not confident in other areas of social studies or writing or even writing in social studies, and so, she hides that writing, much in the way she hides behind her hair and her loose clothing, carefully negotiating narratives from her experiences outside of school that tell her to hide when she's not confident, with those of the school world that say good students show adults their work. She continues to write in the form that is comfortable for her, even on her own time at home, and she goes out of her way to share that writing with her teacher and with me as the writing specialist from the University. Her performance is recognizable enough in the school world to construct her as "good at-risk student" deserving of being in the "upper level" classes. However, it is reproductive in that in her good student enactment, she, like Leslie is repeating, just as the school told her to do, rather than innovating.

Abigail: Good Students Write "Essays"

Abigail is also student in Ronald's 7th grade advanced social studies class. Her performance of self is that of a cool, smart, nonchalant student in her dress, her demeanor and in her daybook. She resists the narrative of order and control inscribed on her body by the school uniform by wearing it in a snug fit, with her plain light blue shirt unbuttoned at the top reveling a white spaghetti strapped camisole underneath and just a hint of cleavage. Her hair always seems to be in the process of a new style. She's constantly working on it in class, often walking out into the hall with half of it styled and the other half sticking straight up. She describes her outside of school activities as doing her homework, texting her friends and wrapping her hair. In her dress, mannerisms and textual performance, Abigail embodies at-risk student as described in the urban school reform narrative. However, negotiations of the various narratives of her life outside of school and those of the school construct a D-Identity of “good at risk student” in the context of Rosa Parks earns her a place in advanced classes.

In the new social situation of a group interview with me, she improvises “good student” by answering every question I ask first and with detail. Her performance of self is enthusiastic, bright and articulate. She was so convincing in her role in the interview, that even though I had seen her in Ronald’s class numerous times and combed through her daybook, I thought I had her confused with another student until I went back through her writing samples after the interview. In the interview, she, like Leslie and Abigail, finds a way to perform “good student,” by giving back the information she’s been given.

There is very little in Abigail’s daybook. She starts a sentence in response to a prompt and then never finishes, as if she’s been interrupted in some way, and yet, she was more than happy to share it with me, even digging it out of the stack in the back of the room for me so that she’d be sure I had it. Her test score on the West African Slave Trade unit was 58%, and yet in the interview, she talked about the test and studying for it with easy confidence. In class, she talks quietly with other students, laughing and giggling, but also raising her hand to answer questions. Her over all GPA is a high C with her best grades being in the tested areas of math and English. She is in all “advanced” classes because of high scores on the state standardized reading and math tests.

Abigail, like Leslie, was not in Samuel’s class where the students wrote the Holocaust diaries, but she had heard about it. She makes a bid to be recognized as "good student" by answering my question about writing in Ronald's class by referring to the diary writing they have done for him. Abigail negotiates the dominant, corporate (objectivist) narrative of writing in the school along with what she knows about the narrative I have brought as one of the writing consultants. She, like the other students assume that because of the film they all saw and heard about the spring before, I want to hear about diary writing in Ronald's class.

> Well, we were writing the diary entries acting like we were African and it makes us feel like we were actually there and we get to experience how they felt when they were on the ship.

Here, Abigail is focused on performing good student, for me, in social studies class. In her description of the assignment, she ventriloquates the reason both Samuel and Ronald gave me for diary writing, explaining to me that it was important for the students to experience what life was like in order to make history more real. For her, in social studies the point is for she and her classmates (we) to "feel" like other people, by acting taking on another identity.

Stanza I: *I'm a good student in social studies*

1. Well,
2. we were writing the diary entries
3. acting like we were African
4. and it makes us feel like we were actually there
5. and we get the experience of how they felt
6. when they were on the ship.

In line 2 Abigail takes on an agentive role by identifying herself as a member of the class engaged in the practice of diary writing in Ronald' class by saying "we." She makes this class membership significant by saying "we" rather than "I." She claims power for herself and her classmates, saying that "we were writing" rather than "we were told to," or "he said to." From this agentive stance, she constructs a relationship between the activity of writing and "acting like we were Africans" in line 3. Her use of the words "acting like" construct the activity as taking on a pretend identity, rather than composing of self that would connect the "Africans" to "our" experience. In lines 4 she constructs these actions as having the power to "makes us feel." She continues in line 5, valuing the feelings the activity evokes by saying "we get to experience." Her use of the word "get" rather than "have to" or "supposed to" signifies that she sees this experience as valuable and worthwhile, "us" feeling like "them."

Like Leslie and Aaron, Abigail is improvising a performance of giving back the information given to her. Abigail does this from an agentive stance, ventriloquating both Samuel and Rashid's narrative about the assignment, and probably what she presumes as mine, in her negotiation of the narratives of writing in the school, but still bidding to be recognized as active rather than passive, in her performance of "good student."

In her answer to my question, Abigail gives writing in social studies the power to make students "feel" and states that as an important activity for them to be engaged in according to her. However, of the three diary entries that were assigned to the class, the following is all that Abigail turned in.

> Hello my name is Thamble gunnogie I am african.
>
> The day I was captured they came and put shakles on my hands and chains on my feet.

> On the slave trip it was horrible, discuting. The

Like the other, sparse entries in Abigail's daybook, this one seems unfinished. She begins to give back the information she has learned in class about slave ships, but then she does not complete the assignment. So while she constructs this writing as important and valuable in her interview, she doesn't complete it. In her negotiation of the various narratives of writing at Rosa Parks and her experience, her "doing" of the work is enough for her to "feel" in a position to claim "good student." It is enough "doing" to see herself in this way and speak to me with authority. From her agentive positionality she sees her writing as signaling her understanding of what "we" are learning and experiencing in social studies.

Abigail explains a little later in the interview how her writing in English class differs from her writing in social studies class

> P. Well, writing in English class, we're doing like essays and then we come in here and we do diary entries, so it's like we do poetry writing, essay writing in [Mr. T's] class, and then we come to [Ronald's] class and we do diary entries and stuff, so it's real different.

Stanza I: *I'm different in social studies and English*

1. P. Well, writing in English class,
2. we're doing like essays
3. and then we come in here and we do diary entries,
4. so it's like we do poetry writing, essay writing in [Mr. T's] class,
5. and then we come to [Ronald's] class and we do diary entries and stuff,
6. so it's real different.

The structure of Abigail's answer mimics the formula for a compare and contrast essay that Tallulah and I observed the students and teachers using in many classrooms in Rosa Parks Middle School in preparation for the state writing assessments. There is a topic sentence in line 1, a clear contrast set up in lines 2 and 3, examples of the contrast in lines 4 and 5 and then a concluding thought in line 6. This may be a performance of the essay style, or it may be her thinking process. She is performing “good student” by calling on what she’s been taught about answering school essay questions. Her answer sets up a difference between writing in social studies and writing in English, where her teacher says she completes her work. In both classes writing is commodified as a thing “we” do, rather than a process. And “doing” this writing is something that makes her a “good student.” However, the doing in English and social studies is “real different.”

In line 2, 3 and 4 she constructs school writing as something she and her classmates “do,” saying “we” are “doing” essays, and poetry and “we do diary entries” rather than we “write” them. By “doing” this in English and social studies she is enacting “good student.” She does not explain the purpose for this “doing” or talk about learning. “We” just “do” it. She sets up a contrast between Ronald’s class and her English class by listing the writing they are “doing” “like” essays and poetry” in English in line 4, but then when she lists what they are doing in Ronald’s class in line 5 she says “diary entries and stuff” which are not “like” essays and poetry. “And stuff” is the only reference she makes to writing they do in their daybooks or on tests, and her language constructs that “stuff” as not important enough to describe to me, the university writing consultant. It’s just another “thing” that they “do.” The writing they are “doing” in the two classes is “real” different (line 6).

In the articulation above, Abigail is negotiating the different narratives of writing in the school, the objectivist urban reform narrative like that of Achieve *3000,* and the writing project narrative that I’ve brought, along with narratives of how to be a good student in order to perform good student for me in this moment. In both narratives, writing is a commodified “thing” that the students “do.” And the “doing” marks them as “good students” in the advanced classes. “Stuff” in Ronald’s class differs for the performance of self in English, where the good student there doesn’t “feel” in the same way. There she completes her assignments where in social studies, she only has to “feel” just a small written bit to “get” the feeling of what it was like on the ship. The rigors of essay writing and poetry, to Abigail are more what school is really about—the expected (not the different). In social studies (with these diaries) feeling is crucial and the dominant socializing discourses of the school attempt to help students sort out which feelings are “appropriate”—“feelings” that are covered up in the school uniforms which are supposed to make the students “feel” and look alike.

For Abigail, as for Leslie and Aaron, writing is a commodified thing in their negotiations of the various narratives in Rosa Parks Middle. The writing Abigail is doing in English is more recognizable to her as “school” writing and therefore the “thing” that is important to her “good student” performance of self. However, she recognizes being interviewed by a university consultant as something “good students” do, and so she is improvising that social situation based on her experience of how to enact “good student,” responding in essay fashion, and “giving back” what the teacher’s say. While Abigail’s “good student” D-identity is constructed of an agentive stance and resistance to the I-identity inscribed on her body through the school uniform and “doing work” without question, her “giving back” bid for “good student” is still reproductive of the “at-risk” I-identity.

Conclusion

All three of the students in this chapter are enacting “good student” D-identities as they improvise the activity of writing in new situations, and participating in the new social situation of being interviewed by the university researcher. Each of the girls constructs writing as a commodified thing that brings students success in the figured world of Rosa Parks schools. Each of the girls draws on the various narratives of writing and being in the world of Rosa Parks Middle School and their negotiations of those narratives result in different performances of good student. Leslie is the most recognizable “good student” who does every assignment in exactly the way her teachers tell her. Her success in doing allows her to construct the identity of successful student who will be able to go to college and be a successful adult. Aaron has found one area that allows her to construct herself as a successful writer and student, and goes out of her way to continue replicating that experience, even outside of school. Abigail has identified the writing activity that for her “matters” in the construction of her good student identity. She chooses then to spend her time on that activity and let other, less important school assignments slide.

Though the performances are different each girl is reproducing the socialization process of school without question. Each of them negotiates the various narratives of the school and understand the role of “good student” as “giving back” on various levels and they are each inscribed by the “at-risk” I-identity of the urban school reform. These three students do not question the value of “doing” certain kinds of writing, or of performing good student, for the university researcher. Even Abigail, who isn’t actually “doing” the daybook writing or studying for social studies talks “good social studies student” for me rather then openly questioning the assignments. And when she describes her English class writing, the writing she does value, she calls on that valuable essay form in order to continue her good student improvisation. Each of these students, their writing, and their talk about writing, illustrate how schooling in the US is reproductive and how the cycle social positioning is continued by the socialization process of schooling.

In the next chapter, I will examine the writing and the talk about writing or a resistant student as she negotiates various narratives in Rosa Parks Middle School to do her homework. This student’s negotiations are discordant with the recognized narratives of the school and in that open in a space for potential change.

CHAPTER 6: BEING “BAD”: MAKING CRITIQUE VISIBLE

The girls in Chapter Five all had experience performing the D-identity (Discourse) of “good student” in the figured world of Rosa Parks Middle School. Being tracked into the “advanced” social studies class in 7th grade marks success in their performances. Their success reproduces their class positionality because their I-Identity (Institutional) is “at-risk student,” and therefore the “good student” in the figured world of Rosa Parks is also an “at-risk student.” This I-Identity tempers what is recognized as “good student” in that figured world. In their negotiations of the conflicting narratives of writing in the school along with the urban reform narrative and the histories of their lived experience, being a “good student” for each of the girls meant “giving back” what the adults in charge or the text says.

In this chapter, I examine the language of Jada, a 6th grade girl who was experienced at performing a resistant student identity. Like the other girls, the institution of school has inscribed an “at-risk” I-Identity onto her. In the moment of the Holocaust Diary assignment, she improvised a performance of “good student” writing a Holocaust Diary, participating in class and talking to the consultants about her work. Her improvisation was discordant with the “at-risk” I- Identity. In fact Jada made a bid to for “good student” in a “successful” school with an innovative response because she was not comfortable with the way the film and the assignment were socializing her to “feel” and respond to the

Holocaust. Jada's improvisation of "good student" temporarily opens up space for social change. Rather than "giving back" like a "good at-risk student," she questions and innovates. The material result, however, of Jada's improvisation is not "change" in this moment. In fact, because of her resistance to the socialization of schooling, both on this assignment and others, she is marked as "bad" and "problematic" by the institution of school, and she doesn't get to go to the "advanced class" in 7th grade. As an "at-risk" student, she doesn't have the social power to be innovative. However, her story offers an image of possibility by critiquing the socialization process of school through her resistance and making the process visible.

Below, I look closely at Jada's writing, and her talk about it in order to explore her negotiations of the various narratives present in the school and in her life as she attempts to fulfill the assignment of performance of Holocaust survivor. Her improvisation disrupts the socializing narrative of schooling in subtle ways that are still recognizable in the world of the school and this disruption holds transformative potential for the reproductive model of schooling in the more "successful" good student performances in Chapter Six

Jada

Jada was a 6th grader in Samuel's social studies class. Her teachers described her as having an "attitude problem" and being a student they were very "concerned" about. This was Jada's performance of in-school "self," and this is who she is in the narrative of Rosa Parks Middle. Jada's uniform fits, but it is not snug or revealing in anyway. She wore the plain blue shirt and kahki pants, and her hair was always swept back into a simple ponytail at the base of her neck. Bits and pieces escaped from the hair bow and stuck out around her head. Her plain style made the uniform look more like prison garb than business casual. The order and control of the uniform was inscribed on her body, but she resisted any attempts to make it look anything other than imposed on her. It did not "fit" her performance of self and she did not make any attempt to make this lack of fit any less obvious. On the day that the students were sharing their Holocaust Diaries and crying in Samuel's class, Jada didn't cry with the others. She sat in the corner, doodling on her paper and appearing stoic. She seemed walled off from the rest of the class, keeping her eyes on her own paper, but with head held high in open disapproval of what was happening in the room, performing her "resistant student" D-Identity.

I was interested in Jada's piece because she was one of only two students in the class who chose to write about liberation from the concentrations camps, a narrative of hope in this performance of Holocaust Diary, but a narrative that didn't conform to the parameters of "acceptable" writing in this instance. When the academic facilitator and Samuel excitedly showed me the girl's work, they did not show me Jada's. Later, as we talked about what to do with the work, they mentioned that some students wrote about the Americans fighting and that this writing was "too violent." The other pieces of writing, much like Aaron's, focused on horrific and hopeless moments of capture and starvation with accompanying descriptions of the death of loved ones in gas chambers and the crematorium, emulating the diary entries in the film that they had seen prior to being given the assignment to write their own. Yet this work was not described as "violent." Jada's "violent" draft did not proceed from a victim's persona; rather, Jada evokes the American Dream narrative of pride in "staying strong" until the Americans get there to save them. Jada's piece offers a "counter" to the idea of "Holocaust Diary" as it is represented in the work of the other students and in the film shown to the students.

> April 12 1945
>
> I was just sitting there when I saw a beautiful sight over the hills. I was so happy that my people was saved. It was still painful to know that my family was still gone. To know that people was still suffering. Although people was still dieing. Then when they came to get me I couldn't move. I tryed to smile but my face was numb from laying on the hard cold ground. I saw the other people crying and smiling. I saw the soilders picking up kids and kissing them. It was painful to know while the resucing was happening people were still dieing. While I was there I saw people trying to stand and smile. Me and my dad were the only ones still their in my family. I felt like I was on steel. It was cold. I was so happy that people was able to stay strong and live until the United States got there. It was just a beautiful scene. Later on that day people was getting put in schools. They were having a good time but they will always remember the day they was torchered.

While certainly not a “happy” piece of writing, Jada’s focus on liberation is markedly distinct from Aaron’s entry and those of the rest of the class in that she paints scenes of hope. She mentions a “beautiful sight” in the first line and near the end she describes a “beautiful scene,” soldiers kissing children, and people “crying and smiling.” In her entry, she notes that pain and hardship of the Holocaust victims, but her focus is on the joy of liberation and the idea of new beginnings. The narrative Jada evokes is very American, reminiscent of US War Movies.

I interviewed Jada, because I was interested in why she chose to write about the liberation. Jada’s enactment of “good student” identity is one complicatedly situated. She brings a recognizable American-hero narrative in order to resist the Holocaust victim-atrocity narrative that is being asked for. She is using the American-heroes-to-the rescue story to improvise. She does the assignment (something she doesn’t always do), but she does so by nominating the Americans-to-the-rescue story, one that would be acceptable in some instances but not in *this* instance of “being a writer.” In her bid for “good student” in negotiating with the dominant narratives she deviates from the “give back” script, resisting the “at-risk” I-Identity, and makes a bid for good student in an upper middle class school who is expected to “create and innovate” (and repeat an idealized view of American hero myths).

On Camera

In the transcript below, Jada is talking on camera, following Tallulah’s instructions to read her writing and then tell us about why she wrote it, and how she feels about what she wrote. She is aware that she is being video taped and that we will be using this footage to publish the work of the class. As she participates in this process, she is continuing to negotiate the various narratives of the school world and her role there and her bid for "good student." She dutifully answers the questions set before her, claiming her own power, but distancing herself from the activity of doing the school assignment by performing her resistant student self. But in response to Tallulah's follow up question about schoolwork she shifts away from her own power and ideas and ventriloquates the "American Dream" narrative of urban school reform and the illustrations on the posters around the school, improvising a way to enact "cooperative" student. The transcript begins after she reads her piece.

> J. Okay, I felt like writing this because it was just history and school work and um, and I felt sad because, it was people were dying and stuff and they had to wait for the United States and the rest of the countries to get there and get help. And I felt like sharing this in school because it was, oh, like me, I'm just like cool and stuff, so I just wanted to share it, just so that they would know I could write it write the diary entries and stuff
>
> T. So that your classmates would know? Yeah, so, tell me a little bit more about what you said at the start about it being schoolwork
>
> J. Oh Yeah. It's like, it's like that you should always do your school work and uh always uh, uh, . . .just to do your school work, so that you can get a

grade and, and a higher grade so that you will be able to do good in school so that you can go to college.

The first three stanzas represent Jada's on-camera answers to our questions: Why did you write this? How did you feel about the writing? Why did you share it? When Tallulah asks a follow-up question in Stanza IV, Jada interprets that to mean that she has not been answering correctly and gives another answer to the question that she now interprets as "why do your school work."

Stanza I

It's just school

1. J. Okay,
2. I felt like writing this because
3. it was just history and school work
4. and um,

Stanza II

Being a good sad student

5. and I felt sad because,
6. it was people were dying and stuff and
7. they had to wait
8. for the United States and the rest of the countries
9. to get there and get help.

Stanza III

I'm cool, I can do school

10. And

11. I felt like sharing this in school because
12. it was, oh,
13. like me,
14. I'm just like
15. cool and stuff, so I just wanted to share it,
16. just so that they would know I could write it
17. write the diary entries and stuff

Stanza IV

Tell me about school work

18. T. So that your classmates would know?
19. Yeah.
20. So, tell me a little bit more
21. about what you said at the start
22. about it being schoolwork

Stanza V

Oh! Bootstraps and the American Dream

23. J. Oh Yeah.
24. It's like,
25. it's like that you should always do your school work
26. and uh always uh, uh, . . .
27. just to do your school work,
28. so that you can get a grade and,
29. and a higher grade
30. so that you will be able to do good in school
31. so that you can go to college.

Jada begins by saying "Ok" signifying that she is going to cooperate by answering the questions Tallulah has asked her, and then claims her own power in this cooperation, while taking an agentive stance in the first three stanzas using "I" statements. In lines 2 and 11 her language constructs her as having the power to choose to do her schoolwork (or not) saying "I felt like writing this" rather than "I was supposed to," or "I had to," signaling that though the writing of the diary and then sharing of it was something asked of her by her teacher, she participated because she "felt like" writing and sharing. At the same time she distances herself from the activity of doing the writing (schoolwork) by saying "it was just history and schoolwork" in line 3 constructing "history" and "school work" as not very valuable to her. She also distances herself from the activity of sharing that happened in the classroom with her use of the word "just" in lines 14 and 15. She further claims authority in lines 2 and 11 with the words "I felt like," Her assertions build the identity, her performance of self, as resistant student, of someone who would not have done what her teacher asked her to do if she did not "feel like it."

In Stanza II, there is a switch in the way Jada constructs her feelings. Before she was saying that she did the schoolwork because "she just felt like it" but here, she engages with Tallulah about what was happening in class the day every one was reading, and she constructs her feelings about the Holocaust as "sad" making a bid for her "feelings" as correct as linked with the crying the other students were doing. In lines 5 and 6 she builds a relationship between this "sad" feeling and people dying. At the end of line 6 "and stuff" signifies that there is more to the story that causes her sadness. However, she chooses not to share that information with the interviewer. She goes on in lines 7 and 9 to build a relationship between her sad feelings and the fact that it was sad that people had to wait to be saved, signifying that waiting to be saved is a sad thing to her. She also constructs the victims of the holocaust as "waiting" for someone else to save them and unable to help themselves and then evokes a very American narrative in line 8 as she constructs the U.S. as the leader in the help operation, choosing to name only the U.S., placing it first and referring to "the rest of the countries." She uses the American Dream narrative to negotiate her cooperation in the activity of writing about and talking about the Holocaust in order to be recognized as what a "good student" would do.

In Stanza III, Jada continues to build identity as resistant student with the power to choose whether she does what is asked of her in school saying in line 11 that she chose to share her writing in school "because she felt like it." She distances herself from this sharing activity in line 14 and 15 saying I'm just like cool and stuff." She constructs her power and distance as "cool" but "and stuff" signifies that there is more to this story as well that she is choosing not to share with Tallulah or on camera. Her language builds a distanced relationship with the people in the room in line 16 with "just so they would know." She also signifies that there is more that she wants "them" to know she can do beside write the diaries ("and stuff") at the end of line 17. Her language builds a relationship between her choice to cooperate here, when she is usually resistant, and others' knowing her abilities and recognizing her as a "good student."

In Stanza IV, Tallulah's response to Jada's answers signifies to Jada that she's not answering correctly. Tallulah names "they" from line 16, as Jada's classmates, and then confirms Jada's silent nod with "Yeah." Her pointing back to Jada's mention of "school work" in the beginning in lines 21 and 22 signals to Jada that what Tallulah is really only interested in is school work, and therefore not interested in what she has said about sadness, sharing her writing, or the Holocaust.

In Stanza V, line 23 Jada understands that she has been wrong so far and now she knows what Tallulah wants from her by saying “Oh yeah.” In her improvisation to cooperate, she draws on her understanding of “acceptable” in the figured world of Rosa Parks and ventriloquates the recognizable American Dream narrative of hard work and pulling oneself up by her bootstraps signaling that this is what she understands is required of her in this publishing activity. However, in this “cooperative” move Jada switches to “you” statements, signaling that this is something other people should do, and constructs herself as distanced from this activity, maintaining her “resistant” performance of self. She further distances herself in line 27 with “just do your school work” also signaling that “getting it done” is all there is to schoolwork. The “so” statements in lines 28, 30 and 31 signify a progression, connecting doing school work to “getting to college.” In this stanza Jada is constructing a world where schoolwork is about getting a grade and getting to college. She does not mention learning or ideas. And she does not mention anything about why a person would go to college or what she might like to learn there. By switching to “you” statements she constructs own identity as distanced from a person who would do these things and performs her resistant self even as she “cooperates.”

Jada is not comfortable performing “good student” in the way she thinks Tallulah wants her too. Her distancing language can be understood as what Bettie calls “attempting to pass in drag.” Because of her I-Identity of “at-risk” student, and the narrative of her lived History that won't allow her to simply "give back" like the other "good students" in the school, she improvises an "innovative" answer. But she doesn't feel comfortable with it, as if she doesn't belong.

Interview

Later, I interviewed Jada, not for the film, but because I was interested in why she choose to write about the liberation. Below is a snippet from my interview with her. Here, Jada is negotiating her role as "good student" at Rosa Parks with the outside (novice) university researcher. I call myself a novice researcher, because at this point in my study I was both learning how to conduct systematic research using interview data and working in the school conducting professional development. In this interview, I was trying to understand Jada's views of her writing and building rapport with Jada. At this point in our conversation, there is a shift in Jada's view of me as I fill in what I expect Jada to say (the exam question).

C. Can you tell me a little bit about why you choose to write about this part of the concentration camp in your piece?

K. Oh I chose this one because I didn't want to cry in front of all them girls
so I just wrote about the end and like the part where they came and saved
everybody.

C. That makes sense. It makes a lot of sense. So you liked this happier part; it seemed a little safer to write about; I understand that! You did a really great job with it. How do you feel about that piece of writing?

K. I feel good because it was sad. Everybody was crying and stuff and uh, and I felt like writing this uh, uh , hmmmm . . . .I don't know why I felt like writing this. I just felt like writing something. I didn't want to do my homework.

C. Was this homework?

(nods)

Stanza I is Jada's answer to my first question where she evokes a narrative, counter to the class narrative that is more comfortable for her. Stanza II is my response to her answer. Stanza III marks a shift in Jada's language in response to my response question, which signaled a "for school quiz question" with a "right" answer to her. She attempts to go back to the class narrative, but then in Stanza IV the interview ends as I point out to Jada that her improvisation is "wrong again" and she is no longer willing to risk "cooperating."

Stanza I: I didn't want to cry

1. K. Oh I chose this one because
2. I didn't want to cry in front of all them girls
3. so I just wrote about the end
4. and like the part where they came and saved everybody.

Stanza II “Correct Answer” You wanted to be safe

5. C. That makes sense.
6. It makes a lot of sense.
7. So you liked this happier part,
8. it seemed a little safer to write about,
9. I understand that!
10. You did a really great job with it.
11. How do you feel
12. about that piece of writing?

Stanza III Answering the quiz question

13. K. I feel good because
14. it was sad.
15. Everybody was crying and stuff
16. and uh, and
17. I felt like writing this uh, uh ,
18. hmmmm . . . .
19. I don’t know why I felt like writing this.
20. I just felt like writing something.
21. I didn’t want to do my homework.

Stanza IV Wrong Again

22.C. Was this homework?
23. (nods)

Jada begins with the word “oh” rather than “well” or simply “I did this because” in a dismissive, “this is easy” tone of voice. She claims her power throughout by using “I” statements, placing herself in complete control of her actions. In line 2 she lets the interviewer know that crying “in front of all them girls” is not an acceptable “practice” (Gee 2010) or activity to her. She does not say that crying is a problem for her, or even crying in front of people. The issue for her lies in crying in front of all of the girls in her class. Her language builds a relationship with the girls of the class where crying is not acceptable. It also builds a distance between her and the interviewer. Jada's language is constructing a disconnect between the activity of the classroom in this moment and her own rules and understanding of how to be in the world, and the world of the school, and an identity for herself as confident in her way of negotiating it. In line 3 the words "so" and "just" distance her from this unacceptable (to her) activity of crying and build an identity for herself of ease with the way she has negotiated this disconnect. She improvises by ventriloquating the recognizable American narrative. She claims her power to choose a "different narrative" saying "I liked the part at the end." She didn't like the other part and so, she chose not to write about it, not to "give back" what the film and her teacher gave her.

Stanza II: the Correct Answer, is my response to Jada. As a novice interviewer, I make several grievous errors that signify to Jada that I think her answer is "wrong" and signal to her that this is a "right" and "wrong" answer activity, like a school quiz, that we are engaged in. My double assertion in lines 5 and 6 about how what she's said "makes sense" signals that she could have answered in a way that did not make sense. Then in lines 7 and 8 I revise her answer for her by telling her what she really meant using "You liked this happier part." In line 8, my language solidifies our relationship as person who knows (me) and person who does not (Jada) by asserting that she chose this part because "it seemed safer to write about." In line 9 I assert how my answer is "right" by saying, “I can understand that.” By using “I” here, I claim the power in deciding what is “correct” and “understandable” and then build my position as person with the power to judge by saying “You did a good job with it.” Further, I do not explain what exactly she has done a good job with. “It” could be writing, talking to me, or choosing a topic. By not specifying, I signal that “it” really is not that important as long as I say that it is “good.” My language constructs Jada as someone who does not need to think about those sorts of details because I am the one with the power to do that. It also signifies that her improvisation is incorrect.

My response to Jada’s constructs Jada as “student” and that we are involved in a “school” activity, invoking the narrative where the adult asks questions that she already knows the answer to and the student tries to get them “right.” My revision of her response and vague comment about her doing a “good job” indirectly suggests that I am not really interested in her actual thoughts and ideas, or her innovations. Jada understands my next question in 11 and 12 (about how she feels) is not a “real” question and that there is a “correct” answer that she must find if she wants to be identified as a “good” student in our relationship.

In lines 13 and 14 of stanza III, there is a shift in Jada’s language that shows that she’s understood my indirect speech act and that she’s actually answering quiz questions instead of having a conversation. She begins to enact “good student,” answering the question. She claims her comfort with her choice, saying “I feel good” and then pauses after “because” before saying “it was sad.” “It was sad” builds a connection with her feelings and the rest of the class, constructing her as “good” because she felt like “sad” like the others – she felt "the right" way. She mirrors my vague language by not explaining whether "it" is the information she has learned about the holocaust, her writing, or her classmates and teachers reactions to the information, the writing or the reading. She begins the next statement in line 7 explaining that "Everybody was crying and stuff, " not "We" and so maintaining her distance from the activity of crying. "And stuff" indicates that there were other things happening that she is distancing herself from as well. The distancing allows her to continue her resistant student performance of self while trying to be "good student."

She makes one more attempt in line 17 to answer the quiz question, beginning with the question stem, "I felt like writing this. . . " In line 18 she enacts thinking about the answer with "hmmmm" and then in line 19 drops the "good student" identity with the answer "I don't know . . ." Here, Jada's language quickly reclaims her authority and challenges the construction of herself as "wrong" because she does not know the answer. She says "I just felt like writing something." Her language here reclaims the agentive stance as she asserts that she did the writing because *she* felt like it, not because she was told to and complied. In line 21 she positions herself further away from the "compliant" student role explaining that she did not want to do her homework. Her language builds a challenge to my authority as the researcher telling her what she meant and why she chose to write what she did. The identity that my language has constructed for her of needing "safety" does not fit with her way of knowing and being and the identity that she is enacting in the beginning. She rejects my revision of her answer and her identity after trying on "good student" and re-asserts herself as resistant. My assertion, through a question in line 22 that this *was* indeed homework ends the interview. She does nod, slightly in response, but she is no longer willing to talk to me because I have claimed my role as one who is to show her how her answers are wrong. She, however, is not interested in that construction of her ideas.

Conclusions

Jada's activities of writing about a "happy" moment at the end of the Holocaust, refusing to "cry" with and in front of her classmates, and not participating in the construction of herself as in need of "safety" illustrate counter activities and outcomes to the dominant insistence on compliance and standardization illustrated by the narratives in Chapter Four and the "good student" performances in Chapter Five. Jada tempers her resistance carefully, moving right along the boundaries of what she knows to be the appropriate way to negotiate this counter activity in school. Jada is negotiating what she knows of the way to be in school with what she knows about the way to be in the world. She has done the writing her teacher assigned and nominates the American Dream narrative that is recognizable in the figured world of Rosa Parks in contrast to the victimization narrative of the film and the other students' entries. She has cooperated by allowing herself to be interviewed and recorded reading the piece and she has agreed to be a part of a study with a "researcher" from the university. When she interprets cues from Tallulah and me, in two different settings that she is not really answering in an "appropriate way, she dutifully modifies her answers, moving away from her ideas to what she believes to be "correct" in her narrative of doing school. She is not willing to comply with the crying that the other girls and teachers are engaging in, and she is not willing to perform by answering a question that she feels constructs her as needing “safety.” Jada openly resists her I-Identity of “at-risk” student and carefully negotiates resistance of the narrative of order and control in the school by performing resistant student regularly. In the moment of the Holocaust Diaries, she attempts to construct a “good student” D-Identity, but her good student bid also resists her “at-risk” I-Identity, marking her as “resistant” as she complies on her own terms, in a way that works with her narrative of how to “be.”

My revision of her answers and Tallulah’s pointing back, past Jada’s ideas about the Holocaust to the notion of school work, remind her, like the school uniforms, that her ways of being and knowing do not fit in this instance of the socializing institution of schooling in the US. She has been “passing in drag.” She doesn’t “belong” in this good student role. In both cases, she attempts to enact the “good at-risk student” identity that through our acts of language indicate what we want from her. On camera, she succeeds in narrating the American Dream narrative about schoolwork, though she carefully removes herself from it. However, with me, she attempts to answer in the way she believes I’m asking her to, but in the end refuses when I continue to position her as “wrong.” She chooses silence, staying recognizable within the world of “good at-risk student” by not contradicting me, but refusing to engage in the non-conversation any longer and maintaining her resistant performance of self.

Jada's experience with "doing her homework," and then talking about it, is that her ideas about the Holocaust and her reactions to it are "wrong" in the world of school. Her narratives of survival were disjointed with those of the school world when imposed on the school's socializing narrative of how to respond to the Holocaust. She improvised by nominating a recognizable narrative in the school world when she became engaged enough with the material to feel compelled to represent it through writing. However, her improvisation did not reproduce what was illustrated in the film and was therefore "wrong." Her bid for "good student" was incongruous from the "at-risk" I-Identity because she synthesized another narrative from the school world along with her narrative of how to be in the world, rather than simply "giving back" what she was given.

Jada's improvisation in the constructions of "self" in the school world are moments of possibility, and she represents the ways in which students and teachers possess "a modicum of agency" (Holland, et al, 1998) within the socially constructed figured world of school, and therefore not doomed to simply reproduce the dominant and dominating narratives and be reproduced by them. Jada gives us an image, even though the material result for Jada in this moment is still to be marked as "resistant." Students and teachers working collectively, noticing the socializing narratives at work and actively listening to each other, can work in solidarity to resist the repetitive give-back-the-right-answer socialization that constructs being a good "at-risk" student. As the resistant student Jada foregrounds our notions (mine, Tallulah's, her teachers, Rosa Parks and the institution of schooling) of "acceptability" and makes the socialization process very visible to us if we care to look. Her moments of resistance are “mini – critiques” of the dominant and dominating narratives. Jada represents possibility in that she has shown, through her writing, that the “at-risk” I-Identity that insists on giving back is not fixed or static, or even “True.”

CHAPTER 7: GETTING SCHOOLED ON RESISTANCE

It's been a year now since Tallulah and I did any professional development at Rosa Parks Middle School. It's been a year since I collected my last piece of data in this study. It's been a year since the research company finished data collection for the National Evaluation Study on the National Writing Project. I drove through the winding neighborhood where Rosa Parks is nestled on my way home from a meeting with Tallulah and Lauren, where we were discussing what I really wanted to do with this last chapter. The neighborhood looks the same. The run down homes on tiny lots with bars on the windows are still there. The fairy tale street names still lead to the castle on the hill that is Rosa Parks. The gates are still there, guarding the building right along with the police car out front. What's changed though is that all of those hardworking people that we connected with in the place are gone. Other hard working people have replaced them, and if the pattern continues, those people will be gone next year, through the revolving door that is urban education.

So what was our impact on the school? We connected personally with many teachers, but the Writing Project is no longer in the building. We hear from the teachers we worked with and see them in other schools, but they are no longer at Rosa Parks. The administrator we connected with is gone. The academic facilitator who shot me the excited e-mail is gone. Samuel was re-assigned to a leadership position at another middle school in the district. Ronald left to work at a charter school where he felt like he would be listened to and where he feels like he has the “freedom to teach.” Leslie left the school to attend a magnet program. Aaron and Abigail will finish middle school in a month or so and move on, but they will enter high school “behind” other “advanced” 8th graders because Rosa Parks did not offer an Algebra course this year like other middle schools in the district serving upper middle class students. Jada left Rosa Parks at the end of her 6th grade year, and no one is able to tell me what happened to her. The school is still a “turn around” school, turning in yet another direction while test scores remain low, the teachers and staff stay overworked and overwhelmed, and the students stay in places of poverty and marginalization.

Writing Project sites across the country are now competing for any type of state or local funding and the National Writing Project is competing for, but has not been successful as of this writing in, obtaining new federal funds. Our site continues to work with our partner schools with local funding in addition to developing grants to support our continuity programs and bring in more teachers. As we continue that work and apply for grants, Rosa Parks is always in our minds and on the tips of our tongues. In some ways, it is an intense and emblematic story of some of the best work of our site, but it certainly isn’t the story where we can show “impact” in a “measureable” (read metric) way. We were not invited back after the grant cycle ended. Our e-mails and phone calls were not returned by the administration. The partnership with Rosa Parks has dissolved and we wonder, not only what we actually did there, but, what happened in the doing.

What we've come to know in all of our many, many conversations and what we've learned from Jada and the good girls at Rosa Parks is that while struggle is important if change is to come, we were all struggling around the wrong things.

At Rosa Parks Middle School children, teachers, principals, and consultants are all working hard, trying to "produce" talented, engaged students. But the various narratives constructing the school compete with each other while the children, as we all are, are constructing who they are and what they know within and against dominant and dominating narratives. Market based education written on and through the children's bodies does not "produce" critically engaged democratic citizens as promised but, at best, identities who do as they are told, and whose competing identities are busting out of the seams.

When children sit down to write in social studies class in the figured world of Rosa Parks Middle School, they are negotiating the corporate (objectivist) narrative of literacy that sees writing as a set of skills to be mastered and necessitates a standard, uniform format so that it can be measured. They are negotiating the way that this narrative positions them, as "at-risk" students who are "only" capable of writing highly structured "five-paragraph essays" that give back information given to them as if they were filling out worksheets. They are negotiating competing narratives of literacy brought by the writing consultants that call the corporate (objectivist) narrative into question. The Writing Project consultants see writing as situated within particular contexts (conversations, histories, discourses) and as a way of thinking, and a way of connecting new information with known. The consultant's narrative views the corporate (objectivist) narrative as limited and limiting, and uses writing to inquire into such legitimizing power structures.

The students are also negotiating various narratives from the other figured worlds of their lives as they respond to the ways these institutional narratives position them. Leslie responds by doing as she is told. Aaron responds by hiding, and repeating one moment where she felt successful. Abigail responds through dress, accessorizing her uniform in a way that doesn't comply with the middle management expectation. Jada responds with resistance to the "school" narrative on a daily basis.

As students negotiate these narratives, they encounter new social situations and improvise in order to enact "student." Abigail has to improvise to figure out what to do when writing is about "feeling" rather than giving back. Jada finds herself wanting to respond to what she is learning about the Holocaust and decides to do her homework as well as cooperate with the consultants when they want to interview her. She has to improvise how to "be" a person who does her homework and cooperates in a way that makes sense in what she knows about the narratives of the school, the consultants, and her narratives of how to "be" a person in the world.

The complexity of student identity formation is not apparent in the long columns of standardized test score data that name the students, and thereby the teachers, the administrators and the school as in need of intervention. However, the scores have the power to define the types of "intervention" the students receive. At Rosa Parks, those interventions included the *Achieve 3000* computer program that tells students what to "copy" from an article and "paste" into blanks. *Achieve 3000*, its corporate body, and the school administration call that writing. The school administration specifies as well a "no-writing--only-preparation-for-multiple-choice-tests" policy in order to "focus" on "raising scores." In the end, these "interventions" do not work, yet the "interventions" are not considered the problem—they offer, after all, a "scientifically proven" method, a step-by-step process of learning. The students, then, are the ones named as "unable" to succeed, because after all of this "help" and "opportunity" they have been "given," they just cannot read at a basic level or write without grammatical errors. The scores have the power to reproduce society as it is, securely fastening the students into their places of poverty and marginalization, and then blame the students and their teachers for not working hard enough.

In her book *Women Without Class*, Bettie (2003) describes the power of the institution along with the agency people do have in terms of identity "performance" and "performativity." For Bettie, performance implies agency and enables us to think about the "exception" to the rule; the "at-risk" kid who performs as "successful" for example, by "negotiating an inherited and chosen identity" (p. 192). In this study, I talked about this as D- (discourse) identity (Gee, 2011). Performativity theorizes the "structural, institutionalized inequalities [that] preexist and for the most part produce . . . performances" without the social actors recognizing it (p. 192) or I (institutional)-identity in this study (Gee, 2011). As the girls at Rosa Parks worked to perform "good student," their performances were produced by the dominant and dominating narratives that constructed them as “at-risk” students. That social, historical power was ever-present in the socialization happening in the school (including the actions of the writing consultants.) Jada took an agenic stance, performing “successful” student, resisting the “give-back-what-you’ve-been-given” narrative of “good at-risk student,” including when I tried to construct her as in need of “safety.” However, due to the power of the dominating narrative, her performance had the material result of marking her as “bad.”

Jada’s resistance to the “at-risk” construction and the socialization of the school through the uniform and other narratives of order and control, as well as ideas of “how” to respond to the Holocaust, can also be recognized as a critique of the way the institution was positioning her in society. Like the working class girls in Bettie’s study who were able to see the “structures of exclusion at work” when they were “exposed to middle class cultural forms” in the college-prep classes, Jada’s resistance makes the socialization of the school world very visible. The material result of her resistance (further marginalization) demonstrates the necessity for a discourse of critique in classrooms, in schools and among “intervening” consultants. Consensus, argues Lyotard (1979), is not only less than ideal, but “elicits complicity with totalizing regimes of knowledge and truth” where those with the most power get to name “truth” and “knowledge” (p. 45).

Jada, in juxtaposition to the “good girls,” performed identities much like the teachers and administrators who seemed “resistant” to our ideas and those who were “good” in the Writing Project reform narrative. Those resistant to the Writing Project accepted the dominant and dominating corporate (objectivist) narrative of writing by insisting on the repetitive-socializing narrative of copying-down-the-words-you-are-given, which pushed the Writing Project's narrative of thinking out loud on paper to the margins. The critique offered by the resistant teachers was that while what we were suggesting may sound great, even ideal, their jobs and the lives of their students are at stake if those scores don't come up. It was all well and good for us to resist the corporate (objectivist) narrative from our position as white middle class women with university jobs, but we weren't taking the very real pressure of the corporate (objectivist) narrative that dictated narrowly structured, formulaic writing in the school "seriously enough." The teachers and administrators saw our writing professional development as constructing what they were doing in their classrooms as "wrong" and "bad" rather than a critique of the objectivist structure. We failed to recognize how normalized and legitimizing the objectivist narrative is. We were all struggling against each other rather than listening carefully and deeply to the very real, very powerful critiques we were all offering. We missed the opportunity to work together against the dominating narrative that produced and maintained this school as one on the margins.

While this work may not have impacted the school, it did hugely impact the lives of certain teachers who are continuing to teach and to think together about how to engage children as thinkers within the objectivist culture but in schools where their expertise is noticed and called upon. Ronald, for instance, joined a charter school where his desire to integrate writing/thinking in social studies is now celebrated. Though the school leadership team is under objectivist mandates like the team at Rosa Parks, they allow Ronald to engage his students and work with them as writers. He is also called upon to share his work with his colleagues and with parents of the children in his classroom. The focus in his charter school is “both/and” rather than “either/or”—both challenge and engage the students and prepare them for the challenges of objectivist testing. In Rosa Parks it was either prepare them for the test first [never do anything but test prep] or lose your job. Those of us committed to public schools (nonprofit schools that serve all students no matter what) might learn about how schools without some of the restrictions placed on state/district-sponsored public schools are able to see past the tests to the teachers and children and the quality of educational life worth continuing.

School leaders with vision of how to engage teachers and students in meaningful learning (rather than ratcheting down and drilling students weekly for “formative” objective assessments) would help to create the conditions for positive impact on student learning. Objective assessments, themselves, need only be one part of the school portrait, one that might be put against other products of learning, products created through the imaginative engagement of children which in themselves offer critique of the uniformity, sameness and repetition of standardized work, products of learning that illustrate that education is about working with human beings and all of the complexity that entails, rather than uniform widgets on the factory line.

Now, as the National Writing Project competes for federal funding, racing to the top right along with and against all school systems, those of us involved with the Writing Project too feel the power of the objectivist narrative, because federal funding requires that one “prove” that a “program” “works” with “measureable results.” Though the current pressures from both Democratic and Republican political parties on the state and federal levels are to increase standardized assessments and promote competition and pay for performance, there is also another narrative of resistance, often heard in conversations among parents and teachers about how reductive and disruptive to learning these pressures are. But these pressures from the objectivist agenda are so great, that the cries for accountability drown competing voices out. Deborah Meir says “all parents [and other community members] need ways to make informed judgments about the professional competence of the school” (qtd. in Gallagher, 2007). The accountability agenda points to standardized testing as “the only way” to make this happen. But, those documenting the problems of objectivist assessment offer other images of possibility (ex: Gallagher, 2007; Scott & Brannon, in press), where assessment is something that happens locally, is instruction driven, is designed by teachers along with their students in classrooms, and is firmly embedded in the ways of being and knowing of the community the school serves. In this view of assessment, teachers and students would be the generators of assessment rather than the targets of it (Gallagher, 2011, p. 451).

At times this work seems daunting, almost impossible, but as Jean Anyon (1997) says “visionaries have long maintained that in order to make fundamental change we have to believe that such changes are possible” (p. 165). From there she goes on to lay out a possibility that shows educators working in solidarity with community organizations offering everything from the creating of Work Projects Administration-type jobs to legal services to housing associations and voter registration. Essentially, she is calling for the neighborhood school to be the "nuclei where referrals to these economic, political, and social services are made or where the services themselves are provided" (p. 169). Rather than a castle on the hill as a symbol of how the neighborhood and the people in it are "wrong" and "bad," the school can become the center of critique of a system that feeds the cycle of poverty and works for change. Education alone cannot solve the social problem of poverty; however, schools working with other community groups can be the hub where all groups interested in the welfare of children come together.

Youth Roots, a community youth organization in Oakland, California, is another group offering and image of possibility for sustained critique. Here, minority adolescents come together and spend their "free time" developing a discourse of critique and then use it as "Artivists" to spread their message. The group tours the country, attending teacher conferences, speaking to educators in powerful young voices about what "kids like me" need. They offer images of teachers and children and community groups working together, giving "other" ways of being and doing.

Community groups organized by parents of school children and concerned citizens are banning together to protest the objectivist agenda and the amount of time testing is taking away from actual learning in schools. They are making use of technology and social media (Facebook, Twitter) to get their message out and to point to other organizations around the country offering similar critiques. They are showing up in front of education buildings, dancing with their children in public protest, essentially begging school boards to consider “other” ways of being and doing in schools.

Professional associations like the National Writing Project and the National Council of Teachers of English, like State Departments of Education, and local educational systems are also required to “prove” themselves with “measurable” results. As professional networks, they have offered ways to collectively voice concerns and offer alternatives. As engaged citizens and as professionals we can use these avenues to build coalitions of resistance and to make visible the consequences of an overpowering testing establishment.

Jada’s critique of the socializing narrative of the school also shows us a need for a discourse of critique in educational research. We need more research that answers Foucault’s call to map the micro powers in the world. We need to understand how power/knowledge is working in the lives of children and educators and map how marginalization is happening so that there is an ongoing critique of education. Such work requires qualitative studies where the details and contexts are of the upmost importance. Rather than trying to reach consensus about what is “causing” the achievement gap and producing “products” to “fix” it, educational research needs to remain ever vigilant in the analysis of the inescapable socialization of schooling, even in, as Luke (1992) points out, the most emancipating of classroom practices, and critical of the way of those practices limit access to social resources.

Objectivist based studies, like the National Evaluation study for the National Writing Project can show trends, for example, that overall, schools working with Writing Project Sites saw increased test scores and higher rates of teacher retention. These trends mark the work of the National Writing Project as effective and useful and that is helpful. However, the details are needed in order to understand how it's happening in individual schools, and understand why it seems to "work" in some and not others. Objectivist studies serve to paper over such detail, all the lived experiences of children and teachers in particular schools. They hide the way in which the urban reform narrative of schooling produces Jada's marginalization, as well as that of the rest of the girls in the study and all of the hardworking, dedicated educators in the school.

It's not just the gathering of the details that map the micro powers at work; it's the lens through which the details are viewed. As a part of the National Evaluation Study, the researchers listened carefully to our "details." They asked that we turn in narrative reports each quarter and offered unlimited space in which to tell them "anything else we wanted to share about the partnership." They then followed up on these "details" in phone interviews. When the researchers learned that our Writing Project Site forms relationships with schools where several Writing Project teacher consultants work before beginning a partnership, they asked to visit one of our "naturally occurring partnerships." In looking at all of these details through an objectivist lens, they are looking at "what is" with the understanding that "it is what it is." The Writing Project work produced "great" results in some schools, but not in others. Looking through constructivist lens at these same details would explain how "what is" is being socially constructed, how the "failure" of some schools and success of others happens because of the ways in which power is working in and through those schools.

The current climate of education reform based in the market logic of competition and efficiency makes Jada's story, and those of the other teachers, students and consultants in this study, of upmost importance when viewed through a constructivist lens. The objectivist paradigm that is the "common sense" of the dominant reform policy works to inscribe some students and schools as "low-performing" and others as "high achieving" through standardized testing. Putting testing in the hands of "expert" vendors removes the messy, human, process of assessment from the hands of teachers and students and is therefore more "efficient." Just like the factory machine spitting out identical widgets. Standardized testing "serves as a lever for score-keeping and competition (Gallagher, 2011, p. 454) as schools try to produce the best "widget-education," in order to compete for students, and for funding. This common sense logic sees the people being educated as "consumers of knowledge" rather than participants in knowledge making. And in a market environment of competition, someone *must* be left behind. Someone must win, and someone must loose.

However, a focus on the complexity of the narratives students negotiate as they construct their student identities illuminates clearly how power/knowledge determines largely who gets to win and who gets to loose. A focus on mapping how marginalization happens, then offers images of possibility for change. A discourse of critique, where questioning rather than compliance and efficiency are ideal is in many ways what Samuel was trying to talk to those 6th graders about, what the girls were writing about in that moment where they saw themselves as writers whose words had powerful effects on others. It is crucial to make that critique the norm in our institutions of education, to re-vision “resistant” as “brilliant, engaged student and citizen.”

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APPENDIX A: ROSA PARKS MIDDLE PLANNING MATRIX

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1st BLK	**GRADE Level Planning 8th grade 8:32-10:00**	**Content Meeting 8th grade 8:32-10:00** Various Classrooms	**Content Meeting 8th grade 8:32-10:00** Various Classrooms	**CSZ Planning or Individual Planning** *CSZ-Central Secondary Zone (Math/LA only)*	**Team Meeting/Parent Conferences** Various Classrooms
2nd BLK	**GRADE Level Planning 7th grade 10:02-11:30**	**Content Meeting 7th grade 10:02-11:30** Various Classrooms	**Content Meeting 7th grade 10:02-11:30** Various Classrooms	**CSZ Planning or Individual Planning**	**Team Meeting/Parent Conferences** Various Classrooms
3rd BLK	**ELECTIVE Team Planning 11:32-1:30**	**ELECTIVE Content Planning 11:32-1:30** Various Classrooms	**ELECTIVE Content Planning 11:32-1:30** Various Classrooms	**CSZ Planning or Individual Planning**	**Team Meeting/Parent Conferences** Various Classrooms
4th BLK	**GRADE Level Planning 6th grade 1:32-3:00**	**Content Meeting 6th grade 1:32-3:00** Various Classrooms	**Content Meeting 6th grade 1:32-3:00** Various Classrooms	**CSZ Planning or Individual Planning**	**Team Meeting/Parent Conferences** Various Classrooms

	WEDNESDAY	TUESDAY
PM Meetings 3:30pm	**“MANTRA” Meeting (PD)** **Admin. Meeting** *1st Wednesday of each month* *2nd/5th* *Wednesday of each month* *(Mandatory Attendance)* *(Mandatory Attendance)* **Strategic Plan 2014 Meeting** **TIER Meeting** **(Committees)** *3rd Wednesday of each month* *4th* *Wednesday of each month* *(Mandatory Attendance)* *(Mandatory Attendance)*	**New Teacher Meeting** *1st Tuesday of each month* *Mentor/Mentee Monthly Meeting* *Media Center – (3:30pm)*

APPENDIX B: WEST AFRICA SLAVE TRADE UNIT

Unit 3: Western Africa Slave Trade

Three Trading Empires
West African Slave Trade
Imperialism/Colonialism

20 Days(A/B Schedule)- January 31st – February 25th

Three Trading Empires

3.01 Identify ways in which people of selected areas in Africa, Asia, and Australia have used, altered, and adapted to their environments in order to meet their needs and evaluate the impact of their actions on the development of cultures and regions.

4.02 Identify the main commodities of trade over time in selected areas of Africa, Asia, and Australia and evaluate their significance for the economic, political, and social development of cultures and regions.

8.01 Describe the role of key historical figures and evaluate their impact on past and present societies in Africa, Asia, and Australia.

8.02 Describe the role of key groups such as Mongols, Arabs, and Bantu and evaluate their impact on historical and contemporary societies of Africa, Asia, and Australia.

West African Slave Trade

7.01 Identify historical events such as invasions, conquests, and migrations and evaluate their relationship to current issues.

7.02 Examine the causes of key historical events in selected areas of Africa, Asia, and Australia and analyze the short- and long-range effects on political, economic, and social institutions.

Colonialism/Imperialism

7.01 Identify historical events such as invasions, conquests, and migrations and evaluate their relationship to current issues.

7.02 Examine the causes of key historical events in selected areas of Africa, Asia, and Australia and analyze the short- and long-range effects on political, economic, and social institutions.

Standard	*Description*	*SWBAT*
3.01, 4.02 2 days	Introduction to Western Africa and the trading empires **Key Points**: • The climate conditions were hot and humid and good for trade, not farming (Sahara Desert makes up most of West Africa) • Camel Caravans led to the	• SWBAT describe the geography of West Africa and examine its effect on the development of trade routes LP ideas – • Introduce concept of trading through MLK example (e.g., imagine if MLK were three schools that didn't interact for 50 years – what would happen when they finally did interact? → they'd want to trade!) • Review impact of Sahara desert on life/travel → talk about impact of travel w/camels, caravans → led to trade routes which led to development of the 3 major empires (maybe have them fill out a cause and effect chart) • Emphasize that trading is essentially an

	development of trade routes - Trade Routes led to the development of trading empires - Trade includes more than just money and resources, it also include cultural elements - The three West African trading empires are: Ghana, Mali, and Songhai	exchange of cultures (e.g., if you see someone else's shoes that you like and trade for them, you're essentially trading for elements of their culture) - Is the climate and land in Africa conducive to farming? If people don't get much food by farming, how do they get there food? How do you think the economy of Africa in general is run? Help students lead to the answer: through Trade! - Map (they label where the different places are and color the empires)
4.02, 8,01, 8.02 1 day	The Three Trading Empires **Key Points:** - Ghana was the first of the trading empires and started the trans-Saharan trade. - The empire of Mali was founded by Sundiata and comprised of severall small states that he conqured. - Mansa masu ruled Mali from 1312 to 1337 and spread Islam throughout the empire. - Songhai was the third empire and its strength from their control of the trans-Saharan trade. - Askia Muhammad was the king that brought Songhai to its greatest power.	- SWBAT explain how the three Western Africa empires became wealthy LP ideas- Warm-Up about salt (hook/connection) → Do you add salt to your food? Do you like salty snacks? Would you enjoy food as much if you did not have salt? 1) Based on what we know about the Climate of Africa, **why do you think the African kingdoms did more trading than farming? (= link to TR's lesson)** - video on the 3 trading empires (intro) (DiscoveryEd) - Animation and worksheet with the following: - Timeline or sequencing chart (they fill in) - Compare and Contrast Chart HW: Diary Entry Pt. I: write a diary entry (1 page) from the POV of a trader in ancient W Africa who is crossing the desert in a caravan → consider the following: what are the sights and sounds of the desert? what are you nervous about? What are you excited about? what is your purpose in traveling? (due Monday)

	• Trade led to the three West African empires becoming wealthy	
7.01, 7.02 1 day	Review of imperialism and colonialism **Key Points:** • Imperialism is when a stronger nation takes control of a weaker nation. • Colonialism is when a country setups a territory in another country. • The Europeans imperialized Africa to enrich their countries economy. • European came to Africa for land, resources, wealth, and cheap labor • The West African Slave Trade began as a result of European Imperialism	• SWBAT explain the concept of imperialism and how it started in Western Africa -LP ideas • Intro video on imperialism • Stages of imperialism (guided notes with visual accompaniment): 1) Native people, 2) interaction/exploration/trade, 3) conquest/Europe takes over, 4) colonization (est. functioning gov't system), 5) revolution [10-question MC Quiz on 3 Trading Empires] HW: Diary Entry Pt. III: write a diary entry (1 page) from the POV of a European imperialist? What are your motivations? What are thinking when you arrive in an empire? How do you view the African people living there? How do you treat them?
7.01, 7.02 1 day	West African Slave Trade **Key Points**: • Slave trading has been happening as early as the first civilizations like Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt. Even in Africa in the Mali and Songhai empires there were slaves (often	• SWBAT explain the causes of the West African Slave Trade. -LP ideas • Ppt. on Slave Trade • Emphasize role of industrialization on growth/expansion of imperialism • Hook: Warm-Up Use the ACE method to analyze Nas lyrics from 'I Can' • Compare/contrast map of traditional ethnic boundaries of Africa with map of colonized sections • Reading of Amos Fortune Novel • Answer questions: Why did Europeans want to colonize Africa? How did Europeans interfere with African cultures? HW: Diary Entry Pt. IV: write a diary entry (1 page) from the POV of a slave being taken to Europe—what do you think/feel?

	criminals, prisoners captured in battle, etc.) • In the institution of slavery, people are viewed as property. • The African slave trade was the single largest forced movement of people and lasted 400 years • The slaves were sent to Europe, America, and South America • The Middle Passage was a horrific experience for African slaves • Slave traders took the strongest men and women which emptied villages and towns of their leaders • The African slave trade opened the door to Europe's imperialism of Africa because it gave Europeans initial access to Africa	
7.01, 7.02, 8.01, 8.02 1 day	West African Slave Trade continued **Key Points**: • The effects of imperialism: new boundaries replaces old ones and caused	• SWBAT evaluate the short and long-term effects of the West African Slave trade on Africans and Europeans -LP ideas:

	ethnic conflict. • The slave trade devastated Africa: over 12 million enslaved Africans came to America • Slave raiding led to inter-tribal conflict, causing the emptying of towns and villages • Brought a lot of wealth to European merchants and traders. • Even today countries are struggling as a result of European Imperialism	
All 1 day	Review	• SWBAT review the 3 Trading Empires, Imperialism/Colonialism, and the West Africa Slave trade by completing a review guide and review game
All 1day	Unit Test	

APPENDIX C: NARROWING THE LENS WITH MORE NARRATIVES

What follows are narratives of two social studies teachers negotiating the various narratives in Chapter Four in order to engage their students in the curriculum of the class through writing. The first narrative is one of convergence, where teachers, consultants and administrators are all working out of the corporate (objectivist) narrative of school, where teaching and learning is about doing what you are "supposed to do." This was a marked moment that became the reference point for students and teachers when talking with me about their writing. The second narrative is one of resistance and compliance in which Ronald is complying with the consultants' idea of using the daybook as place to think deeply about the content of social studies, while resisting the administrations "argument writing only" policy.

Dairy Writing – A Narrative of Convergence

One brisk morning in March, I was sitting in my quiet home office surrounded by open books, working on a paper for class when this e-mail popped up in the corner of my screen:

OMG

Can you get over here today! Samuel's all girls class has done some **unbelievable writing.** I need to get this published ASAP! We need your help!!!

It was our second year working with Rosa Parks Middle School and Tallulah and I had just facilitated a workshop on "Using Genre to Act on Content Area" the day before. Though we had been studying genre theory and thinking about what we were learning about genres as sites of action rather than simply containers to pour knowledge into, this workshop really dealt with genre as "form." The title alludes to our beginning thinking about genre as sites of action, and on the agenda we had this sentence:

> If we think about genres as sites of action, as ways of being and viewing the world, then viewing a topic through different genres and contexts is like holding it up to the light and looking at it from different angles, from different view points.

However, the activity that we asked to teachers to try with each other and later with their students does not really push the term "genre" past the container notion of from. In fact we even say "genre/form" on the handout – marking the terms as interchangeable. (See Appendix C for the agenda and handouts from this session.) Basically, this activity asks students to plop what they know about a topic into a "form." They aren't acting on anything. This container idea of genre is evident in the diary writing that prompted the e-mail message above. But that is all something I've figured out in hindsight. In the moment, I was jumping out of my skin with excitement over having struck a cord with one of the teachers some how.

I grabbed the phone, called the school, and managed to get a very excited academic facilitator on the line. She wanted to know if Tallulah or I could come right then. Tallulah and I exchanged some jubilant text messages and since she happened to be in the area, Tallulah went by. She got there just in time to join the class where the mainly African America girls were reading aloud from their homework papers, dairy entries written as if they were children living during the Jewish Holocaust. The teacher, an African American man, the academic facilitator, a white woman, and the new principal, a black woman, were all in the room, listening to the girls read with tears in their eyes. When Tallulah, a white woman, entered, the girls greeted her and asked Aaron to read hers again. As she quietly read, the girls and the adults openly cried. Several other tearful entries were shared before the period ended.

Afterwards, Tallulah wrote to our site director and me, thinking about and celebrating this moment that we had been invited into.

> When I was getting ready to leave, one of the girls asked [Samuel] something. And he said, I don't know, ask her. She said, "Did you cry listening to the stories?" I said something like "Well you know these diary entries are very powerful and full of emotion. The thing though that is really affecting me is the way that all of you girls are so interested and connected to your writing and that you are doing all of this amazing writing and thinking in social studies with [Samuel]" (And being me) I actually was a little choked up telling them that. I looked over at Samuel and he was tearing up himself. ---What a moment- teacher, kids, WP consultant connecting over a writing assignment.

Later that same day, I went by to collect the diaries. The academic facilitator and Samuel wanted me to look at them closely and think about ways to publish them. They also wanted me to know that this was the first time all year that all of the girls had actually done their homework or really even shown much interest in school.

The academic facilitator read Aaron's entry to me, beaming and crying at the power of the child's writing. But then, as I sorted through the other papers and asked about other classes who did the same assignment, she explained that they had a “problem” because some of the entries weren’t “appropriate” for school and some of them had horrific grammatical errors.

I met with Samuel the following week to talk more about the diary entries and the assignment. In that interview and in subsequent conversations with him about this moment in his classroom, he said that this was and still remains his best day in 9 years of teaching. He had never tried this sort of informal writing and he was thrilled with the results. He wanted to publish the girls’ work in some way, to keep it with him, to remind him of the moment. He wanted my help because he was not at all comfortable with his ability to “teach writing” and shared the academic facilitator’s concerns about the school appropriateness of some of the work as well as the errors in the conventions of writing. He had given the assignment because he knew that he was now required to do some writing in his class and he got the idea from our workshop. He simply did not know what to do next with the writing, but he did know he wanted to do something significant with it. He was also concerned that he did not have any more time to really work with the pieces in class because he had to “move on” with the other content he needed to teach.

In the end, Tallulah and I decided to video the girls reading selections from their diaries, since the reading of them in class seemed to be the significant moment. We also asked the girls to reflect on the experience as a part of the video. We then edited the readings and interviews together into a movie. I conducted formal interviews with several of the girls (see Appendix C for the

Interview Protocol) interviewed several of the girls an additional time as a part of Phase I of this study.

The story of the Holocaust diaries is a narrative of convergence. Samuel is performing engaged teacher who, in the workshop, saw a possibility that he could use with his students to engage them as learners and writers of social studies. The literacy facilitator saw this possibility as well and supported the excitement of teacher engagement and student engagement and learning. Tallulah and I saw the possibility too. We responded immediately to the e-mail and talked more with the students so that we could "publish" this work through a video-documentary-performance of student learning.

Also, in this narrative of convergence, everyone is falling into the corporate (objective) narrative of schooling where learning is "doing what one is supposed to do." Samuel is teaching writing in social studies because the state says to and the administrator is watching to be sure he does it, and it's what the consultants want him to do. Samuel, the academic facilitator and the consultants say the students are engaged because they all do their homework – what they were supposed to do. The consultants publish the student work to show that the students are doing "good work" so they have succeeded in doing what they were supposed to do, getting writing into the school in content areas.

The moment of the holocaust dairies came to be the narrative by which the students, and in some ways Ronald, the second teacher in this study, defined the type of writing I was interested in during phase II. Over a year later, when I interviewed the students in Ronald's class about writing in social studies, they began by referring back to these Holocaust diaries. This assignment was the reference point by which the students described not only their writing in social studies class the following year, but all of their school writing in their conversations with me.

The Holocaust Diary Assignment

After viewing the film *Remembering the Holocaust: Children's Diaries* (See Appendix D for a description of the film) in class, Samuel asked the girls to write diary entries as if they were Jewish children living during the Holocaust for homework. There was no discussion about the diary as a form and the girls were left to interpret that based on their experiences with diary writing. In order to complete the assignment, the students had to negotiate narratives about the Holocaust from the film, narratives about the Holocaust from their teacher, the multiple intersecting narratives of Rosa Parks Middle School, and non-school narratives to create a theory-in-use about how to do this assignment. Later, when sharing their diaries in class and during their interviews with me, they had to reimagine and negotiate these scenes while hearing the sound of their voices and feeling the eyes of their peers, their teacher, their administrators and the consultants on them.

Daybook Writing- Narratives of Resistance

I was back at Rosa Parks one afternoon in early December in the third year of this study to finish up a formal interview with Ronald about how he saw himself using writing in his social studies class. When I checked into the office, I learned that he was in a "new teachers" meeting being held by the district. I slipped into the back of the media center for wait for the meeting to end, and he came hurrying back. “You’ll never believe what the kids are doing” and then he was off, whispering away about what his students were writing and ignoring the woman up front who was pointing to a power point slide and talking to the group of teachers who were whispering among themselves, texting, or grading papers.

“Let’s get out of here! I’ve got to show you this stuff!” Ronald grabbed my bags hustled me out of the media center. He continued to talk, hands waving, as we nearly ran down the hall. He started pulling out daybooks as soon as we got to his classroom, and said “Oh YES! PLEASE!” when I interrupted to ask if I could turn on my recorder. For the next 30 minutes, he read to me from his students’ daybooks, saying over and over again how smart they are and how excited he was about what was happening in his classroom. He couldn’t stop reading to me from the notebooks and then telling me about the amazing discussions and deep understandings of social studies that were coming out of the writing. He talked about how he couldn’t wait to work with his 7th graders to take what they had been doing with quick writes in their daybooks and class discussions and move them into longer essays.

And then, as I was leaving he said, “You know, all of this is totally under the radar. No one even looked at these notebooks for my eval. and I got “emerging teacher. Whatever, I know I have a lot to learn.”

Three months later, I slipped into the end of Ronald’s first two-hour block. The lights were low, and 32 pencils in the hands of 32 students were scribbling as fast as they could go. Some students were squashed together, bumping elbows at a back table because there weren't enough desks. They didn't notice each other, or me when I walked into the room. Ronald called time, and some began to put away their notebooks and get in line, but others were still writing. One child walked over to me and whispered "Where you here? Did you see how brilliant we were? Did you get that in your notes?"

Ronald opened the door to lead the students to their next class and bellowed down the hall, "We've got some WRITERS up in here!!!!" The students followed him out grinning.

He was nearly dancing when he came back in, once again grabbing notebooks and reading the acrostic poems the students had written based on a gallery crawl of images from the slave trade that he had posted around the room. Other teachers on his team came in to see what all of the excitement was about and began to marvel with him about the outstanding thinking and writing the students had done. But then, when someone mentioned telling the administration about it a hush fell over the room. The other 7th grade teacher had done a different activity. If Ronald told, they would both be "in trouble."

In many ways, this narrative of Ronald and his daybooks is a narrative of compliance as well as resistance. In both of these scenes, Ronald is performing resistant teacher, he ducks out of a meeting, he brushes off the fact that the writing his students are doing in daybooks that has him so excited doesn't "count" in the evaluation the administrators do, he resists the idea of teaching exactly the same thing at the same time as his team mate. And yet, in many ways, Ronald is showing me that he's doing what he's "supposed to do."

The Assignment – The Daybook

The daybook is a tool for writing and thinking that the Writing Project brought to Rosa Parks in the first year of their partnership. Tallulah and I, along with other colleagues in the Writing Project, use this tool with our students as a place for getting ideas onto the page. Essentially the daybook is a container for messy on the spot thinking thrown on the page, to be mined later for larger, more public pieces of writing. The daybook functions as a writer's notebook for students. It functions as a way to record their thinking about the content of a class, the ways it might connect with their daily lives, and ideally to begin question legitimizing power structures that are present. However, as I mentioned in Chapter 4, this empty composition book had become a commodified "thing." Having students write their thoughts, and think about content in forms like acrostic poems or diary entries in their daybooks was the "thing" we had told the teachers to do. Ronald's interest in using the daybook was one of the main reasons I chose to study his classes in phase two of this study. The Writing Project gave him 170 composition books for his students. He complied with the Writing Project narrative by showing them to me every time I came to talk to him.

Students in Ronald's class had to negotiate the competing narratives of writing in the school as they decided what to do with the new situation daybook assignments, and as with the their improvisations had differing material results as they worked to construct and preform "good student" identities.

APPENDIX D: WORKSHOP MATERIALS

Writing to Learn: Using Genre to Act on Course Content
Agenda

3:30-3:35 ***Introductions/ Review Daybooks***

3:35-3:55 Using Genre to Act on Course Content
If we think about genres as sites of action, as ways of being and viewing the world, then viewing a topic through different genres and contexts is like holding it up to the light and looking at it from different angles, from different view points.

3:55-4:05 Partner Sharing/ Debriefing

Share with teammates working on similar units.
1. What do you notice about the different writings?
2. How is the information different? Similar?
3. What can be gained by looking at the same information through these different lenses?

4:05-4:20 Large Group Share and Debrief

4:20-4:30 Evaluations

Homework
Try Genre Response writing at least ***one*** time in your classes and bring samples to the staff meeting on **April 21.** We will use these student samples to to talk about ***assessment.***

Writing to Learn: Using Genre to Act on Course Content

1. Take a moment to think about the topic you are working with in the unit you are teaching right now. Quickly list everything you know about it, or everything you wanted your students to know. **5 min.**

2. Choose one or more of the following forms/ genres to show us what you were just writing about
    - A free verse poem
    - A poem in a character's voice
    - A monologue
    - A wanted ad
    - A resume
    - A collection of recipes

A poem in two voices
A dialogue between two characters
A CD song list
A comic strip
A political cartoon
A My Space Page
A series of Facebook Status updates
A video game
Story board for a short film
A text message conversation
A song or collection of songs
If this topic were a car, what kind of car would it be? What would be the accessories?
If this topic were an outfit, what would it look like?
A genre of your choice

15 min.

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Tell me about writing in this class.

2. Tell me about writing in other classes at school.

3. Tell me about a piece of writing that you are really proud of.

4. Do you do any writing outside of school?

5. Where did you go to elementary school?

6. Where do you live now?

7. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your writing?

APPENDIX F: THE FILM NARRATIVE

Children Remember the Holocaust

Samuel was able to access the film for the students through a software program “Discovery Education” purchased by the school. The film was created as a “School Break Special” by CBS. This is a series marketed as “dramatizing issues significant to teens.” Episodes deal with topics such as teen drinking, teen pregnancy, suicide pacts, euthanasia, catering to middle class society in the mid 80’s to early 90s by making topics such as poverty, homelessness, and gang activity “insignificant” by omission. Reviews of the episodes are all described as “heartbreaking.” According to the marketing and reviews of the films showcasing accolades such as “there wasn’t a dry eye in the room”, the appropriate responses to the issues raised are tears and other expressions of sadness. The film covers Sept 1, 1939 through 1945 and is constructed of snippets from letters, diaries, and spoken and written memoirs that have been collected. Keanu Reeves narrates the film. There is no way to tell which bits of narration were originally letters, which were diaries and which were spoken or written memoirs, but the words “Dear Diary” are interspersed throughout the film. All are represented as if they are being spoken in the time of the visual images playing across the screen.

Immediately following scenes and narration describing the Nazis discovering Jews in hiding places, Keanu Reeves appears, sitting on a stool where he describes what happened when the people arrived. In two or three sentences he says that families were separated, the old and young immediately gassed and some were “given the task of feeding the ovens that burned their mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters." At the end of the film, Keanu Reaves points to the fact that "the conditions that allowed the holocaust to occur; racism, intolerance and bigotry, are still with us today." He goes on to refer to "the killing fields of Cambodia, the slaughter of Rowanda, and the rape and destruction of Bosnia." The film ends with his request of viewers to "never forget."

APPENDIX G: LESLIE’S JOURNAL

Oct. 15 Journal Entry

1. What score do you want to make on the unit 1 test?

   I want to make 100 on the unit 1 test.

2. What did you do to ensure that you reach your goal?

   Study and make sure you understand the questions they are asking, that’s how you/I can reach your/my goal.

3. How were civilization developed through human-environment interaction?

   The civilizations develop through human-environment interaction by just using your environment /or like we said “interacting.”

APPENDIX H: AARON'S DIARY

Tuesday 7:23am August 16, 1941

Dear Friend,

The day has come my 12th birthday the day that was suppose to be the happiest day of my life but it wasn't. My family and another family were hidden in a room behind a book shelf suddently we heard a loud bang on the door. We were all quiet we could hear the terrifing whailing scream of children calling out for their mom but probibly their mom was gone. I tried to comfort my brother who was asking me why the other children were crying his question broke my heart I couldn't tell him the truth so I told him that he should go play with the other little boy from the other family who lived with us suddenly the 8th month old baby Julio started to cry his mom tried to quiet him so we wouldn't get caught but it was too later the Nazis found us as they walked in they pointed their rifles at us like if we were a hunting animal. As we walked to the consentration camp my brother was clapsed to me he wouldn't let go. When the nazi opened the fence he shoved us in we tripped. I got up to help my brother but I didn't see him off in the distance I saw my brother trying to get off the soldier, then my mom started screaming. Today my birthday was a horrible nightmare, suddenly a nazi officer came up to me screaming and pulled me away from my parents. I was dumbfounded he took me to a gigantic factory, he put me to cremate bodies suddenly my brothers body lay there angonizing with a bullet through his head blood still gushing out, in his hand was the small red toy car that I had given him for his birthday. As I took it from his hand he pressed my hand he was alive, but then he vanished I cried hard enough to make a river. As I took the car I though of all the memorable moments. Tears came to my eyes as I remembered all the happy family moments. Tears came to my eyes I did the hob when I was done my brother was gone as I gave him my last good bye and a kiss on a cheek. I put him in the flaming fire I cried as I did this I whent back to my parents showed my mom the toy car and we started to cry I hope we got out soon but for now we have to live here until the Nazis get tire of us.