COUNTERING ASOCIAL JUSTICE: CONSUMER CULTURE, STANCE AND A
CARTOGRAPHY OF ENCOUNTER

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In Social Foundations classrooms, social justice approaches to questions of difference are certainly part of the curriculum. After teaching numerous Social Foundations courses, I encountered several issues related to the way rigid identity categories were complemented by neoliberal narratives that seemed to limit class conversation in troubling ways—particularly in that students had a difficult time articulating a sense of connection with others beyond their circles of acquaintances. This dissertation is an exploration of how I might resolve some of those dilemmas.

I problematize the neoliberal subject position as it relates to questions of social justice, and offer that a relational approach to others may be a useful counter. Inspired by several scholars who address theoretical relational curricular possibilities, I designed a course using a consumer culture approach to constructing Other as a conceptual lens through which to begin talking about difference.

Using student data from that class, I introduce stance analysis as a way to interpret the data in terms of the ways students either reinscribed or interrupted a sense of neoliberal relationality. Finally, using the methodological approach of social cartography, I created a map wherein students could plot their encounters across difference.

This map is intended as a pedagogical heuristic that could be used to destabilize a self-possessed and individualistic neoliberal sense of self. To this end, the map is oriented toward an

approach to self and Other that is contingent, ongoing and contextually mediated. I explore the pedagogical implications of the map and suggest that such approaches may be useful for better understanding how we are relationally constituted. I argue that entering social justice conversations from this vantage point may avoid some of the trappings of rigid identity categories without resorting to commonsense neoliberal narratives.

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To Elsie and Amaya. Two educators.

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Adhering to a stance of comparing and ranking oppressions—the proverbial, "I'm more oppressed than you"—locks us all into a dangerous dance of competing for attention, resources, and theoretical supremacy. (Hill-Collins, 1989, p. 2)

I'd like to imagine that I have some connection to these people around me beyond…I don't know…sharing space with strangers. (Interview, Bobby DeLan)

As a teacher of Social Foundations courses, I have been confronted with different challenges related to course content and the social justice approach espoused by the field of Social Foundations. Over the last several years, I have taught five Social Foundations courses and the data for this dissertation comes from the students in one of those courses. A catalyst for this dissertation was that I often found myself troubled by the types of conversations occurring in my classroom. My students and I seemed to repeatedly have the same, narrow conversations related to social justice. I was especially unsettled by how students frequently appealed to the notion of personal responsibility and by how fixed identity categories influenced our conversations. I tried multiple approaches and readings in hopes of framing classroom conversations in different ways, but conversations often migrated back to familiar, entrenched positions. I felt I needed to offer a different lens through which to access social justice conversations—particularly around the notion of difference. This study represents my attempt to create a heuristic that might help me access questions of social justice differently in the classroom. To create this heuristic, I organized a syllabus and taught a class in which students dealt with questions of Otherness through the lens of consumer culture.   This interpretive study uses the concept of stance to

analyze student text from that class, and I use the principles of social cartography as a methodology to generate the portrayal of the heuristic in the form of a map. I created a map wherein future students could map their personal stances toward Other. This map represents a heuristic that could resolve some of my dilemmas around social justice conversations. This dissertation offers the theoretical and conceptual process of arriving at that map. My hope is that the map might facilitate conversations that avoid some of the salient and troubling dilemmas— the individualism of personal responsibility and the rigidity of identity categories—that I found my students appealing to in my previous courses.

1.1 SITUATING THE STUDY IN THE FIELD

The standards for Social Foundations developed by the Council of Learned Societies in Education (CLSE) suggest that the field draw primarily from the interpretive, normative and critical perspectives from within humanities disciplines,

> to sharpen students' abilities to examine, understand, and explain educational proposals, arrangements, and practices and to develop a disciplined sense of policy-oriented educational responsibility. Such study develops an awareness of education and schooling in light of their complex relations to the environing culture. (CLSE 2004)

This does not imply a definition as such, but it does offer a way to situate the field of Social Foundations within schools of education. A fundamental assumption of Social Foundations is that collectively grappling with the contested questions of social justice is a worthwhile process that is related to cultural democracy. More specifically, Social Foundations scholars assert that "citizens in a democratic society must be able to consider contested ideas and be willing to

engage with each other respectfully in spaces of contestation through their resistance as well as their consent" (Garman, 2011, p. 2). I take Pinar's (2004) hope that my curriculum will enable "students to employ academic knowledge to understand their own self-formation within society and the world" (p. 16). In this context, I consider social justice work a process of, as Garman (2011) writes, working with educators to "understand the false notion that the knowledge we deal with is neutral" (p. 3). This idea certainly suggests many different pedagogical considerations and approaches. Social Foundations courses often consider social justice through the lens of race, class, gender and sexuality issues; I initially approached the idea of knowledge neutrality through these identity categories along with neo-Marxist critical theory (Apple, 1996; Giroux & McLaren, 1994; Lipman, 2006; Saltman & Gabbard, 2003) approaches to inequity. I found that, as sympathetic as I was to these authors, this approach did not resonate with many students. Later, when introduced to the ideas of Foucault (1997) and the application of Foucault in Gunzenhauser (2006), I experienced what I might call a personal linguistic turn. I began centering my focus on the language that emerged in my classes, and also on the ways dominant narratives framed much of the students' responses to social justice issues of equity. As a result, I became particularly interested in neoliberal political ideas (Harvey, 2005) and accompanying narratives—particularly the narratives that posit a highly individualistic, socially fragmented worldview.

My experience in the classroom was that the notion of personal responsibility frequently emerged from students as both a cause and solution for social justice issues. A second commonly occurring dilemma seemed to be that, in a course organized around identity categories, students did not see shared interest across categories. One of the consequences of these two dilemmas is that they imply that working toward ("doing something") social justice is

primarily an individual task and not something that is shared. In other words, these ideas offer and encourage a notion of *asocial* justice and discourage the idea that social justice concerns are shared. Consequently, this thinking implies that social justice issues would be remedied if each individual were to simply "be more responsible for him or herself," as one student said. These dilemmas seemed to be reified by neoliberal ideas.

I found these student responses troubling because if one of the goals of Social Foundations is to work toward social justice, these two interrelated dilemmas represented serious obstacles in that they made it difficult to think about notions of the common good, as well as think about the issues individuals might share across difference. If commonality is not recognized across categories of difference, and if there is a devaluing of the common good, questions of social justice become 1) primarily individual problems to deal with and/or respond to and 2) micro-level oriented and minimizing of systemic concerns. To frame these dilemmas, I began to consider them as primarily a challenge to the (dearth of) relational language that characterizes individuals as part of a collective. I felt that the students and I lacked a manner of discussing the types of social justice issues addressed in the course in a way that would attribute shared responsibility for the issues, rather than relegate them to narrowly defined individual interest groups.

1.2   INTENTION

From a wider perspective, I consider this project to be an exploration in social justice pedagogy. The academic communities that address questions of critical pedagogy and social justice, particularly the field of Social Foundations of education, have a long history of grappling with ways to address dilemmas surrounding concerns of social justice. As stated earlier, the two

primary dilemmas I had were to move beyond an identity politics approach to social justice, and also to explore ways of complicating the individualistic narratives that inform our assumptions about approaches to social justice. Based on challenges to critical pedagogy such as Ellsworth (1989), Bowers (2002), and being sympathetic to Parkes et al.'s (2010) Foucauldian reminder that subjection and discipline can happen even under the best intentions, I wanted to explore a way to work toward what Gunzenhauser (2010) calls a "popular language of relation" (p. 3).

Keeping in mind the idea of relation as a way to counter the idea of social justice as primarily a solitary pursuit, I organized a Social Foundations course around the notion of *constructing Other* through a lens of consumer culture in hopes that this conceptual frame might enable a different way to think and talk about issues of social justice. I wanted to access social justice conversations through a perspective that was not organized by identity categories. My hope was this might change the language of the conversation. The idea that we *share* questions of social justice is, I think, made difficult when we lack ways to talk about the common good, and when identity categories seem to imply competing interests. Framing the course around constructing Other and exploring Otherness as demarcated by consumer culture categories was an attempt to counter pedagogy that reinforces traditional and fragmenting identity politics categories (for example, race, class, gender, sexuality). I hoped that exploring student rationales for their boundaries of Otherness would offer a way to complicate individualizing cultural narratives.

The course generated various student texts and I used stance analysis to name two stances that emerged from these texts. A significant feature of stance analysis I found useful was that it assumes an explicitly relational approach to Other. An analysis of stance also affords a great deal of significance to the language we use when speaking. As stated by Jaworksi and Thurlow

(2009), stance-taking suggests dimensions of power wherein speakers align themselves in relation to others by appealing to value systems and "establishing one's preferred version of social reality" (p. 198). Similarly, Christians and Merrill (2009) offer that "linguistic choices are implicitly ethical choices because they help shape relationships" (p. 4). In that vein it becomes important to consider how the language we use can reproduce or contest established social arrangements, and consequently expand or limit relational possibilities.

I find it worthwhile to explore the relational implications between self and Other that emerge from these different stances toward Other. I am troubled by how significantly our construction of Other affects the potential of our relationship to that Other, and by how unconsciously that construction can occur. I hope this project contributes to the literature on social justice pedagogy for future professional educators. Most ideally, my hope is that this project might offer a way to consider relational language in an educative space that, as several have shown (Biesta, 2004; Gunzenhauser, 2010), is being purged of ethical possibility.

1.3   DISSERTATION ROADMAP

1.3.1   Remainder of Chapter 1—Introduction

In the remainder of this chapter, I introduce the troubling dilemmas that motivated this dissertation project. These dilemmas stemmed from previous iterations of Social Foundations courses I had taught. I then establish my theoretical orientation and conceptual framework for this dissertation. I conclude with some of the questions that guided this project.

1.3.2   Chapter 2—Neoliberalism and Asocial justice

Several education scholars have noted the importance of contextualizing the "historical moment" (Pinar, 2006) or the "cultural surround" (Nicholson-Goodman, 2009). This chapter represents my attempt to write the political dimension of that context and the implications of that dimension for relationality across difference—I am particularly concerned with the relational implications of a neoliberal political climate. I intend this chapter as an effort to delineate those narratives of neoliberalism that influence relations between self and Other. My focus is thinking about the relational configurations that are privileged and legitimized by neoliberalism and neoliberal narratives. In this case, I am interested in how neoliberal discourse represents a serious obstacle to social justice in the sense that individuals are mediated and imagined according to narrow market metaphors. This concern is applicable to fundamental questions of Social Foundations classrooms, which operate from an assumption that it is important for students to engage with multiple and contested perspectives as a process of social justice. Particularly, I want to contest the individualized solutions for social justice—being personally responsible and ethical consumerism—offered within neoliberal narratives. I also introduce the idea of *asocial* justice and argue that individualized efforts toward social justice work are limiting. The chapter concludes by suggesting that a turn toward a politicization of the everyday might be a way to complicate neoliberal narratives and is, therefore, important for social justice.

1.3.3   Chapter 3—Negotiating the Stranger with Relational Curriculum

Building on the idea of the politicized daily life, I turn to educational theorists who have addressed this idea in the context of education. As a result of some of their writing, I work with the idea of the daily encounters with strangers (Bauman, 1993, 1994; Biesta, 2007) as a concept

around which to begin formulating a Social Foundations course that counters the challenges of neoliberalism. In this vein, I briefly overview several educational approaches to ethics work (Clarke, 2009; Infinito, 2003) and discuss Gunzenhauser's (2007) project of critical reflection as a way to legitimize examination of the self within a relational context. As a way to operationalize such a project, I use Bauman (1993) to suggest the idea of constructing Other as a concept around which to organize a Social Foundations course with the hopes of countering some of the dilemmas to social justice named in the previous chapter. I conclude this chapter by introducing the lens of consumer culture as a particularly compelling position from which students might begin to examine their constructions of Others.

1.3.4 Chapter 4—Methodological Introduction

Here I detail the participants in this study and the methods of data collection. My methodology is social cartography, but I suggest an ontogenetic approach to social cartography which focuses on the process by which maps come to be created. According to this approach, each step of the map creation is considered important. This includes the context in which map contents is generated, the lens through which that contents is analyzed, and the conceptual organization that guides the final creation of the map. The contents in this study was generated through the lens of consumer culture and analyzed according to stance analysis. The final representation of the map was guided by the principles of social cartography. Each of these three stages are introduced in this chapter and dealt with extensively in the subsequent chapters.

1.3.5 Chapter 5—Consumer Culture as Curriculum

The Social Foundations course I taught for this study was initially designed around two general hopes: 1) that students become conscious of their process of constructing Other, and 2) that they

think about the intersubjective nature of self and Other boundaries. In this chapter, I offer how I came to consider the pedagogical approach of using consumer culture theoretically suitable. After a theoretical overview of consumer culture, I provide three different examples where other authors have used consumer culture texts as curriculum. I conclude by detailing the specific assignments that I used from which the data for this dissertation came.

1.3.6 Chapter 6—Relational Stance Analysis

This chapter provides the theoretical rationale for choosing stance as the concept around which to analyze the data. I situate myself in the stance literature and warrant my choice of stance by focusing on the implied relational quality of stance and, importantly, the value systems and power dimensions of stance-taking. This chapter includes the bulk of my analysis and I outline the dimensions of the two stances—reinscription and interruption—that I name.

1.3.7 Chapter 7—Terra Incognita: A Cartography of Encounter

To spatialize the two stances, I created a map centered on the everyday encounter with difference. Following the principles of social cartography, I offer the conceptual ordering of the map. To demonstrate how this map could be used by students to critically reflect on their interpretations of encounters with difference, I map several student positions. Finally, I offer how this map might resolve some of the initial dilemmas that motivated this study. As such, this piece might serve as both a conclusion to the dissertation project, as well as a link to the future in that I hope to use it with my (future) students.

1.3.8   Chapter 8—Conclusion

This final chapter offers a summary of the dissertation along with the implications of this map and its connection to the field of Social Foundations.

1.4   SETTING THE STAGE—TROUBLING DILEMMAS

> Strangers are, in principle, undecidables. They are unclassifiable. A stranger is someone who refused to remain confined to the "far away" land or to go away from our own...The stranger blurs a boundary line. The stranger is an anomaly, standing between the inside and the outside, order and chaos, friend and enemy. (Sarup, 1996, p. 10)

When teaching Social Foundations of education courses intended to address the intersection of sociocultural dynamics with the institution of education, I experienced several major frustrations. Salient topics for these courses included the expected categories of race, class, gender, sexuality, and increasingly, disability studies. One of my dilemmas with this was constantly having to confront rigid identity categories that, while relevant, to me seemed oversimplified, and tended to group individuals into classes or sets of people. A syllabus would be divided into separate units that progressed through issues like race, and then sexuality and then gender and so on. This appeared problematic in that it seemed to reify differences between groups as well as to essentialize each particular group. Further, this approach allowed many students to assume a position of being somehow outside the issue as long as their sense of self did not correspond to the demographic under discussion. Another salient challenge, articulated well by "whiteness" literature such as work by Hytten and Warren (2003) and Applebaum (2008), was how white students often resisted classroom conversations related to race-based structural inequity. Relatedly, and perhaps most troublesome of all, parsing demographics according to standard

social divisions made it difficult to articulate a sense of shared commonality across boundaries. In other words, students appeared to have difficulty thinking about questions of social inequity as shared concerns, instead of simply as concerns for the particular demographic of discussion for that particular day. My concern was not that students expressed indifference to social justice issues, but instead that the readily-available language individualized social justice issues and minimized a sense of shared interest across difference.

1.4.1 Identity Categories

One of the challenges to considering a notion of shared interests is what I might name identity politics. The position I take toward the notion of identity politics is that it can easily fragment a population. Further, I think that the notion of identity itself has become increasingly contextual, fluid, and as Bauman (2000, 2007) suggests, linked to consumer commodities. Due to its fragmenting effects coupled with, and exacerbated by, self-interest, and because of its commodification, I do not consider a notion of "identity" as a firm platform on which to work toward an understanding of shared interests. However, I do think a notion of categorical identity (race, class, sexuality, etc.) *does* offer a position from which students will speak if the discussion is already organized according to those politicized demographics, and if they are framed as identity categories (e.g. as in the units on my syllabus). I increasingly consider identity category-based positions unhelpful as a way to talk about social justice issues. The appeal to identity categories represents an obstacle to thinking about commonality in that the language appears to pit interests against each other. Also, categories appear to proliferate infinitely and, consequently, be more exclusionary. Coupled with the well-meaning nature of the multicultural tolerance rhetoric, a proliferation of identity categories often results in the shallow idea that to merely include a representation of all categories is somehow working toward social justice. As

an example, a former student sincerely narrated her frustration with trying to keep track of all the holidays as an increasingly diverse array of religious beliefs were represented in her middle school classroom. Her frustration was two-fold; on one hand she was continually nervous about offending a student by excluding any particular celebration and on the other hand, she lamented that "the American" (her words to imply Christmas, Easter, etc.) holidays seemed increasingly forbidden.

1.4.2   Personal Responsibility

The second obstacle that can often impede discussions of social justice is amalgamation of cultural narratives that valorize the individual and individual effort. Particularly salient in USAmerica are the narratives that laud individual effort. Perhaps evidenced most clearly in the notion of the American Dream, these narratives posit that individuals, through individual efforts, can overcome obstacles to succeed. Ascribed traits pale in comparison to the possibilities of individual achievements. This narrative is tirelessly reproduced in our movies, our political dramas, biographies of our sports heroes, and our cultural icons. As Fernback and Thompson (1995) suggest, this notion of "rugged individualism" facilitates a waning of "our shared sense of collective self, fails to embrace the public and instead becomes enmeshed in the cult of personality" (p. 3). Because the notion of individualism is so strong, I think it is useful to think about how it influences our approach to social justice concerns.

The narrative of individualism is not new, but a more complicated notion is the idea of personal responsibility that emerges from neoliberal theory. Many authors (Apple, 1996; Giroux, 2005; Milojević, 2004; Peters, 1996, 2001; Ross & Gibson, 2007) have discussed neoliberalism's effects on education. As Peters (1996) suggests, neoliberal thought is rooted in an understanding of individuals as individuals (as opposed to collectives), who operate rationally

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and according to market principles. According to these authors, neoliberal thought imagines that the individual operates according to assumptions of rationality which rest on a foundation of applying market logic to individuals; or what Marx Ferree (1992) considers a "project of bringing microeconomic analysis of self-interest onto all areas of human behavior" (p. 31). These theorists also consider neoliberalism as a dominant discourse that contains a host of internally coherent narratives. They go on to suggest that the language of these cultural narratives seep into our unconscious and become part of the way we make sense of the world through our language. As neoliberal ideas are so individualistic, these narratives affect how we speak about ourselves and ourselves in relation to others. If neoliberal narratives increasingly shape our cultural sensibilities, it is not difficult to imagine how neoliberal thought further challenges the notion of collectivity while delegitimizing the language of shared concerns. Perhaps this is most clearly represented by the almost always pejorative "bleeding heart" notion that frequently emerged in classroom conversation, where it is seen as naïve and sappy to care too much about others.

To address these two dilemmas of identity politics and personal responsibility I began to think about how I might organize a class that could possibly avoid the standard categories of difference (race, class, gender, sexuality). I wanted to organize a class around a concept wherein specific demographics of people were not singled out or studied as units, and which also offered a space to work against entrenched cultural narratives of individualism. With this in mind, I developed a course using a semiotics approach to consumer culture as the filter through which students were asked to construct Other. I hoped this approach would reframe classroom conversation and give us (myself and the students) access to a different conversation. I was

specifically interested in a conversation that complicated notions of individualistic personal responsibility and that worked against fixed identity categories.

1.5   THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

My attempt here represents an interdisciplinary synthesis of several different ideas.   My disciplinary "home" is that of Social Foundations of education. Within that field, I locate myself with scholars working on critical pedagogy. As a teacher in the field of Social Foundations, I am guided by education scholars who recognize how schooling and the institution of education is a politically contested space where many competing interests vie for recognition. I am particularly drawn to those scholars who tackle macro scale questions of power related to normative assumptions about schooling. For this I draw from a cross-theoretical group of scholars like Apple (2004, 1996), Foucault (1977), hooks (1994), and Heath (1983). In terms of pedagogy, I take inspiration from curriculum theorists such as Ayers (2004), Pinar (2006) and Ellsworth (1989), who address the complicated process of encouraging students to think about where and why they situate themselves in relation to various dimensions of schooling's contested terrain. Kincheloe (2004) calls this "recognizing the importance of understanding the social construction of student consciousness" (p. 20). For me this means thinking about each other (myself and my students) as socially constructed beings, reflecting on how our lived experiences affect that construction, and consequently shapes our assumptions about each other.

The project is guided by epistemological sensibilities that Crotty (1998) might call post-structuralism. While he does not attempt a definition, he offers that post-structuralism is a subjectivist approach to meaning-making that suggests meaning is derived from something other than an interaction between subject and object, as the object itself has no inherent meaning. A

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salient theme from Crotty's discussion of post-structuralism includes a focus on language as a sign system wherein language is imbued with meaning by (borrowing from Foucault) discourses that emerge from within relations of power and produce "rituals of truth." This semiotic assessment of language, however, does not posit a stable relationship between signifier and signified. Instead, citing Derrida, Crotty identifies deconstructionism as another feature of post-structuralism and suggests this instability is primarily what differentiates structuralism from post-structuralism in that the instability is what makes post-structuralism a subjective orientation, unlike a more objectivist structuralist approach. Engaging with questions of how power and language influence and shape subjectivity, then, are salient considerations for post-structuralist researchers.

Perhaps more clearly outlined by Parkes et al. (2010), post-structuralism is considered a critique of a) universalism, b) foundationalism and c) essentialism. By critiquing universalism, these authors are addressing the challenge to "grand explanatory narratives" that attempt singular, unifying explanations of history and human experience. The language (discourses) of these narratives, rather than representing truth or reality, are considered something to interrogate for the way they constrain what can be considered truthful or 'legitimate.' Related to the challenge to universalism, their critique of foundationalism focuses on interpretation of text. If language is always imbued with power that reflects particular contexts and positions, as the rejection of universalism implies, another post-structuralist assumption is that text cannot be considered to have a singular meaning. They suggest several reasons for this. Authors cannot control how a text will be interpreted by readers, and readers cannot definitively attribute intention to an author. There is no "authoritative meaning that can be anchored in a text…and no truth or meaning that can be derived from a text that does not involve some interpretation"

Therefore, there is no "ground upon which to privilege one interpretation as a singular truth" (p. 169). Finally, they characterize the challenge to essentialism as a disbelief in the idea of unified and orderly identities (subjectivities). Instead, people are considered as fluid selves, historically and contextually constituted, that continually cross through and between categorical labels and their ascribed meanings.

1.6   CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

An important idea for this project is that language is a powerful force for framing how we imagine ourselves, how we imagine others and how we imagine the relationship between ourselves and others. One of my theoretical assumptions is that how we imagine our own identities and form our categorizations of others is structured by language. I do not consider language as a neutral phenomenon, and instead follow scholars who consider language and discourse closely tied to power. I draw from theorists who consider discourse as one technique of articulating and normalizing a particular truth regime, which in turn incentivizes particular types of subject positions. The notion of "subjectivity" suggests a more fluid, historically constituted individual than does the idea of "identity." Hall (2004) writes that the idea of subjectivity is more multifaceted than a notion of identity. He defines subjectivity as our social and personal being that "exists in negotiation with broad cultural definitions and our own ideals" as we have "numerous discrete identities of race, class, gender, sexual orientation and a subjectivity that is comprised of all these facets as well as our own imperfect awareness of ourselves" (p. 134). Important for me is how poststructuralists suggest language influences subjectivity. Van Brussel (2010) suggests that in light of post-structural theory, the body cannot

be considered a given reality but instead should be considered a product of multiple contested discourses that construct meaning and define legitimacy. He writes,

> there are discourses such as religious, sexual and sport discourses that give meaning to the body. In this way, different 'types of bodies', which are all subject to a discursive struggle for meaning, are being constructed: the sexual body, the commoditized body, the productive body, the civilized body, the ill body, the dead body, etc. (p. 6)

In the case of my dissertation, I might say I am interested in discourses that define the "relational" body. Butler (2005) is helpful when she writes that how we narrate ourselves is "constrained in advance by a truth regime that decides what will and will not be a recognizable form of being" (p. 22). She continues by suggesting there is a "normativity" that "conditions both subject production and intersubjective exchange" (p. 23). I use Peters (2001), Olssen, Codd and O'Neil (2004), and Rose (1990), who identify the discourse of neo-liberalism as a dominant meta-narrative from which a host of coherently integrated cultural narratives emerge. These narratives represent the types of narratives I hope to complicate. These authors suggest neoliberal logic represents an almost taken-for-granted framework of normalcy wherein, as Gilbert (2008) writes, neoliberal logic is used to "naturalize" a market metaphor "as the basis for all social relationships" (p. 554). Peters (2001) concurs and suggests neoliberal discourse incentivizes a particular type of individualized moral behavior (i.e. personal responsibility). I consider neoliberalism part of a truth regime of the historical moment that Pinar (2004) asks educators to stand against.

Taken together, my epistemological and theoretical approach is conceptually organized around the notion of incentivized subject positions. In this case, that subject position is of individuals within a consumer culture discursively governed by neoliberal-inspired narratives. I do not want to imply that this subject position necessarily determines subjectivity, but rather that

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it represents a recognizable and culturally legitimate form of being. My assumption is that as powerful forces which influence self-constitution as well as construction of other, it is important to recognize these narratives in order to work toward the overarching focus of my project. Because I am concerned here with the neoliberal implications for subjectivity, I am interested in complicating those dominant narratives that offer ready-made subject positions, which have relational implications for constructing Other.

1.7   CONSTRUCTING OTHER AS PEDAGOGY

Incorporated into the classroom, this notion of constructing Other seemed to enable a way of accessing conversations about social justice, but without necessarily dividing the population into large, static and separate groups. It opened the possibility for a more nuanced discussion that accounted for the ways identity categories intersect and interact, and how the othering process is ongoing and dynamic. As a result of some of my early efforts to use the notion of constructing Other in the class, I continued to work with the idea as a way to address the social justice considerations.

For this study, I organized a Social Foundations course around the idea of exploring and constructing other through the lens of consumer culture. The rationale for using the lens of consumer culture is that many (Baudrillard, 1998; Bauman, 2007; Campbell, 2004; Featherstone, 1991) have discussed consumer culture as a cultural and symbolic system within which individuals constitute a personal identity, as well as learn to situate themselves socially and discursively in relation to others. As Usher (2008) writes,

> consumption is a set of socio-cultural practices that do not simply express, but rather
> actually construct differences between and within social groups through a defining of

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both how to consume and what to consume, and in the process linking identity with consumer practices. (p. 33)

This reflects my desire to use consumer culture as a way of engaging the question of Otherness without using identity categories. A semiotic approach using consumer culture organizes individuals and groups according to categories, but not rigidly according to standardized, fixed categories. As Featherstone suggests, consumer culture is a sign system that is constantly in flux, yet simultaneously ordered. The tenuous ordered disorder is created in part through the constructions of other that individuals make as they respond to micro-level, daily encounters that are also simultaneously mediated through the macro-level lifestyle constructions offered by global media outlets (TV, advertising, etc.).

In the course, students were asked to engage with each other around the meanings of their respective constructions of Other, to discuss the possible reasons for the differences surrounding their respective constructions, and finally they were asked to address how their constructions of Other might inform their relationship to Other.

1.8   GUIDING QUESTIONS

In light of the broader social justice dilemmas related to incentivized subject positions, there are several questions that guide this project.

- Does consumer culture resonate with students as a site of boundary making?
- How might stance analysis help complicate asocial justice?
- In what way might stances be mapped to complicate individualistic narratives?

Taken as a whole, I hope the project conveys a sense of thoroughness and thoughtfulness and is

recognizable as work that fits in the Social Foundations tradition of social justice.

2.0   NEOLIBERAL ASOCIAL JUSTICE

In this chapter, I hope to lay out the conceptual frame within which I have positioned my study, and define a problem space that warrants a dissertation focused on a relational approach to social justice work. To do that, I think a close look at neoliberalism, particularly through the lens of governmentality theorists (Rose, 1999; Olssen et al., 2004; Peters, 2001) is important because these scholars offer a way to begin thinking about how particular types of individual practices are rationalized, legitimized and enacted; they offer a way to study what Hamann (2007) calls the conduct of conduct. As Rose (1999) writes, a governmentality approach offers the ability to question how we arrive to our "present truth…in the sense of our habitual modes of being in the world and experiencing the world and ourselves" (p. 19).   I am principally concerned here with establishing that it is reasonable to suggest neoliberal theory incentivizes a subject position with particular motivations. More specifically, and after establishing this idea, the remainder of the chapter examines the relational features of this neoliberal subject position by introducing the idea of asocial justice. If one of my hopes is to counter the aforementioned dilemmas of fragmented identity categories in social justice conversations, I think it is useful to examine what Hamann (2009) calls the "neoliberal ethos" that "is operative within almost every aspect of our individual and social lives" (38). In this vein, this chapter details a short overview of neoliberalism and explores in what ways this political and economic theory compels us to conduct ourselves at the level of everyday life, particularly in relation to others.

2.1   DEFINING NEOLIBERALISM

Neoliberalism is by now a familiar term in the sense that it is used by many scholars. However, what neoliberalism is, exactly, is contested. Often, neoliberalism is reified as something that "imagines" (Saltman 2007)**,** "recruits" (Bondi 2005), "constructs" (Read 2009), "terrorizes" (Giroux, 2005), but it still remains unclear to who or what these actions are attributed. In an effort to avoid reifying neoliberalism, I want to briefly lay out how neoliberalism might be defined by sketching an overview of its origins. Simply, I consider neoliberalism a powerful economic theory. However, because neoliberal economic logic has been extended into the political and cultural realm by national leaders as a rationale for making social policy, the effects of the theory extend well beyond the sphere of economics. Further, the economic theory of neoliberalism is based on several core assumptions about human beings and human behavior. To the extent social policies are developed in accordance with the assumptions about human beings espoused by neoliberal theory, architects of such social policy can be considered to imagine a particular way of living according to particular sensibilities. This way of living incentivizes complementary modes of being which, in short, is what I mean by the notion of a subject position as imagined by neoliberalism.

2.1.1   Neoliberal Origins

The philosophical origins of neoliberalism can be traced back to enlightenment notions of a human being capable of rational thought. However, what is considered as contemporary neoliberal theory can be attributed primarily to scholars from two economics departments— namely Frederich Hayak from the Austrian school and Milton Freidman from the Chicago school. Klein (2008), Harvey (2005), Olssen et al. (2004), Peters (2001) among many others,

give an account of the theoretical work done by these scholars to advance neoliberal theory, and this account is relatively uncontested. By way of defining neoliberalism, Harvey (2005) offers perhaps the most level-headed assessment of neoliberal economic theory. He suggests neoliberalism is a political economic theory which "proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (p. 2). My hunch is that scholars using the term "neoliberalism" are likely to offer a critique of the theory. It seems the alternative, more sympathetic label might be 'free-market capitalism.' I would suggest, however, that both advocates and detractors characterize neoliberalism similarly. The difference is in individuals' beliefs in the legitimacy of the theory. Taking a neoliberal/free-market concept like privatization of education, for example, some believe privatization would markedly improve education access and provision. Others believe the same policy would be disastrous. Yet neither camp would disagree that privatization itself is a neoliberal/free-market policy agenda. Looking more closely at this definition we can see the philosophical assumptions that guide how proponents of neoliberalism imagine human beings, just social policy, and the role of the state.

Olssen et al. (2005) characterize the philosophical underpinnings of these free-market economists as being consequentalist as opposed to rights-based theories of individual behavior. Thorsen and Lie (2007) explain further, suggesting that early theorists such as Friedman and Hayak believed that the outcomes of neoliberal policy making would result in positive social and economic outcomes which would increase individual citizens' ability to make rational choices about their lives. The humanist liberal assumption of the rational individual deserving of rights is a secondary assumption of their theory. Further, for both Austrian and Chicago schools,

concepts like "class", "society", and "culture" did not really exist in the sense that these entities "do not act, think, save, consume, or invest…only individuals do these things and hence, it was claimed, only individuals are real" (Olssen et al. 2005, p. 142). Therefore, economic theory was developed to complement this belief in the individual as the primary (only) decision making unit.

Neoliberal theory asserts that human beings are best able to achieve individual freedom when their economic actions are not overburdened by state regulation. As such, "liberty" and "freedom" supersede notions of "equality" as a rationale for policy making. As a result of these two fundamental assumptions—that the individual is the only meaningful social unit and that free market capitalism is the best mechanism for achieving human liberty—an entire family of economic theory and social policy frameworks developed by advocates of neoliberalism. Drawing from Harvey (2005) and Peters (2001), neoliberal policies are those policies that open markets, facilitate privatization and reduce welfare, privilege consumer choice, and compel competitive and possessive individualism.

The role of the neoliberal state, however, shifts away from the idea of "small government" and "laissez-faire" (i.e. the weak or absent state from traditional liberalism) to a notion of "strong" state in that the role of the neoliberal state is to secure sympathetic institutional and political frameworks for the introduction of neoliberal policies. Olssen et al. (2005) describe this as a shift from a "negative conception of state power" toward a "positive conception of state power" (p. 180). The intervention of the state into markets is no longer perceived as a negative intrusion. However, the nature of how the state intervenes in the market is different. In contrast to a "weak" state that does not interfere with the market at all (the liberal state), a neoliberal state actively creates markets and protects existing ones. In other words, the state should *not* regulate markets as this is still considered a negative intrusion, but the state

should interfere in order to create new markets or to protect existing markets. The current transformation of education policy is a good example of this "strong" state idea. The federal government promoted an agenda that clearly opens a market for education by encouraging private providers (to say nothing of dismantling labor or greatly expanding the private testing market). The federal government acted "strongly" by linking continued funding for education to each state's acceptance of No Child Left Behind mandates. This incentivizing can be seen as the federal government actively creating and expanding private markets in education. This concept of the strong state is further dealt with in the "disaster capitalism" literature, detailed extensively by Klein (2008), *The Shock Doctrine*, and predicted quite concisely by Amin (1992), *The Empire of Chaos.* The idea in this literature is that the neoliberal state will use naturally occurring disasters (e.g. hurricanes, earthquakes) and create other disasters (e.g. wars, rhetorically constructed crises) as an opportunity to open and expand private markets.

I think this point about the strong state is an important consideration in how neoliberal theory came to fruition, and also to validate the notion that neoliberalism is a coherent set of beliefs. I do not consider neoliberalism as an undefinable and contested notion that may or may not exist conceptually. I contend that there were concrete actions taken on the part of various national and international bodies that created economic and political environments sympathetic to neoliberal theory.

Harvey (2005) suggests the world "stumbled" toward neoliberalism, not fully arriving until the early 1990s. Bondi (2005) characterizes the process, saying that while it originated "as a political commitment to free-market economic theory, neoliberalism has become a discourse of market or quasi-market relationships that has had enormous success in colonizing economic and cultural life in innumerable contexts" (p. 499). Herein lays the crux of what I hope to explore

from this point onward. If we accept that neoliberalism has assumed a dominant status (within economic and political contexts) and contains a discourse that incentivizes particular ways of being as part of the theory, then we can suggest that there is a subject position "imagined" by those who employ neoliberal discourse and develop policy from within a neoliberal framework. This suggestion further implies that neoliberal discourse somehow shapes the way we come to think about ourselves and about others, and what constitutes appropriate modes of action.

Attesting to this notion, Peters (2001) writes that one of the claims made by neoliberal advocates is that the market is a superior *moral* form of political economy. Indeed, as Thatcher hoped, "economics are the method, but the goal is to change the soul" (quoted in Harvey, 2005, p. 23).

2.1.2   Theoretical Distinctions—Two Approaches

> Whatever their methodological and conceptual differences, then, these investigations share with Marxism and critical theory a profound unease about the values that pervade our times. (Rose, 1999, p. 60)

Before discussing how "the soul" might be changed, I think it is worth noting the differing conceptual categories used by different theoretical orientations that address the neoliberal subject position. Primarily, this tension emerges between some neo-Marxists and so-called post-structuralists. I recognize that there are different motivations behind each of these theoretical camps, even though they appear to be discussing quite similar topics. However, I am less interested in making an attempt to resolve inter-theoretical disputes about what types of macro forces act in which ways and for what reasons to create a subject position. To oversimplify the differences, critical theorists are concerned with interrogating the maintenance and social reproduction of inequitable relationships—between different demographics, between States and

citizens, and among States or global regions. Further, their analysis ultimately revolves around the class relations of production and ownership. Rose (1999) articulates a different concern for theorists of governmentality. He is interested in "the conditions of possibility and intelligibility for certain ways of seeking to act upon the conduct of other, or oneself, to achieve certain ends" (p. 19). This approach complicates critical theory assumptions about power imposition (from owner to worker) and also begins to work around the critique of relations among expected social categories (race, class, etc.) as he addresses populations rather than demographics.

A second caveat I want to make is that I recognize it is not clear that either theoretical orientation (apart or together) necessarily theorizes the inevitability of a particular subjectivity (as opposed to a subject position), particularly those scholars who assume a governmentality approach. Barnett et al. (2008) recognize the convergence of neo-Marxists and governmentality theorists around the area of neo-liberal subjectivities and question the notion of an inevitable subjectivity when they skeptically write that, "if there is such a thing as neoliberalism, then it is assumed that there must also be lots of neoliberal subjects being hailed, more or less successfully, to order" (p. 625). Their main point of contention is the apparent inevitability of a pre-determined subject position from which individuals have no possible escape.

I think the distinction between subject position and subjectivity is important to make here. I do not think most scholars are suggesting that a neoliberal economic and political project forces unwitting individuals to behave in specific and defined ways, although I am suggesting that individuals will change in accordance with incentivized subject positions that will lead or have led to subjectivities we could consider as neoliberal. Generally, I am quite sympathetic to ranges of theoretical positions within both perspectives, particularly in their respective conceptions of the power of language.

2.1.3 Neoliberal Ideology

Holborow (2007) states that an ideology legitimizes a select interest group and, from a conflict perspective, it can be assumed that interests among different social groups conflict. It can also be assumed that a dominant ideology facilitates certain groups' interests at the expense, or to the detriment, of others. Many authors (Apple, 1996; Giroux, 2005; Milojević, 2004; Peters, 1996; Spring, 2004) point to neoliberalism as being a dominant ideology. That is to say that while there may be numerous ideologies in existence, the neoliberal ideology is by far the most salient and far reaching.

One could argue, as Apple (1996) does, that neoliberal ideology has become hegemonic. The discourse of this ideology is present in virtually every aspect of our lives. A key feature of a dominant ideology is that it can bring together different groups of people who might not otherwise feel they share much in common. Milojević (2004) states that the dominant, hegemonic, ideology (neoliberalism) is established as such by framing marginalized and competing ideologies as unrealistic. Dominant ideologies are not more powerful because they more accurately reflect some objective reality, but because they are constructed as both desirable and inevitable. Competing ideologies are not simply framed as unlikely, but as impossible. She also reiterates the point that these ideologies do not emerge from uncontested, culturally neutral spaces. Rather they are deeply linked to particular visions of the world and privilege certain perspectives and positions. A second important feature of a dominant ideology is that it appears to "make sense." It appears as a neutral representation of reality and not as a worldview which privileges some while oppressing others. As Leonardo (2003) suggests, reality appears "natural or preordained" because ideology is everywhere yet seemingly nowhere (p. 205). This reification of ideology makes sociohistorically constructed relations appear as natural. As Apple

(1996) writes, "this is exactly what has happened in so many of our nations as this [neoliberal] discourse becomes increasingly dominant in the formation of our common sense" (p. 15). What remains challenging is analysis of the processes that reify a dominant ideology. Some (Apple, 2004; Gabbard, 1998; Leonardo, 2003) identify discourse as the site where ideologies are most clearly represented. Leonardo suggests ideology must mask its relations of domination and appear to "naturalize those relations that are otherwise produced socially and historically" (p. 15). He grants that this process is not without conflict, but proposes that the primary location of conflict is in language. Language is the site where competing interests bid for control. Ideologically controlled language, then, assumes a discourse that legitimizes the ideology. As Leonardo states, "ideology is made intelligible through discourse" (p. 14). Holborow (2007), concedes that language is the most overt carrier of ideology, but proposes that because language is never a predetermined, fixed system of meaning, ideology is not reified by language alone.

This offers a nice bridge between the analysis of the ideology of neoliberalism and the governing practices of neoliberal policy. The discussion of ideology is meant to establish neoliberal thought as a dominant part of our collective sensibilities in the current historical moment. We might assume, then, that neoliberalism represents a discourse that suggests certain subjectivities. Certainly, there is language that signifies neoliberal ideology—words like choice, accountability, and personal responsibility. Even while I am inclined to agree that something we might call neoliberal ideology is dominant, I also am inclined to agree with Holborow (2007) that language, alone, is not enough to fundamentally reshape institutional and cultural structures. Especially because I consider neoliberalism a concrete economic and political project, neoliberal language also evolves from other, more material processes. Here is where scholars applying a notion of governmentality become useful, specifically in their analysis of how state processes

contribute to neoliberal discourse, neoliberal sensibility, and ultimately, a neoliberal subject position.

2.1.4 Governmentality

Rose (1999) suggests that neoliberalism is less a conscious operationalization of any particular school of economic or political thought. He instead considers it a "contingent lash-up" of available thoughts, theories and policy actions for the purpose of solving particular governing challenges. He writes,

> In the course of this process, a certain rationality, call it neo-liberalism, came to provide a way of linking up these various tactics, integrating them *in thought* so that they appeared to partake in a coherent logic. And such rationalities were then embodied in, or came to infuse, a whole variety of practices and assemblages for regulating economic life, medical care, welfare benefits, professional activity and so forth. (p. 27)

Throughout this process of governing, he is interested in the manner by which a coherent logic is stitched together in ways that constitute "historical epistemologies" (p. 29). By this he means the entire internal coherence of how truth comes to be defined in any particular historical moment. He employs imagery of the rhizome to describe a "regime of enunciation" wherein concepts flow like circuitry, interconnecting interconceptually. The important questions for Rose are not necessarily the legitimacy or truth of any particular concept but more the "production and circulation" (p. 33) of truth. As a way of grasping this production and circulation, Rose offers that, at the most micro level, it is worth analyzing the language and actions of individuals for the ways they (we) "translate" these truths onto our lives. He suggests that:

> To the extent that actors have come to understand their situation according to a similar language and logic, to construe their goals and their fate as in some way inextricable,

they are assembled into mobile and loosely affiliated networks. Common modes of perception are formed, in which certain event and entities come to be visualized according to particular rhetorics of image or speech. (Rose, 1999, p. 50)

According to our perceptions, then, we act. We translate these rhetorics into particular modes of conduct for ourselves. Our thinking shifts such that our truths align with those truths in circulation. These truths are imbued in various technologies (practices, vocabularies, architecture, calculations), which further legitimizes the particular network of truths. I think it is important to note here that Rose does not consider any "truth regime" as emanating from a particular stratum of individuals intent on controlling a population. Nor does he paint a picture of duped individuals unknowingly participating in their own entrapment; here he again distances himself from some critical theorists. He suggests we cannot "counterpose subjectivity to power" because power is diffuse throughout a population. Further, any notion of freedom or entrapment is already defined and imagined, in part, according to the contours of any particular historical moment. For him, the task is not uncovering hidden ideological agendas that oppress. Instead a purpose of his governmentality approach is to "adopt an irreal attitude" (p. 59) toward truth such that we are able to question truths in circulation that claim to operate for our best interest. By questioning ourselves, our conduct, our perceived order, etc. we might see the provisional nature of our social arrangements. It is an ethical project where we destabilize truths by interrogating the received order of things.

2.2   OUTLINING A NEOLIBERAL SUBJECT POSITION

Besley and Peters (2007) consider the study of "governing" to be "the point at which the relations between government and self-government coincide and coalesce" (p. 132). In other

words, government is not about the application of the legal system, the police, or bureaucracy. It is closely related to the process of normalization as articulated by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*. Bondi (2005) writes that "neoliberalism works by installing a concept of the human subject as an autonomous, individualized, self-directing, decision-making agent at the heart of policy making" (p. 499). According to Besley and Peters (2007) and Peters (2001, 1996), neoliberal ideology is rooted in an understanding of individuals as individuals (as opposed to collectives), who operate rationally and according to market principles. The objective is to secure a future of global market competition by shrinking state power and allowing the "equitable" logic of the market to govern individuals' choices.

Olssen et al. (2004) agree with the self-interested, rational-actor notion of *homo economicus* but consider *manipulatable man* to be a more accurate. This label addresses what they consider to be one of the most salient features of the neoliberal subject position, which is that individuals must continually respond to state disciplining technologies (increased surveillance, standardization, creation of "experts" who evaluate performance, etc.) and align their conduct accordingly. Hamann (2007) writes that this subject position is not natural, rational or predictable, but instead must "be brought into being and maintained" by various social mechanisms that reinforce particular practices (p. 42). Peters (2001) considers this a form of cultural reconstruction along the lines of enterprise, and of "remodeling public institutions along commercial lines" (p. 87). Many authors have recognized this shift whereby the state continues to remove itself from traditional roles of welfare and public provision, thereby shifting the duty onto the individuals. Beck (1992) writes about the "risk society," Apple (2007) describes the "new managerialism" and Besley and Peters (2007) and Peters (2001) consider this an ascendency of "enterprise culture." Peters is especially helpful here because he offers an

analysis of two concepts for thinking about the individual in this context of enterprise culture. One concept is that of the *enterprising self* and the other is of *responsibilization of the self*. These two dimensions of the neoliberal subject position are useful because they address how individuals are compelled to act and, significantly, they speak to assumptions for how we morally assess the actions of others.

Peters (2007, 2001) draws from other governmentality theorists (Gordon, 1991; Rose 1999, 1989) to flesh out his notion of the enterprising self. Peters suggests that "neoliberalism depends on the development of a set of practices of self-government whereby the individual learns to refashion himself or herself as the entrepreneur of oneself" (p. 142). Individuals learn this as they become increasingly required to invest in themselves, particularly in education (training) to manage risk and to successfully compete in society. I think this notion of the entrepreneurial self can easily be seen in the current choice discourse surrounding education. Individuals are expected to consider themselves as a continually adaptable project that upgrades skill-sets as necessary to maintain competitive advantage over others who are also competing for scarce resources. This notion of the entrepreneurial self, alone, suggests an obvious shift towards a highly individualized subject position from which others are perceived as potential threats in the sense that others are, primarily, competitors. However, by adding the notion of responsibility, the space is opened for a market-mediated rhetoric of what moral individuals should do to demonstrate their worth.

As Olssen et al. (2004) and Besley and Peters (2007) describe, there are two primary outcomes of the state increasingly transferring risk management to the individual. Olssen et al. identify one of the outcomes as the state needing to guard against and stigmatize any "perceived possibilities of slothful indolence" (p. 137). In other words, if the state is shifting responsibility

(economically, politically and discursively) for welfare away from itself—the public—and towards the private sector, then the state also needs to govern the individual to ensure individuals are assuming responsibility for their welfare. One clear way to do this is to shrink the public sphere by lessening funds for public welfare institutions like health and education. Another governing mechanism is to discursively construct a subject position from which individuals demonstrate their moral responsibility via proper risk management. This is what Besley and Peters (2007) and Peters (2001) term the "responsibilization of the self." They (2007) write that this

> responsibilization refers to modern forms of government of the self where individuals are called upon to make choices about lifestyles, their bodies, their education and health at critical points in the lifecycle—birth, starting school, going to university, first job, marriage, retirement. [It is] a moralisation and responsibilization—a regulated choice making transfer of responsibility from State to the individual in the social market. (p. 160)

I think this notion of responsibility begins to capture how neoliberalism might change the soul, particularly in terms of how we begin to think about others. It is quite clear how the notion of personal responsibility has been used recently in education, healthcare, and immigration debates to stigmatize perceived individual or group failure. Further, in the case of education, according to this notion it is not enough to simply move through the ranks of education, one ought to choose an economically beneficial educative path. Especially in difficult economic moments, the responsible citizen should link his or her education to economic productivity. This logic clearly follows neoliberal philosophy and is in accordance with human capital theory—another theory that complements neoliberalism.

A major critique of the neoliberal notion of responsibility is that it does not account at all for individual inability to effectively manage risk. The danger is that our perceptions of others becomes increasingly acontextual and ahistorical in the sense that any historical event or structural social position becomes irrelevant to the moral judgment of irresponsibility. Individual worth is measured and perceived in terms of how individuals contribute economically above all. If individuals are not perceived as contributing, they are stigmatized or pathologized. For example, Bauman (2007) offers an excellent account of the stigmatization of failed consumers as those who do not positively demonstrate their social worth by publically showing they contribute to the economy via their consumption of clothing. As Harvey (2004) writes, "individual success or failure are interpreted in terms of entrepreneurial virtues or personal failings rather than being attributed to any systemic property" (p. 66). This notion of responsibility conveniently shifts the conversation about public welfare away from the state and onto the individual. As Biesta (2004) writes, this is a "reconfiguration of the relationship between the state and its citizens" (p. 237). Importantly, Biesta details how this reconfigured relationship is primarily an economic one, in which the state is reduced to the provider of services to the citizen-customer. Further, this individualized conception of state service provision removes interpersonal responsibility as each individual is primarily responsible for himself or herself.

Finally, Besley and Peters (2007) combine the processes of the entrepreneurial and responsibilized self into the idea of "self capitalization" (p. 171). That is, the responsible entrepreneur invests in oneself as "a new citizen consumer subject". This process of self management is

both self-constituting in the Foucauldian sense of choice-making shaping us as moral, economic and political agents. It is self-consuming in the sense that the entrepreneurial self creates and constructs herself through acts of consumption. (p. 171)

Using the lens of these theorists, we arrive at a fairly coherent subject position that privileges an economically-defined sense of rationality, is highly individualistic and self-interested, and carries the moral and ethical responsibility to constitute oneself as an economically productive and competitive agent.

Combining the notion of ideology along with governmentality analysis, it becomes clear how difficult it is to resist this subject position because the individual is governed through the individual's capacity to act—not by an overt repression of action. Bondi (2005), writing about the appeal of neoliberalism, argues that it is not only self-gratifying narcissists who are attracted to neoliberal ideology. Neoliberal subjectivity "holds attractions" even for political activists because activism depends on belief in a subjectivity that allows people to make choices (p. 499). Or as Read (2009) writes, neoliberalism governs without governing, and for neoliberalism to be successful individuals must continue to feel they have great freedom to pursue their interests. This may be an accurate statement, but it is also a deceptive sentiment, as neoliberalism very clearly defines what kind of freedom the individual has and delineates rationality along very narrow self-interested definitions. Still, even if we consider neoliberal ideas to be a primary or dominant ethos, this does not imply the end of history or that there is no alternative. As Hall (2004) offers, "interpellations and other processes of subject creation are numerous, always partial, often recurring and reinforced, but also potentially lapsing" (p. 129). Rose (1999) concurs, saying there is always slippage between any network of truth, and any circulation of truth can be contested along the "fragile relays, contested locales and fissiparous affiliations" across a territory (p. 51). If it is the case that any subject position, the neoliberal one in this case,

is a tenuous one and never all-encompassing, one question is how we might think about countering that neoliberal position.

2.3   PROBLEMATIZING NEOLIBERALISM

A subject position could take any number of articulations that purport to capture some essential element of one's subjectivity such as "mother," "Latino," "professional," etc. We have countless identity labels to draw from which supposedly carry some meaning about a particular subject position. However, as Smith (1998) writes, "every subject position bears the residual traces of past articulations, and is always being articulated into many different chains of equivalence at the same time" (p. 89). In other words, subject positions articulated around notions of identity are always precarious in the sense that the meaning of any particular label is not stable and may change across space and over time, not to mention that individuals will assume different labels for different occasions.

One of the features of neoliberalism, though, is that it is de-raced, de-classed, and de-gendered. An ideal neoliberal individual operates according to an assumption of rationality which rests on a foundation of applying market logic to his or her actions regardless of identity label. In this sense, the neoliberal subject position can supersede any other position and is always present whether individuals are aware of it or not.

One of the most troubling aspects of the neoliberal subject position is the assumed allegiance to capital rather than to other human beings or the quality of life. Countless scholars have detailed why neoliberal economic and political theory is highly problematic—particularly for its literal destruction of the public space (Peterson, 2006), its exacerbation of wealth disparity (Harvey, 2005), its seeming ability to absorb all forms of resistance (Bondi, 2005), its reduction

of citizenship to that of labor and consumption (Bauman, 2007; Barber, 2004), its marketization and commodification of relationships (all of the above authors), and for its commonsensical discourse (Apple, 2007) that seems to limit conversation about alternative social arrangements. As Giroux (2005) writes,

> within the discourse of neoliberalism, there is no way of talking about what is fundamental to civic life, critical citizenship, and a substantive democracy. In its dubious appeal to universal laws, neutrality, and selective scientific research, neoliberalism eliminates the very possibility of critical thinking (p. 10)

The perspective espoused by Giroux appears to suggest that thinking outside the neoliberal box is nearly impossible. Yet, this is not the perspective advocated by those who offer language as a site of resistance.

2.4   COUNTERING NEOLIBERALISM

As stated earlier, I am interested in everyday language as a text to analyze. Hamann (2007) writes that

> governmentality is not a matter of a dominant force having direct control over the conduct of individuals; rather, it is a matter of trying to determine the conditions within or out of which individuals are able to freely conduct themselves. (p. 55)

Rose (1999) says similarly that a governmentality approach is about "diagnosing symptoms" and questioning the assumptions from which those symptoms emerge (p. 57). As a matter of diagnostics, Hamann suggests the "proof will be in our practices" (p. 68). In other words, by analyzing everyday activities, words and thoughts, we can begin to think about the consequences and implications of current practice, as well as imagine different possibilities. Thinking about the

implications of language is nothing new, but I also think we do not practice such diagnosis often enough—particularly with future teachers. Weedon (1987), offering an overview of the significance of language analysis, writes how language meaning can never be fixed in certain terms and a subsequent challenge is to explore the implications of subject creation in such a context. If language comprises a significant part of subject creation, and acquires its meaning relative to particular discourses, then we can look at the site of language as part of a critique of a subject position. My study is organized around an exploration of the neoliberal subject position to further explore its consequences for relationality between self and Other, and this problem space is circumscribed by an overarching notion of social justice. Consequently, a basic question was to consider the effects of neoliberalism on perceived relationships across difference, and the attendant consequence for the language of social justice.

2.5   ASOCIAL JUSTICE

Because my interest in this dissertation is the relational implications of a neoliberal subject position, a significant question is the implications of this subject position with respect to those we consider others. If our responsibility, as individuals, is defined as investing in ourselves to increase our human capital and thereby to avoid or weather any economic or personal misfortune, this has significant relational implications—particularly if we are thinking about social justice work. One implication is that social justice is rendered an individual pursuit. In other words, justice work from a neoliberal perspective can be imagined as *asocial*.

In their piece Understanding Education for Social Justice, Hytten and Bettez (2011) offer five "strands" or "categories" of approaches to social justice that currently appear in the education literature. The five approaches they identify are philosophical, practical,

ethnographic/narrative, theoretically oriented, and democratically grounded. The issue framing their article is that so many definitions of social justice exist; it is perhaps challenging to grasp the scope of what social justice may mean. Their text demonstrates the contested nature of social justice work even from within a group of scholars who, conceptually, would likely agree on social justice being an important issue. I think their approach is useful in that it offers a framework within which scholars working on social justice from different perspectives can dialogue. The question of defining social justice remains, yet I was struck by one of the major tensions that appeared to cross through each of their categories. That is the tension between social justice work that focuses on individuals and social justice work that focuses on collectivities. In other words, a tension that might loosely be characterized as social justice efforts which deal with inequities between different groups of people, and social justice work that centers on individual experience.

The situation is more complicated and nuanced than a dichotomy between individual and collective suggests, but I think it is a conceptual issue worth exploring. Particularly, I think it is worth thinking about how we might imagine the relationship between these two in a non-dichotomous way. Taken in the context of social justice work, I might ask the question, "what's social about social justice?" As an initial response to this question, I use Lister (2008), and suggest an understanding of social justice that is not a distributive notion of justice concerned with policies oriented towards redistributing goods in an equitable way. Instead, here I'm considering social justice as a relational question that centers on the "nature of social and political relations…and involves dimensions of recognition, respect, discrimination, representation, voice, domination and oppression" (p. 243). This is not to discount any notion of redistributional justice work. Rather, I think relational social justice work might be a useful

precursor to legitimize redistributive notions of social justice for students. Conceived as primarily a relational issue, social justice work might be imagined as work that considers the many dynamics at play with an individual's relation to others in any social surrounding or institution. I am reminded of Hendrickson's (2009) *Teachers College Record* review of Jose Mesa's book *Moral Education in the Age of Individualism.* In that review he draws from Mesa's call as well as from Noddings to suggest that we need a "new kind of individuality and a new kind of community" and that "self-understanding must be referential of others around us, and communities should exude a sensitivity to emerging individualities" (p. 3). These notions posit a constitutive relationship between the individual and one's social surroundings. Far from a dichotomy, the individual and the broader collective are seen as dependent upon each other. Importantly, these understandings of social justice work suggest the importance of the social—relational—dimension of social justice.

As an instructor of courses that deal with questions of social justice, I have, in different ways, encountered challenges to this relational idea of social justice. I wonder how we might work with each other across some of the social justice strands identified by Hytten and Bettez 2011), and how we can use that collaboration to engage students in ways that might make social justice work meaningful and relevant to their lives. Importantly, how do we work with social justice in ways that addresses the social and relational?

2.5.1 Neoliberal Social Justice?

In my experience, very often my classes have been filled with students with big hearts who feel an acute sense of responsibility to "help" change the world for the better. I have found myself in front of a class full of students hoping to be future teachers who are also sympathetic to the idea of social justice in the abstract. The recurring dilemma, however, is that in the rush to feel that

one is "doing" something, what often gets presented as social justice work are individual acts that might be better thought of as "asocial" justice work. I want to address two frequently recurring examples of this and offer a relationality-based critique. Both examples stem from the different manifestations or configurations of so-called ethical consumerism.

In the classroom, the notion of personal responsibility frequently emerged from students as a *rationale* for pursuing a life they consider as socially just.   This notion of individualized personal responsibility is recognizable as what Michael Apple (2006) might call a commonsense neoliberal narrative. However, even for those savvy enough to resist the most common and crass applications of personal responsibility—namely that whatever malady you might have is "your own fault"—there are tenets of neoliberalism that still offer a seductive narrative of personal responsibility. This narrative privileges agency and includes a moral dimension. Many scholars have also explored at length the moralizing tones of this notion of responsibility. Again, beyond the commonsensical moral failings of the mother without health insurance, for example, there is, among the big hearts, a moral sense of responsibility to act and to do something about perceived social injustices. Whether this moral sense stems from guilt, or compassion or empathy is unclear, but the issue is that this notion of personal responsibility is not only pragmatic or rational or self-interested; it is moralized in the sense that one who is perceived to be personally irresponsible is somehow also personally failing. This idea of personal responsibility has consequences for social justice work. One of the implications of privileging personal responsibility is that questions of social justice become 1) primarily individual problems to deal with and/or respond to and 2) micro-level oriented, which minimizes systemic concerns. Personal responsibility also suggests that working toward ("doing something" about) social

justice can be primarily an individual task and not something that is shared. In other words, this idea of personal responsibility offers and encourages a notion of *asocial* justice.

As an example of this dilemma, I think the notion of ethical consumerism fits nicely. Many have already written about ethical/green/responsible consumerism. There are advocates and detractors and those who offer positions in between. One of the more balanced pieces is Youde (2009), offering an analysis of Product (RED). He concludes that yes, privatizing public concerns, like AIDS, is not the most ideal situation. He also suggests that simply being asked to buy some product represents a fairly shallow form of participation. But, even given those challenges, he finds that there are "potential contributions of private sources and actors" that are ignored if we discount ethical consumerism entirely (p. 220).

My concerns tend to focus more on how ethical consumerism represents an almost taken-for-granted framework of normalcy wherein, as Gilbert (2008) writes, neoliberal logic is used to "naturalize" a market metaphor "as the basis for all social relationships" (p. 554). Or, as Marginson (2006) suggests, neoliberalism has a "superficial discursive fit with the desires for commodified consumption now central to daily life" (p. 207). If we think about the arrangement of social actors in a scenario of a free-trade model of ethical consumerism, the status quo remains unchanged. To afford being an ethical consumer already means you are likely middle to upper-middle class. Further, the relationship between the producer and consumer is quite tenuous. The producer is dependent on the whims of the consumer's choices as well as dependent upon the shifting waves of global taste. The consumers, on the other hand, momentarily satisfy their sense of moral responsibility and have the opportunity to reinforce their self-perception of being ethical people. In the abstract sense, the ethical consumer can

imagine somewhere, somehow, by some unknown process, someone unknown may be benefitting slightly from the extra cost of the supposedly sustainable or fair product price.

As another example, one evening in the grocery store I happened onto a display for a Pittsburgh-based bottle water company called GIVE. The tag was "Drink Give, Do Good™." In front of me were four bottles of water that each had a different label corresponding to a particular issue. The blue label was for homeless children, the green label for the environment, the orange label for muscular disorders and the pink label for breast cancer. The way it works is that the company will donate ten cents to the particular cause for every purchase. This is what I called a neoliberal, asocial justice buffet. Standing by myself, with literally no idea about what ten cents to a muscular disorder may mean, my sense of social justice was activated by this pitch to "do good." This water display was also right next to the milk cooler, in which I had several different options for drinking an ethical glass of milk. Without doing anything at all, I was given the opportunity to gorge, responsibly and without qualm, on social justice. As Žižek (2009) describes in *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*, the products themselves contained, within the act of my purchase, a satisfaction for any moral pangs about the world that I may have.

The problem, of course, is that social justice in this way is both asocial and commodified. I was not being compelled to ask any difficult questions about myself, about inequity, about systemic concerns, about my relationship to homeless children (where? Pittsburgh? Brazil? I have no idea. But I hope Brazil because I imagine ten cents will go a lot farther there). Yet, and importantly, because the notion of the ethical consumer is firmly, culturally established as a legitimate and valid subject position, to immediately scoff at this idea of ethical consumerism is to sound cynical and jaded. As the response often goes, "at least it's doing something and something is better than nothing."

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These two examples of ethical consumerism differ from each other. The moral pull of the fair trade examples suggest that somehow the producer of the particular product will receive a fair price for the product. What is not said is the implicit assumption that every other product may be somehow unfair. This model suggests some sense of solidarity between consumers and producers, but it is not based on a shared common cause. It is based on a personal moral appeal to the consumer. It is almost as though the consumer is doing a favor to the producer. In the GIVE example, I would suggest the social is even less apparent. There is not a person immediately benefitting at the other end of the purchase. The supposed justice in the act is mediated presumably by some organization that is working on the particular issue. Both, however, are solitary acts that commodify one's sense of social and moral obligation. I am suggesting that in a climate of personal responsibility, a relational understanding of social justice work is often overridden by more dominant, asocial proposals which frankly, are easier to do. A key factor here is the moral implications of responsibility. Again from Žižek (2009), "In the [actual] consumerist act, you buy your redemption from being only a consumer." He goes on to suggest that "the new ethos of global responsibility is to put capitalism to work as the most efficient instrument of the common good…but separated from concrete socio-economic conditions" thus "leaving these very capitalist relations in tact" (p. 35). He says it another way: "it is immoral to use private property in order to alleviate the horrible evils that result from the institution of private property." Žižek ends up taking a position that is more hard line than where I would end up. He basically suggests that any "charity" work which does not address systemic concerns only perpetuates an unjust system by minimizing the misery level of the byproducts of that very system (poverty, homelessness, entrenched social hierarchies) such that the system itself continues to be tolerated. I am not so structural and see this sort of position close to the

hardline positions espoused by some guerrilla movements in Latin America. Favorite targets of these groups were aid workers and NGO's working in poor communities because anything these agencies did to minimize the crushing poverty of the individuals living there only decreased the likelihood that these individuals would revolt. Or, as Žižek says, "the worst slave owner was the owner that was nice to his slaves". Again, I'm not extending myself to such a degree, but part of what Žižek is trying to address is what he considers hypocritical approaches to social change.

I am suggesting that, in a cultural climate of hyperindividualism, in a neoliberal political-economic climate of a shrinking public and in a socially fragmenting context of ever increasing identity categories, we should be wary of social justice solutions that fit smoothly within this individualized, privatized, personalized, and commodified consumer-choice oriented framework. Or, in other words, we should be wary of asocial propositions for social justice.

2.6   CONCLUSION

Like many scholars in the Social Foundations field, I consider social justice work important for future teachers who are on the cusp of being in a classroom that will likely be filled with individuals representing any number of socio-cultural realities. Further, as others (Biesta 2004; Briscoe 2012; Gunzenhauser 2012; Luke 2004; Marginson 2006) have suggested, neoliberal policies have narrowly defined educational purposes toward outcomes that are aligned with market demands (as opposed to any number of other possibilities), and foster competition between schools and individuals within schools. In the context of this dissertation, one of the challenges became imagining a curriculum that could address my concerns with the neoliberal self—particularly how restrictive an individualized, competition-driven subjectivity is for social justice. Additionally, if valorized neoliberal notions of individualism and personal responsibility

are further coupled with a sense of the declining value of the public, there are relational consequences.

Education scholars have addressed this challenge from a relational perspective and I now want to explore how these scholars helped me think through this issue of self in relation to other in a neoliberal context. Additionally, Gunzenhauser (2006) follows Foucault and analyzes the circulation of disciplinary power and the limiting effects this may have on notions of the self. He suggests a turn toward the micropolitical as a way to identify moments of this power diffusion. By this he is referring to the small interactions in which we engage daily. In other words, he proposes that examining and reflecting on relational interaction could serve as a strategy for resisting dominantly imposed notions of the self.

The next chapter represents my engagement with these different educational scholars to imagine how I might develop a course that focuses on a relational approach to self and other and which incorporates the idea of the micropolitical.

3.0   NEGOTIATING THE STRANGER WITH RELATIONAL CURRICULUM

What type of connection do you have to others out there in the world? Or the people around us right now?

Who do you mean? You mean with strangers? (Student Interview—Alec Redding)

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Early on in this project, a student described being in public as "sharing space with strangers." This characterization stuck with me, particularly as this notion of the stranger frequently emerged in conversations with other students. Although the notion of the stranger homogenizes yet also echoes a radical alterity, I think it offers a starting point for beginning to think about relationality across difference in a way that is not organized by categorical labels. To help me work with this idea of the stranger, I used educational theorists (Asher 2003, 2007; Clarke, 2008; Gunzenhauser, 2007; Infinito, 2003) who address moral and ethical projects from a relational perspective.   These authors served as conceptual starting points when thinking about the dilemmas of doing work within a constraining network of legitimized subject positions.   I believe that their work speaks to a notion of relationality that is important for the asocial justice concerns I have addressed. I also see in these authors an opportunity to politicize the mundane and the everyday. In this chapter, I work with the conceptual suggestions of the above authors to explore the idea of everyday constructions of Other. The chapter concludes by suggesting how

consumer culture could be used as curriculum to examine that construction process as well as the implications of those constructions.

3.2   STRANGERS

Encountering the stranger has been posited as a key feature of our contemporary cultural and political dilemma. Bauman (1995) writes that "the question is no longer how to get rid of the strangers and the strange, but how to live with them, daily and permanently" (p. 12). For him, this represents a shift from what he characterizes as the modern options of devouring (assimilating) or vomiting (ghettoizing) the stranger. Biesta (2007), drawing from Bauman, also reaches a similar conclusion that strangers represent a plurality that is here to stay. As a result, we need to move into a space that recognizes this difficult condition, rather than attempting to avoid it. As Bauman (1994) writes, "we understand now that uncertainty is not a temporary nuisance, which can be chased away through learning the rules, or surrendering to expert advice, or just doing what others do. Instead it is a permanent condition of life" (p. 36). Biesta extends this notion to suggest that, in fact, the condition of plurality, this "world of otherness" (p. 54) is a necessary condition for beginning to formulate ethical relationships. In a context of perpetual uncertainty, these authors find hope that a moral self can appear which develops in part from individual opportunity to recognize collective concerns and responsibilities. Traditional categories and tribal affiliations no longer necessarily legitimize any particular relation between oneself and an Other. Rather, they suggest that the breakdown of categories opens space for individuals to make themselves moral individuals—which Bauman also recognizes as an infinite process fraught with uncertainty. Biesta, more explicitly concerned with the implications for education, offers that an examination of our construction of strangers is a process of self-

examination wherein we can begin to articulate ourselves into this "community of those that have nothing in common" (p. 61). He writes that the stranger is,

> produced as a result of a specific construction of what is own, proper, familiar, rational. It is not to imply that everything that is other is categorically good. It is first and foremost to see that what counts as strange depends on what counts as familiar. The stranger, in other words, is never a natural category. (p. 59)

Thinking about the implications of the omnipresent stranger in a Social Foundations classroom, I wondered how we might address social justice issues in a context of asocial proposals. One way that I think we might approach this issue in the classroom is by offering a different question to students. Instead of the commonly asked "what can I do about social injustice?" or "what can I do to work toward social justice?" we might ask "what does social justice have to do with me?" If one of our purposes in Social Foundations is to explore ideas such as contested knowledge, multiple perspectives, or normative assumptions about the way things are, this question "what does social justice have to do with me?", might offer a way for students to rethink their relationship to others and complicate a sense of radical alterity to explore what we might share, beyond space, with strangers. Bauman (2007) writes that we (teachers) can never force students to grapple with the strange, but we can make sure there "are opportunities within education to meet and encounter what is different, strange, and other" (p. 69). He suggests this encounter is fundamental for individuals to "come into presence" or be free. In other words, the condition of difference, plurality and uncertainty is not a challenge to endure, overcome or tolerate; it is the condition from which individuals can collectively realize shared concerns.

Many have already addressed how current, macro scale political forces make the notion of education for social justice, or the idea that social justice be considered a shared concern, a difficult prospect. This climate is what I attempted to address in Chapter 1. With respect to

relationality, neoliberalism represents a homogenizing force generating policies and broad cultural narratives that offer narrow assumptions about human nature. Seen in this light, all humans are economically rational and inherently self-interested. Difference can be perceived as merely market niches to be filled for the purpose of consumption, but are not reflective of any difference beyond superficial desires. However, several have addressed this context and, inspired by Foucauldian ideas of the self, posited how we might work within such a setting to counter or resist such narrow conceptions of the self. More specifically, these authors address this issue in the context of teachers and teacher education.

3.3   ENGAGEMENT WITH SELF AND OTHER

Clarke (2008) suggests the importance of what he calls "identity work" for teachers. For Clarke, this work is not a process of self-discovery or even a project of determining who one wants to be or become. Instead it is a "complex matter of the social and the individual, of discourse and practice, of reification and participation, of similarity and difference, of agency and structure, of fixity and transgression" (p. 189). He draws from Butler to articulate the tension of being situated into previously legitimized subject positions, yet which do not preclude the possibility of alternatives—or constrained choices. He suggests there is liberatory potential for teachers to recognize the impossibility of the sovereign, rational, fully integrated self. To this end, he proposes a historical ontology of our teaching self as a way to better understand what forces have shaped us and to inform our possible response. Clarke does not discount the social embeddedness of the individual, but his focus is on the individual and the ethical self. For example, he offers that identity work is important for educators because their work impacts the identities of students. While that is the case, Infinito (2003), on the other hand, draws from a

similar Foucauldian perspective, but expands her focus and addresses how ethical identities occur only in relational contexts. For her, the purpose of such a project is social justice, not an individual project. She writes, "it is a subject's own life, the one that she lives amongst other subjects and her thinking about that life which is the 'stuff of ethics'" (p. 73). To that end, she considers it her teaching job to "re-form the relationships within which the self is immersed" (p. 76). Both Clarke and Infinito offer a philosophical rationale for engaging with new and future teachers in projects that may offer some possibility for resistance to or interrogation of current educational norms. Gunzenhauser (2008), addressing the context of high stakes accountability, articulates similar arguments about the need for ethical projects that offer possibilities for educators to constitute themselves in ways that might resist such impositions. What is particularly useful from Gunzenhauser's piece is that he suggests two conceptual notions which offer a framework to think about such work.

Gunzenhauser (2008) suggests that "vigilance against subjugation" and "intersubjective engagement" (p. 2234) are two projects of critical reflection educators might take up. Taken together, these projects offer a way for educators to think about how we might work at resisting the imposition of dominant subject positions. He does not prescribe specific classroom activities that engender these projects, rather suggests that they together can unify the type of self-oriented approach that Clarke addresses with the self-other approach that Infinito explores. In other words, there is a necessary process of reflecting in various ways upon one's own sense of self, but this must also occur in a relational context because the self is not unified and coherent but is mediated in part by other subjects. I am particularly drawn to the notion that this work can address the daily life of the individual. This process of vigilance against subjugation and intersubjective engagement does not appear as a formalized project but instead suggests an

interrogation of what Gunzenhauser (2008) calls the "subjectivity formed in day-to-day life" (p. 2235). I borrow from, and perhaps distort slightly the Freirian notion of conscientizing, to see Gunzenhauser's project as one that opened the door for me in a social foundations classroom to excavate the seemingly mundane actions of life to examine practices that normalize social injustice and unjust socio-cultural arrangements.

Although often overlooked or taken for granted, the notion of the "mundane" (Scott, 2009) or the "everyday" (Trend 2007) has been, in different ways, legitimized as a site to examine. Trend (2007) helps further the idea that there is great potential in critically examining our daily, perhaps taken for granted, practices when he writes that these "underexamined aspects of daily existence can provide insights into larger issues that affect who we are" (p. 7). For me, this speaks to subjectivity and concientization. The micro level of daily action offers a place to see how dominant political narratives influence and constrain, but also can reveal the ways individuals act outside or struggle with those dominant forces. As Rose (1999) earlier stated, the dissemination of dominant discourse is never smooth and even. Or as Scott suggests, the "infinite number of local, subjective realities" (p. 4) is fruitful for study to explore the ways individuals make sense of their lives. I am quite sympathetic to Trend's rationale that an explicit focus on our daily lives does not necessarily result in an ego-centric or narcissistic project. He suggests, to the contrary, that such a project can strengthen recognition of shared connection across difference.

I have tried to establish that a project aimed toward social justice might be comprised of an examination of everyday encounters with strangers. The hope is not that strangers cease to become strangers, but instead that such an examination could form the frame around which to examine in what ways neoliberal narratives are practiced at the micro level. For example, the

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notion of mismeeting represents a recognizable micropolitical orientation toward others to which these relational ideals could be applied.

3.4   MISMEETING THE STRANGER

Returning to the notion of the stranger, Bauman (1993) continues with his inquiry, suggesting that our perceptions of those around us are mediated by how socially near or far we consider them. He invokes a continuum from friend to enemy, from neighbor to alien, wherein we feel differently about the Other depending upon where they are situated along the continuum. We love, care for and are interested in friends. We are disdainful, fearful, and hateful toward our enemies. We have a sense of responsibility to our nearby neighbors and are indifferent to the distant alien. Bauman goes on to suggest the language we use to situate ourselves in relation to others has a spatial dynamic such that terms for "friends" invoke a small social distance. Literally, we have "close" friends. This distance widens as our perceptions of others moves away from "friend" and toward "enemy." Our perception of this social distance has moral implications in that our perceived moral obligations weaken toward those we consider distant. For Bauman, the stranger is at the far end of the continuum: anonymity. However, they are not truly anonymous, instead "they derive identity from the classes to which they 'belong'—or rather, to which they have been assigned" (p. 149). This process of categorizing strangers is based on little more than stereotypes cobbled together from what we think we know of them or their type. This process of categorization occurs during what he refers to as the "art of mismeeting" which is "scrutiny disguised as indifference" (p. 155). The tension in this situation is that he suggests only increased "experienced biography" (getting to know someone) (p. 155) will interrupt the categorization process, but that mismeeting ensures this will not happen.

Mismeeting is to actively resist nuanced knowledge about another person and instead impose a category onto them. He writes that mismeeting "desocializes" social space and that "to evict from social space the others who are otherwise within reach, means to abstain from acquiring knowledge about them (and to deny them knowledge of oneself)" (p. 155). As this mismeeting is certainly a recognizable daily, mundane act, I found it a ripe possibility for the types of projects that Gunzenhauser (2008) theorized. Through the analysis of daily, mundane activity there is possibility for critical engagement with one's actions (in this case the categories one is placing strangers into). The act of categorization can be seen as a way of de-stranging the stranger in that it locates them somewhere into a known range of categories, but I would further suggest that locating each other into essentialized identity categories is an expression of lateral power imposition that represents the type of subjugation against which Gunzenhauser reminds us we should remain vigilant. This process of categorization can also be seen as an intersubjective process. The categorization process occurs based on an interpretation or read of how we perceive the Other/stranger. To do this we must draw from contextual information filtered through our experience along with various cultural inputs. The idea of the intersubjective interpretation comes from my thinking about how I might operationalize Gunzenhauser's call for intersubjective engagement as a way to resist normalization. In this case, the normalization that troubles me are the features of the neoliberal subject positions that validate the individual and diminish a sense of relationality. To that end, I focused the course engagement around the construction of Other with the hope that by collectively unpacking students' interpretations of Other, they might begin to think about how their interpretations are inherently intersubjectively mediated. I think Moore (1994) helps further explain the idea of intersubjective interpretation, when she writes that

Intersubjectivity and dialogue involve situations where bodies marked by the social (race, gender, ethnicity and so on), are presented as part of identities. The uses of the body, the particular circumstances of interaction and the readings made by others are all involved in the taking up of a positions or positions that form the basis for the enunciation of experience. Experience is thus intersubjective; it is not individual and fixed, but irredeemably social and processual. (p. 3)

My hope was that students, engaging with each other around the construction and interpretation of various others, would recognize that boundaries of otherness are always in flux, and that interpretation is filtered through social positioning and is not necessarily fixed or "true."

3.5   CONSTRUCTING OTHER

The way I use this idea might initially seem to disregard the asymmetrical power relations implied by "othering" according to many theorists (ie. that the powerful have the privilege of otherizing the marginalized, exotic, or excluded). I am using the idea of Othering as a process of difference-making on both the micro and macro level. I also mean for the idea to be fluid, such that who is considered other may change according to any given context, whether superficial and somewhat mundane (i.e. "we" are Pitt vs. "them" that are some other team) or more expected Othering such as gender. I became interested in how the terms of the construction affect the nature of the relationship between parties—between the self and the other, and I found the intersubjective nature of the relationship especially compelling. Asher (2003) describes this well when writing how self-consciously engaging "encounters with difference can allow educational theorists, researchers and practitioners to…understand the "other" *in relation* to—rather than apart from—the "self" and *vice versa*" (p. 236). Sarup (1995) extends the idea by saying, "The Other often mirrors and represents what is deeply familiar to the centre...if one considers the

opposition Self and Other, the Other is always to some extent within. That is to say, what is considered marginal and peripheral is actually central" (p. 58). Further, that this binary is never static, and is constantly being drawn and redrawn according to changing contexts suggests that how we imagine and narrate our own identity is intimately tied to the boundaries along which we construct the other.

As a pedagogical approach, I tried to a) access conversations about difference by working with a pedagogy that b) explores the intersubjective nature of interpretation of other with the hope that the process might c) counter individualistic narratives and d) invoke a sense of *shared* concern for issues of social justice. I use the term "access" in reference to my attempt to find a way to a conversation that resists essentialized identity categories. Boler and Zembylas (2003) write about "embracing ambiguity in the construction of identities" (p. 125). According to this notion of identity, the self as not a complete and coherent whole, but rather perpetually constituted by sedimentation of experience and changes across context. As Boler and Zembylas suggest, the "self is always a fiction and identities are kinds of closures- national, ethnic, family, sexual, and others—arbitrary closures" (p. 125). The conversations I hope to access with students, then, are ones that works against these arbitrary closures of commonly accepted identity categories. I think it is important to recognize again that, as Asher (2003) reminds us, "*all* identities are hybrid, multifaceted and that recognition of the 'other'…is always in relation to one's 'self'" (p. 237).

Although less focused than Boler and Zembylas (2003) on the emotional responses of such a process, my approach is akin to their discussion of a pedagogy of "discomforting truths" (p. 110) whereby students are given the opportunity to complicate their beliefs, values and assumptions by interrogating how the definitions ascribed to different Others are learned,

internalized, and politicized. The opportunity I hoped to offer students is to question more deeply how and why they make certain interpretations of others. In an effort to link these interpretations to the political, a focus of the course was reflecting on how one's social positioning influences interpretations. This approach, I hoped, would facilitate students' ability to complicate each other's and their own interpretations by confronting normative explanatory conclusions about different social justice issues.

3.6   CONCLUSION

As a way to tie this chapter together, it is useful to return to Biesta's (2007) admonition that ethical education needs interaction across difference. For him, the purpose of such interaction differs from traditional projects of diversity and tolerance. He rejects the notion of diversity as an idea that suggests differences are simply cultural and can be understood from within a universalizing and essentializing framework of humanism, which he suggests is not political. He contrasts this idea of diversity with the notion of difference. A distinguishing factor is that diversity implies learning about others and then coming to know them. Difference does not assume a prior or future knowledge of the other. For him, difference "takes the fact that we differ just as we encounter and experience it—which more often than not will mean as it confronts us" (p. 103). In other words, his idea of difference better captures the experience of life which is lived perpetually among strangers, whom we encounter daily. He helps us move around the idea that we ought to learn about each culture as part of an educative process that does not examine the normative elements of the assessments made about whoever we are considering to be "diverse." Gunzenhauser's (2008) ideas of critical reflection and intersubjective engagement both suggest a reconception of one's relationship to the entirety of

one's surround. Importantly, these are both concepts that suggest an ongoing process. They invoke practices of self-constitution which Niesche and Haase (2012) connect to the idea of governmentality. As described earlier, governmentality is both a process of governing others (or polity of others from a political perspective) as well as governing oneself. In Niesche and Haas' study they explore how two teachers

> are constantly making decisions in relation to codes of behavior and action as set out by governmental bodies, parental and community expectations and particular education discourses. Not so much in a linear fashion but often in complex and conflicting ways that involve a looking back of the self. (p. 3)

This description of their study goes beyond relationality, but certainly includes it. Importantly, they suggest how their situating of ethical work within a frame of governmentality allows them to examine how teachers "construct their subjectivity through a constant activity of acting upon themelves" (p. 3). For my purposes this also speaks to the importance of the idea of subject positions. Secondly, this embedding of subjectivity into the complex milieu of daily life, yet also situated in a particular historical moment, captures the ongoing movement through various subject positions that any individual may undertake in any given context. The ethical projects addressed in this chapter suggest that one may work to resist any particular subject position, but that the project is ongoing and difficult. Importantly, they remind us that any project is relational and necessarily must involve some form of encounter with difference.

In these initial backdrop chapters, I have established that the political theory of neoliberalism incentivizes particular, narrow subject positions which, for the most part, I feel are subject positions that do not complement educative efforts for social justice work in a Social Foundations classroom. In this context, sparked by student commentary on the stranger, I then established the conceptual rationale for a curriculum that originates from an intersubjective

understanding of the Self-Other relationship as a starting point to enter conversations about social justice among varying demographics. Using Gunzenhauser's (2007) concepts of critical reflection and intersubjective engagement, I developed a curriculum that might offer students the opportunity to practice the type of subjectivity work across difference that Biesta (2007) calls for.

The introduction of consumer culture as curriculum, the data that came from that curriculum, the analysis, and the final cartographic portrayal each represent distinct steps of the process of this dissertation. Each step also represents a part of the methodological approach. As such, the next chapter offers an overview of the methodology approach.

4.0   METHODOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

4.1   METHODOLOGY

In this project, I am operating with theoretical orientations that consider language as a contested site of subjectivity production, and I make the claim that this project is somehow intended to disrupt individualistic and essentialized subject positions "incentivized" by neoliberal narratives. The final portrayal of this project is represented by a map that offers one resolution to the dilemmas that motivated the project. This map was created using principles of the methdology of social cartography. I consider the map to be important, but its importance can be better understood knowing the steps taken to create the map. My approach to social cartography, then, reflects that process and is what Kitchen, Gleeson and Dodge (2012) refer to as an ontogenetic approach to cartography. In other words, a map is significant for the truth claims it makes, but also must be understood as the product of the initial theoretical and conceptual orientations as well as the technical choices that inform the construction of the map along the way.

In this chapter I describe the three stages that inform the genesis of the final map. The three phases of consumer culture curriculum, stance analysis, and cartography are further explored in the subsequent chapters. In this chapter, after discussing the phases of the methodology, I address questions of representation as well as issues of researcher subjectivity.

4.2   METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS AND PORTRAYAL

From the outset, this dissertation was guided by pragmatic and applied concerns. Namely, I wanted to develop a heuristic that might be helpful in a Social Foundations classroom to frame classroom conversation. For that reason I draw from social cartography as explored in Paulston's (1991, 1992, 2001) and Liebman and Paulston's (1994) ideas of representing multiple perspectives and ranges of positions into a coherently organized and multilayered field. As these social cartography theorists envision, the map itself can function as a heuristic device for the purpose of dialogue.

Maps, however, present their own ontological and epistemological issues in that significant issues of power are embedded and undergird any map. This is a representational dilemma of mapping—a map cannot be considered more than a representation of a version of reality or the truth. As a way to address this, Kitchen, Gleeson and Dodge (2012) propose a post-representational approach to mapping. In this case, maps are considered emergent and processual texts. For them, the important cartographic questions are not related to the techniques of map design or explication of the underlying ideology. Instead the task is "to examine how mappings emerge as solutions to relational problems" (p. 3). By solution they mean a contingent proposition to resolve a particular issue. They consider this an ontogenetic approach to mapping where the significance of the map can best be understood from knowing how that map has emerged. Getting insight into the emergence of the map not only helps make the map intelligible, it reveals the ethnography of the map. In other words, the subjectivity of the mapper, the texts used to generate the initial terrain, the interpretive choices made on those texts, and the theoretical orientations that inform the map's parameters are all necessary parts of the map. This is the approach to social cartography I have taken here. The first two chapters of the dissertation

establish the problem of this study and situate it in the cultural surround. The proceeding chapters represent the conceptual and theoretical process of arriving to the final portrayal of the map. This process can be imagined in three phases. First is the use of consumer culture as curriculum in my Social Foundations classroom. The use of consumer culture was designed to introduce a different mode of social boundary production that did not rely on expected identity categories. The student voices for this study came from that class. The second phase was to interpret those student voices as exemplars of broader theoretical texts. This interpretation was done following stance analysis literature. The final stage was to generate a map that, inspired by the stances, spoke to the original dilemma—addressing questions of difference that changed the parameters of conversation away from categories and away from individualistic interpretations. The following chapters each address in more detail the theoretical and procedural rationales for their respective step—consumer culture, stance, and cartography—in the process. The following information in this chapter is intended as an introduction to those chapters.

4.2.1   Student Texts—Consumer Culture as Curriculum

Student voices for this project come from a Social Foundations course with 22 students during the summer of 2010. All the students were in the School of Education's Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program, which is an intensive, one year certification program. One year earlier my class was filled with harried MAT students in their final stage of classes. They had already spent a semester mired in the bureaucracy of institutional education and some already seemed skeptical about their career choice. Early on, a student complained that she needed less idealistic talk, and more classroom management strategies. In other words, her willingness to consider the limitations of gender binaries, for example, was low. Fortunately, the students who contributed to this study took the class during the first term of their program, and that small dose

of apprehension that comes with the beginning step of an intense journey had them energetic, engaged, and willing to discuss the types of Social Foundations issues that some previous students perceived as irrelevant to their teaching careers.

The students in the class were primarily local students who had spent the majority of their lives in Western Pennsylvania. Additionally, there was one international student as well as students recently arrived from California and Texas.

The bulk of the course was organized around the idea of constructing other through the lens of consumer culture, and students addressed this idea in several different ways throughout the course. The student text for this dissertation comes entirely from the writings and interviews of the students in this class. To gather this text I developed three writing assignments as well as conducted recorded interviews. These three classroom assignments, listed below, are each described in more extensive detail in the following chapter.

1. *A consumer culture autobiography*- students were asked to think about what image they hope to project of themselves and then to identify locations where they shopped in order to project their desired image. The purpose of the assignment was to introduce the idea of semiotics and "reading" consumer culture commodities as signs that signify particular preferences.

2. *Reading journals*- throughout the course, students wrote bi-weekly reflections that addressed readings, assignments or classroom conversation. The content of these journals ranges widely, but because the course was organized around consumer culture, much of their writing centers on themes of "otherness" as demarcated by commodity items.

3. *Lifestyle magazine analysis*- students were asked to bring in lifestyle magazines that they recognized as appealing to a demographic they did not identify with. They were

asked to respond to magazine imagery by exploring their thoughts and feelings about the people and commodities presented in the magazine.

4.2.2 Recorded Interviews

21 of the students consented to be interviewed for this project. Students signed consent forms on the first day of class, but I did not know which students consented until after the grades for the course were submitted. Of those that consented, I ended up interviewing 15 students. Four students acquired jobs outside the area during the summer of the course and were unavailable for an interview. The other student, when asked to schedule an interview, responded that he was no longer interested in being interviewed. I used a semi-structured, open-ended interview format and interviews ranged from 45 minutes to an hour and 30 minutes. Because I did not know which students consented to participate until after the course ended, all interviews were conducted during the semester following the course. All interviews occurred at the University of Pittsburgh in public spaces such as the library and other campus coffee spots. The challenge during this type of interviewing was to follow Bell's (2010) reminder that such interviews are not conversation, but rather purposeful conversations. Following Holliday's (2007) suggestion that specific methods emerge as the research unfolds (as opposed to what she calls *methodolotry* which is the rigid application of a particular method), I piloted the interview questions with several individuals unfamiliar with the course to see if the questions made sense to them. These were students from other classes I was teaching outside the School of Education who had volunteered to look at the questions. The final iteration of the interview questions (Appendix A) were oriented toward thinking broadly about the relationship between self and other, as well as how that thinking may be mediated by commodity items (i.e. External appearance mediated

through dress). All interviewees responded to the same set of questions and I transcribed all interviews.

4.2.3 Safeguards

Throughout the student text collection process, all writings and recordings were kept in a locked office drawer. Transcribed interviews were stored on flash drives and copies of student writing were made without student names. In all cases, students were given pseudonyms and no identifying information was retained.

4.2.4 Data Interpretation—Stance Analysis

I use the concept of stance for this project and consider stance analysis a type of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis has a wide ranging scope and within this methodological field, I borrow from critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995, 2003; and Rogers, 2004). These theorists emerge from a critical theory perspective that studies language in relation to power. Fairclough (1995) writes, "the power to control discourse is seen as the power to sustain particular discursive practices with particular ideological investments in dominance over other alternative practices" (p. 2). This general assumption about the power-mediated relationship of language to practice offers a bridge from my theoretical interest in discursively incentivized subject positions.   These critical discourse theorists consider language a political practice wherein we use language to produce desired worldviews or counter undesirable worldviews (Gee, 2011).

The stance analysis stage represents the portrayal of the student voices. To develop these stances, I used Jaffee's (2009) notion of stancetaking, which considers the way individuals position themselves, in their writing or speaking, in relation to others.   Jaffe is helpful for

clarifying my intentions with stance when she writes that when individuals talk about others they engage in "explicit and implicit forms of social categorization and evaluation, attribute intentionality, affect, knowledge, agency to themselves and others, and lay claim to particular social and/or moral identities" (p. 9). This understanding of stance corresponds to the way I hope to analyze student text in that it attributes a normative aspect to stance. Jaffe characterizes stancetaking as something that happens as individuals organize relationships between self and other and suggests that identity is constituted by the ways in which individuals assume normative stances, particularly evaluative and affective, toward others.

Accordingly, I considered student texts as a site of stancetaking. With the notion of stance as the interpretive frame, the basic process was to identify text wherein students addressed any social demographic (an other) of which they did not consider themselves a part. I purposefully did not intentionally include biographical information about the students. The main reason for this is that I do not know their socio-cultural location beyond gender and race. I did not purposefully exclude such information either, and sometimes certain biographical information is clear based on the student's quotation. When working with student text, my approach was to connect theoretical texts to the student voices and then to group the theoretical texts thematically according to the different rhetorical strategies employed when discussing difference. In this sense, the student voices represented exemplars of the larger issues raised by the different theoretical texts. These strategies were grouped together to form two broad stances. As a way to articulate a sense of stance and counter stance, I named two stances of re*inscription* and *interruption*. Reinscription refers to a stance wherein one is positioned relationally such that a dominant status quo is reproduced and remains unchanged. In other words, social hierarchies, prevailing definitions of what constitutes normal, and an overriding individualism are reinscribed

when students adopt dimensions of the reinscription stance. Taking a stance of interruption, on the other hand, refers to student texts that challenge the status quo, or offer counter narratives.

4.2.5   Final Representation—Cartography

Following the work of social cartography developed by Paulston (1992, 1999, 2001), the final representation of the map attempts to spatialize the two stances. What emerged is a map that centers on the notion of experience. This heuristic depicts a space in which to map personal encounters with difference. Much of the work in Social Foundations could be considered as working toward having what Pinar (2004) refers to as complicated conversations about difficult sociocultural issues such as race, class, gender, and sexuality as they intersect with the institution of education. I think the map does offer one way to enter such a conversation.

4.2.6   Methodological Considerations

Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) write that there is a potential tension for postmodern or poststructural theorists in that they "live their lives as humanists, but this is not necessarily how they theorize" (p. 223). I recognize this tension in the sense that I consider myself aware of the way political narratives—of neoliberalism, for example—incentivize particular behaviors and I believe they can be resisted. On the other hand, my theoretical assumptions would appear to suggest otherwise. As Carlos Torres (2009) recently suggested, we are all "percolated" in dominant narratives and a certain degree of unconscious conformity or compliance with these narratives is unavoidable. When thinking about methodology, then, it was a struggle to imagine a legitimate way of doing my project.

St. Pierre and Pillow (2000) address some of my concerns as they articulate ways to move out of the "ruins" of foundationalism, legitimation and representation. Their concern is to

question how researchers might responsibly research and represent research even while cognizant of the intractable dilemmas of the research process the "posts" (primarily postmodernism, poststructuralism) have raised. They wonder what can be considered viable methodologies and how new methodologies might be created. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2003) address the crisis of representation and of legitimation with respect to qualitative research during this "postmodern" moment. They characterize the current moment as one wherein grand narratives are becoming less credible, and wherein post-positivist assumptions have less traction. In this context, they wonder how qualitative researchers might "best describe and interpret the experiences of other peoples and cultures" (p. 616).

These questions are more than an experimental exercise because, as St. Pierre and Pillow (2000) ask, "how do those of us who have been privileged by the authority of foundationalism, those who have begun to understand their complicity in its indignities, proceed?" (p. 1). What emerges from authors addressing this methodological challenge are not clear cut methodologies or forms of representation. Instead, I consider themes that appear as different authors address the dilemmas of methodology and representation. For example, Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) offer "receptiveness to pluralism in the potential of different voices" (p. 222). Lather (2007) writes about "attempting to be accountable to complexity" (p. 11). In their research, Miller and Fox (2004) analyzed "the 'underdog' methods and strategies that marginalized groups and individuals used in countering claims based on dominant discourse" (p. 49). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) suggest that the qualitative researcher should now "center" on a "commitment to study the world always from the perspective of the gendered, historically situated, interacting individual" (p. 612). A relevant challenge that emerges from this literature is how to imagine a methodological approach that retains the idea of non-fixed, fluid, relational selves and others. In

other words, how to reflect what Pile (2008) writes as a challenge to attend to subjects whose positions "turn out to be unstable, mobile, and unfinished" (p. 209). My interest is in relational subject positions and my assumptions are that we each inhabit different and shifting relational positions depending on a given context. This orientation is informed by theory outlined earlier that centers on language as a site of subject constitution. The motivation for this project is this concern with language; I am in pursuit of a different conversation about difference. Implicit here is the idea that a different conversation may lead to the enactment of different subjectivities. Given the above, an underlying concern was to work with the data in a way that considered the above pitfalls and remained accountable to the notion of multiple, shifting positions that individuals assume in relation to others.

4.2.7   Researcher Subjectivity

As with any project of this nature, researcher subjectivity informs every step of the process from the development of the initial research questions, to the relationship to the data and, certainly, the interpretation of that data.

A brief anecdote can set the stage for my personal underlying orientation to this project. As a grade school age kid living in southern Argentina in the late 80's, I was referred to by the locals as "Ruso" (literally, Russian). This was the term for basically any white person in that area, and was based on the fact that during the 70's, a small group of Russian farmers had immigrated to the area with a brief generation-long stop-over in the state of Washington. During their time in the U.S., the younger Russians had also acquired English. So, from the perspective of the Argentine locals, it made perfect sense to refer to me as Russian. Of course, from my perspective it was bizarre and incomprehensible that I would be considered a Russian as the connotations of the word for me relied on entirely different contextual information (Reagan, the

Bear in the Woods, Cold War). I did not have the language at the time, but upon later reflection my being called "Ruso" was an example of the self-other mirroring process. Particularly, the experience showed me the contingent truth of such boundaries, as boundaries served more the purpose of elucidating the social construction by which difference is named rather than reflecting any real difference. The experience also offered insight into the relationship between self and others. Constructing social boundaries establishes who you are by identifying who you are not. Unpacking one's own boundaries, then, can be an instructive process for thinking more deeply about the seemingly normal social boundaries that exist in our home culture. This is a political endeavor as Biesta (2007) explains when he writes that "any reflection of the self on the self that does not take the ethical relationship with the other into consideration, fails to appreciate what makes the self into a self" (p. 44). A Social Foundations classroom, with its overt focus on issues of social justice, seemed a good environment in which to experiment with this idea of constructing other.

With respect to the student and theoretical texts and their interpretation, a conscious challenge was to work against the looming, polemical neo-Marxist orientation that informs my theoretical history. I tend toward a perspective I might call neoliberal reductionist in that I am quick to attribute any negative social or political happening, micro or macro, to some machinations of a larger neoliberal project. This was especially difficult during the development of the reinscription stance in Chapter 6, as my language began to reflect my negative perception. In other words, my writing began to reflect that it was "bad" to reinscribe and "good" to interrupt. This may be my orientation, but the paternalism of the language did not allow for alternative interpretation of the data, and imposed too much of my own agenda onto the data. I

worked to minimize this, for example by removing language of moral implication that I included on many previous iterations of the map.

Finally, the motivation of the project is inspired by Kwame Appiah's notion of "cosmopolitanism" as discussed in the film *Examined Life* (2008). While sitting in an airport, he describes a contemporary condition for many individuals: encountering more people in a single day than many of our human ancestors would encounter in a lifetime. Several challenges arise from this situation. One fundamental challenge he asks us to think about is how to address the question of having responsibility for those people (strangers) for whom we do not have relational language. This links to my concern about the language with which we talk about difference, and also to my disposition toward a collective mentality and away from hyper-individualism.

Thinking about the shifting boundaries between self and other is one way to begin that conversation about difference and, importantly, recognize the intersubjective process by which we make and break boundaries.

5.0   CONSUMER CULTURE AS CURRICULUM

I feel that I have two distinct purchasing identities: Ms. Fritz and Jean. People with whom I teach or have class may not see much of the Jean part of my purchasing identity, whereas friends who are not in the field of education might not see much of the Ms. Fritz side of my purchasing identity.

                              Identity Autobiography- Jean Fritz

Currently the show *Keeping up with the Kardashians* is a huge influence on my sense of fashion. I obsess with shoes and earrings. In fact, I belong to the Kardashian website that recommends you a new pair of shoes each month based on your personality traits.

                              Identity Autobiography- Ella Rubia

After law school I enrolled in an M.A. in Spanish in the naïve attempt to become a leftist Latin-American Intellectual. During this period I grew my hair long and wore revolutionary propaganda t-shirts along with jeans and, of course, Converse Chuck Taylor's.

                              Identity Autobiography- Ulrich Kreis

5.1   INTRODUCTION

As an introduction to this chapter, I think it is helpful to consider the ideas of symbolic and social boundaries advanced by Lamot and Molnár (2002). According to their perspective, symbolic boundaries are "conceptual distinctions" made by individuals in order to classify and order people and practices (p. 168). These distinctions are contested and represent areas of cultural struggle to define meaning. Social boundaries, on the other hand, represent what the authors refer to as "objectified forms of social difference" such as access to resources and

opportunities (p. 168). There is a relationship between these boundaries when symbolic boundaries become coherent enough that they contribute to social boundaries, or when social boundaries contribute to symbolic boundaries. Exploring this boundary-making represents what I hoped to accomplish by using consumer culture as curriculum. I consider the interpretation of different consumer items and lifestyle categories to be symbolic boundaries, much like the quotes that introduce this chapter demonstrated. However, my assumption is that the interpretations of symbolic boundaries must be connected at times to internalized constructions of social boundaries—such as across class, or between ethnic groups, or sexual orientations. These ideas led me to consider the possibilities of using the interpretations of consumer culture (symbolic boundaries) as a way to access questions about social boundaries.

My thinking regarding consumer culture as curriculum was further sparked by Aronowitz and Giroux's (1991) observations that, in the burgeoning educational literature on postmodernism, there was a lack of pedagogy that worked to understand "how people invest in signs, signifiers, images, and discourses that actively construct their identities and social relations" (p. 72). The idea of individuals "actively" constructing relationships implies a destabilization of the standard categories of difference we often rely upon in Social Foundations classrooms. However, I still think those categories are significant and I wanted to retain the political importance of those categories. In other words, I do not think our sense of self and other is merely interpretation. Our interpretations are linked to underlying normative assessments of others. These normative sentiments that undergird our interpretations reflect and retain existing categorical social hierarchies even when, at the micro level the categories themselves may be unstable. I think a peer described this idea well in a recent conversation when he refers to his work as post-Black but not post racial. In saying this, he suggests the

category "Black" is, for him, increasingly less conceptually useful as a coherent demographic category. However, this does not imply that race ceases to be a significant social fault line.

In this chapter I address how I came to consumer culture as a response to Aronowitz and Giroux's appeal to social semiotics. In the first part of the chapter, I want to discuss consumer culture as a dominant force, focusing on the notion of individual lifestyles projects. In the second part, I want to address how I used this approach to consumer culture in the classroom.

5.2   CONSUMER CULTURE

The concepts of consumer society, consumerism, and consumption are three such vast categories that one might question whether they retain useful analytic capacity. Scholars suggest that consumption is now more significant than production as a cultural force that shapes individuals and society and deserves, for all its conceptual messiness, to be studied (Bauman, 2007; Cambell 2004; Featherstone, 1998; Ritzer, 1999; Soper & Trentmann, 2008). Sassatelli (2007) writes,

> to consume is to act as consumers, that is to put on a particular, contested kind of identity and to deal with its contradictions. In this light, consumer culture is more than commoditization and affluence, more than conspicuous consumption and the democratization of luxuries. Consumer culture also *produces consumers.* (p. 6)

Sassatelli continues by suggesting that the ways in which individuals identify as consumers, and the manners in which institutions increasingly treat individuals as consumers are processes that merit inquiry. I first want to clarify what constitutes a consumer culture for my purposes. Then, following Sassatelli's broad proposal, the guiding focus of my inquiry here will be to look at consumer culture as a meaning-making process whereby individuals attach interpretations to consumer items which function to sort and classify others.

5.2.1   The Individual as Consumer

One of the features of the mainstream consumer culture discourse is that individuals are increasingly referred to as "consumers." Sassatelli (2007) suggests this role of consumer is "naturalized as a social identity" (p. 134). Furthermore, consumption is promoted as a desirable and worthwhile activity for individuals to pursue. Bauman (2005) employs the notion of interpellation to describe this process, saying that in a society of consumers, individuals will be interpellated "primarily in their capacity as consumers" (p. 51). Individuals are then expected to positively demonstrate their legitimacy as citizens by responding to these appeals through repeated consumption. Being a consumer then becomes a unifying category for individuals. Everyone, in some way, shares the sense and experience of being compelled to constantly consume. Soper also (2008) identifies the concept of "patriotic shopping" whereby we learn to regard "shopping, that bastion of private choice, as a 'civic' duty" (p. 202). Through the act of consumption we demonstrate our individual worth.   In a consumer society, continuous consumption is routinized as an activity that we all share, and in which we are expected to participate. As Sassatelli states, consumer society "requires a process of learning whereby social actors are practically trained to perform (and enjoy) their roles as consumers" (p. 11).

One of the common threads in Sassatelli's (2007) and Campbell's (1987) analyses is the prominence they afford to the notion of individualism in consumer culture. This theme of individualism is further developed by postmodern treatments of consumption. The significance of individualism here can be thought of in at least two ways. One way is that individuals begin to place increasing importance and value on themselves as a project to develop. A second feature of postmodern individualism is that individuals can increasingly attribute individualized meanings to the objects they consume. This individualized construction of meaning and of

interpretation solidifies a connection between consumerism and individual identity projects in the sense that individuals can create and express an identity through their acts of consumption.

5.2.2 Postmodern Consumerism

Postmodern theorists such as Baudrillard (1998), Featherstone (1991)**,** and to some extent Gottdiener (2000) and Campbell (2004), with their focus on the signs of consumer culture and on the identity construction based on those signs, offer insightful analysis into the ways individuals make meaning out of consumer culture. Gottdiener (2000) offers an explanation of the semiotics of consumerism. He discusses material goods as having one of three statuses—a use value, an exchange value, and/or a sign value. This notion of the sign value of material goods harkens back to Veblen's (1899) conception of "conspicuous consumption" wherein a good is consumed in order that it be seen by others. In this case the image of the good represents something beyond its pragmatic functions of either use or exchange. The good can be considered as a sign that is intended to convey some meaning about the possessor of the good. For postmodernists, the sign value of the object becomes an important driver of consumer culture. Objects are consumed increasingly because of what they signify and the significance of the object outweighs its use or exchange value.

Postmodern consumer theorists such as Baudrillard (1998) consider consumer objects as "chains of signifiers" that shoppers navigate in order to project their desired image of themselves. Sassatelli (2007) suggests that this navigation is an essential project of the individual. "Our world calls us to *positively* demonstrate our capacity to choose" among consumer culture goods. In this way, consumers convey they are "sovereigns of themselves" by successfully demonstrating their capacity to maneuver this sea of commodity signs (p. 155).

At this point, Featherstone (1991) helps illuminate the complex task of the individual in this context. "One's body, clothes, speech, leisure pastimes, eating and drinking preferences, home, car, choice of holiday, etc. are to be regarded as indicators of the individuality of taste and sense of style of the owner/consumer" (p. 83). The individual consumes in part, to project some desired identity to others that see them. Individuals indicate, through their consumption choices, how they hope to be perceived. Concurring with Sassatelli's (2007) analysis, Featherstone considers this management and projection of "lifestyle" to be an individual "life project" to display individuality. One is no longer bound to a lifestyle simply because of family or cultural tradition.

Throughout their analysis, both Featherstone (1991) and Sassatelli (2007), like Gottdiener (2000), refrain from normative statements. They offer an attempt to analyze consumer culture from a perspective that recognizes the sign value of commodities, and to theorize the process of cultural and individual tensions that emerges from consumer culture. Their analysis tends to focus on what might be thought of as the management of perception. Individuals try to project a desired lifestyle image of themselves with the hope that others will "read" their projection accurately. As cultural definitions fluctuate, the individual is expected to respond accordingly.

Campbell (2004), also operating from within this general postmodern sensibility of consumer culture wherein commodities can be considered part of ever-shifting lifestyle projects, focuses his analysis inward. While individuals must concern themselves with an outwardly directed image of lifestyle, he suggests they are also entangled in a ceaseless process of identity discovery, which is realized during our experience of desire while shopping.

Featherstone (1991) and Campbell (2004) describe how individuals in a consumer culture navigate the shifting interpretations of commodity signs to project a lifestyle image and to

uncover personal identity. Taken together, their respective descriptions of the lifestyle project situate the individual in a perpetually tenuous situation of managing one's projected public image. Adding to the complexity is that interpretations of this projected image are not fixed. At the same time, these authors describe an inherently unstable cultural system that is subject to the dialectical tensions between forces of cultural fragmentation and forces of cultural stability. Or, as Featherstone (1991) terms it, a tension between cultural "order" and "disorder" for the individual. I think this perspective is useful and necessary to frame the larger picture of context within which this assessment of consumer culture occurs. One's understanding of self is constantly subject to reinterpretation and one can never accurately know others' interpretation. For individuals living in a consumer culture, the experience is a constant process of identity management amidst shifting sign meanings.

5.2.3 Self-commodification

Bauman (2007) agrees with the notion of the lifestyle project described by Featherstone (1991) and parts of the identity discovery process Campbell (2004) explains, but complicates their assessments by problematizing the incessant consumerism both these projects require. Further, Bauman suggests this linking of identity to commodities facilitates a shift toward a commodification of the self when he writes that, "in the society of consumers...no one can keep his or her subjectness secure without perpetually resuscitating, resurrecting and replenishing the capacities expected and required of a sellable commodity" (p. 12). Bauman also disagrees with Campbell's suggestion that we can uncover our authentic selves through shopping. He offers that, "what is assumed to be the *materialization* of the inner truth of the self is in fact an *idealization* of the material" (p. 15). Bauman combines these points—self commodification and commodity fetishism—to undergird his assessment of consumer society.

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For Bauman (2007), in consumer society construction of subjectivity becomes a primary focus of individuals.

> If it was the lot of *commodity fetishism* to hide from view the human, all too human substance of the society of *producers*, it is the turn of *subjectivity fetishism* to hide the commoditized, all too commoditized reality of the society of *consumers* (p. 14)

He suggests there is a waning importance of ascribed identity positions, and instead individuals must fashion themselves into attractive commodities. This perpetual, ongoing self-commodification is at the heart of any identity project and not, as Campbell suggested, a discovery of self. Rather, individuals must tailor themselves to the demands of the market. For Bauman, this task is rendered as the primary duty of responsible citizens in a consumer society. His analysis extends a critique to both the lifestyle and identity projects, and opens space for his critiques of hyper individualism. Importantly for my project, Bauman suggests this cultural situation has detrimental relational consequences.

5.2.4 Relational Implications

At first glance a "lifestyle project" may appear relatively benign. This project appears to be simply purchasing goods in order to project a particular appearance with the assumption that appearances can be lumped into general categories of people. For example, Nielson—a large consumer research company—has identified over 60 lifestyle categories in the U.S. These categories, with names like *The Young Digerati* (tech lovers in their 20s and 30s) or *Park Bench Seniors* (older, urban dwellers), convey little else beyond the commodity choices of each respective category. These categories, although linked to other demographic information like race and income, are primarily defined by the types of products consumed. In other words, these market segment categories appear to be relatively apolitical. Featherstone (1991) touches on the

cultural dynamics at play within the general idea of lifestyle categories by saying that all consumer goods are not equally culturally valued, and that different lifestyles connote differing levels of cultural and economic capital. I think this idea is fairly apparent.   Edwards (2000) helps develop this point further and begins to politicize such lifestyle categories, suggesting consumption is "a cultural site of social stratification through which the wider economic and political tensions of contemporary capitalism are played out" (p. 36). This idea of tensions and social stratification then imbues the lifestyle project with the questions taken up by the Social Foundations field.

This notion of an individual lifestyle project certainly has implications for cultural constructions of gender, race, and class. Both Featherstone (1991) and Sassatelli (2007) speak to the idea that different social groups struggle in two senses. One struggle is to define a sense of internal legitimacy and authenticity (what does a "real" farmer do, wear, eat, or drive, for example). The other struggle is to manage and define the boundaries between social groups. This division becomes particularly salient between classes and different ethnic groups. Because this cultural struggle is waged to a large degree through our objects of consumption, we need high levels of commodity choices from which to select our respective lifestyle. The perpetual cultural struggle then becomes one of legitimizing certain lifestyles over other lifestyles. Further, as Featherstone (1991) elaborates, the system of signs is not stable. The meanings and interpretations of consumer culture objects will not retain the same meanings across space and time. Returning to his notion of ordered disorder, the culture is ordered in the sense that the consumer goods are meaningful signs to be interpreted. However, the process is disordered in the sense that interpretations are not fixed. For an individual to express preference for a particular music genre, for example, implies something about how they imagine themselves.

But, because the meaning system is so unstable, no one can know for certain, absent other contextual signs, what meaning the individual intends. I think two excerpts from student journals explain this point further. When a student, Ted, was writing about purchasing a computer he suggested that "perhaps when people see me with my Mac, they think I'm a liberal, or a hipster or a Californian." Although relatively understood (I think), the notion of Mac being linked to a political orientation may be new for some. However, the connection of Mac to California certainly cannot be considered a standard interpretation of Mac users. In a more illustrative example, another student, Charlene, spoke about how, when purchasing a car, she wanted the car to express her identity. When sifting through the many car choices, she described why she omitted one car from her list. What follows is the transcript from our interview.

Charlene: There's a car company that has a car named the Matrix. And when I was studying advanced algebra a property of a matrix that I needed for my work was that it be invertible, and I don't want to drive a car that's named after something that has a good property of being invertible. I don't want my car having that property.

Me: I'm not sure I understand.

Charlene: I needed my data to be organized into an invertible matrix which means that I can flip it. So, if a car's named after something that's able to be flipped, that's so stupid. I don't want a car that flips over.

The makers of the Matrix (Toyota) probably do not expect the vast majority of consumers to make such a connotation. What both examples show is how the meaning attributed to different commodity items is connected in intricate ways to individuals' personal experiences. Because of this, meaning can never be standardized.

If we extrapolate from overly simplified examples such as Macs and matrices, and apply the same sort of semiotic significance to the thousands of objects we consume, we begin to see the enormity of the individual lifestyle project as discussed by Featherstone. Literally, everything we buy can be "read" as a sign of how individuals choose to define themselves. Because of the shifting meanings of the signs, this lifestyle project becomes ceaseless. The borders between lifestyle segments are porous and fluid and the meanings of objects are constantly in flux. Always present, too, are the broader social implications of consumption that Edwards (2000) refers to as the production and maintenance of a "quite insidious series of social divisions that operate as processes of inclusion and exclusion alike" (p. 156). In other words, consumer choices are rarely random and individualized, but instead represent conscious decisions about social group alignment.

For Bauman, another relational consequence of consumer culture is that it perpetuates an excessively individualistic conceptualization of society. He captures this critique with his notion of "subjectivity fetishism" wherein each of us must project an identity (or identities) that is created by the commodities we respectively choose to consume. These commodities represent the (unstable) system of signs discussed earlier. Echoing Sassatelli's (2007) statement that the individual must "positively" demonstrate the capacity to successfully choose among myriad commodities, Bauman critiques the individualism of this process. Successful "selection of services" is the "concern of the *individual* consumer: a task that must be *individually* undertaken and resolved with the help of consumer skills and patterns of action *individually* obtained" (p. 55). For Bauman, this excessive individualism begins to erode the sense of ethical responsibility to others that a society must have in order to function. Barber (2008) also acknowledges the excessive individualism perpetuated by consumer culture and expresses concern about its

political effects. Barber finds the conflation of "citizen" and "consumer" to be a troubling development of consumer culture. "Citizens cannot be understood as mere consumers because individual desire is not the same thing as common ground; public goods are something more than a collection of private wants" (p. 75). Further, Barber suggests that consumer culture has an infantilizing effect on individuals such that they become like/remain as narcissistic children driven primarily by the immediate satisfaction of short term wants. Both Bauman (2007) and Barber (2008) fear a world filled with apolitical individuals who have little sense of connection or responsibility to one another.

Along with the diminished sense of responsibility for other human beings, how consumer culture contributes to the construction of Other is a worthwhile topic of study for a Social Foundations classroom. Following Featherstone's analysis of signs, we can expect that the sign system plays a significant role in the construction process. This nexus offers a compelling place to research how individuals respond to these assessments of consumer culture—both in terms of their own lifestyle projects as well as how they interpret the commodity signs of others. As Schor (2006) describes, "younger generations are growing up in a more consumer-saturated world, a world in which market mediation is so much more important in defining their own identities, subjectivities and social dynamics" (p. 46). Schor's statement helps tie together the notion of the lifestyle project and sense of relationality that Bauman (and others) fear, and links these to consumer culture. I think this is a crucial issue for educators to consider, and Schor captures why consumer culture is relevant for Social Foundations classrooms.

5.3   3 EXEMPLARS

The above theoretical approaches to consumer culture sketch out the approach to consumer culture that I found helpful for a Social Foundations classroom. This approach suited my purpose in that it avoids some of the identity politics pitfalls detailed at the outset. My assumption was that nearly every student would resonate with this semiotic approach to consumer items. I expected that everyone would immediately recognize how commodity-based judgments inform their perception and assessment of others. I also expected that the idea of crafting their own projected identity via their commodity choices was a process that would ring true for students. In this sense, a general notion of lifestyle categories initially assumed the place of the standard demographic categories for initiating classroom discussions. This process is what I referred to earlier as using consumer culture as the filter through which to begin social justice conversations.

The next step was establishing and exploring the connections between students' commodity reads with the process of social stratification and reproduction of demographic hierarchies and power. In what follows, I offer 3 exemplars of different ways scholars have made connections between the semiotics of commodity items and social divisions. These approaches represent different ways consumer culture might be used as curriculum in a Social Foundations class.

5.3.1   Consumerism and the Poor

As one example, Bauman (2011, 2007) puts forth the idea that commodified responsibility ultimately renders the poor as little more than social undesirables. Bauman suggests that, in a privatized and hyperindividualized context, the concept of responsibility shifts away from

including a sense of responsibility to Other and becomes almost exclusively concerned with responsibility to the self in order to manage risk and pursue self-fulfillment. Similarly, when the state shifts social responsibilities away from public concerns and onto individuals, a logic of self-interest supersedes concern for the public good. Following this logic, any negative (or positive) social consequences or outcomes can be attributed to the individual. Bauman (2007) suggests, "In a deregulated and privatized setting which is focused on consumer concerns and pursuits, the responsibility for choices, the actions that follow the choices and the consequences of such actions rests fully on the shoulders of individual actors" (p. 89). We are no longer required to concern ourselves with an Other. In addition to the commodification of citizenship that Soper (2008) described, this situation has further consequences for those who do not or cannot participate fully in consumer culture. If we demonstrate our successful citizenship, in part, by projecting the appropriate image of economic contribution by purchasing goods, those who cannot do so also can be viewed as failed citizens. Bauman (2007) writes that this situation results in the "collateral casualties" of consumer culture wherein those individuals—what he sardonically refers to as the "underclass" (poor, often minorities)—who cannot demonstrate successful participation in consumer culture are considered failed consumers by the rest of society. "The poor for the society of consumers are totally useless. Decent and normal members of society—bona fide consumers—want nothing from them and expect nothing...the poor are not needed, and so they are unwanted" (p. 126). In our current social context, framed by narratives of choice and personal responsibility, poverty can now be linked to other forms of social deviance and criminalized as evidence of individual failure and irresponsible management of personal choices. Further, in a catch-22 twist, when the poor *do* demonstrate successful habits

of consumption as evidenced by nice cars, late model televisions, or expensive clothes, they are critiqued for foolish and irresponsible spending habits.

From a semiotic approach, there are at least two dimensions at play in Bauman's analysis. One is when individuals are constructed as being poor by their lack of appropriate (up to date, coherent to a non-poor lifestyle) consumer culture items. The other is when certain commodity items become coded as belonging to lifestyles that themselves represent frequently denigrated categories or demographics—basically any urban or rural poor demographic. Unpacking why and how certain lifestyle connotations are produced and maintained becomes an exploration of cultural power (where do the lifestyle hierarchies come from?), as well as an interrogation of individual normative assumptions about different lifestyles (why do I hold the biases I hold?). Both types of questions are central for the Social Foundations field.

5.3.2 Images and Cultural Narratives

A second example is Pauly (2003), who uses advertising images and offers a different curricular possibility. She used student interpretations of visual imagery to explore how "meaning is negotiated by viewers through culturally learned lenses, socio-cultural contexts, and embodied experiences" (p. 264). Her study examined the way students drew on different cultural narratives as they interpreted images related primarily to gender and race. Students chose different images and responded to various questions related to their interpretations of the images. Images ranged widely from female Disney characters, to GI Joe dolls, to paintings from the Harlem Renaissance. Pauly studied how students "reasoned about how images might influence people to think, feel, do, or imagine their social identities and histories" (267). Her purpose was oriented toward demonstrating a need for reflective practice to interpreting visual culture in hopes that students might be more aware of how power operates and informs the meanings students

attributed to the images. Pauly concludes by suggesting that the ubiquity of visual advertising imagery initially renders the images seemingly trivial, which reinforces the need to explore interpretations as a way to unpack students' unspoken and unexamined assumptions about those images.

5.3.3 Political Advertising

A third use of consumer culture as curriculum I find helpful is Giroux's (1994) analysis of United Colors of Benetton advertising photographs. This series of photographs were highly provocative and notable in that, other than the Benetton logo, they made no other reference to Benetton clothing at all. The photographs were intended as some sort of political statement, but one could never be quite sure of the meaning. For example, one picture is simply the bloody pants and t-shirt from a soldier in the Bosnian war. Another is of a nun kissing a priest. Many of the images play with questions of race. One image is of two hands, one black and one white, handcuffed together. A different picture shows the naked torso of a Black woman with a dark complexion breastfeeding a light complected White baby. A third picture shows a Black baby boy hugging a White baby girl, but the boy's hair is formed into subtle horn shapes. Unlike the types of images Pauly (2003) suggested are frequently considered trivial (normal, everyday media imagery), these images are clearly meant to provoke some reaction. Giroux's critiques of these images center primarily on the decontextualized nature of the images and what he considers the aestheticization of politics. However, Giroux does not overlook the clear politicized nature of the representations. "Isolated from historical and social contexts, Benetton's images are stripped of their political possibilities and reduced to a spectacle of fascination, horror and terror that appears to privatize one's response to social events" (p. 22).

This echoes Bauman's (2011) work theorizing the idea that responsibility for public welfare has been commodified and individualized.

These images rely upon the fact that the viewer carries some assumptions of social divisions and underlying social inequities, but it is unclear what, exactly, the images may mean (if anything). Therefore, one's interpretations of the different representations in the photographs are imbued with a politics of interpretation. Regardless of whether one feels compelled to buy Benetton because of the advertising campaign, exploring one's imposed meaning on such images does speak to one's vision of the social order. Sandikci (2001) writes that the collapse of politics into a consumer exchange "constructs advertisements as a pedagogical site, in which knowledge is produced, values are articulated, identities are shaped and communities are formed" (p. 313). This reasserts again that the notion of the lifestyle category is a salient metric of social division, and that these seemingly commonsense categories are structured, constrained and interpreted from within a broader landscape already instilled with entrenched social hierarchies.

5.4   CONSUMER CULTURE AS CURRICULUM

I have tried to describe how I imagined a semiotic approach to consumer culture items as a filter through which to begin discussions around difference in a Social Foundations classroom. The premise is that seemingly mundane conversations about meanings attributed to various consumer items from different lifestyle categories can be unpacked to move conversation toward questions of demographic categories and social hierarchies related to race, class, gender and sexuality. More specifically, unpacking one's interpretations can lead to conversations about one's perceived relationship with others. Or, returning to the notion of boundaries that began this

chapter, one's interpretation of symbolic boundaries is implicitly linked to the social boundaries one has constructed.

In the course, I used three written assignments to access these ideas of social boundaries. These assignments were a consumer culture autobiography, biweekly reading journals, and a lifestyle magazine analysis.

The instructions for the consumer culture autobiography directed students to first think about what image of themselves they hope to convey to others that they encounter (at work, in the street, going out) in daily life. Secondly, they were asked to identify the places they shop and the items they purchase which they feel transmit their desired image. Thirdly, they were asked to reflect on how closely they connect their sense of self to the items that they purchase. This assignment was given to them on the first day of class. The purpose was to familiarize them with several of the concepts to be discussed in class. For example, I wanted them to be familiar with the idea of reading consumer culture as a text about which they have normative interpretations. I also wanted them to reflect upon their own lifestyle project in the way that Featherstone (1990) describes. Finally, I wanted them to think about the connection between their sense of self and the seemingly mundane choice of what to wear. Edwards (2000) suggests that this choice reflects a choice about both social and cultural identification, and I wanted students to reflect on that idea. Finally, this assignment functioned as a barometer test for me. I wondered whether the theoretical approach to consumer culture I adopted would resonate with the students and make sense to them.

The second assignment—the reading journals—were simply short responses to the class readings and class discussions. These were not intended to be polished pieces of writing. Instead, I used these to help prepare class content to address the issues that arose in student

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journals. These texts functioned as a place for students to express opinions about course content and highlight the issues most salient to them. Very often these pieces contained anecdotes from students' lives. The readings or discussions would spark some thought or memory and students would narrate a related personal story. The content of these journals was very broad, but because they were grounded in class readings and discussion, they often addressed questions of difference as demarcated by consumer culture.

The final assignment used for this dissertation was a lifestyle magazine analysis. The idea for this assignment came from a course several years earlier. During a discussion about marketing, a student noted that when an advertisement markets a product he does not want, he immediately recognizes the manipulation of the advertising. But, when he does want the product, he often forgets about and is not conscious of how he is being manipulated. For this assignment I wanted to work with that idea, but also incorporate how one feels about the images portrayed in the advertising for others. Elliot (2004) considers this moment (when individuals assess and compare what they will wear against what some others might wear) as a site of the "self-in-action" (p. 137). In other words, this is a moment when individuals negotiate their imagined or desired identity and how they hope to be perceived by others. As Holloway (2011) notes, there is an enormous amount of literature examining lifestyle magazines and their representations of gender, race, sexuality, and youth. The thrust of these studies assumes that individuals conform to some degree to the representations of the lifestyles they imagine for themselves. In my case, I was interested in how students analyzed their interpretations of the lifestyles portrayed in magazines they did not perceive as being directed to them. In other words, I wanted them to analyze their response to the lifestyles of others as a sort of re-creation of the self-in-action.

For this assignment, students could select any lifestyle magazine they wanted. Many students selected urban hip hop magazines and gay magazines. Several of the women selected magazines targeting the young male demographic. Other magazines targeted the big and tall demographic, hunters and, what one student referred to as "the yoga crowd."

One of the central questions was to connect their thoughts and feelings about the images to how they feel about real people they encounter who represent that lifestyle. My initial idea was that this would introduce the notion of the production of difference. This did appear to happen for some students. What emerged for other students was more akin to the normative evaluation of those others who would be attracted to the lifestyle (e.g. "who could want to be like this!?").

5.5   CONCLUSION

Along with the interviews described earlier, the data for this dissertation came from these three assignments. These four sources of data generated a significant amount of written text. When Paulston (1992) offered a basic introduction to conducting social cartography, he suggested several basic steps. The first is to identify a coherent body of text. Secondly, identify a conceptual theme to guide the analysis of that text. The objective is to name the range of different positions represented in that body of text. Finally, the mapper has to conceive of a field into which that range of positions can be plotted. For example, he mapped different theoretical orientations to development that appeared in an international education journal. As another example, Nicholson-Goodman (2001) mapped literature relating to environmental education, and Nicholson-Goodman (2009) mapped different conceptions of citizenship that appeared in public

news outlets in the aftermath of 9-11. In my case, because of its relational implications, I used

the concept of stance to interpret my data. In the next chapter, I turn to how I analyzed these

texts.

6.0   RELATIONAL STANCE ANALYSIS

Stance always invokes, explicitly or implicitly, presupposed systems of sociocultural value, while and the same time contributing to the enactment and reproduction of those systems. (Du Bois, 2007, p. 173)

What is "said" is always said against the background of what is "unsaid"—what is explicit is always grounded in what is left implicit. (Fairclough, 2003, p. 17)

Conceptually, stance is defined and operationalized differently according to differing research aims, and even within the same source. For example, Christian and Merrill (2009) use the terms "profiles," "approaches," "perspectives," "domain," and "categories" to introduce their moral stances (p. 1ff). From the field of teacher education, Berghoff (1997) addresses stance as a "position" or "perspective" that one assumes. However, she does not clearly distinguish between whether assuming different stances results in changed perspectives, or whether a stance is itself a perspective. In the field of sociolinguistics, there has been a recent effort to more clearly define stance. In these cases, some analysis of stance is explicitly grammatical (Kärkkäinen, 2007), whereas other studies investigate stances from a perspective that examines questions of identity and ideologies (Jousmäki, 2011).

Englebretson (2007) is useful for beginning to think about stance when he offers that stance is an interdisciplinary concept that crosses throughout linguistics, and also appears in education, sociology and anthropology. As a starting point he offers that stance is a "conceptual entity" that "people actively engage in (i.e. stancetaking)" and this "happens in discourse" (p. 3). Jaffe (2009) adds to this idea by writing that stance is fundamentally about positionality.

One of the primary goals of a sociolinguistic approach to stance is to explore how the taking up of particular kinds of stances is habitually and conventionally associated with particular subject positions (social roles and identities; notions of personhood), and interpersonal and social relationships (including relations of power) more broadly. (p. 4)

The intention of stance research that Jaffe describes aligns with my efforts to analyze student text (written and spoken) as a place where individuals position themselves in relation to others by the stances they take when addressing different dimensions of Otherness. For this reason, employing stance analysis as a methodological tool complements the aims of this project to explore relational language.

6.1   META-LINGUISTIC STANCES

As both Englebretson (2007) and Jaffe (2009) show, there are endless possibilities for different types of stance analysis at the explicitly conversational level. However, I am interested in what Jaffe (2009) calls a "metalinguistic" analysis of stance. The idea with this metalinguistic approach is that the researcher is less concerned with the specific grammatical arrangement of spoken utterances, but instead is focused on how stances (in speech or writing) carry normative assumptions about the object toward which the stance is directed. These assumptions then can reflect, create and/or reify social positioning.

The study by Jaworski and Thurlow (2009) is an example of this metalinguistic approach to stance. Their study examined travel literature for examples of what they termed an "elitist" stance. They state that they were not looking for explicit "attitudinal statements flagged by phrases such as 'I believe,' 'I think', I feel, 'I hate', 'I agree' and so on'' (p. 220). Instead, they considered stancetaking as an *inferred* social act that positions the self and "says something

about [one's] view of the world" (p. 220). In their case, the text they analyzed for "elitist" stances was travel brochures and advertising that invoked elitist social positioning by appealing to norms and values recognizable as upper class. For example, they cite a brochure advertising beach-front lodging which attracts the type of guests that read the newspaper and "start from the front, not the back" (p. 220). Their broader goals were to examine the way "elite subjectivities and feelings are enacted" by "sets of stancetaking positions" invoked by different discursive representations (p. 222).

Their article serves as a type of model for me in that they linked stance to a notion of incentivized subject positions by looking at normative assessments and evaluations of travel that emerged from the texts of various vacation brochures. These normative statements were then characterized in different ways such that, taken together, the text conveyed what they called the elitist stance.

I am concerned with how stance can be used to analyze the way individuals align with what Jaffe (2009) calls "ready-made (ideological)" cultural scripts. She suggests stancetaking is "performative," which is a perspective that views identity as "discursively constructed rather than fixed" (p. 11). Within this view, the same principles of stancetaking apply as discussed above—intersubjective positioning, normative statements—but the analysis moves from the immediate lexical level to what she calls "issues of ideology and power, anchored in specific cultural and social contexts" (p. 20). In a statement that evokes the notion of discursively "incentivized" and "legitimized" subject positions she writes:

> culturally and historically specific social, institutional, and political formations structure people's access (as individuals and as categories of persons) to particular linguistic stances (especially valued ones such as authority, legitimacy etc.) as well as shape the stances that are attributed to them. (p. 20)

I take this to mean that, at a metalinguistic level, stance analysis can be used to investigate the type of questions I am interested in for this project—namely, that stance can offer a way to represent relationality and, consequently, counter individualistic assumptions.

For my purposes, I consider stance as a linguistic position one takes which situates oneself in relation to others vis-à-vis an appeal to a normative understanding of sociocultural standards. I use this metalinguistic notion of stance because of its relational implications. By taking a stance toward some person or object, one assumes some degree of relation with that person or group of persons. Stance is also a metaphor of action—one *takes* a stance. Because of the normative dimensions of evaluative and affective stances, stances are not simply passive observations. They can demonstrate how one actively interprets and ascribes meaning to the social world. As described by the authors above, the stances that one takes imply something about one's perception of self and one's perception of others. In addition to the relational qualities of stance, the normativity of stances offers a way to explore the warrants one may have for any particular stance. In this way, stance complements the aims of complicating logics of justification for who or what is considered neutral or legitimate, which is a fundamental concern of social justice work. In this study, the two metalinguistic stances I formulate are stances of *reinscription* and *interruption*. In what follows, I outline the different dimensions of each stance using theoretic texts and student texts as exemplars of some feature or characteristic of each stance. I grouped texts according to strategies that together formulated stances that *reinscribed* or that *interrupted* different dimensions of neoliberal relationality. I am interested in those rhetorical strategies used by students as they speak and write about their sense of relationality across difference. In each case, after the student text I offer my interpretation of that text.

Following the texts, I have consolidated the dimensions of each stance into a chart which outlines the basic categories of each stance.

6.2 THE STANCE OF REINSCRIPTION

Hytten and Warren (2003) conducted a similar study using written and spoken text from a Social Foundations classroom. In their course, they were troubled by what they considered student "protection of whiteness's dominance" (p. 70). Using classroom texts, they developed what they termed "rhetorical strategies" that reinscribed whiteness. They formulated categories of texts which, taken together, represented the different ways their white students responded to complicated race-related issues. They were particularly interested in the ways student responses offered students a way out of having to directly confront their own complicity with whiteness. Their study speaks to this project in the way they interpreted characteristics of their White students' text which reproduced a system of racial hierarchy. In my case, I am interested in the way student speech reproduces what I call neoliberal relationality. To that end, I named four dimensions—personal responsibility, TINA (there is no alternative), individualized experience and reified classifications—that together comprise the reinscription stance.

6.2.1 Personal Responsibility

As has been well documented by scholars, a central tenet of neoliberalism is the notion of personal responsibility (Harvey, 2005; Olssen et al., 2004; Peters, 2001; Ross & Gibson, 2007). The continuing evolution of this concept is one of the more salient characteristics of neoliberal relationality. Expectedly, students often appeal to narrow understandings of personal responsibility when engaging with problematic cultural issues. For example, in response to an

article that addressed the idea of young women's fashion magazines increasingly marketing "sexy" clothing and make-up, a student Nicole, wrote,

> Though [the] consumer culture has strung out of control in more ways than one, it is also the fault of parents in lacking implementation of values. Parents need to enforce to children the importance of respecting their bodies and the bodies of others. It is the promotion of sex that will lead to emotional problems, sexual fantasizing and sexual abuse. If we want our seven year old girls to be sex symbols we might as well throw them out on the street corner and have them learn to fend for themselves as prostitutes. Parents and other adults who recognize the disgraceful behavior that is being displayed need to take a stand and fight for the rights of their children; we need to stand for better values.

One of the first things I am struck by is what appears to be a "blame the victims" sentiment. The student considers it taken for granted that "consumer culture" is too much, yet it still remains the parent's fault if they do not resist consumer culture pressure. Young girls are almost without agency according to this statement unless they learn to respect themselves. There is also a question of "from whom" one needs protection (from abuse or fantasizing). In other words there is no naming of, for example, men as aggressors. Men remain invisible and the causes of this "disgraceful" situation are primarily women or their parents.

Similarly, responding to an article about consumption, Kimi wonders,

> Do we really expect children to be less materialistic, when there is a society of materialistic adults walking around? There must be a reason that Americans are up to their eyeballs in credit card debt. At some point the 24 year-old graduate student may have kids, and are we naïve enough to believe that she won't spread her misguided values to her children? Oops I forgot! We live in a society that places no accountability on the parent. Oh blame the company selling the products, and not the parents that are ignorant enough to buy the items. I am truly worried about the nation as a whole and the future of this country.

Again, there is a strong blame-the-parents statement. Interestingly, both texts hint at the notion of macro-scale marketing forces, yet immediately dismiss the idea that anyone but the individual should be held accountable for maintaining some (normative) idea of values. This text also uses the language of crisis to suggest everything culturally is going wrong. Crisis language is not new, but has been theorized as a particularly useful neoliberal strategy for justifying privatization of public goods and removal of welfare programs at a policy level. Crisis language is also used to justify increased repression of socially marginalized demographics (immigrants, for example) as a way to ensure social order. Another feature of this interpersonal crisis language is that the authors of these texts position themselves as being responsible individuals. Implicit in their statements is the notion that "others out there" in the world are somehow irresponsible and, by recognizing the shortcomings and lack of responsibility of others, these students situate themselves as the guardians of decency, values and morality.

Part of demonstrating personal responsibility also includes the rhetorical strategy of distancing oneself from those deemed irresponsible. In this case, Kimi empathizes with the men in her building as they struggle with "obscene" students.

> Students dress in scandalous clothing to attract as much attention as possible. Male teachers working with me in this atmosphere have told me that to not be accused of anything they only look at students' shoulders and above. Going down the hall is another site in itself because mini-skirts and bending over to get things in locker is bordering on obscene.

There is a lot of relational positioning in this quote. The student separates herself from the other, younger female students in the way she characterizes their improper behavior. Then the quote has a double move wherein she blames the girls for dressing in an inappropriate way, but also she represents the "obscene" scene in a way that invokes yet is sympathetic of the male's visual

perspective. This appears to victimize the men who are forced to endure the situation and have

assumed the responsibility to avoid accusations by only looking at students' shoulders and face.

Much as the earlier quotes, this student positions herself as possessing personal responsibility

along with a commonsense moral code.

Another characteristic of personal responsibility is what I termed the "good Samaritan"

sense of responsibility to others. These texts emerged from students responding to a question

about their sense of responsibility to individuals they do not know. Here, Rachel offers that,

> Yeah, there have been a lot of times I've helped people out that I don't know. I'll give
> spare change to people or open doors for people. There's one time this older lady was
> having a hard time on the street and collapsed, and I walked her back to her house with
> somebody else. I don't know what was wrong with her. I was in England and was
> supposed to be going to a show, but I saw this lady and she needed help so I helped her.
> So, if someone needs help, I'll help them.

Charlene expressed a similar understanding,

> If I see someone I don't know and they seem upset, it still bothers me. If someone's in
> trouble I'll stop to help. I don't spend that much time thinking about others. But, if
> there's something I can do to help. Financially, I can give money to help a kid have
> breakfast that doesn't have any food. Those ads make me feel guilty. I feel like I don't
> have enough money to give to all the causes or people that would need it. I'm more
> likely to do something than give financially to help someone I don't know. Like if
> someone you don't know drops everything they're carrying, I'll help them. Or if I see an
> accident, I'll call 911.

I immediately think about the dystopian implications of this notion of responsibility if these

situations represent the extent of interpersonal responsibility. I consider these bare minimum

acts of responsibility that might be more aptly described as obligation or duty. Perhaps more

notable is the commodification of responsibility that appears in these quotes. Both students

immediately respond from a financial assistance angle. The sentiment seems to be that responsibility to other people is only necessary insofar as one literally comes physically or virtually face to face with another person who requires some type of assistance.

When prompted to think about responsibility to people not in immediately visible distress in one's direct path of travel (a la the Good Samaritan), a student, Ellen, referred to the Haitian earthquake:

> I don't think I have a responsibility to people unless I'm actually working with these people. It depends on the situation: for instance when that whole situation with Haiti went down, I thought we should be over there helping. But the second I found out about that flood in Nashville and nobody knew about it until weeks later, that's when my frame went to "why aren't we helping the people here instead of all the people way over there and they are not really us". That's probably selfish in a way, but I feel like this is our home and we should be protecting our home first before we go out and spread our wings to help everyone else. We need to have priorities to who we are. I'm not opposed to helping people. I'm all for it. Depending on the situation we should help the less fortunate; but when our own people aren't being helped, that drives me nuts.

Again, responsibility continues to be framed as help-oriented, but this quote varies from the above two in that it clearly demarcates responsibility along lines of nationalism. This student invokes an international political boundary notion of "us" and "them" and prioritizes according to that in-group affiliation. The relational implications of this are again to commodify responsibility and to form a need-based hierarchy. Defined as primarily monetary assistance, these understandings of responsibility suggest a power imbalance and seem akin to the notion of white man's burden. Further, interpersonal responsibility only becomes necessary when the individual fence of negative freedom is breached by the unfortunate.

Another feature of the personal responsibility category is what I called the lint brush rant. For lack of a better descriptor, the lint brush metaphor suggests a blunt coverage that picks up strands of anything with which it comes into contact. Similarly, the lint brush rant covers a wide ground of issues, but in a rather chaotically organized rant. This student, Monica, had had her fill of classroom discussions pertaining to systemic inequity, and wrote this journal in response to the class conversation.

> Some kids don't have drive and do not want to fully succeed to their potential. They are the ones that work the low paying jobs and strive for nothing more. If you think good schooling will eliminate poverty, you are wrong. There are so many other factors to poverty outside of the schools control. Some people like to feed off the government for as long as the government will let them. The war on poverty is a joke! There is no war. If there was, then what is the government doing? Making the people on welfare get jobs would be a good start. How about paying them to go to a technical school or get a college degree. Here is a good one, make them pass drug tests to receive their welfare. I guarantee that 80% would fail. Why should my tax money support people that do not want to live and work to their full potential and are a waste to society? They are on welfare but always seem to have new shoes on, brand new SUV's (with rims of course), and can hang out all day in the streets. There are people that want to contribute to society and those that don't; schooling will not make a difference to those who don't.

This is the type of statement that presents difficulty for furthering a conversation. The text reads as a grab-bag of political talking points that only hang together in the context of several underlying assumptions related to government, poverty and race. A key relational dimension of this text is that she is clearly referring to Blacks. Initially one might assume she is referring to poor people in general, but by referencing new shoes and saying "with rims of course" she signals she means Black people. She attributes to them a broad range of undesirable

characteristics (lazy, poor, drug using, apathetic, irresponsible with money, etc.) that she condemns and does not want to support.

The basic characteristics the above students attribute to the personally irresponsible fit well with what Bauman (2007) refers to as the "underclass" (p. 122). He uses this term to capture the way social undesireables, very often the poor, have been recast as being a generally useless social burden. He distinguishes the term *underclass* from the term *working class* in that working class acknowledges the socially beneficial role of working. Even *lower class* he suggests offers the possibility of upward mobility. In contrast and in reading the student's quote again, it appears as if this socially irredeemable underclass demographic has no legitimate role, and serves only to, as Bauman writes, "feed on the life juices of the other classes" (p. 123). Even though the third student appears to be limiting her commentary to Blacks, the underclass can encompass many different demographics. The sweeping moral implication of the personal responsibility narrative offers the possibility to lump any perceived problematic demographic (Bauman lists the homeless, undocumented immigrants, drug addicts, single mothers, the poor, and school dropouts) into a single, socially worthless underclass. Importantly though, he writes that,

> plunging them all into one category is not the verdict of objective facts. Collapsing them into one entity, charging them all collectively with parasitism and harboring malice and unspeakable dangers for the rest of society is an exercise in *value-laden choice* not *description.* (p. 125)

The notion of value-laden choice introduces a challenge to one's personal assumptions. For a Social Foundations classroom, this suggests that examining the warrants for one's assumptions can complicate the perception that one's assumptions are simply descriptions. Importantly, this introduces the concept that one's own experiences do not necessarily represent high-quality

warrants. How we interpret and narrate our own experiences, then, becomes another rhetorical strategy with implications for stance.

6.2.2 Individualized Experience

A strategy for narrating personal experience that reinscribes the status-quo is one that privileges the individual experience and the taken-for-grantedness of its truth. A student's personal experience becomes the warrant for any opinion, and any opinion is thereby justified if it corresponds to one's individual experience. The students read the chapter from Bauman (2007) where he outlines his theory of the underclass. To impress upon the reader the disastrous social and relational consequences of such a socio-cultural development, Bauman's writing appears to suggest what he is in fact critiquing (i.e. he appears to write very harshly about those in the underclass). After reading the article, Madeline wrote that,

> The article mentioned a lot of disturbing but somewhat true points about poor people.
> They say poor people are totally useless. I never thought of society without poor people,
> I have just come to terms with the fact that there will always be poor people in the world.
> I feel that the majority of people turn their heads as they walk by a homeless man
> standing on the corner collecting money and ignore them anyways, so in a sense we act
> like they don't exist anyways.

She explicitly validates Bauman's notion of the underclass by considering his description of the underclass as "somewhat true". I find it interesting how she extrapolates her experiences and attributes them to all of us (that presumably aren't in the underclass). She experiences the homeless man as mostly a nuisance to ignore and, maybe because actually writing that opinion induces some feeling of guilt, she changes from the "I" pronoun and begins to speak for some "we". Her experiences are not examined, but instead are assumed to be normal such that "we" all share it. Her experiences then become an acceptable relational description of how "we" act

toward "them". There is also a strong element of matter of factness here. It is what it is. This is another rather convenient strategy to avoid an analysis from a systemic perspective.

A related, but different dimension of the interpretation of personal experience is when personal experiences appear to close one to the possibility of relationships with certain others. In this case, this student's experience with people on welfare at her field placement reifies commonsense assumptions about people on welfare. Sarah writes that,

> This school was located inside a gated community whose members were on welfare and living in section 8 housing. Before working with the students in this community and witnessing the families living there, I had a very different perception of welfare. I thought that it was a good system in which people could get assistance while looking for work. My outlook was very positive. I have a very different perspective now. I saw the system being abused and a continuous cycle of poverty stem from it. Most people in the community did not work and did not encourage their children to do well in school. The system has failed.

Again this highlights another manifestation of personal responsibility, but most significant to me is that she does not seem to question her assumptions about the people living there. She perceives their behavior quite negatively, and makes the assumption that they are at fault for the failure of the system. Her perspective draws from dominant narratives and she doesn't ask why individuals might "abuse" the system. The blame here is at the individual level. The presumption is that the welfare system is perfectly fine if only the recipients would behave properly. In other words, there is an implicit suggestion that the individuals in this community are faulty people, which again assumes a relationship between poverty and moral deficiency. The result of her experience in this community appears to preclude future reconsideration of her interpretation.

Together, these quotes suggest that privileging one's personal experience and using the interpretation of one's experience as the sole warrant for one's assumption reifies social boundaries between demographics. In both cases, there are apparent negative relational consequences that result from the students' interpretation of their experiences, yet in both cases they attribute their interpretations to those outside themselves. In the first case, she assumes her feelings are shared by all. In the second, she assumes the personal failings she witnessed to be endemic of all individuals who use the welfare system.

6.2.3   Reified Classifications

Another dimension of the reinscription stance that appeared in student text is what Maxine Greene (1988) refers to as "naming" (p. 5). By naming, Greene refers to the ability of an individual or collective to name the social, cultural and systemic obstacles that represent a constraint or limit on their quest for freedom. When writing about early women writers, Greene suggests that many authors addressed the daily minutia of child-rearing and household maintenance as unfulfilling, but did not name men or patriarchy as an obstacle to their fulfillment. She considers the issue of naming to be a significant and necessary part of resistance to a dominant, repressive force. Greene borrows from Virginia Woolf to describe these constraining forces as "the cotton wool of daily life" (p. 60). This idea reappeared to me often throughout the course. In student texts, they frequently do not attempt to name the source of that which they find problematic. Often times, students address a problematic issue, yet do not name sources of the issue. Here Charlene is responding to the topic of female sexualization and writes,

> By inundating us with advertising, we are making sexy a goal for kids, especially girls, there is an argument that sexualizing children can lead to more abuse of children. The major issue is that dressing in a sexy way, a girl who is trying to put out an image of

being cool or mature will actually be projecting an image of wanting to be desired. The image that kids might be associating with being independent and trying to project will be "read" by others as "I am seeking sexual attention". The effect of this on a girl's self-esteem might be that if she is not getting sexual attention, she is not valued of validated as a person. I'm imagining trying to explain to a young teenage girl that wearing "that" outfit puts off this type of image, which can lead people to treat her in a sexualized way.

This quote is exemplary of the type of quote I have in mind when thinking about "naming". This student identifies a problematic issue, but what's missing to me here is any notion of men. At the risk of nitpicking, it seems that an effect of not naming men or patriarchy here is to avoid a conversation about the source of the issue. As in some of the earlier quotes about the same topic of over sexualization of women and girls, the responsibility lies with the parents and the girls to somehow resist the trappings of linking personal worth to sexual appeal. She uses the word "people" at the end which seems to suggest that there is no pattern of which people might be more or less likely to regard a girl in a sexualized way. I am reminded of the ways feminist scholars have problematized the "stranger danger" narrative by demonstrating that known men in the home are much more likely than random strangers to abuse children. For example, Cowburn and Dominelli (2001) begin their article by explicitly stating they will use the "he" pronoun because males are overwhelmingly the perpetrators.

6.2.4   There Is No Alternative

I organized another clustering of text around what I referred to as TINA (There Is No Alternative). This again is a fairly well established notion in literature that addresses neo-liberalism (Saltman, 2007). It refers to the idea espoused by Margaret Thatcher that, as all other political arrangements have supposedly proven themselves faulty, free market capitalism is the only conceivable remaining option. I borrowed this term and situated student texts in this

category when the feel of their text seemed to invoke a sense of matter-of-factness in the face of what the student might otherwise consider undesirable. In other words, this reinscription strategy is when students appeared to accept some particular social arrangement because "that's just the way it is." For example, when interpreting with other students in class the possible meanings of a Benetton advertisement, Ellen wrote,

> I interpreted the photo the way most people would perceive an interracial relationship. The black guy is maybe untrustworthy, and corrupting the purity the white girl has within. What I realized about my interpretations was the negativity of it. I saw it how it actually is. People are going to judge anything that seems out of the accepted social realm. Interracial relationships, gay relationships, skin color, are all things that may be becoming more prevalent in society but it is something that will never be fully accepted as a social norm.

She seems to suggest that a racist social judgment of the image is not acceptable, yet also seems resigned to its inevitability. The implication is that there will always be social hierarchies organized according to the standard categories. There will always be marginalized groups and there's nothing to be done about that simple fact. Her conclusion has an interesting paradox that recognizes cultural changes occur, yet despite awareness of these changes, she seems to reify traditional arrangements as the only ones that will ever be legitimate.

This strategy of matter-of-factness is similar to what Hytten and Warren (2003) term the "discourse of the real vs. ideal" (p. 83). In this scenario students consider it too impractical to enact social change. Idealistic conversations can occur within the confines of the classroom, but to actually change the "real" world is unlikely and nearly impossible. This strategy is also akin to what Boler and Zembylas (2003) refer to as the "natural response/biological model" in response to difference (p. 113). According to this model, fear of difference is a normal, natural biological response for humans. They suggest that, whether or not such fear is biological, this

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naturalizing of fear in response to difference can be used by dominant groups to justify marginalization and repression of minority groups. These ideas suggest a resignation to the idea that there is no alternative to whatever the current social hierarchies may be.

Another related strategy addressed by Hytten and Warren (2003) is when White students compare their beliefs to a more extreme position in order to minimize the apparent racism of their own position. The effect is to suggest that the students' own position is, in light of the comparison, not really so bad and therefore not a significant issue. In my course, this comparison strategy also had the effect of de-problematizing troubling issues. In this matter-of-fact vein, after a discussion of the sexualization of women and girls, another student, Jennifer, off-handedly states,

> When we were talking in class about Miley Cyrus, all I could think was about how there was a lot of talk about how her new video was out and it was pretty scandalous as well as the front cover of her new cd. I thought it would be something horrible but then I saw the video and I didn't think it was as bad as people made it out to be. She wasn't as scantily clad as people had made it sound and she is now 17. Yes 17 still isn't very old, but nowadays, it's something I expect from people. You see people who are only 14 or 15 dressing like she does and no one really says anything about them.

The tone here is a resigned "it is what it is". There is nothing to be done about this issue. This student goes a step further by coming to terms with and accepting what she considers to be unacceptable. She recognizes that 17 "isn't very old" but suggests it isn't that bad because it is not nearly as young as 15. Her strategy of comparing the situation to something she considers worse functions as a sort of justification for her nonchalance and for the fact that a hyper-sexualized ad with a 17 year old exists in the first place.

6.3   SUMMARY

The above rhetorical strategies together comprise what I am calling a stance of *reinscription*. Table 1 below offers an organization of these different strategies. Certainly, the dimensions of the stance that I identified do not exhaust the numbers of possible rhetorical strategies that could fit within a stance of reinscription, but these represent recognizable strategies which reify neoliberal relationality. The relational implication of the reinscription stance is to further entrench individualism and offer different ways for students to distance themselves from others. In the context of social justice concerns, this stance represents an individualistic and micro-level approach to justifying disregard for social and cultural inequities and for espousing asocial justice approaches to change.

Reinscription

Personal Responsibility
• Language of crisis (others are nuts)
• Lint brush rant
  -Conflation of issues
  -Appeal to dominant narratives
• Blame- name demographic as complicit in own subjection
• Good Samaritan
  -responsibility is to help only when immediately visible
	Individualize Experience
	• Personal experience which closes
	• Rethink relational self with certainty
	• Extrapolate experiences (speaks for all)
	• Alterity across difference

TINA (There is no Alternative) • Complicity with norm • Legitimization of norm • Matter-of factness/ it is what it is	**Reified classifications** • Essentializing boundaries • Self-commodification • Making invisible dominant group (neutralizing)

Figure 1: The Stance of Reinscription

6.4   THE STANCE OF INTERRUPTION

Standing in contrast to rhetorical strategies that comprise a stance of reinscription, there are other strategies which begin to interrupt a sense of neoliberal relationality. The dimensions of this stance interrupt the stance of reinscription. In the context of a Social Foundations classroom, these strategies complicate commonsense responses to cultural, political and individualized narratives which can justify and legitimize the types of social injustices that are addressed in the Foundations of Education field. In that sense, the dimensions and characteristics of the interruption stance represent a counter stance to the stance of reinscription. As above, I interpreted four dimensions of the stance of interruption: interpersonal responsibility, problematizing language, contextualized experience and imagining possibilities.

6.4.1 Interpersonal Responsibility

The neoliberal version of personal responsibility offers a powerful narrative by which individuals can resist conversations that challenge systemic inequities, but students do not always appeal to that narrative. For example, Jean's memory of a semester-long field experience complicates mainstream explanations for poverty as well as the student's previously held assumptions.

> I do think there are people who are in a situation where they are dependent upon welfare due to circumstances beyond their control. During one of my undergrad field experiences I worked an extremely poor district in which all of the children received free lunches. They had a parent education night every week where they offered workshops for parents. Going to some of those parent nights and talking to some of those parents I learned that many of them had missed out on opportunities as children that I took for granted. Some didn't have access to computers or know how to use computers to search for jobs online (and I was embarrassed to admit that I do not know if there was a library within the community). Some single parents couldn't afford child care and didn't have family or

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friends who could care for their children when they worked. I don't think that any of those people chose the situation that they were in.

She recognizes and names disparity of opportunity, which is a powerful counter to the idea of personal responsibility. She also begins to touch on notions of structural inequity, which opens space to move analysis to a systemic level and away from an individualized "work hard" assessment. This student shows how her eyes were opened to the difficult material conditions (no library, no child care) many individuals face, and she does this without resorting to a personal responsibilization of conduct (ie. don't have kids). Also, she appropriately challenges the Horatio Alger notion of agency, where heroic effort and material acquisition is the only marker of success. Her text instead represents a story of individual agency where people work to improve their situation by going to the workshops, despite the structural and systemic obstacles they face.

Different from the above vignette where the student encounters a situation previously unknown to her (poverty) that others are forced to contend with, the following student, Laura, offers her story and uses her experience to complicate many commonsense cultural assumptions about poverty and personal responsibility.

My parents got welfare when I was a kid. I had dinner because of food stamps while growing up. So I think I'm a little more attuned to the idea that just because people are poor, it doesn't mean they aren't contributing or don't want to contribute. I lived the experience of watching people who are impoverished trying desperately to find jobs, or trying desperately to find transportation to those jobs once they had them. These kinds of problems that unless people experience that or hear about them, they don't appreciate. But it's not as simple as "get a job". If it were that simple, we could eradicate poverty in a year. It's important that we give poor people a voice so that we can look at specific places in our society where things seems to be breaking down and specific places where we're failing. I think those people, given the opportunity to participate more fully, could

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help us devise constructive solution to a lot of problems. But unfortunately, not only do we not give those people a voice, but our society is very structured to exclude them completely. Not just from politics and civic engagement, but even from basic cultural and social engagement. Talking to them, aside from very basic giving you an idea of your privilege—which I think is a very important thing to learn—It was important for me to understand that I am significantly more privileged than other people, even if I'm not from a wealthy background. If you don't understand the privilege that contributed to your success, you're much more likely to marginalize people that haven't achieved the same success. You need to appreciate the way society contributes to and allows some to progress while holding back other people.

Much the same as the above, this highlights problematic systemic issues. Importantly, she resists situating her family story within the "bootstrap" narrative of individual effort. Rather, she moves to a consideration of her relative privilege despite conditions of material deprivation. She also subverts the notion that poverty is primarily a result of lack of information or of education. Instead, the poor are positioned as people with insight to solve systemic failings. Finally, I think the way she complicates the notion of civic engagement is helpful. By addressing the broad, socio-cultural segregation of the poor, she counters the overly simplistic notion of simply voting out lawmakers when one doesn't like the law. She also shows how such social separation has consequences for empathy.

Another dimension of the interruptions stance is the way students talked about the idea of responsibility in terms that differ from a narrow notion of helping. This student, Rachel, introduces the idea of dialogue across religious difference when she recounts her experiences from college.

I like to have dialogue. It causes you to think and clarify more what you believe. It challenges you. You need to be challenged in beliefs. These challenges are good for you to deepen own beliefs and learn why you believe what you do.

For example, I didn't want to go to a Christian school. I went to Christian schools from Kindergarten through 12th grade. I wanted to branch out and get out of my comfort zone. I had lots of controversial discussions in college. I had a Jewish roommate and a Catholic roommate and an atheist roommate, so we had a lot of conversations. Then I went to Egypt and worked with a Muslim. It was funny, because I felt like he was trying to convert me but then I was trying to bring him to Christianity. We still keep in touch.

The most salient feature of this text for me is the description of her desire to listen across difference. As the individuals in this text are literally living together, this notion of listening also connects to an idea of place-making. I also find it refreshing here that the student (a devout Christian) recognizes, rather than denies, her personal religious bias. I think recognition of one's bias can result in more meaningful dialogue across difference than when we presume or feign neutrality.

The above three texts all represent ways of talking about responsibility that avoid the individualizing and moralizing pitfalls of the neoliberal notion of personal responsibility. The way these students narrate their experiences reflects an understanding of responsibility that Huston (2005) begins to articulate when she suggests that responsibility begins when we first "acknowledge our situatedness and location, material, historical, and bodily specificity, the interconnections between our own well-being and the existence of others" (p. 114). These student texts avoid a determination of responsibility according to shared demographic affiliation. Instead, they each acknowledge a form of meaningful relationship with the others in their story that is not dependent on overtly being part of the same demographic. The text from these students also contain traces of what Gruenewald (2003) refers to as "place-making". He suggests place-making begins to happen if there is a shift in orientation from "residing" in a place to "inhabiting" a place. For him, residing suggests a less invested and more transient way

of being in a place. Inhabitants of a place, on the other hand, consider their relationships to others in the same space and "work to form empathetic connections with other human beings" (p. 8). Part of this empathetic connection is to recognize the ways that others are marginalized or systemically exploited, as the students in the first two texts acknowledge. These students also offer language and examples of finding common ground with those that appear superficially different. In this sense they enact what Greene (1988) discusses as a pursuit of freedom, of which interpersonal responsibility is significant. A major thrust of Greene's book is the struggle for apparent strangers to find common ground, solidarity or to recognize shared experiences. Sharing experiences across difference, Greene suggests, can help "interpret from as many vantage points as possible lived experience, the ways there are of being in the world" (p. 120). Implicit in the idea of "sharing" experiences is the type of listening evident in the cross-religious dialogue discussed by the third student.

Garrison (1996) treats the idea of listening in substantial depth. He draws from Gadamar and Dewey to develop a theory of listening that is useful for thinking about these student texts. One reason for listening Garrison offers is that encounters across difference help us know ourselves and recognize our preconceptions. If we do not listen to voices different from our own, we can avoid confronting our own prejudices. A consequence of this is, as Garrison writes, "we will never possess ourselves much less find occasions for re-creating ourselves. Instead our culture, and those who control it, will always possess us" (p. 439). For Garrison, the idea of listening speaks directly to the notion of interruption of the status quo which may possess us. I see this self-reflective component implicit in these student texts that address listening, as well as a desire to broaden individual perspective. In this way, listening makes Garrison's notion of "re-creating" complementary to Greene's (1988) above ideas of sharing experience to gain multiple

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perspectives. Expressing the willingness to listen becomes an integral part of interpersonal connection and represents a counter to neoliberal relationality.

6.4.2   Problematizing Language

Another strategy of interruption is what might be considered as finding connections across difference by challenging language that creates boundaries between people. Working to articulate connections can disrupt essentialized categories as well as offer insight into ways that difference is reified. The documentary *The Examined Life* (2008) offers an example of this type of interruption. In one section of the film, Judith Butler and artist Sunaura Taylor, who uses a wheelchair, discuss the notion of what "taking a walk" means in the context of someone using a wheelchair. Throughout the clip, they complicate taken-for-granted linguistic categories such as "walking" and being "able" bodied. Their conversation expands to explore the social implications of Taylor asking for assistance, for example, when ordering coffee in a coffee shop. They conclude by offering a critique of the idea of the self-sufficient individual with Butler suggesting that "my sense of what's at stake here is rethinking the human as a site of interdependence." This clip confronts the notion of normalized body movements and disrupts the idea that bodies can be categorized as able or disabled, or as masculine or feminine. After watching this clip, Charlene wrote this after her weekend run,

> The other idea that resonated with me during the film was the idea that physical access to community for people with disabilities leads to social acceptance. This makes so much sense! As I ran through my neighborhood this weekend, I looked for the cut out for wheel chair accessibility. I believe we become more comfortable with what we see or experience frequently. This makes accessibility not just an issue of convenience, but an issue of social responsibility. I believe as humans, we become more comfortable with what we see or experience frequently.

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The student appears to have gained an insight from the film that created the possibility to see her surroundings and built environment differently. As a result, the student offers a critique that highlights structural (physical infrastructure) marginalization. This type of insight connects to broader infrastructural issues, such as public transportation for example, as a mode of marginalization. Perhaps more importantly, she recognizes the social implications of what increased encounters across difference may mean in relational terms.

Continuing with the idea of language and its significance as a site of category reification, in this text, Laura addresses the notion of language as problematic in the way our words reify problematic perceptions of our realities.

It's useful to know how different genders experience different parts of society and react and are affected by different parts of culture. Gender needs to be talked about a lot more. I think we're beginning to understand that gender is much more nuanced than a sex binary. I think in order for people who identify as transsexuals or transgender and even those that identify as homosexual or bisexual, I don't think we will be able to afford those individuals full rights and acceptance in society until we confront how we think about gender. And until we acknowledge that sexism still exists very much. And sexism isn't just oppressing women overtly, but there are things like rape culture, and even perpetuated notions of masculinities. Those conversations need to be had, and they need participation of people from all genders.

Developmental bio isn't my interest, but even on a biological level, sex is not a dichotomy. If the argument is that a gender binary is based on biological sex, I think modern biology has blown that up. You can't claim that anymore. That particular conversation is difficult because we don't have language to deal with these ideas yet. I don't feel that I'm in the conversation in the LBGT community, but I'm around it and the amount of work people in those groups are requiring—and I think rightfully so—but that amount of cognitive effort just to enter the conversation is a big barrier for people. Let alone the cultural barrier.

This text captures much of what I find troubling with social justice conversations. In one sense, it is clear that we should continue to have conversations across difference and about how our language structures and normalizes how we think about difference. But, in many cases there is a dearth of readily available language that can challenge commonsense narratives. One of the most significant implications here is her challenge to engrained gender and sex binaries. She sees the work of language that needs to be done as a way to complicate that binary, but it's important how she recognizes her personal struggle and lack of familiarity with the LBGT community, which represents intimidation and hesitation for her—particularly at the level of language. She sees that there are complicated conversations that should continue but is unsure how, given the lack of language and lack of connection across difference.

Boler and Zembylas (2003) address the power of binaries that this student is struggling against. Certainly binaries function to define what identity expressions are considered standard or normal while rendering ambiguous or shifting identities as abnormal. But Boler and Zembylas highlight a more troubling consequence of ambiguity which is fear. Some of the relational consequences of this fear are that those identities which do not conform to standard binaries are labeled deviant and therefore less valuable. During the walk with Judith Butler described above, Sunaura Taylor speaks to this point and extends it when she recalls how she felt her physical impairment at times seemed to call into question her humanity. She wonders where our "boundaries lie as a human and what becomes non-human" and "in those in between moments, in between male and female or in between death and health, when do you still count as a human?" There are clear relational implications at these margins of language that this student is working through.

6.4.3   Contextualizing Experience

A significant dimension of the interruption stance relates to individuals' personal experiences and how reconsideration of experiences can increase empathy in some cases or, in a minimal sense, allow one to confront personal biases. This approach to personal experience differs from the treatment of experience in the reinscription stance. In that case, personal experiences alone were used as truth claims to justify personal opinions that segregated demographics, reinforced perceptions of alterity, or confirmed commonsense narratives. In contrast, an interruptive approach to personal experiences considers personal experiences as opportunities for personal reflection. In one classroom activity, students took various perception tests designed to measure personal bias toward different demographics (implicit.harvard.edu). Many students did not like or agree with the results of the test because it tends to show that people are biased against, for example, Black men, homosexuals, overweight people, and Arabs. In response to these results students will almost always critique the methodology of the study and point to any number of technical, test-related reasons why they might appear to be biased against a particular demographic. Rarely do they reflect on the possibility that they might have the bias in question. However, after taking the test Ella wrote,

> In my own personal love relationships, I know that I do prefer thin, fit males to overweight or fat males. When it comes to friends, however, I have never given much thought to the body types that my friends possess. However, after taking this assessment, I was a bit surprised to see that I have a strong preference to thin people over fat people! I began to reflect on situations in my life. While it may sound harsh, I realize that my circle of friends is all pretty, attractive, and fit girls. We rarely associate with females who are severely overweight or unattractive.

One significant part of this is her recognition of previously unrecognized personal bias. The unknown here is how she might characterize why she feels this way or how she feels about those she considers overweight. I think a bigger point is that this opens up a discussion on the body itself.

Heyes (2007) offers a wide ranging but nuanced analysis of normalized bodies from a feminist perspective and she speaks to some of the relationality concerns here when discussing weight and dieting in her chapter "Foucault Goes to Weight Watchers." She suggests that weight is increasingly becoming a marker of personal responsibility and that those perceived as overweight can consequently be seen as failed bodies of the personally irresponsible. "Dieting discourse elides mastering oneself and caring for oneself, insisting that the controlled and relentlessly self-disciplined persona is also the most ethically responsible" (p. 85). This sentiment assumes a rational, controlled, individualistic sense of self that draws from a neoliberal conception of subjectivity. The body itself as a site of discipline and normalization through exercise or dieting culture is a growing field of research that addresses many of the types of social justice concerns raised in the field of Social Foundations. For example, frequently absent from the conversation about weight is the correlation between poverty and food access.

Another related form of experience is when, after an encounter or experience with someone, one reflects on their previously held biases against people of that demographic. In other words, they had an experience that interrupted their previous notions of a particular demographic. For example, Sarah writes,

> I thought about my feelings toward alcoholics and how they have changed through my personal experiences. I had a family member that I was very close with struggle with alcoholism and eventually pass away from the disease. Before going through this experience, I perceived alcoholics as bums on the street that couldn't get their lives

together. I thought of them as lazy and believed they should get themselves together and become productive members of society. It was not until I went through the experience of witnessing an alcoholic's struggles that I realized it was a disease and that "regular" people all over are trying to overcome this problem.

I'm reminded of Sean Penn's statement from the film Milk when he implores other "in the closet" friends to come out to their families because mothers and fathers need to "know that they do know one of us" (Van Sant & Black, 2008). His implication is that personal experience across difference has the power to complicate previously imagined boundaries between people. The categorical boundaries of us and them are challenged and it may become difficult to retain moral judgments about loved ones. As a result of this student's personal experience she is able to reconstruct previous experiences or ideas about alcoholics and now considers them "regular" people. She also complicates an overly simplistic personal responsibility narrative and switches the discourse to that of "disease". This removes moral failing from the alcoholic and situates the individual differently, as someone who is sick rather than incompetent.

The above dimensions comprise what I am calling a stance of *interruption*. These orientations toward difference are those that have the potential to interrupt individualized notions of self and which have the potential to develop language to confront asocial justice. The table below charts the stance of interruption in contrast to the stance of reinscription.

Reinscription	Interruption

Personal Responsibility
• Language of crisis (others are nuts)
 	
• Lint brush rant
-Conflation of issues
-Appeal to dominant narratives
 	
• Blame- name demographic as complicit in own subjection
 	
• Good Samaritan
-responsibility is to help only when immediately visible (space-based)
	Interpersonal Responsibility
	• Place making
	• Listening
	• Connections across difference
	• Imagining possibilities
	   o Personal vignettes that complicates status quo
	   o Considering counter-perspectives

TINA (There is no Alternative) • Complicity with norm • Legitimization of norm • Matter-of factness/ it is what it is	
Reified classifications • Essentializing boundaries • Self-commodification • Making invisible dominant group (neutralizing)	**Problematizing Language** • Linguistic critiques • Resisting binaries
Individualized Experience • Personal experience as truth claim • Rethink relational self with certainty • Extrapolate experiences (speaks for all) • Alterity across difference	**Contextualized Experience** • Personal experience across difference-which complicate previously held positions • Rethink relational self with uncertainty • Experience of being othered • Recognition of privilege or bias one has

Figure 2: The Stance of Interruption

6.5   THE RELATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF STANCE

The idea of stances that I suggest is not that people only will assume one stance or another. Consistent with a perspective of subject positions that I am sympathetic towards, students will move between these broad stances as well as shift strategies depending on any number of

contextual factors. Outlining the dimensions of these two stances does not capture the position of any one student but it does offer a way to think about the ways that commonsense relational narratives, and status quo assumptions about difference are enacted in everyday conversation. Ruitenberg (2007) helps us see why this everyday talk is not meaningless when she writes that "the sedimentation of repeated discourse" is a form of power (p. 13). In the case of these stances, the forms of power they represent can be seen as complementary to (reinscription) or disruptive (interruption) of an unjust social reality.

Jaworski and Thurlow (2009) refer to stances as "vehicles for expressing a relational, identificational, and…ideological orientation (p. 219). In this sense, the stances represent more than an individual's opinion of any particular demographic. They represent the different ways students position themselves in relation to others vis-à-vis a broader neoliberal context. In the case of reinscription, there are features that render the broader socio-cultural context as a neutral environment. In other words, "it is what it is," whether "it" is one's experiences or whether "it" is the social marginalization of a group. In a classroom filled with predominately White students, appealing to this stance might also be seen as what Hytten and Warren (2003) suggest is "everyday protection of their own social status" (p. 88). Because of the presumed neutrality of the broader social environment, students can appeal to a stance of reinscription without overtly endorsing social injustice.

In the case of the stance of interruption, there are characteristics that suggest reflection, uncertainty and a recognition that the broader social context is imbued with normative values that are not neutral. In the context of a Social Foundations classroom, the stance of interruption can represent moments when students counter the status quo, or what Pinar (2004) refers to as

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standing against the "historical moment." Gainer and Larrota (2010) capture well my hopes with the notion of interruption when they write,

> We contend that "interruptions" exist and offer powerful spaces for teachable moments. If we look for such moments, we can help our students, future teachers, see how their actions are situated in cultural and historical contexts. They can see how their actions can reproduce wide-scale social inequalities and/or represent counter narratives that go against the grain.

The stance of interruption, then, contains several dimensions that each offer some exemplars of interruption to the status quo. I think the notion of stance also makes clear the linguistic process involved in stance taking. In other words, stance taking is a not an abstract concept irrelevant to the so-called real world outside the classroom. Rather, it is an integral part of the mundane living we all do and it is imbued with significant relational consequences.

6.6   MOVING FORWARD

This chapter generated two stances along with a range of rhetorical positions within each stance. In the next chapter I offer a map that spatializes these two stances. My intention is to offer a terrain wherein students could map their own stances toward others. In keeping with the focus on the everyday, I developed a map that centers on the encounter with difference in the space of everyday places. As Peeren and Horstkotte (2007) write, "Place, in this sense, is conceived as multiple, shifting, and invariably relational…place becomes the site of the confrontation and negotiation with the other" and the encounter is "where the self is forced to take a position in relation to otherness and its specific form" (p. 11). In other words, this encounter represents the moment in which one assumes a stance. This stance is mediated by the context of the moment

but also the layers of experience one has had. One of the dimensions of stance taking that appeared particularly salient in student text was how individuals' personal experiences inform their stance. Accordingly, the map makes an attempt to incorporate the dimension of experience on one's stance toward an Other.

7.0   TERRA INCOGNITA: A CARTOGRAPHY OF ENCOUNTER

> Each of us construes his or her own assortment of "others" out of the sedimented, selected and processed memory of past encounters, communications, exchanges, joint ventures, or battles. (Bauman, 1993, p. 146)

> Mapping is "entirely oriented toward experimentation in contact with the real".
> Deleuze & Guattari (1987, p. 13)

Wright (1947) refers to terra incognita as the land unknown to the map maker but known to the inhabitants. Early map makers mapped terrain according to possible coordinates, yet would eventually bump into uncharted territory. For the map maker, this territory was referred to as *terra incognita*. Or course, for anyone living in that space it was not unknown.   In this chapter, I first contextualize my map as a representation of the unknown with respect to the experience of the encounter with difference.   In this case, the map represents a space to plot one's own experiences with such an encounter. After an overview of social cartography, I present the map along with the conceptual explanation for the different features of the map. I conclude by exploring how this map could resolve some of the dilemmas that initially motivated this entire project.

Social cartography was theorized to have the potential to cope with the challenges of research in a postmodern time and the social cartography project was, in part, an attempt to develop a methodology suitable for representing disparate knowledge claims made in the field of international comparative education. The cartographic component of this methodology might be imagined as a heuristic device which depicts the relationships between varied knowledge claims

in that it attempts to show how different perspectives are related to each other. As stated earlier, I have borrowed heavily from the principles of social cartography, but have diverged from how it was imagined by Paulston (1992, 1999, 2000). However, I find the conceptual foundations of social cartography applicable to this project and I particularly appreciate the discursive act that mapping has the potential to perform. I concur with Ruitenberg (2007) when she writes that

> When I present cartographic discourse as an alternative or complementary discourse I do so not because I believe it is somehow more neutral and less rhetorical than other discourse, but precisely because maps produce worlds different from those produced by other discourse, and this allows us to ask different kinds of questions. (p.10)

Unlike the project of social cartography proposed by Paulston, this map is not intended as a cartography of what is there, or positions that are known to exist. This map represents a space into which one might plot what is there as one interprets experiences. This map offers an orientation for the mapper, but recognizes that the contents of the space are unknown and may change. From the beginning, my intention has been to offer a way to have conversations about difference that disrupted or avoided some of the pitfalls of relying on categories of difference for that conversation. I am using the portrayal of the map as a space that represents a possible terrain of internal positions related to individuals' experience of encounter with difference, which I hope offers a way toward that conversation.

7.1   CARTOGRAPHY

Maps and the practice of cartography have a history that is often considered scientific, positivist and therefore neutral. Because of this, I think it is useful to have a perspective on this history to better see how social cartography explicitly challenges these assumptions yet does recognize that

maps and map making is a process imbued with power. Secondly, I think it is important to see how social cartography might be seen as a response to knowledge claims that rely principally on personal experience. Finally, I think social cartography lends itself quite well to the field of Social Foundations by addressing how power and knowledge are related to individual perspective.

Harley (1989) deconstructs maps and explores them as representations of power. The challenge for Harley is to locate the ways power is exercised through the cartographic process and make explicit how the map represents contested relations of power. Harley considers maps as images that possess narrative qualities which display the "rules of society" yet hide their social representation while simultaneously legitimizing a particular worldview. Harley suggests that as we begin to recognize maps as representations of particular social perspectives, we see that "power is exerted *on* cartography" as well as "exercised *with* cartography" (p. 12). In other words, maps are constructed with intentions beyond neutral representation. In this vein, Harley writes that maps have social consequences for how those reading the map construct reality. He (1988) addresses some of the ways maps exercise power to facilitate the dispersion of particular and subjective representations of reality by examining what he calls a "theory of cartographic silence" (p. 57). Much like Willinsky (1998) suggests that the borders of early maps ultimately constructed the mental divisions in our collective imaginaries (between East and West, for example), Harley details a history of intentional map omissions (newly discovered water passageways, for example) which were used to protect economic interests. This analysis centers on how the literal lines of maps begin to frame our reality in terms of how human groups construct themselves and Other. This focus on what maps show also illustrates how early

empires maintained power by representing themselves as the center of the known world as well as how empires hid newly discovered information to protect political and economic interests.

However, Harley also explores what he calls "unintentional silences" (p. 65). The most significant example of this is the positivist discourse that surrounds maps. Scientistic assumptions create a silence of homogeneity in the sense that space is assumed to be measurable and uniform. A result, Harley suggests, is that place became less important than space, and space "became all too easily a socially-empty commodity, a geometrical landscape of cold, non-human facts" (p. 66). Harley links this unintentional silence of positivism to the exertion of political power by suggesting that the legitimacy (truth) of the existing social order could be more easily written into supposedly empty spaces. As one example, he writes how mapmakers represented nomadic indigenous territories as empty, which therefore justified sale of that land.

Paulston's (2000) understanding of social cartography breaks from the assumed objectivity of cartography that Harley so thoroughly critiques. He suggests instead that maps can become concepts that have the potential to challenge objectivity. Following Paulston, Nicholson-Goodman (2009) writes that space itself has become a highly contested concept as she discusses the postmodern disruption of a linear notion of history, space and place. Accordingly, space becomes heterogeneous, diverse, complex and contested. Drawing from Foucault's notion of archeology, Nicholson-Goodman considers the practice of cartography as a way to "excavate" space for meaning (p. 25). The approach of social cartography recognizes the narrative quality of maps, as described by Harley (1989), but rather than conceiving cartography as a way to advance a single narrative, the map becomes a space to illustrate many disparate narratives. The task of the cartographer is to uncover meaning and narratives that simultaneously exist within a

contested space, and to visually represent (using the map) an interpretation of those meanings. As such, it is particularly suited to a postmodern reality of contested knowledge claims.

As a philosophical and theoretical backdrop to cartography, Paulston (1994) outlines several interrelated theses of postmodernism that suggest significant challenges for research methodology. Firstly, postmodern thought tends to discard the idea that any single narrative can tell the whole story. These universalized, sense-making narratives about "progress, emancipation, and reason" can now be critiqued as "totalizing, standardizing, and predominating" (p. 440). As Rust (2000) writes, metanarratives "provide a restrictive, totalizing theory of society and history" that are not based on "subjective human experience" (p. 31). The postmodern critique of these narratives is that they can accurately be seen as originating from privileged or dominant positions of power. As such they represent a restricted and exclusionary way of interpreting experience. There is a recognition that alternative or silenced counter narratives might now be afforded some legitimacy. The challenge for researchers is to imagine ways of representing these previously silenced narratives.

Liebman and Paulston (1991) respond to this challenge by suggesting that social cartography "rejects no narrative, whether metanarrative or that of a localized culture" (p. 236). Instead they consider the notion of "mininarrivisation" of the metanarrative. That is, of course, dominant narratives continue to exist, however they ought no longer be privileged as the only or best explanations of social phenomenon. The challenge for the social cartographer is to find a way to include the previously silenced narratives and to depict conceptual or theoretic relationships between competing and contested narratives.

A second thesis of postmodernism that Paulston (1999) asserts is the rejection of any universal knowledge as well as any "a priori privileging" of a specific truth regime. This is

particularly challenging because the researcher must also attempt to uncover his or her own assumptions and question those truth claims he or she has privileged. Bartolovich (2000) addresses this challenge when she describes her efforts to use mapping as pedagogy. She writes of the difficulties of trying to reconcile certain Marxist assumptions with neo-Marxists critiques while also considering post-structuralist critiques of both—particularly with respect to the way each theorize hegemony and power. The challenge, in this case, is how one might represent these differing claims without necessarily affording more legitimacy to any single claim. By way of addressing this tension, Paulston (1991) writes that the social cartographer should adopt an open, heterogenous stance toward knowledge. The task is to move away from "closed" conceptions of knowledge and toward representations that decenter, and that juxtapose "discontinuous images and worldviews that contradict as well as complement" (178).

A third proposition Paulston (1994) lays out is one which suggests that postmodernism requires a shift from essentialist research to an antiessentialist orientation. He suggests that exploring interpretations is more important than uncovering facts. Postmodernism requires an approach which recognizes and accounts for the effects of history and power on knowledge. In turn, everyday practice and experience are mediated by one's position in the social milieu. The implication here is that knowledge, then, differs across "cultural clusters" within the broader milieu. As Mouat (2000) writes, the postmodern era brought the "dawning awareness that reality is composed of disconnected fragments" and social cartography offers a way to pursue a "reintegration of the fragmented universe bequeathed by modernity" (p. 83). The assumption is not that some smooth reintegration is possible, but rather that social cartography is a way to suggest possible relationships between the fragments.

Bartolovich (2000), much as above-mentioned critical geographers recognized, considers mapping as an act of "world writing" (p. 376). To map is not just to present or reproduce an image of a static reality. Mapping is also an act of production and of imagining different ways of representing a complicated and fluid reality. Particularly, the mapping theorized by Paulston imagines the representation to be one that shows multiple discourses. This makes sense given Paulston's work in comparative education. By offering a representation of a large field (the map) that contains overlapping, interconnected, as well as incommensurable discourse, the comparativist might better comprehend different conceptual positions. However, Paulston also recognizes a more profound possibility, when he writes that maps represent "ways of seeing" (2000). These differing "ways of seeing" represent the different sense-making worldviews that the mapper tries to represent. This representation of multiple perspectives is a significant feature of social cartography. The mapper attempts to coherently include a range of different perspectives in a way that shows relationships between the perspectives. This can open possibilities for dialogue across perspectives.

7.1.1 Discursive Possibilities

Turnbull (2000) offers that maps can "structure what is possible to speak of and also that which it is not possible to speak of" (p. 60). I would hedge on the certainty of his proposition, but agree that the map certainly does structure where the speaking begins. Paulston imagines maps produced by social cartography as ones which always increase the potential for dialogue, which increase that of which it is possible to speak. Liebman and Paulston (1994) write, the map represents an "inter-cultural" dialogue and "is a playing field welcoming all into the game with the single caveat that they continue rather than stifle the dialogue" (p. 235). Bartolovich suggests how maps might continue dialogue when she writes that social cartography can help

visualize where one is situated and from there, illuminate where one might go (by seeing the possibilities). She suggests this linking of materially experienced life to theoretical positions is not politically indifferent, but is instead necessary to begin to articulate any sort of counter hegemonic politics.

As I see it, one of the clearest possibilities of social cartography is the rupture of a dominant discourse along with its accompanying narratives. If we recognize the power of a particular discourse to shape our perceptions of ourselves, of others, and of our understanding of reality, it stands that recognition of differing discourses might offer new modes of perception.

7.1.2 A Note about Subjectivity

It is important to note that the map maker does not purport to be an invisible force or an omniscient eye surveying the textual landscape from a distance. Another important feature of the map is that the mapper, as a way of explicitly acknowledging the subjective nature of the map, situates him or herself in the map. However, I am not mapping a range of existing positions. This map is intended to represent a range of internal positions that any individual may experience during encounters with difference. In that sense, there is no single spot that anyone inhabits. Instead, we move across the map depending on the contexts. My intention for such a map was that by connecting experience to perspective, one acknowledges the socially constructed nature of experience as well as recognizes that one's perspective is one among many, and also highly provisional. This could also be considered a way of mininarrativising one's personal sense-making narratives as warrants for truth claims. In other words, to put oneself on the map is recognition that one's experience, by itself, is neither exclusively unique nor can it alone be used as a final justification for holding any particular position. However, it does offer a starting point for where one enters the dialogue.

Throughout his writings it is clear the Paulston attributes a great deal of power to discourse in terms of how it informs one's construction and interpretation of reality. Because of this productive power, the social cartography project is, in part, theorized as a way to privilege multiple discourses and to mitigate the power of a dominant discourse. Ruitenberg (2007) locates the power of discourse in "the sedimentation of repeated discourse" (p. 13). She suggests that it is through repetition that any particular discourse acquires its productive potential. In the case of a dominant discourse, the implication would be that, by frequent repetition, it produces a particular ideology which contains a particular set of explanatory narratives and relationships. Stromquist (2000) acknowledges the dilemma for the qualitative researcher working to counter dominant worldviews. While totalizing and exclusionary categories clearly exist, the difficulty is that to develop counter narratives, one must often use dominant-narrative categories. She gives the example of how her work with violence against women ends up privileging heterosexual relationships and reifying stereotypical divisions between men and women. Said another way, while attempting to counter a dominant ideology which privileges male-female gender categories, and legitimizes particular relationship configurations (heterosexual), Stromquist finds herself repeating, and paradoxically validating, those categories.

This presented a potential dilemma for me in terms of the language I used to imagine and construct the map. Certainly my own subconscious dispositions factored into the construction of the map's conceptual categories, which end up establishing the boundaries and borders of the map. Paulston recognized this dilemma, but does not address how the construction of the map appears to situate the researcher outside of his or her own perspective. It seems as though the mapper must be able to recognize his or her own subjective bias. In the case of my map, it is

clear that I privilege certain positions over others. As stated from the beginning, my agenda was to imagine a different conversation about difference. This meant framing the conversation in such a way that certain ways of talking were incentivized over other ways, and the map reflects those preferences.

A second challenge comes from Beverley (2000) who addresses the notion of representation. Beverley is particularly concerned with the claim that one can represent another's experience, especially across significant power differentials. He questions whether individuals situated in academia, and thus quite privileged to a degree, can ever claim the authority to represent the "subaltern". The claims of social cartography proponents, however, do make that claim with the caveat that maps are subjective and not meant as authoritative. Building from Beverley's caution, I am also skeptical of the egalitarian language Paulston (and many others) use when talking about the inclusion of marginalized voices. Especially problematic for me is that those voices are filtered through what Beverley names as the "enemy country" of academia. Those of us privileged enough to be in academia must be benefiting in some ways from dominant structures and institutions of knowledge production. In some sense, then, it may be contradictory (against our self-interest) to legitimize marginalized ideologies that could threaten our privileged positions. I think Beverley's position is a bit too rigid, but his point about representation is well taken. My map is a representation that implicitly suggests how others, not just me, negotiate encounters of difference.

Finally, I would suggest that it is impossible to deny the power the map image has to frame the dialogue. It is accurate that the map may offer new ways of seeing—or a more integrated way of seeing—but it cannot be considered a power-neutral representation. Of course, reframing a dialogue was my intention, so in that sense the map represents an acknowledged

exercise of power. Nevertheless, the mapper assumes a position of power by controlling the representation. Similarly, any who might contest the representation must first start from what the mapper has mapped.

Despite these challenges, I consider social cartography a useful and compelling methodology, especially when the goal—showing the interrelationship between multiple perspectives to facilitate dialogue—is both necessary and possible.

In the end, my hopes were to use social cartography to map the ways that students wrote and talked about their encounters with Other as mediated through consumer culture. I had several underlying discursive acts that I hope for my map. As a heuristic device, I want the map, as a whole, to encourage individuals to explore why they feel the way they do about others by:

- suggesting a long-term, ongoing conversation that

- specifically links past experiences/encounters to one's current feelings yet

- is conceptually organized in a relational, as opposed to individual, framework which

- offers a discussion that does not rely on specific identity categories and

- connects the political to the everyday by

- grounding the conversation in a daily life context

In other words, with previous Social Foundations classroom conversations about difference (i.e. race, class, gender, sexuality) in mind, I am hoping for a map that alters the way that conversation happens with the hopes of avoiding the individualism and socially fragmenting pitfalls already mentioned at the outset. I think the wide range of contextually mediated ways we experience and make sense of our encounters across difference warrants a cartographic approach, and the principles of social cartography are well suited for this project.

7.2   WRITING AND READING THE MAP

In the previous chapter, I developed a range of positions that I organized according to a binary of *interrupting* and *reinscribing* a neoliberal relationality. To begin my map I asked how, given that range of positions within the two stances, I might spatialize the stance binary (interruption and reinscription) by adding other dimensions to incorporate the various approaches to difference that individuals used. In other words, I did not intend to map each of those stances from the previous chapter. That binary is useful as it does suggest names for common stances that individuals might assume with respect to others. More importantly, the development of the stances offered insight into those actions, practices, and habits which (according to the way I organized them) engendered stances of either reinscription or interruption. Particularly significant for me were the dispositions surrounding students' interpretations of personal experiences with difference, and how that affects their perceptions of others. In this vein, Valentine (2008) makes a compelling call that "more emphasis needs to be placed not just on immediate contact experiences, but on how people's accrued histories of social experiences…contributes to feelings about urban encounters" (p. 333). With that in mind, I imagined the map as the representation of an internal terrain where individuals can unpack previous encounters with difference as well as plot current and ongoing encounters.

In the maps I have found most intelligible and useful (namely, those found in Paulston, 1999 and 2000; and in Nicholson-Goodman, 2000, 2009), maps are multilayered and are organized initially by an underlying field which is the conceptual backdrop that offers an initial coherence to the map. On top of the field, other layers of these maps include intersecting vertical and horizontal axes which order the field. In what follows, I build the map by offering the rationales for the conceptual backdrop of the map as well as for the different axes.

7.2.1   Conceptual Backdrop

For this conceptual backdrop, I used Massey's (2005) notion of "throwntogetherness" (p. 149). Massey's larger project for understanding social space proposes to imagine social space as always-in-flux, never fixed, and never closed. Throwntogetherness is her way of naming always shifting space through which people and things are always moving and changing. Amin (2008) writes that throwntogetherness "signals the whirl and juxtaposition of global diversity and difference in contemporary urban life" and is the "relatively unconstrained circulation of multiple bodies in a shared physical space" (p. 10). This concept is useful for several reasons. It counters an understanding of space as a conglomerate mass, and it also implies relationality in that we are thrown together. I also appreciate how the notion does not necessarily imply the desire for such a condition, rather it is the situation in which we find ourselves whether we like it or not. Finally, in addition to macro social perspectives, throwntogetherness opens the possibility to think at the micro level of daily interaction. For Massey, space is not a bordered container of inert objects to map. Instead, it is "a heterogeneity of practices and process…an ongoing product of interconnections" (p. 107). Anderson (2005) sums up Massey's notion of space highlighting three significant characteristics that Massey articulates. Space is 1) always under construction, 2) a product of interrelations in 3) a sphere of distinct, coexisting trajectories (p. 228).

This notion meshes well with my desire to map a range of stances that emerge in response to encounters with others. As the conceptual backdrop to the map, throwntogetherness represents the external context in which different stances might emerge. Throwntogetherness, then, is the descriptive, external condition of the places and spaces where encounters with others take place.

Figure 3: Conceptual Backdrop

7.2.2   Orientation Toward Difference

Set on top of this field is the axis which I am calling the *Orientation Toward Difference*. I mean this as an epistemic axis that represents what one claims to know about an other. I have formulated this axis along a range of *stories-so-far* at one end, and *stories imposed* at the other end. Again, Massey (2005) helps consider the possibilities and range of this orientation. In her theorizing of space, she suggests that any space in any particular moment might be thought of as a "simultaneity of stories-so-far" (p. 9). Within a conceptual backdrop of throwntogetherness, individuals move through space and any one place momentarily possesses the possibility of a fleeting meeting, or intersection of individuals whose paths have crossed. For Massey this notion represents the idea of space as always undergoing a process of change and flux. Leitner (2012) theorizes similarly when she discusses different "spaces of encounter" (p. 829). This is that moment when

the lives of diverse people from different parts of the world, with different social and cultural identities, interest, and power/knowledges and occupying different and unequal socioeconomic positions intersect in place (p.829)

Leitner refers to this encounter as a predicament whereas Massey holds that these encounters represent the "chance of space" wherein the opportunity exists to be "surprised" at the "finding of yourself next door to alterity" (p. 116). For my purposes, the epistemic orientation of this axis asks whether, in this moment of encounter, others are imagined as individuals with unfolding lives whose trajectory has happened to intersect with mine? Or, are others fixed into known, yet artificially constructed and boundaried identities? In other words, are others imagined from a perspective of stories-so-far or from a perspective of imposed stories? And if imposed, what are these imposed stories based on?

Massey (2005) speaks to this idea of what Godart and White (2010) call "mobilizing existing stories" when noting that any encounter (the now) is affected by the layers of the past (the thens). The ongoing accretion of these layers of encounters then builds up a personal history of encounter. We might also think of these layered accretions as experiences with others. Ahmed (2004) similarly writes about how any encounter across difference is shaped by previous encounters. However, while categories and perceived boundaries between groups are socially constructed, they are not enduring. They can also be interrupted or reified by the micro level encounters one experiences.

I find it very useful to explicitly unpack personal histories with different others as a way to understand how we have arrived at the perceptions we currently hold. In this vein, there is the idea that increased experiences with others may break down previously held barriers. Leitner (2012), writing about whites and Mexicans in a small Midwestern town, notes how some encounters between individuals from the two groups challenged previously held categories and

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boundaries. She suggests the encounter holds the possibility for "disorienting us from the habits, stereotypes, and prejudices toward the Other" (p. 829). Thinking of the *stories-so-far* and *imposed stories* axis, this disorientation Leitner describes would represent a move away from the imposition pole, in that a boundaried and categorical imagination of the other is weakened.

However, Leitner also acknowledges that the opposite may also occur. Encounters may reify existing stereotypes. Valentine (2008) also professes a skepticism of the "potentially naïve assumption that contact with 'others' necessarily translates into respect for difference" (p. 325). He suggests that individual attitudes are just as likely to remain unchanged, or even worsened, as a result of repeated encounters. This suggests a complicated interplay between the actual encounter, and the interpretation of the encounter as mediated by the context of past encounters. In other words, it is a complex process involved in unpacking what story or stories individuals use or draw upon to tell the encounter.

For the purposes of the map, one's orientation toward the others' story in any encounter is significant. Massey (2005) helps us imagine the *stories-so-far* orientation, when she writes that a condition of throwntogetherness begs negotiation of multiplicity and a "modesty of judgment" (p. 147). What you can do in this context, she writes, "is meet up with others, catch up with where another's history has got to 'now' (p. 125). In other words, we can seek to hear what is the story-so-far.

At the other end of the axis, imposed stories represents the denial of the others story and instead imposes a story upon them. In Leitner's (2012) study, she shows how whites draw from broader cultural narratives about immigrants to impose and legitimize narrow and racist interpretations of the Mexicans. This idea of drawing from stories in the broader sociocultural surround to interpret encounters with others has obvious political implications. If we believe that

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this surround offers easily accessible narratives to justify discriminatory feelings about others, it is clear how these official stories might be imposed onto others. Or, in the case of negative individual experiences, we can see how one may impose that past experience onto a current encounter with an individual within the same (imposed) category.

Ilcan (2005) refers to this type of meeting as a "monological" encounter (p. 230). By this she means that the Other exists not as another individual human being, but instead as a representative of a particular social category. This world of categories "is a monological and objectified world. It corresponds to a single and unified authorial voice…the outcome of this one-sided story presents the other as a mere object of consciousness" (p. 232). This single voice may draw from readily available narratives, or from personal experience. In either case, there is an imposed story onto the other.

For both *stories-so-far* and *stories imposed* the use of the word 'story' is significant. I mean, as Massey's metaphor suggests, that the stories are our sense making interpretations of our own lives as well as the story we imagine about the lives of others. I think that imagining our lives in this way—as a story—has the potential to destabilize the certainty one might imagine of his or her own interpretations of experience. Godart and White (2010) suggest an expression and creation of identity that is contingent upon story as it situates oneself in relation to others. They further consider story as "scripts that can be reproduced across historical, geographical, and social contexts (p. 572). Both of these suggest that the telling of our story, and the stories of others, depends on many things beyond the immediate interpretation of personal experience. This is significant, for the idea of encounter as the stories we draw from can shape the encounter itself. Godart and White write that transitory encounters with a stranger do not necessarily constitute a story, but that "existing stories can be mobilized for interactions, even for transitory

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encounters" (p. 573). As Leitner (2012) showed with whites' incorporation of existing cultural

stereotypes to denigrate Mexicans, this retelling of existing stories to narrate encounters also has

clear political implications.

Figure 4: Orientation Toward Difference

7.2.3   Orientation Toward Encounter

During the course of daily life, our trajectories cross with many others' trajectories as we move

from place to place. There are many contextual factors that mediate how we may feel about any

one of the others with whom we temporarily share space. In addition to our openness to an

other's story, another important dimension of this map must address one's initial disposition to

the encounter itself. For the second axis, I suggest poles of *mismeeting* and *fresh action* as a way to imagine one's orientation toward the encounters with difference.

The notion of mismeeting comes from Bauman (1993), when discussing the peculiarities of contemporary daily life in which our ventures into public space nearly always involve encounters with strangers. Bauman (1993) defines the "art of mismeeting" as "scrutiny disguised as indifference" (p. 155). That is, we tend to be aware of and assess our surroundings as well as the others in our shared social space, but this assessment is not overt or explicit. For Bauman, the effect of this technique is to desocialize public space. Physical space remains a series of places inhabited by individuals, physically close to each other but socially distant. In this way, mismeeting works against socializing a physical space. However, he also suggests that the crowd we individually move through is not an anonymous mass. As we move along, we organize other individuals according to known categories. In this context, Ilcan (2005) writes that others "are not individuals but, rather, a social type, standing alongside other social types" (p. 228). Mismeeting, then, is to resist nuanced knowledge about another person and instead impose a category onto them. The tension in this situation is that Bauman suggests only increased "experienced biography" (getting to know someone or observing someone acting differently than expected) may interrupt the categorization process, but that mismeeting ensures this is not likely to happen. Instead, the categories fill in the details about the others around us.

An outcome of this categorization process is that the strangers around us are imagined as socially near or socially distant. In other words, are they similar to me (near), or dissimilar to me (far). The real challenge for Bauman, then, is how to deal with the perceived socially distant other. The desire to meet or interact with those socially distant categories may be weakened. This is especially the case when the characteristics of a distant category are negative (as opposed

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to exotic, for example). Ilcan (2005) writes how, in these habitual and routine spaces, "strangers are deprived of their specificity, of their past" (p. 155). What is important in this context is not initially the category into which one places an other. It is the implications of that category for the likelihood of orienting oneself toward something other than mismeeting. As Ilcan (2005) writes, the issue at stake is not one's image of another, but how this image affects the development of social practice. I think of the bus as a classic site of mismeeting. Individuals have likely made a quick assessment of the others on the bus and, if possible, choose to sit accordingly. Individuals occupy their time with any number of activities, but speaking to others is rarely one of those activities. It often seems that speaking may actually be the most awkward or suspicious activity one could undergo—especially speaking across perceived categories of difference. Rather, the outward expression of desire to meet—or to socialize the physical place of a shared bus—is of disinterest. Importantly, the possibility of an interruption to this site mismeeting is similarly low.

At the other end of this pole is what I take from Lefebvre (1993) and call *fresh action.* In contrast to a disposition oriented toward mismeeting, fresh action might be characterized by a disposition of willingness toward the possibility of engagement with difference. When he uses this idea, Lefebvre is working toward his accounting of social space as a real, but not a fixed, noun (thing). He writes that social space "cannot be reduced to the rank of simple object. At the same time there is nothing imagined, unreal or 'ideal' about it" (p. 73). In other words, social space is something that, itself, can be studied. Particularly important is when he suggests that social space is what "permits fresh actions to occur" (p. 73). In addition to the built material environment that governs space, space is socially and contextually constituted insofar as individuals carry their lived histories with them as they move through space. Davies and

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Niemann (2010) write that with his reimagining of space as socially produced, Lefebvre begins to describe how "in the process of inscribing themselves in social space, these social relations also produce that space" (p. 560). According to Davies and Neimann, this move created the possibility for analysis of everyday life to focus on individuals' experiences and "on the spaces where these experiences take place" (p. 559). Ilcan (2005) furthers this notion of *fresh action* by suggesting that social space offers the possibility to disrupt the categories that reproduce difference and "keeps strangers in the category of the unfamiliar" (p. 229). The idea of possibility is important for my purposes here. This is one of the significant ways that *fresh action* differs from *mismeeting,* as the latter nearly removes the possibility of engagement. I think the concept of fresh action also works well with Massey's (2005) propositions that space be imagined as "a sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity" that is "always in process" (p. 11). Accordingly, fresh action for the purposes of the map represents a willingness to recognize the multiplicity and works against a disposition of certainty that fixes others into imposed categories.

The addition of this axis completes the conceptual terrain and ordering of the map.
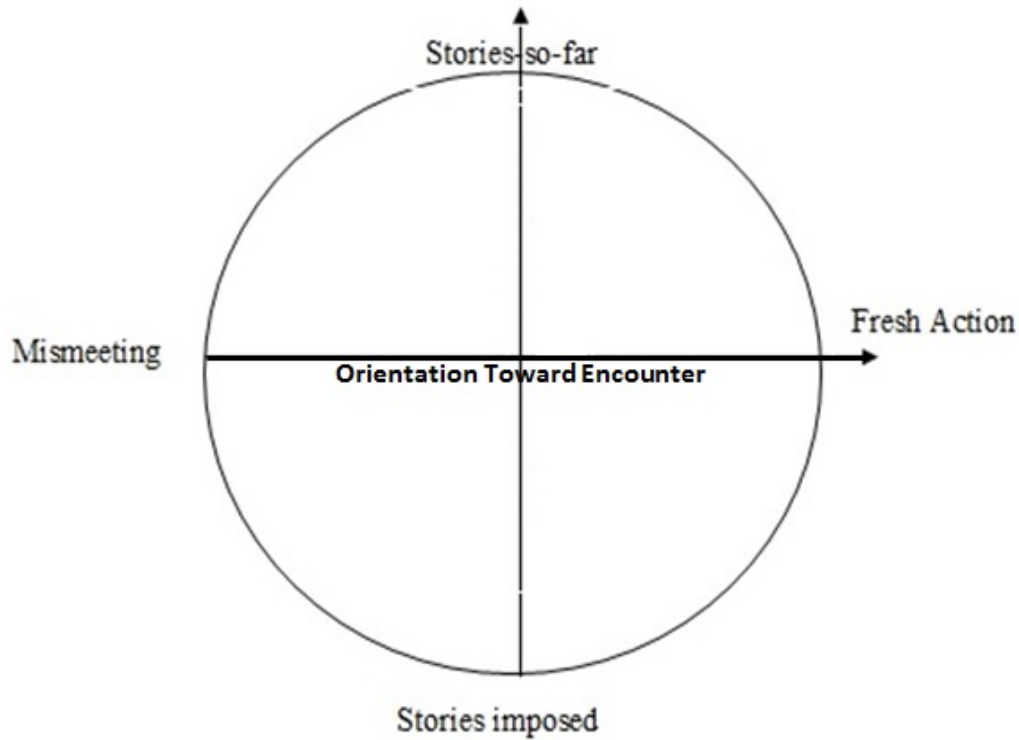
Figure 5: Orientation Toward Encounter

7.2.4   Naming the Quarters

Because one of my initial concerns dealt with the use of categories as the initial organizing frame

for talking about difference, the next step is to suggest the implications of the map for that issue.

Each quarter suggests a different characterization of difference. Starting from the bottom left, if

one's orientation toward difference is *stories imposed* and one's orientation toward encounters

with that difference is of *mismeeting,* I suggest that one is operating according to **Essentialized**

categories. In other words, to impose a story means having to draw from cultural assumptions

about the appearance of someone to make the claim to know their story. Further, if this claim is

coupled with an unwillingness to challenge that assumption by engaging, the imposed story

remains unchanged as mismeeting tends to assure the story will not be contested or nuanced.

Moving clockwise, if one's orientation toward encounter is *mismeeting* yet the orientation toward difference is *stories-so-far*, I consider the characterization of difference as **Categorical**. Categories of difference still remain as an organizing framework however, the categories do not necessarily imply any specific story. Said another way, I might consider this position a well-intentioned imposition of homogeneity. Well-intentioned insofar as one resists imposition of an explanatory story, yet still considers groups of people categorically. This position appeared in student writing with statements like "I'd really like to learn more about Arabs because their culture seems so interesting." A group of people in this statement are considered categorically, yet the student has not explicitly imposed any particular story. Opposite this quarter is the *stories-imposed* and *fresh action* quarter. I consider this the **Circumstantial** quarter. This represents that encounter with difference where the imposed story of the other is ruptured, but the rupture is only extended as far as that particular individual other. Valentine (2008) describes this situation with his research with individual encounters with members of minority groups. He suggests that when an individual has a negative experience in such an encounter, the negativity of that experience is likely to be extrapolated and "mobilized to produce and justify powerful negative generalizations about the whole population that minority individual is seen to represent" (p. 332). Using the terminology of the map, Valentine describes one way an imposed story might originate. However, he goes on to say that if an individual has a positive encounter with a member of a minority group the experience will *not* be extrapolated and applied to the whole group and will instead be reflective only of that person. In other words, "in the context of negative encounters minority individuals are perceived to represent members of a wider social group, but in positive encounters minority individuals tend to be read only as individuals" (p. 332). This situation where another individual is imagined outside the boundaries of or as not

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pertaining to the existing category in which he or she would otherwise be situated is what I am calling Circumstantial.

The final quarter of stories-so-far and fresh action is what I call **Contextual**. At the risk of appearing utopian, this position on the map represents a willingness to engage with difference without the imposition of limiting stories. I consider this disposition similar to what Leitner (2005) characterizes as the alternative politics that requires "negotiating and exceeding boundaries, rather than maintaining and fortifying them" during encounters with difference (p. 843). On the map, this is the place that interrupts a hierarchically organized and individualistic mode of neoliberal relationality. No place on the map can be considered politically neutral and this place represents an interruption of segregation by identity category as well as the imposition of story according to those categorical identities. A final portrayal of the map is below.
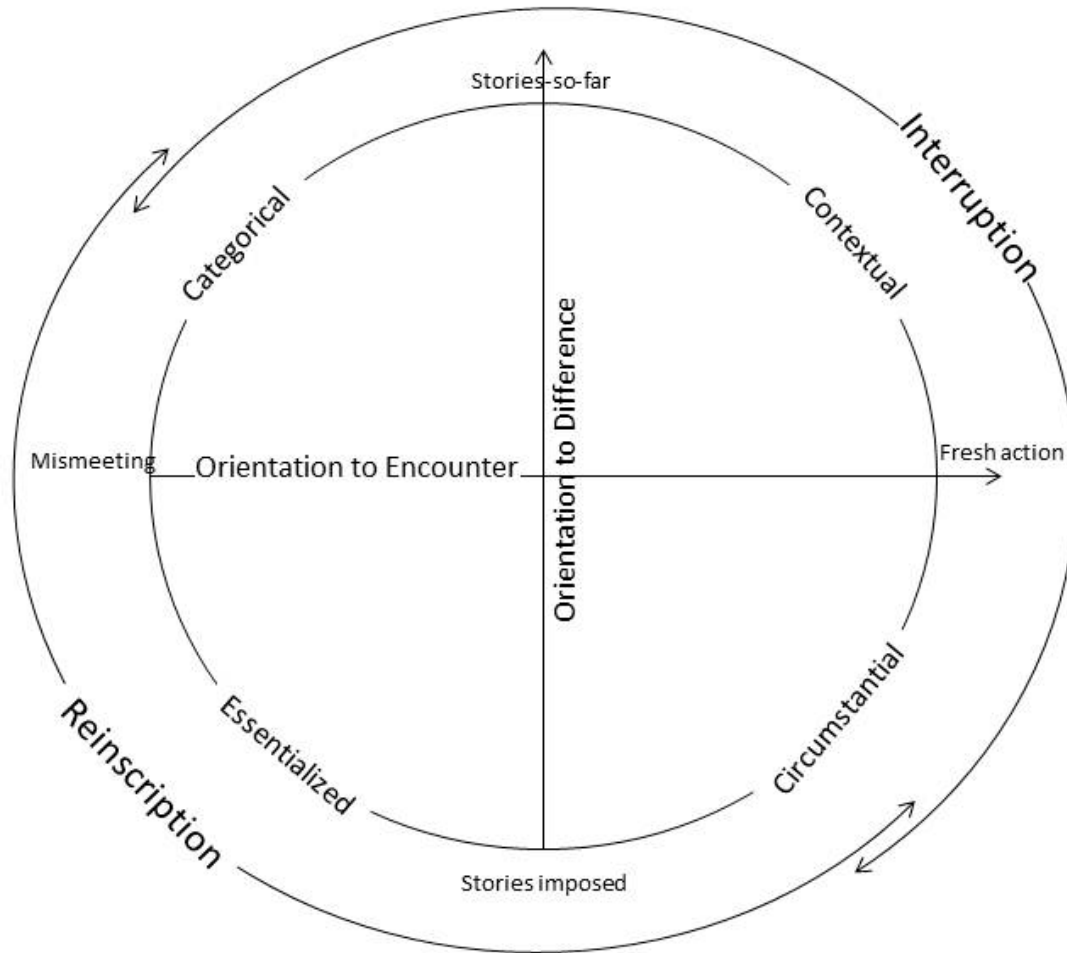
Figure 6: Completed Map

7.3   APPLICATION OF THE MAP

Wood (1994) asks an important question when he writes that "certainly the focus on the map's discourse function is right (not what does the map show or how does it show it but what does the map do? What does the map accomplish?)" (p. 12).   I imagined this project as being applicable to the Social Foundations classroom in that the map could be useful as an insightful pedagogical heuristic device. In the following section, I offer how this map could be used. In class, a student could begin by plotting their own positions on this map, followed by an unpacking of the

possible meanings and implications behind any particular plot. Here I will plot several positions and offer a rationale for the location. The exact location of plots is not intended as a precise measurement. The location depends, in this case, on the sense I get when I interpret the students' statements. I do not think the process of mapping would be any more exact if one were mapping him or herself. Again, the significance lays less in the precise location of any particular point on the map, and more in what meaning is made of that particular point. Berry and Warren (2009) describe the purpose well when they write that an

> experience is always spatiotemporally rooted in (or informed by) given locations (physical, emotional, thoughtful contexts) subject to divergent meaning, and is necessarily subject to change over time as reflection (and further reflection) changes *what* happened more and more toward *how* what happened has made me who I am. (p. 601)

As a heuristic device, the map is intended to start that reflection from within a particular field, so that the mapping of any encounter is only the beginning step in a more involved self-reflexive process.

In class, the site of encounter was with images from various sources. These images and advertising complemented actual human encounters. Discussion quickly moved beyond image to experience of actual encounters as reflected by the quotes in the previous chapter. Here, I purposefully chose examples that are representative of each quarter to suggest how the map might work. Any one of these quotes is subject to multiple interpretations, and each opens up numerous ways to reexamine personal experience. I offer a brief interpretation simply to show how I think the quote is representative of the respective quarter.

7.3.1 Essentialized

A female student, Ellen Jameson (EJ), responding to a question of "Why are there poor people" said that,

> Honestly, I think people are lazy. Any circumstance that isn't medical, you have a choice to work or slip. So most of the time I don't feel bad. I think it's on them and they made bad choices and slipped. I have yet to experience someone that worked hard and ended up almost homeless. Like, the people begging for change, I have no sympathy. There are resources to help you. I should clarify, when I think poor, I'm thinking choice poverty, which is different than getting laid off. But people always have a choice.

What I read in this quote is a fairly certain explanation for poverty. The explanation for poverty lies within poor people themselves and the (bad) choices they have made. The appeal to experience is that she has not yet met anyone that disrupts her explanation and assumptions about poverty. It is unclear if she has spoken to homeless people about their circumstances, but she does say she has yet to meet someone that has worked hard yet still became homeless. I read an Essentialized characterization of the poor that reflects an imposed story. The imposed story is that the person made poor choices in life and "slipped". At this point, she does not appear particularly interested in challenging that perspective by wondering about the specific context surrounding any particular individual she considers poor.

Another student, Ted Robinson (TR), was responding to images in a magazine and the different 'looks' that appeared in the magazine. The question posed was, "What are your thoughts about people with a look you don't like?" He responded,

> I won't associate with them—like hipsters. Or black guys all gangster I try to avoid. Or nerdy people in the class…I won't sit by them. I guess it's not fair to tell this by someone's dress, but I assume them.

This student is linking a certain appearance to a specific type of person that he imagines would look or dress that way. Presumably there are some experiences that have led him to these conclusions such that he "won't associate" with certain types of people. I read an Essentialized characterization in this quote with an emphasis on avoiding or mismeeting certain people.

7.3.2   Categorical

In this quote, a white student named Kimmy Tucker (KT) was talking about what she could learn from other races.

> Probably mostly family values would be different. If I were to have a conversation with someone it might help eliminate personal experiences and make me think about how media and situations shape certain people. I don't have many experiences with other races, so I don't know how they live or why they are the way they are. So, I could learn about that.

I infer from this statement that she has had negative experiences with people from other races. I think her use of the word "eliminate" is also interesting. It lends credence to the idea of historicity of experience. I do not know which races she has in mind and I do not know what her experiences have been, but it appears she has interpreted her few experiences negatively and thinks badly of certain other races. However, she seems to acknowledge the possibility of overwriting, or reinterpreting, previous experiences in light of new experiences. I locate her in the Categorical quarter because she still seems to be talking about other races as homogenous categories that internally share different cultures and values, but she also seems to acknowledge unknown stories that these other races might have to explain their different cultural values.

Another student, Monica Toni (MT), wrote in a reflection journal about her response to an article about emerging female fashion in Turkey. Classroom discussion that day centered on

recent issues involving headscarves in educational institutions in France and Turkey. She wrote that,

> It was fascinating to see the ads with the faces of the women erased. Just like how the men treat their women in that religion as if their [sic] not there. The article made me very angry just thinking about these poor women stuck in a world where their opinion doesn't matter. I would love to meet the man that invented that religion. At least these women have fashion to care about.

I like this quote because I see the notion of intersectionality emerge. Depending on the dimension of her identity—gender or religion—she feels alternately close to and far from the Muslim women. Monica seems to feel empathetic towards these women from a gender perspective. However, from a religious perspective the quote suggests the idea of Muslim being radically different—even "invented"—compared to Monica's Catholic beliefs. I locate this in the Categorical quarter because of the implied homogeneity of the Muslim category, but also because I get an underlying sense of curiosity about the women. However, this quote is good for showing the subjectivity of mapping, because it considers Islam in a fairly narrow and essentialized way and could be located in another quarter.

7.3.3 Circumstantial

This quarter represents an encounter where a category is destabilized in some way. This quote comes from a student's, Sarah Meek (SM), weekly journal where she talks about how an experience changed her perception.

> I had a family member that I was very close with struggle with alcoholism and eventually pass away from the disease. Before going through this experience, I perceived alcoholics as bus on the street that couldn't get their lives together. I thought of them as lazy, and believed they should get themselves together and become productive members of society.

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> It was not until I went through the experience of witnessing an alcoholic's struggles that I realized it was a disease and the regular people all over are trying to overcome this problem.

It's clear in this quote how her personal experience made her reflect on her previously held assumptions and complicate them. Here, the category of "alcoholic" becomes something "regular" people can have. Her experience with her uncle changes, presumably, the way she interprets others with the disease. I consider this circumstantial because that individual struggling through alcoholism was viewed differently—apparently Sarah knew the person—than other alcoholics. Her personal experience in this case offered an opportunity to disrupt previous, less personal experiences or observations of alcoholics.

7.3.4 Contextual

This final quarter represents those encounters where individuals, to use the words of the map descriptors, resist imposition of both categories and stories, in order to, as Massey (2005) writes, meet others where they are so far.

The first quote is from a student, Michelle Persons (MP), responding to a question about her response to those who believe differently from her.

> I dated a guy in college that was such a bigot. He was against homosexuality. He would say some of the most racist things—like that the civil rights movement wasn't important. So, I thought "well, you're eastern European. You're from a different culture and trying to make sense of it here. Obviously you don't believe all black people listen to rap and eat fried chicken, because I'm black and I don't listen to that and I'm a vegetarian." And he'd say things like, "I'm more black than you are." And I'd say, "Only because of stereotypes." But I understood that he was that way because of how he grew up. Not that I condoned it. But I accepted him the ways he was, because of where he was coming from. I still try to accept someone at face-value and understand their point of view. I get

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that growing up it was drilled into his head that homosexuality was wrong. And of course black people were ostracized growing up in Ukraine…a small town in Ukraine with one random African person there. So I get why you might have those views, but it's the willingness to at least hear out someone else, that gives me a better view of people. So I'm willing to not discount or discredit people with conflicting views. I want to hear it and gain more knowledge and see someone else's perspective so I can form a better judgment when I'm faced with situations. Especially as a teacher. You have to know where other people are coming from. And I want to do that in everyday life anyway. I want to talk to people with conflicting views. I don't mean debate or arguments. I hate arguing. I just want to know…what's your way of thinking.

In this quote Michelle interprets her experience with the person (her ex) through her sense making interpretations of his statements. Despite his differences that she found offensive, she offers an explanation that contextualizes his statements. She doesn't appear to extrapolate and make generalizations beyond the other individual. Her orientation toward encountering difference certainly appears open. Based on this quote, the reason for this disposition is to hear, using Massey's (2005) notion of trajectory, where others are coming from.

A second quote comes from a self-described devout Christian student, Rachel Boller (RB), responding to a question about what we can learn from others who think differently from us.

I like to have dialogue. It causes you to think and clarify more what you believe. It challenges you. You need to be challenged in beliefs. These challenges are good for you to deepen own beliefs and learn why you believe what you do.
For example, I didn't want to go to a Christian school. I went to Christian schools from Kindergarten through 12th grade. I wanted to branch out and get out of my comfort zone. I had lots of controversial discussions in college. I had a Jewish roommate and a Catholic roommate and an atheist roommate, so we had a lot of conversations. Then I

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went to Egypt and worked with a Muslim.   It was funny, because I felt like he was trying to convert me but then I was trying to bring him to Christianity. We still keep in touch.

Again, this quote suggests a willingness to engage with difference. The other implication of this quote is that it suggests forged connections across one dimension of differing religion.

As stated above, the location of these quotes onto the map is not intended as scientific application. I picked quotes that I felt represented each quarter but, in all likelihood, an individual mapping of oneself over the course of a semester would lead to plots all over the map. Students could see how their stances toward others move and how their personal experiences are used differently to justify different stances for different Others. I see this as a significant possibility of the map—wherever one maps one's different encounters, one is prompted to critically reflect on the location of the specific plot. Part of the emotional and intellectual work, then, is the critical reflection on the context surrounding the different points. In my case, the end result for students would be a momentary portrait of self in relation to others.
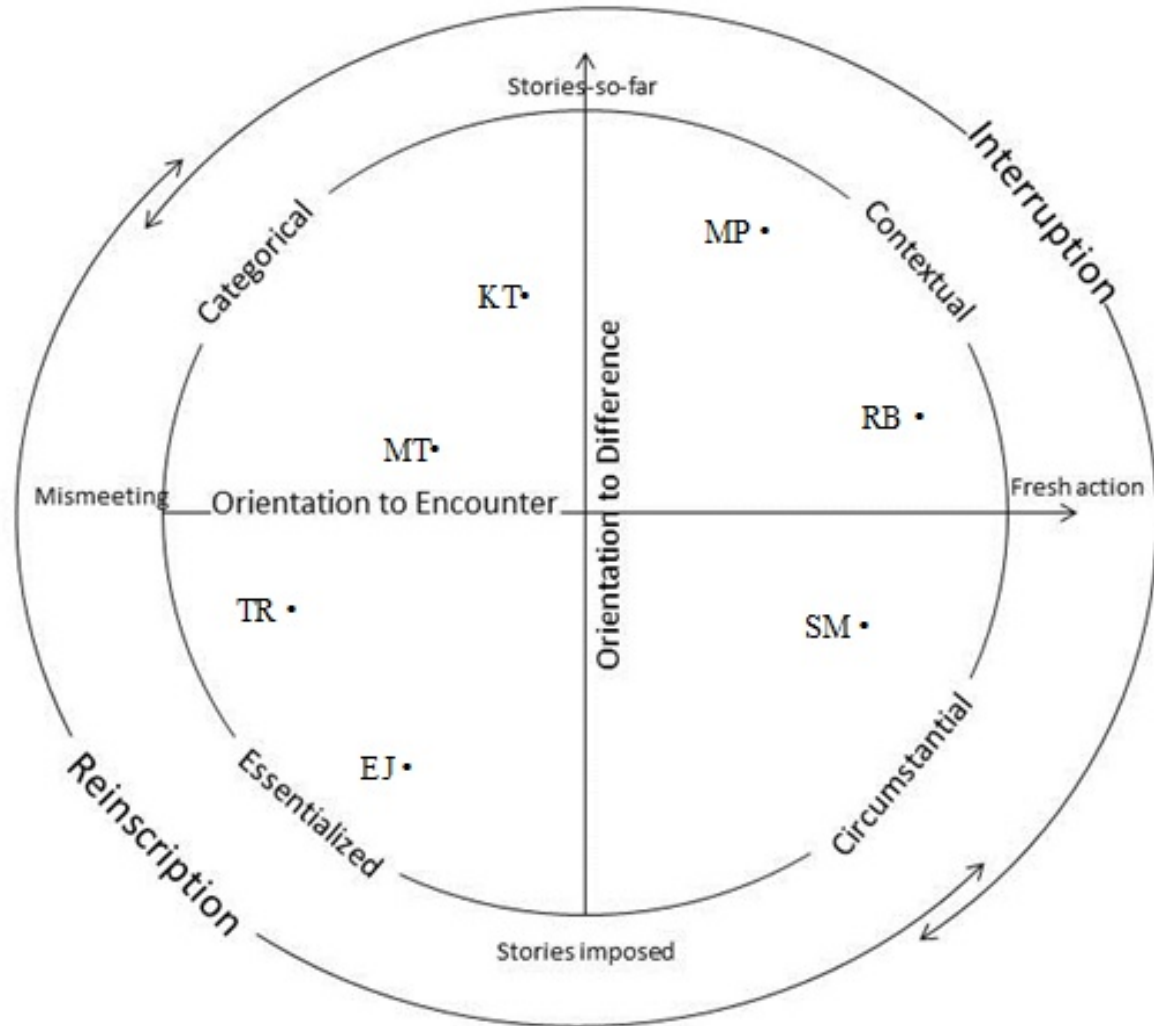
Figure 7: Map With Plots

7.4   THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE MAP

To finish this section on the application of the map, I offer how I hope this map could resolve some of the earlier dilemmas that instigated the entire project. The map will not solve social problems around difference, but it does offer several opportunities for students.

In the Lifestyle Magazine analysis assignment, students were asked to reflect on their feelings about that particular group that the lifestyle represented. For some students in my class,

this reflection process served to justify whatever feelings they already had. Applebaum (2008) and Hytten and Warren (2003) have explored this phenomena of how students—in both cases, white students—work to justify or legitimize negative feelings about non-whites by appealing to personal experiences, or by offering interpretations that discount the experiences of non whites. For example, one student, Jennifer, appeared to realize that in her reflection she may be perceived as racist, but then immediately seems to offer a justification of that by saying "It's such a major issue that white people are racist against black people, but no one ever addresses the fact that a lot of black people are also racist against white people as well." She goes on to consider how Black History month demonstrates an undercover racism because there is not a month for "us." This is the type of rhetorical move that Hytten and Warren analyze. However, this student's comment is also a rather well-worn statement that would be plotted somewhere in the essentialized quarter of the map. In that way the map offers an implicit challenge to the statement in that the map privileges movement toward the contextual quarter.

For other students, the process of reflecting on and unpacking encounters led to different types of statements than the one above. These following statements represent the possibility and opportunity of the map.

1. The map privileges a notion of non-essentialized identities and offers a way toward a conversation about difference that does not rely on rigid categories.

The map reflects my suspicion of the rational and self-interested individual. As a result, the map presumes that we are individuals filled with contradictions and who need each other, at the very least, for interpretation and understanding of our cultural surround. The map privileges the idea of an ongoing, contextually mediated understanding of others where we work against received stories and essentialized labels by engaging with others across difference. For example,

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Charlene wrote that she "did not understand diversity issues related with gender" and thought "well, aren't you just male or female?" But after watching a documentary about gender performance said she "had an epiphany about gender and now I *really* understand that people don't always fit neatly or easily into one of those categories." She goes on to talk about problematizing the "molds we are supposed to fit in". Although perhaps initially seemingly superficial, this statement represents a crack in the idea of rigid categories, and pushes thinking beyond categorical borders.

2. Personal experience as a truth claim for the interpretation of encounters across difference is complicated because, as one unpacks the interpretation, there is the possibility that new meaning or insight is gained.

By situating personal encounters onto the map, one is asked to reflect on the dimensions of that encounter. The experience of the encounter does not simply stand for itself. Rather, one has to think through the reasons for interpreting the experience of the encounter. My hope is, as Berry and Warren (2009) write, when discussing the challenge with personal experience, "experience is problematized, not taken for granted; we consider not only the story but also the diverse influences that govern our crafting of the story in the first place" (p. 602).

One of these diverse influences would certainly contain a historical dimension in that one's present interpretations rely to some extent on past experiences. That one's current perspective is contingent on events from the past complicates the certainty of the present. In other words, if the past were different, then perhaps the same current event would be interpreted differently. For example, Jennifer wrote that "Due to some of my physical features such as my hair, I've had different people including black people ask me if I was part black at times." She connected this idea to her own stereotyping based on physical traits and concluded saying "the way I stereotype people make me think that I probably am a little close-minded [sic] and shallow

at times". In this example, the current event itself (her being asked about her race) does not change, but the meaning ascribed to the event does. She connects the stereotyping she does to the stereotyping done to her and recognizes the superficiality of such classifications. In doing this she also reinterprets the past experiences of having been stereotyped based on her curly hair. Scott (1991) speaks to this notion of historically contextualizing experience saying, "it is a historicizing that implies critical scrutiny of all explanatory categories, usually taken for granted, including the category of 'experience' (p. 780). I think the map presents the opportunity for that critical reflection of one's experience.

3. Social justice is incorporated into a politicized understanding of the seemingly mundane everyday and the notion of the neoliberal individual is challenged by using a relational and intersubjective framework.

As Leitner (2012), Massey (2005) and Valentine (2008) noted above, the meaning making or interpretation of encounter is political. Restrepo (2011) writes that "the manner in which the world is interpreted is inherently political as it plays a crucial role in maintaining or undermining the ways in which we inhabit and intervene in the world" (p. 433). A question that follows is what "ways" are being either maintained or undermined? My argument has been that part of social justice work is to challenge (undermine) so-called natural or common-sense ways of relating to difference that I attributed to neoliberalism. I think, following Massey, that the micro level is one site where we can look to examine the creation of such a condition. According to the governmentality theorists, we do not need physical coercion to continue what Massey calls the "local reproduction of the neoliberal capitalist global" (p. 101). In that sense, examining relational practices of the everyday represents a possible challenge to that neoliberal global. One male student, Alec, who had expressed dissatisfaction with rigid gender roles early on in the class later wrote, "As a man, I wish there was some color I could use to allow me appropriate

access to any activity. If I cooked in a blue apron, or cleaned the house with a green vacuum cleaner, I don't think the colors would stand out clearly as an entry point to this activity." He finished that particular Journal entry lamenting "the masculinity that is at stake if one is unable to attract females." I think this is a good example of politicizing the everyday. Despite having a girlfriend, he is experiencing tension between desirable activities with also wanting to avoid having his masculinity and sexuality questioned. Based on his earlier comments, this experience of realizing desirable activities that do not conform to imposed categories is ongoing. He has experienced that the perception or response of others, upon hearing about things he likes to do, is one of surprise and he is thought of, as he said, "as being strange or gay." Another relevant angle on this anecdote could be for him, and the class, to reflect on the conditions of the cultural surround that have him worried about being perceived as gay or appropriately masculine.

Related to that point, I think the map suggests the intersubjective nature of our interpretations. The map suggests that we are not individuals making meaning in isolation, but that meaning making is an intersubjective process. Importantly, because of the historical dimension of experience mentioned above, the constitution of our subjectivity is ongoing. Again, from Berry and Walsh (2009), "Just as everyday interaction is an interdependent process, the formation of selves is enacted in cooperation with others". They continue, "thus, understanding ourselves…is an undertaking of discerning situated subjectivities or selves who are dynamically crafted in the production of everyday experiences…through cultural performance of that self and in relation to others" (p. 604).

Thinking as an instructor, I do not need the map to have a conversation this way, but I do think the map helps facilitate that conversation. If individual constitution is ongoing and interdependent, and mediated by past experiences, the notion of the self-sufficient individual is

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destabilized. Instead, we now need, at the very least, to consider our interactions with others. Massey (2005) pushes further saying, "the throwntogetherness of a place demands negotiation…The sheer fact of having to get on together; the fact that you cannot 'purify' spaces/places. In this throwntogetherness what are at issue are the terms of engagement of those trajectories, those stories-so-far, within that conjuncturality" (p. 141). She later writes that our social context imagined this way demands "a politics which pays attention to the fact that entities and identities (be they place, or political constituencies, or mountains) are collectively produced through practices which form relations; and it is on those practices and relations that politics must be focused" (p. 148). I think the mapping, and the accompanying excavation of personal experience, might sharpen focus on that process.

4. The commodified notion of social justice is challenged.

I think an approach to social justice conversations in the ways described above represents a marked contrast to the commodified understanding of social justice outlined at the outset where social justice work is imagined as buying a responsible bottle of water, or charitably helping out the needy. Worse yet is the idea that if one's situation is less than ideal, personal irresponsibility is imagined as the most likely cause. Bauman (1993) sarcastically dismisses this notion that each need only take care of his or her own saying "if only each of us serves well our own interest, the invisible hand will serve us all, serving the interest we all share. With the invisible hand on the twenty-four-hours-a-day beat…we can sleep undisturbed" (p. 183). Further, to the extent we are able to continue fragmenting ourselves, our concern diminishes for others we imagine as different from us. As a counter to a market-led notion of social justice, I imagine social justice work as first dealing with our respective responses to encounters across difference. Michelle's quote, I think, captures much of these sentiments when she talks about the unstable ground of

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commodified identity positions being used to classify people. She spoke about the tensions she experiences navigating different social settings:

> When I show up to Pitt in my teaching clothes I'm like "God I would hate myself if I saw myself." Probably I'd be thinking "what a stuffy bitch" maybe. I try not to think about that when I see other people dressed. I don't know that they want to be dressed the way they are. Maybe they just came from somewhere or are going somewhere, so I don't want to automatically assume that someone else's clothes will reflect them. It's not really a good way to go about things. Putting people into boxes, in my opinion…they can move from box to box in day. Regardless of how many boxes there are. Yeah it's nice that there are more and more, but it's because we want to put more people in them. We create them so we can classify them. But I think, just stop classifying people.

This quote speaks to much of this entire dissertation. She challenges identity categories by recognizing the endless interplay between outward appearance and the interpretation of others of that appearance. She links this challenge to her own experience of feeling uncomfortable with her appearance and suggests a contextual approach, even when that context is unknowable, to interpreting encounters. Her quote speaks to what Aitken (2010) suggests as a focus on how "qualitative encounters with difference make me feel; the non representable that churns my stomach or makes me smile" (p. 63). Or what Bauman (1993) cites as the "we-experience" (p. 185). In short, my perspective is that any impetus toward social justice depends on the willingness to see how we are connected to each other—even at the seemingly mundane level of the everyday encounter. I am not arguing for a radical empathy or even against alterity. I am suggesting that, despite all manner of contextual, historical, ascribed and innate differences, social justice efforts should include work to see how our ongoing creation and understanding of reality is tied together with the strangers around us. In a classroom setting of students discussing their maps, there is no guarantee of change, but it does hold the possibility of what Leitner

(2012) calls "positionalities being called into question" (p. 833). My hope is that this includes individual positions as well as collective.

I offer that the map represents, of many possibilities, one way to map an internal terrain of encounter. My goal was to offer a coherent space into which one could situate encounters with difference. The range of voices represented on any one map is the internal polyphony of contradictory voices we all possess. The map offers a way for one to begin internal excavation of the stories we tell to explain our identities and which construct the boundaries between self and other. I hope it offers the possibility to dialogue beyond the superficial level of experience and towards what Asher (2007) refers to as a culture of "do ask, do tell" (71). In other words, I would hope the map could offer a way toward a different conversation about difference.

In the final chapter, I offer a summary of this project along with the implications of the project, as well as implications for future research. I also address some of the limitations—some were resolved along the way and others remain.

8.0   CONCLUSION

Along the way, this dissertation introduced different conceptual pieces which helped me address some of the curricular issues I was thinking about. In short, this dissertation represents an answer to the question of what happens if I teach a course around consumer culture and Other and then try to map student responses to Other? The path I ended up taking represents one outcome of many possibilities, and many times along the way I was unsure where things were headed.

In this concluding chapter, I address how I think the map, as a pedagogical heuristic, might help resolve some of the initial questions I was facing. Before concluding, I also briefly address some of the areas where I think this mapping project interacts with other relatively recent developments in the field of Social Foundations.

8.1   SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This dissertation began as an attempt to address what, at the time, seemed like a fairly simple issue to deal with. I thought that complicating identity categories might be a relatively straightforward issue to address with students. After several classes, though, my own thinking was complicated by how solidified certain cultural narratives appeared to be in students sense-making explanations; and in many cases these narratives relied on stable notions of identity categories. At the same time, I was struck by how the scholars working with questions of

neoliberalism were addressing, albeit indirectly, conceptual issues that related to what I was hearing in the classroom.

In an effort to find a connection between these two areas, I turned toward scholars who theorized how the tenets of neoliberalism might interact with questions of identity. When post-structuralist scholars elaborated the notion of truth-regimes and how the repeated sedimentation of particular narratives influenced subjectivity, I was able to make the connection. These scholars captured the taken-for-granted nature of the way students talked about difference as if categorical divisions of people were not only real, but that the fault lines had always existed. In other words, the categories appeared as an integral part of the larger sense-making canopy under which students made sense of their realities.

In the classroom, the persistence of stable, singular identity categories themselves felt like the remnants of a time when political organization depended on such a coherent approach to identity. I do not want to discount the power of identity politics, but in the classroom the use of categories was starting to feel increasingly like a crude mechanism of social sorting for the purpose of making discussion more tangible.

In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault talks about the importance of the examination as a way to standardize, compare, and hierarchically sort individuals. In the classroom, insistence on categorical approaches to labeling different demographics seemed another technique which served that individual and demographic sorting function well.

As stated at the outset, I was thinking about social justice work divided in terms of recognition and/or redistribution. I think the ultimate goal must include mechanisms of redistribution. However, my experience in the classroom as both a student and an instructor suggests that redistribution is unlikely without first tackling the complicated work of recognition.

I consider a part of recognition work as language work. Neoliberal narratives laud a highly individualistic notion of self which has resulted in a dearth of available language at the macro level to counter such narratives. The repeated enunciation of these narratives leads to a situation where others can be caricatured, sorted, and compared according to these self-possessed neoliberal narratives. These explanatory narratives allow us to overlook complicated questions of systemic injustice and instead simplify our explanations for why such conditions exist. Even when neoliberal narratives are put to work toward social justice aims, they often lead to asocial and individualistic understandings of what social justice may mean. Wood (2008) suggests further that many understandings of redistribution also play well within a neoliberal environment as this notion economizes social justice and oversimplifies it as primarily a question of access to capital. The classroom outcome, then, is often a highly economized conversation about social justice. In this context, individuals from different identity categories can be rationally imagined as competitors for scarce resources. This notion then offers a justification for what often more accurately seems like an unwillingness to recognize the legitimacy of others that one perceives as different. Rather than engaging with difficult recognition questions of culture, history, power, and the construction of normalcy, one can discount recognition of difference warranted by culturally legitimized economic grounds.

To counter this, recognition work must mean attending more profoundly to those complicated questions of injustice. I follow Applebaum's (2009) idea that working for social justice is not an ideological indoctrination, or liberal bias, where students are forced to accept a particular worldview. Instead, it can be better considered as work where students are expected to engage with multiple perspectives and challenge the certainty of their own thinking. Using the language of the map, it means, in part, to acknowledge the story of others and recognize how that

story may be more complex than what any single narrative can explain. I am not interested in students thinking like me or repeating my ideas back to me. I hope they engage in order to complicate their thinking about encounters with difference. Here is where Gunzenhauser's (2008) call for critical reflection and intersubjective engagement is important, as both notions are conceptually valuable to work against the idea of the self-possessed neoliberal individual.

Operationalizing intersubjective engagement could be done in any number of ways. In my case, I think there are at least three interrelated concepts around which the notion of intersubjective engagement might work. One is the notion of contingent self-identities, another relates to the interpretation of experience, and a third relates to being confronted with our own biases.

Related to the first idea, unpacking one's constructions of difference reveals more about the normative assumptions guiding one's own self-understanding than it does about whomever the Other happens to be. As Butler (2005) addresses, there are culturally legitimized identities as well as those that are not. It is certainly easier to speak about oneself from within recognized and validated positions, and difficult or impossible to speak from marginalized or culturally delegitimatized positions. I think intersubjective engagement around identity questions can represent any identity as contingent. For those already existing within such a position, the experience may not be novel. For others, though, not accustomed to having their self-perception challenged, it offers the opportunity to reflect on oneself differently. To plot one's positions on the map asks that one consider facets of his or her identity with no assumption that the facets necessarily add up to a smoothly integrated whole. In other words, recognition that our own identities are contingent on a range of contextual factors may begin to disrupt the assumption of

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a neat, coherent self and instead suggests a self that is mediated by others. This intersubjective, relational quality of self-understanding begins to counter the neoliberal self.

The second application of intersubjective engagement relates to the interpretation of experience. Again, countering the neoliberal notion of self-managed individual, is the idea that we are always in a process of constitution. Our experiences represent one of the ways we are constituted. However, if our interpretation of our experiences is contingent on prior experiences, the relationship between our identity and personal experiences must be turned around. As Scott (1991) writes, "it is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience" (p. 779). This is a powerful idea that calls into question any number of certainties we might have about ourselves, including the truth of the sense-making narratives we use to narrate our own identity. A central outcome of mapping oneself is to give an account of the location of the different plots. This offers an opportunity to interrogate our interpretations of personal experiences for what they say about how we imagine others as well as ourselves. Importantly, this lets us think about how others in our experiences are positioned by our retelling of the experience.

Finally, as the map privileges contextually mediated interpretations of encounters, it values listening across difference as an intersubjective process. Garrison (1996) recognized this when he suggests how listening to others gives us the opportunity to hear ourselves narrated from a different position. To the extent we are narrated differently than we imagine ourselves, such an encounter can free us from being trapped by our unknown prejudices in that we have to confront the discrepancy. In a classroom of students discussing their maps, this type of listening would ideally occur. Again, this relationally constituted notion of self represents a counter to a neoliberal subject position.

The map's approach to intersubjective engagement in these three ways offers the opportunity to speak of ourselves in a way that acknowledges the contingency of the truth-claims of our own self-understanding and self-narration, as well as our narration of others. In that way, the map, while internally focused, also directly relates to the external or the social. To map encounter in this way, one must reflect on a relational self in a world filled with difference—our condition of throwntogetherness.

8.2   LIMITATIONS

Until this point, I have intentionally avoided a discussion of the demographics of the students that participated in this study. Evading that question until now, however, does not mean it is not a significant issue. As stated throughout, there were specific reasons for trying to address questions of difference from a perspective that did not resort to known categorical identity markers. At this point, though, it is worth addressing some potential shortcomings of that approach. One of the biggest is the question of social justice and race.

My experience teaching Social Foundations has been that nearly all of the students are white, and the students in this class were no different. As Hytten and Warren (2003) have shown, there are many ways that white students may resist conversation related to race and equity in Social Foundations classrooms. My concern here is less about how students may resist exploring and mapping their stances toward others of a different race, and more whether the approach I took may facilitate that resistance. There are several ways that this could be the case.

The map is a representation of an individual's plotting of his or her personal stances toward different others. In this way the individual becomes the authority in articulating his or her position. However, as several have shown (Applebaum, 2008; Hytten & Warren, 2003;

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Scott, 1991), individuals cannot be the uncontested arbiters of their own experiences. Applebaum (2008) writes how the discursive practices used to narrate experiences are ideologically laden and "serve to give meaning to our social world, but which also serve to establish and sustain relations of domination" (p. 407). In this way, the map could be an opportunity for students to re-establish the authority of their own interpretations of their experience, and thereby perpetuate and legitimize status quo social injustice. Despite the hope that the map offers an opportunity to interrogate individual experience, it may reduce experience to such a micro-level that students do not consider their experiences from broader, systemic perspectives.

A second consideration is whether the map reduces experience to merely a discursive interpretation. For some students, this helps to remove a sense of complicity for any systemic inequity. For other students, it may minimize their claims of social injustice. Applebaum (2008) writes,

> That some groups of people have difficulties obtaining mortgage loans, or are profiled by the police; that some groups of people fear walking alone at night; that some groups of people cannot have their partner recognized and respected in marriage; these are experiences that "refer outward" and, though they will always be interpreted according to available frameworks, are beyond discursive structures. (p. 408)

In other words, reducing some experiences to individual interpretation may minimize or mitigate certain systemic social injustices that have real, material consequences—in other words, that cannot be considered as one's interpretation.

A second issue related to this idea of interpretation of one's experience is the language used to narrate the experience. Earlier, the notion of one's "story" was discussed, which emphasizes the discursiveness of the interpretation of experience. However, the language used

to narrate one's experience has consequences for the implications of the experience. Applebaum (2008) makes an important point when wondering how to sort out the "truth" of one's interpretation. Is the issue really whether one's narration is "true" or not? Or, are we better served by questioning whose interests are served by particular interpretations? In the context of social justice work, she suggests we should be attuned to which interpretations name systemic injustices. She writes that "some explanations expose the larger social patterns to which certain attitudes and behavior contribute, while other conceal this connection" (p. 409). In other words, interpretation of experience could, for many students, serve as a way to distance themselves from larger questions of inequity.

Finally, there is a potential limitation to this project that is reflective of my own subjectivity. I was interested in avoiding categorical thinking because my experience (with mostly white students) suggested that students find various ways to resist conversations about categorical Others. An implicit assumption of mine, though, is that others also see the world from this categorical or categorized perspective. This may be especially problematic because I, as a white male, benefit from not being seen categorically for the most part. During the day to day of micro-scale life, I move through space and have the privilege of being perceived as an individual and not as a category. Even if some individuals may perceive me as a category (white males), systemically this is not the case. These categorical identity markers do not precede me. A question then, is how the notion of categorical thinking may get challenged in that I, personally, benefit from being thought of as an individual (and not a category)? An extension of this question is to ask how might the mapping experience be problematized by individuals whose categorical markers do precede them? I think this could be especially true when the category is something visible such as race. Of course, I cannot say how others would perceive this project,

or how students would feel about the map. Perhaps the map, oriented around the assumption of categories, would represent a limited conception of the social field, or a forced way of perceiving others.

Certainly, there are other possible limitations. But, because the project was oriented around social justice, I think the limitations discussed here represent complications that could result in status quo injustice being reinscribed rather than interrupted.

8.3   CONNECTION TO THE FIELD OF SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS

I think there are at least two areas where this type of project is complemented by current work in Social Foundations. One emerging area is that of autobiography. Another area, relatively established in Feminist studies programs but less present in Social Foundations, is work around the concept of intersectionality. I think the map lends itself to both of these approaches in the way they address questions of identity, difference, and social justice.

Nicholson-Goodman (2012) has already made the connection between social cartography and autobiographical work. In addition to her other work with social cartography, her recent approach maps her own journey of becoming a scholar through the academic work of graduate school. Implicit in this idea is a notion of self-constitution as her process explores the way she comes to make sense of herself inside and outside the academy, and how her life experiences contributed to that understanding of self. I think it is important here how she works with a notion of polyvocality. She consciously narrates herself in different voices—academic language, poetry, and as the subject of inquiry—throughout the text. In other words, she recognizes a contextually mediated self and says she maps "the elements of self-construction that came into play" during her time in graduate school (p. 247). Throughout the piece she suggests that this

exploration of self is important not only for self-understanding, but also for the political and civic ends of better situating herself in the cultural surround. I read in her work an autobiographical approach to relationality.

In another text (Bushnell & Henry, 2003), the authors address how they use autobiographical writing in their Social Foundations classroom to work toward social justice. Their approach suggests that "self-authorship" constitutes a way of knowing which is different from other forms of academic writing. They ground this claim offering that writing the self is a process "influenced by individual perceptions and the selected remembering of…subjective and construed" people and experiences (p. 57). Their end goal of the autobiographical work they do with students is to shift epistemological orientations from positions of certainty to positions of contextually mediated contingency. This move to more complicated ways of knowing represents a step toward social justice work.

In both of these examples, I think there are clear interactions with the cartography of encounter I propose.

A second area that I think merits more inclusion in the field of Social Foundations is the concept of intersectionality. This approach to social justice and identity work suggests that an identity politics approach to identity categories is no longer appropriate. These theorists suggest that different categories interlock and interact in a much more complicated way than an additive or subtractive approach to oppression. Valentine (2007) says this well when he writes that the

> additive or multiplication analogy assumes that one form of oppression would be merely additive upon another. Thus, someone at the intersection of three systems of oppression—a disabled black woman, for example—would be more oppressed than a black woman who was considered to be at the intersection of only two. This approach both champions an identity politics and implicitly ranks difference. This way of thinking has been challenged as dangerously essentialist because of the way it interprets identities

as a set of separate and fixed differences added incrementally to one another. It also implicitly assumes a base identity—presumably white, heterosexual, able-bodied male— upon which other identities are added. (p. 13)

I think this quote addresses many of my own issues with categorical approaches to difference. Much of the intersectionality work remains at the theoretical level. However several authors are working with methodological approaches that incorporate intersectionality frameworks.

Cole (2009) offers a narrative approach to intersectionality that I found compelling. She first writes how intersectionality works against binary approaches to difference, which is a step toward more complicated thinking. She goes on to show how a narrative approach, or the "storying of lived experiences" is a way to challenge the caricatured representations of individuals found in dominant discourses (p. 563). I make the connection here to the idea of the neoliberal self. Cole writes that intersectionality would work well with a methodology of "personal experience approaches within which contradiction and complexity abound" (p. 566). Part of my thinking about the map is precisely that point. We are filled with contradictions which no single narrative of self can begin to capture. She further writes of the importance for individuals to experience those multiple stories as a way to better understand the different ways connections and possibilities of connection exist. Again, I think the map could offer a space which houses the multiple stories of one person, but which shows both the contradictions and the possibilities.

Much like the autobiography work above, I think the connections between what I have offered here is complemented by the work of intersectionality theorists, and such a concept represents an exciting area to bring into the field of Social Foundations.

8.4   CONCLUSION

Returning to the notion of social justice as recognition, I am constantly in search of ways to disrupt notions of normalcy and, to borrow from Butler, what counts as being human. For me, an approach to recognition work must include work around language in order to name forms of oppression, but importantly to create ways of talking about what is currently difficult to address. Recognition work also must include work on ourselves to better understand the ways in which, during daily life, we enact ways of being that marginalize and exclude. In a current political context of increasing polarization, when it seems the talking heads insist on appealing to an increasingly individualistic, asocial understanding of self, recognition work needs to offer a counter that works toward understandings of the many different possibilities for interconnection.

The map developed here is one representation of that relationship between the self and the Other. Massey (2005) concludes her book suggesting that a "challenge of our constitutive interrelatedness" is the "ongoing and ever-specific project of the practices through which that sociability is to be configured" (p. 195). As a curriculum heuristic, I imagine the map as one way to begin to address that challenge.

APPENDIX

Interview Questionnaire

1) What relationship do you imagine or feel between you and your:
   a) teachers
   b) fellow classmates
   c) students

2) How would you describe your relationship to others out there in the world (not family, friends, etc.)?
   a) What sense of responsibility do you have to these people?

3) Tell me about a time when you felt like a stranger or an outsider.
   a) How did you know you were an outsider?
   b) What did you learn from that experience?
   c) What do you have in common with strangers?

4) Think about a few beliefs you have that you consider significant
   a) Where do you think these came from (ie. why do you have them)?
   b) What's your response to those who believe differently than you or don't consider those (your significant beliefs) to be important?

5) What's the value of people believing differently?
   a) What can you learn from people that believe differently?

6) What's worthwhile about speaking to people who you consider:
   a) Rich?
   b) Foreign?
   c) Immigrant?
   d) A different race?
   e) A different gender?
   f) Poor?

7) How would you feel if you couldn't buy clothes for a whole year?

8) Are there particular looks that you try to:
   a) achieve? which and why?
   b) avoid? which and why?

    c)   what are your thoughts about a person if you see them with a look you try to avoid?

9) How closely would you connect your sense of identity to your appearance?

10) In what ways do consumer culture items (clothes, jewelry, general appearance) affect your
feelings about yourself?

11) In what ways do consumer culture items (clothes, jewelry, general appearance) affect your interpretations of others?

12) What informs your ideas and feelings about these "looks"?

13) How much stock do you put into your interpretations of others?

14) Are you concerned that others interpret you in the way that you hope to be interpreted?

15) In what ways do you think consumer culture is a reasonable measure by which to interpret others?

16) What do you think when you see someone with "outdated" style?

17) What do you think is the social outcome of the increasing variety of consumer "looks" and their association with identity?

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