THE SINGULAR POWER OF OUR

REPEATED PERFORMANCES

OF RACE

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines race as cultural identity and specifically what is produced and legitimated when race is expressed on the surface of the body through our daily discourses and repeated performances of those discourses. The framework defines identity as daily and repeated communicative, linguistic and corporeal enactments. It also asks whether there is power in these expressions and whether a self-reflexive approach to these expressions of race as culture could be subversive or transformative.

The framework of this dissertation is built on a rejection of the categories of identity as arbitrary and as part of a discourse used to divide, rank and degrade people. The framework is propped up with constructs adapted from the work of Butler, Bakhtin and Foucault's interpretations of power and specifically the idea that labels are the work of power used to police exclude and prohibit. From Foucault I adopted the notion that power does not emanate from a single sovereign source, and is instead disseminated through various actors across multiple relationship networks. From Bakhtin I adopted the metaphor of *centripetal or unifying discourses vs. centrifugal or diversifying discourses*, which provided clarifying imagery regarding the ways in which power moves inside language, more often than not fixing meanings to objects in limiting and tyrannical ways. Finally, from Butler I adopted the idea of *performativity*, which defines identities as daily repeated communicative, linguistic and corporeal enactments and explains how discourse

is manifested through our bodies such that we might accomplish things with words when we perform with and through powerful discourses.

The dissertation concludes that bodies (race) and categories (culture) are not fixed entities but rather engaged in a dialogic process with what has been and could be. Our enactment and engagement of categories give durability and credibility to those discourses and performances in large part through the naturalization created by daily repetition. Furthermore, we can self-reflect on our bodies and performances, the discourses that we have helped sustain, and the possibilities that open up once we understand that there is power in our repeated performances and possibilities in the spaces that open once we halt the repetition.

For Lila, the love of my life

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INTRODUCTION

Defining My Questions

What am I doing here? What is the purpose of my being here? I repeatedly confronted these questions during my graduate studies in the Education Culture and Society department (ECS). I did not decide to pursue a PhD for the love of knowledge or to address a pressing concern. Rather, I did so to extend the duration of my stay in the United States, my only viable means of doing so while facing the increased scrutiny of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Nevertheless, Part of me longed for a job that would have tangible and satisfactory outcomes equal to the effort that I had invested in my education. The hours that I had spent reading, writing, and in painful and confrontational conversations—usually around issues of race and white privilege—with my classmates seemed aimless and to lead nowhere. At the end of each day, I felt that I had nothing to show for my work.

I do not mean to imply that I was not interested in or excited about the new and radical ideas to which I was being exposed during my studies. In the end, much of what I learned was life transforming and this entire journey changed me forever. However, in my struggle to give legitimacy to the enormous amounts of energy that I was devoting to the mere exchange of ideas, I would ponder with uncertainty, what is the power in words? What could be accomplished with words? At that time, I did not see that addressing these powerful questions could have been the *raisons d'être* for my dissertation research and for my long years of study at ECS. Because of a lack of direction and complete ignorance regarding what formulating a research question entailed, it would be many years before I stumbled upon the realization that these concerns were the focus of my inquiry. Eventually, I went on to inquire about the power of words and specifically about the power in the discourses of race we enact daily on the surface of our bodies.

I identified theoretical constructs that allowed me to formulate a more focused set of questions regarding race, discourse and power. With language borrowed from the work of Foucault, Bakhtin, and Butler, I was able to build a framework. I had always understood that I was not searching for generalizable truths. I knew that what I wanted to do was string together a cohesive narrative to make sense of my data; because this narrative would be informed by my own life experience it would be yet another creative way to talk about the relationship between discourse and power and how people figure in the dissemination of that power. From Foucault I adopted the notion that power does not emanate from a single sovereign source, and is instead disseminated through various actors across multiple relationship networks. From Bakhtin I adopted the metaphor of *centripetal or unifying discourses vs. centrifugal or diversifying discourses*, which provided clarifying imagery regarding the ways in which power moves inside language, more often than not fixing meanings to objects in limiting and tyrannical ways. Finally, from Butler I adopted the idea of *performativity*, which explained how discourse is manifested through our bodies such that we might accomplish things with words when we perform with and through powerful discourses.

Ultimately, I decided to inquire into the power in the discourses of diversity and difference, whose force I had sensed—thought not understood—during my years at ECS. It was in the multicultural education classroom that I had learned that the notion of race has been discredited by the science of genetics. However, that very same classroom was the stage where the politics of identity and the identity performances of white and racialized students were at the center of a real struggle for some kind of power. I saw how different actors tapped into the power of particular discourses and how different performances of those discourses had varied effects on the context and the dynamics of classroom relationships. Nevertheless, I did not understand the connection between those performances, the discourses enacted through them, or their power. These are the relationships that I set out to understand.

I thought I had found an extraordinary setting for testing the power of the discourse of diversity within *forum theater* (FT), a form of the theater of the oppressed (TO). According to Augusto Boal, its creator, FT is a theatrical space in which rehearsal for the revolution takes place (Theater of the Oppressed, 1974). Through FT, a group of individuals can rewrite a script regarding the difficulties, problems, and dilemmas in their lives as a way to understand how to transform their lives by theatricalizing a problem and presenting it to an audience that then engages in a democratic and public search for alternatives. In short, the group seeks to test the power of its proposed solutions using discursive and performative tools, thus ultimately testing the effectiveness of those tools. FT, I thought, would be a fitting setting to examine whether or not we can transform the world through discourse and performance.

I identified two FT pieces in which participants wrestled with the discourses of difference for examination. The first had been presented at a conference by a group of teachers and students of theater that specifically addressed the power struggles within the multicultural education classroom while the second examined the film *Crash* (Haggis) and some of the problematic discourses of race that the film represented. The script of the first forum, in which a white student demonstrates unrelenting resistance to the idea that a language other than English could be spoken in her American classroom, was based on the composite experiences of many educators who had faced such resistance in their multicultural education classrooms. I saw this script as a place in which to identify the discourses deployed in the tension created when white students in the multicultural classroom push back against the idea of diversity. I wanted to examine it closely to identify who deploys these discourses, how power moves through them, and what FT participants can achieve or transform vis-à-vis this problem and through the discourses that they perform on stage.

The second forum piece had been prepared by a group of University of Utah students as a means to explore the representations of racialized groups in the movie *Crash*. Focusing on analysis of the parts of the film in which racialized people are defined, the forum specifically invited interested students to examine the stereotypes that had been written in the script and to recast them in a way that was more recognizable to the FT audience. As I wanted to understand which types of discourses are deployed to speak of the "other" and how power figures in those definitions, this FT was significant because the group was composed of people who identified as members of racialized groups, whereas most of the participants in the first FT were white. This difference between the two forums allowed me to examine whether racialized groups use the power of discourses of difference in ways that differ from those of white actors. Together, the two forums would serve as exemplars in the critical explanation of the relationships I sought to understand.

In this introduction, I retrace my long path to finding both FT and identifying the questions that I addressed in my inquiry. I also provide a preamble to the ideas and constructs that compose this dissertation. During my ECS orientation in 1999, a senior professor had stated that choosing a research topic was a serious decision and that doctoral candidates should only pursue research into a subject matter about which they feel strongly or passionately. The professor reminded my fellow students and me that as our topics would soon become a major part of our lives, if we were not truly interested in them our research would be that much more tedious. It was only later that I gave heed to her instructions.

As part of attending Frank Margonis' Fall 2000 Critical Pedagogy class, I read a series of articles on pedagogical approaches that place a strong emphasis on social justice. One approach was that of *teatro campesino* (TC), a dynamic form touted by its creator as an ideal way to illuminate the oppressive conditions faced by workers (Bagby, 1967). Theater activists working with the United Farm Workers had used TC as a popular cultural form and a powerful organizing tool in their standoff with powerful agribusiness interests in 1960s California. Defined as fertile terrain for political education and activism, TC had allowed these workers to unite in what they saw as the process of their political conscientization (Freire, 1970). Staged in the sunny fields of California and on truck flatbeds, the *actos* or scenes improvised as a part of TC were a clever and compelling incarnation of this conscientization, offering viable solutions to the workers' predicament at some times and simply provided the healing release that comes with laughter at other times (Broyles-Gonzalez, 1994).

I found TC engaging, sometimes humorous, and very entertaining. Beyond that, I realized that it had been an effective pedagogical means of creating awareness of the abuses to which farm workers had been subjected by powerful bosses (Broyles-Gonzalez, 1994). I decided that semester that TC was a topic that could sustain my interest through the difficult process of writing a dissertation. Moreover, as TC echoed the Brazilian popular educational and cultural movements of the 1950s and 1960s, it connected me to a younger, more idealist version of me. I had learned about these movements while a student in Colombia, a time at which the optimism of Freire's philosophy had served as a powerful alternative to the powerlessness and apathy that Colombians often felt while living in a society of outrageous disparity between unspeakable poverty and unjustifiable excess. I eagerly embraced the ideals put forth by Freire and TC, particularly that education could lead to liberation through critical thinking and that the poor could own the process of their political awakening through a participatory pedagogical approach.

As I began reading more about TC and political theater in general, one of my colleagues forwarded me an e-mail with information about the Seventh Annual Pedagogy and Theater of the Oppressed (PTO) Conference. Scheduled to take place in Omaha, Nebraska in spring 2001, the event included a three-day FT preconference workshop by TO founder Boal. Excited about the opportunity to see political theater in person and to learn more about it, I registered for both the conference and preconference workshops and headed to Omaha that spring full of expectation. I was not disappointed. At the conference, I learned a great deal about Boal and his efforts to change the world through popular forms of political theater (PT). I discovered that he had a large contingency of followers who would come from all over the world to learn from him and from the other practitioners of TO, some from as far away as Israel, Japan, Korea, and Zimbabwe (Estrada, personal notes 2001). I also learned that Boal was a globe-trotter who had taken his techniques and methods from Brazil to Peru and then to the United States, Switzerland, India, and beyond (Boal, 1992). After he had become wildly popular, several theater companies, including the prestigious Royal Shakespeare Company of London, had invited him to use his in-demand improvisation and game-based techniques to help them polish their productions (Boal, 1992). I found Boal to be a warm, charismatic, and profoundly persuasive leader and educator who spoke of TO with passion and contagious optimism. He conveyed his message that TO was a powerful tool to foster democratic and cooperative forms of interaction among participants using commanding and convincing language. Part of TO's power, Boal stated, was its rootedness in the lives and concerns of its participants and its ability to turn spectators into the actors and directors of the theater of their own lives (Estrada, personal notes, 2001). By the end of the conference, I had become a committed follower dedicated to learning more about this potent theatrical form and the change it could bring.

During the first workshop, I felt tense and timid as Boal began "theatricalizing" the space. I had never participated in theater, and was nervous engaging with a group of seasoned professionals. However, Boal ensured the space was welcoming and informal, even though it was held in a large conference room of an old hotel in downtown Omaha. He started by having us engage in a series of exercises aimed at breaking the ice and getting the group into a dramatic mood, a relatively painless way to ease a novice like me into the exuberant practice of TO. One such exercise was that of the *image theater*, in which participants use their bodies as "clay" to create still images of a concept, a problematic situation, or oppression (Boal, 1992). Although I began the activity with fear and doubt in my theatrical abilities, I soon found myself playing along and enjoying myself in a room full of theater directors, professors, students, and experienced actors. I was struck by the group's ability to express very complex notions without using words, one of the primary rules of the activity. After my group had presented our images to the other groups, the participants began to dialogue. As in many of Boal's workshops that I would later experience, the room became filled with the sounds of people enjoying themselves, whether the nervous "oohs" and "aahs" of surprise at an image's ingenuity or power or the "a-ha" of recognition when someone gave fitting words to a human sculpture.

There were no chairs in the room where we gathered except for that reserved for Boal. Between games and exercises, he pulled his chair toward the center of the room and took the role of the teacher, inviting us to gather around him on the carpet. "Closer, closer," he would say, opening his arms in an embrace and gesturing with his hands toward the center of his chest. It was remarkable to watch everyone—young and old, men and women, people from all professions and walks of life—sitting around him and looking up to him. We were like children, our heads tilted upward, listening intently. Several times he recounted one of his favorite stories: the origins of TO in Brazil and Peru as he worked in literacy campaigns under the repressive Latin American military dictatorships of the 1960s. Painting himself as a committed activist devoted to his work, he described his arrests and torture by the police, followed by his exile in the early 1970s for what was then perceived as the subversive and dangerous cultural work of PT and TO. There was a strong sense of pride and certitude in his retelling of the use of PT as an important tool for social justice during difficult times of violence, suffering, oppression, and fear. He explained that as his ultimate goal was to reinvent the future for people who had none, he and his troupe were committed not to entertainment but to teaching. Through theater, they gave their audiences the means of production so that they could write and rewrite the scripts of their own lives. The audiences at the PTO conferences were deeply fond of this kind man, having great respect for the depth of his experience and all that he had to offer.

I was thrilled to have found such a group. After becoming increasingly interested in FT as a participant at—what were to me—highly charged events, I attended subsequent PTO conferences with the goal of learning how to create a powerful space in which individuals could collectively examine their oppression and re-invent their own realities and futures. In retrospect, I see this transformative goal as a tall order for the theater form. However, at that time I was captivated by the stories and, especially, the energizing and convivial process. I loved how boisterous and lively the theater events could be: the collective wrestling with the issues, the agreeing, the dissenting, and the thinking aloud together. I loved the complexity and democratic nature of the stories of mixed origins. Given that most of the participants had a background in theater, the performances were amusing, loud, and self-assured. For those who were as open to the experience as I was, the performances were, at times, rattling. Furthermore—to me in my search for meaningful scholarship—they offered tangible outcomes, such as liberation from oppression.

Of the various theater forms I learned from Boal, I found FT most riveting for its transformative potential. The story of how it began is iconic. As Boal told it (1979), he and his troupe were using what he called *simultaneous dramaturgy* with a group in a rural community during a literacy campaign in Peru. True to the principles of PTO, the participants generated a story about a problem that they faced, and Boal's troupe put together a relevant theater piece. The troupe, which had started experimenting with how to share the means of production, would perform the play and, at a critical moment, stop the action to ask the audience for feedback and suggestions about what to do next. On one occasion, a woman in the audience who was deeply invested in the outcome because the story primarily concerned her predicament became increasingly upset. Feeling that the performers were not acting on her suggestions to her satisfaction, she asked to come on stage. Boal (1979) marked this moment as pivotal to the development of TO, for the spectator's taking of the stage forever changed the relationship between actor and spectator and created what Boal called the *spect-actor*. As the spect-actor and her desires and intentions took center stage, the process became truly participatory because it included her unmediated ideas and worldview (Boal, 1974). When the spectator comes on stage in any performance, the process is cracked open; the stage is no longer the altar from which actors and directors preach to a silent audience (Boal, 1974).

Thus, FT, as Boal developed it, begins with a composite story created by a diverse audience that shares concerns regarding a problem or an issue. Just as in the FT forums that I analyze in the Multicultural Approaches to Curriculum section, this story is distinctive and significant because it is layered with the viewpoints, ideas, and opinions of the various people who conceived it. The ultimate objective of FT is to create an event or forum for performing a problem in front of an interested audience to identify alternative outcomes from those of the original script and to defeat the antagonist. As such, it is usually shaped as a less-than-ideal situation that concerns conflict between a protagonist who is strongly opposed to and/or is defeated by an antagonist. Through these theatrical exercises, according to Boal, participants rehearse for real-life struggles. One of the problems that I addressed through FT participation was the intense opposition that teachers encounter in the multicultural education classroom from white students. My group, which was composed of theater professors and students from across the country, addressed this problem using a composite story concerning whether the Japanese language and Japanese theater forms are legitimate components of a theater class curriculum.

During the process of FT, the audience is instructed on how the entire process is structured and told that the story will be performed in its totality without interruption. When the story is performed a second time, the facilitator instructs the audience members that they should yell “Stop!” if they see an opening or opportunity to interject an idea that might help the protagonist fight the antagonist. By doing so, audience members can bring new ideas to the stage. I recall Boal as the subversive, the activist, pointing at the stage and saying, “If you don’t like something you see, you must go there and change it! The stage is just like real life, and if you don’t stand and do something, things will go on; things will stay the same” (Estrada, personal notes 2001). Once the first intervention has been exhausted and examined by the collectivity for its strengths or weaknesses, the play resumes. However, another interventor may request to go backward or forward to a point in the story at which he or she wishes to make a change, a process that calls for more spect-actors to come on stage to face the antagonist by offering their own perspectives.

Several ideas inherent in FT are clearly based on Freirian assumptions. These include the ideas that individuals must be active participants in the process of their conscientization; that each contribution is collectively necessary and valuable because the solutions that it offers individually are generally incomplete or faulty; and that an open and democratic conversation might lead to change, particularly that of true liberation from oppression. Boal and his supporters provide no definitive guidelines for the FT process, as they see it as having the potential to become a uniquely transformative moment for a community that, in rewriting the story of its oppression, may begin to deal with issues in more self-sufficient and effective ways (Aristizabal, Hector and Blair, Brent, Personal Interview, August 2003).

As I became familiar with the process of FT, the many forums in which I participated evoked a wide range of emotions and responses. Perhaps the most memorable forum was that assembled by a group of diverse high school students from Prince George, British Columbia dramatizing the suicide of a classmate, a young Bosnian refugee, who had been branded effeminate and repeatedly victimized by school bullies. I remember becoming deeply disturbed and moved by the candor in their representation and the way in which they seemed to be dealing with the pain of the event head on, and can recall becoming lost in the conversation that took place as soon as the process was opened for interventions. The forum seemed to me extraordinarily effective because the students had turned their tragedy into our heartbreak. The dialogue that they engendered felt engaging, and seemed to have come from a place of real concern. In a sense, they had created the conditions for our mobilization against bullying. However, our greatest asset—our commitment to the same goal—could only be exercised in the limited space of that particular forum. After the forum had ended and I had returned to my hotel room preparing for some much needed rest, I found myself asking, if the goal of the exercise—to improve the lives of the participants—could be accomplished since the entire event was as ephemeral and short-lived as the words that had been spoken?

What seemed to be missing for me was a sense of the power of these performances if they were to be repeated. The group had enacted alternatives to bullying and in that theatricalized, energized and communal space they seemed to have brought about a turn on the script. However, I could not answer this question: How could that energy and mobilization be transferred outside that conference room where we had temporarily convened? If I were guiding students through this examination, what would be the process through which we could learn to recast our performances with the goal of transforming the larger politics of identity in their daily interactions once outside a particular FT event? As I experienced similarly powerful experiences at various forums, this question regarding the efficacy of these performances and the power in the evoked discourses remained unresolved and in the back of my mind.

At these conferences, I was thrilled to see FT practiced in faraway places by people to whom I would not otherwise have had access. I saw one presentation by a group that used FT for addressing language restoration issues in Native American communities (Reyner, Trujillo, Carrasco, and Lockard, 2003). I also made a friend in John Sullivan, a scientist from the Center in Environmental Toxicology at the University of Texas, who was very adept at guiding participants through the FT process. He told me how he had been using FT in communities of color near Superfund sites to raise awareness about the connection between environmental toxicology and community health. I learned how mental health activists from the Czech Republic had used TO to bring about legislative change in the system of care for children in vulnerable situations (Legislativní divadlo, n.d.). Boal had presented many examples of his use of TO, including his work with the Jana Sanskriti Centre for Theatre of the Oppressed in India. There he had deployed FT to rural areas of India to deal with a variety of issues, including exploitation of rural workers by contractors, blind superstition, and domestic violence (Jana Sanskriti Centre for Theatre of the Oppressed, n.d.).

The more I heard from TO and FT practitioners within communities they saw as oppressed, the more I wanted to understand how they were achieving change. Were ancient languages being restored within Native American communities, and if so, how? And how were the lives of exploited and abused women in India being improved through FT? In an attempt at specificity, I had initially wanted my research question to be, how do participants achieve change through the process of FT? However, as my ideas developed, I came to understand that the tools available to FT were discursive and performative. And so I began to ponder whether change could be achieved with those tools. As I explain later some of the most vocal critics of Boal have argued that the process of TO and FT is a succession of ideas and these ideas alone will not change the world. As my perspective shifted I began to see that there is little to be said or theorized about how the interventions of FT have a bearing on the material conditions people return to after a TO performance or a Boal workshop for example.

I had not seen and could not have measured any material change brought about through the process of FT. What I had witnessed were trained actors trying to modify a character's performances to change the outcome in the script of a play. Even though I always regarded the scripts as synecdoche of the larger politics outside FT, it has never been clear to me how these performances can work in the service of issues outside these specific theatrical spaces. There is a story Boal tells—which I will relay in its entirety later—that addresses this question. The story is about of a group of Brazilian peasants at one of Boal's PT presentations who ended up frenzied by the chant "let us spill our blood" the troupe used to end the piece. In the agitation the peasants asked the actors to take the weapons on stage and join them in confronting their oppressive landowners. However, as Boal recounts, the rifles on stage were only props. He speaks of the deep embarrassment he felt and tells how from that moment on he vowed not to ask the audience to take risks he was not willing to take himself. The story relates to my frustration with FT because it exemplifies the significant disconnect between what happens on stage during an FT production and the material conditions the participants live in and want to address.

It took me a long time to let go of the empty optimism I had internalized about what FT could accomplish. Eventually I came to see that the processes and techniques of FT are not weapons but tools. FT is not—as Boal said—rehearsal for the revolution. However, the process as a dynamic communal dialogue can be understood as a critical pedagogical space to inquire about the performative nature of human behavior (Turner) as it relates to power dynamics. In the case of the diversity forum the immediacy of the discourses and performances are replete with insight about how we represent ourselves vis-à-vis difference; how those representations might mediate our relationships with others; and how power is negotiated in the interactions that are enacted. With this new and less revolutionary understanding, which was now informed by my theoretical constructs, I began to formulate a much different question. Using Butler's construct *performativity*, which defines identities as daily repeated communicative, linguistic and corporeal enactments, I wondered how these representations were constructed via discourse; furthermore, I wanted to see whether power was being disseminated via these discourses.

The FT process is a place where we can examine these communicative, linguistic and corporeal enactments particularly to inquire, what is produced and legitimated in the discourses repeated through enactments? And, in keeping with the main thrust of the whole endeavor, could anything in the process be subversive or transformative? The forum on Multicultural Education was especially interesting because it could inform my understanding of how racial identity is done as a performance. When it comes to racial identifications, what is being produced, repeated, and validated through discourse and performance? According to Clifford (1998), the best way to understand cultural identity is not by studying museums, artifacts or libraries. Rather, it is done through the observation of emergent cultural performances which signify the social and cultural constructs that are in place and those that are being appropriated, challenged or subverted.

As I will go into more detail later, in performativity the body becomes a site where race as culture emerges as an ideological struggle. This struggle is over the meanings we make in our daily repetition of communicative, linguistic and corporeal enactments that all together produce race. In the end, I have reformulated my question to ask not about the power of FT to change the material conditions of participants' lives; but whether or not the discourses and performances that are deployed in these events are powerful; and if so, what kind of power is it and what purpose does it serve? In the second part of this introduction I will give a general outline of each of the chapters that give structure to the document. I account for the main themes in each of the chapters.

Chapter 1 Methods

Critical Performance Ethnography

I begin this project from the rejection of the categories of identity as arbitrary and as part of a discourse that has been used to divide, rank and degrade people. I see them as manufactured to justify a cruel hierarchy where the other was either brutalized or erased. From the start my inquiry was a critical examination using the constructs I had brought together to frame my questions. I pieced a framework together with the expansive ideas of critical thinkers I saw as pushing the limits of our understanding. From Foucault I adapted some of his interpretations of power and specifically that labels are the work of power used to police, exclude and prohibit. The work of James Clifford provided a transformative metaphor for culture. I understood I should approach it not as if looking at a village but as if I was boarding a ship or riding on a moving bus. Judith Butler's unsettling analysis of gendered identities clarified what was meant by the performance of identity. As she built on the work of Foucault she illuminated how repetition plays a large part in the naturalization of categories.

I also departed from my belief that the universe is a vast unknown that cannot be apprehended through language (1972). Within this worldview I could not pursue accuracy or certainty as they are traditionally defined. That is, my goal would not be to reduce the distance between the unknown and the known; neither it would be to push my analysis closer to an actual *truth.* Instead, I wanted to build a creative narrative about discourse and power where the theoretical constructs I braided together would be informed by my own experience of identity. I saw in the form of FT an exciting medium to go about my inquiry, and I was able to propose a number of questions about the relationship between discourse and power as it is negotiated on the surface of our bodies. The process was interrupted a number of times, initially, by my fear of not knowing what I could say. I gave up my writing and analysis because I could not find my way around the transcripts of the forums. For a long time I endured the disappointment of having given up. Eventually time and motherhood granted me a new sense of purpose. So after four years I started looking at the transcripts again in an effort to find meaning and to write a narrative in line with my framework.

As I looked at the transcripts anew through the lens of my constructs my initial question changed. It was no longer whether the FT process was a transformative experience for participants. I realized the tools available to FT participants were discursive and performative, and I had no way to measure if and how FT could transform someone's life or their future. My question turned to whether there was power in performance and in the various discourses we deployed through our enactments. I read the FT transcripts many times looking for places where powerful discourses were being tapped. What I saw in the first forum was English only used as a universalist truth. As Foucault had written, universalist truths are used as powerful vehicles through which a group determines what it will be, as well as who belongs and who does not. In that forum English only was the discursive means by which the strong character of Diane aligned her identity with that of the English speaking nation. Simultaneously she rendered non-English speaking others as foreign or out of place.

English only as a doing that is repeated daily by multitudes illuminated Bakhtin's sometimes obtuse concepts. The maelstrom of English acted much like a centripetal force as a commanding truth actualizing national unification daily. On the other hand, and as I reviewed other participants' response to Diane's deployment of universalist truths, I figured that failing to present a counter-discourse or setting a centrifugal force in motion is surrendering whatever power we can exercise. There are already powerful alternative narratives about a polyglot nation that can be voiced. Today, in the U.S. many groups, who identify around languages other than English, are coming into their own power.

In the second forum I used the same ideas to identify another discourse where repetition as power is also manifest. It is the single story (Chimamanda, 2009) we have told about Middle Eastern men until they have become that thing. I point to a Neo-Orientalist representation of Middle Eastern men that dehumanizes them as it turns them into crazed, volatile and dangerous terrorists. I see the power of the repetition unchallenged as the FT participants accept this new-orientalist representation, appropriate them and move them forward as the only possible ones. Similarly to the first forum, in the second forum there is no counter-discourse to interrupt another powerful narrative working to fix meaning to its object. As I wrote what I saw, a narrative about the relationship between discourse and power continued to take shape.

I have not been a detached observer. My idea of the universe and its representation suggests that I am the one giving contour to the narrative. Furthermore, the process was a self-conscious examination because I gazed back at my body to make sense of the emergent narrative. Along with what I had identified as the discourses deployed by FT performers I was examining my own body to consolidate my understanding of how a discourse can be projected onto a body; or how a performance of a particular discourse lends credibility and longevity to that discourse. My body and those of the FT participants had become a cultural site for critical inquiry and social commentary. My understanding of how we deployed power through discourse took me to reflect on how I use power as I repeat particular discourses daily and deploy the power they carry.

My idea of validity and reliability align with McLaren's (2001) who wrote that the final measure of a critical ethnography is the power to affect the world through praxis. Validity is about the degree by which research energizes those involved to be a transformative force in the world. Given that I developed this vocabulary through reflection on the FT process, my research is critical performance ethnography because it recognizes the innate theatricality to our cultural and bodily expressions. While ethnography describes culture performance ethnography describes social beings as performers. The relationships and politics underlined in a particular performance serve as synecdoche to the larger politics of identity. In performance ethnography the subject matter is the experiencing body and so inquiry is done in a novel way, short-circuiting familiar ways of understanding and or resisting arguments. Because in this case it is about race and power it engages the body to listen and to learn in an unaccustomed way by understanding the discourses we deploy through witnessing the performance of others.

Finally, even though I concluded that equating FT with rehearsing for a revolution is far-fetched. As an educator I would use FT as an opportunity to be self-reflective about the language we engage in our performances vis-à-vis others and how that language carries power. Performance as a way to interpret multiple texts in a Multicultural education classroom can introduce a markedly different pedagogical approach. As my own analysis progressed I found myself reading my body and seeing my experience as it is connected to the larger politics of difference and the naturalization of the very world within which such interactions took place. I wonder if the same could be accomplished around matters of difference within the Multicultural education classroom. Finally, given that students access meaning through their bodies could we have a conversation about race with a different emotional quality to the one I frequently experienced?

Chapter 2 History and Theory

I begin my work by presenting the history of TO and FT in Chapter 1. Throughout this chapter, I describe the social and political significance of TO and FT as they evolved and examine how TO and FT have shifted, in terms of geography, population, and purpose, away from the Latin American audiences that Boal first pursued. In this historical account, I do not recreate a genealogy of TO or FT, as a linear account would be neither possible nor useful. Instead, I recount several moments in the history of TO and FT that elucidate these movements as they are experienced and understood today.

Forum Theater: A Historical Perspective

I begin my presentation of the history of TO and FT with a discussion of Bertolt Brecht's epic theater (ET) due to its influence on Boal. Specifically, because Brecht's practice of ET, which involved the consolidation of multiple influences—including Japanese theater—has attracted the most attention (and repetition) of the forms that influenced Boal. Similar to FT, ET seeks to disrupt classic Aristotelian theater, which Willett (1974) described as a problematic and apolitical theatrical form incapable of contemplating the pressing issues of the time, by bringing politics onto the stage. By evoking themes such as opposition to war, poverty, and the growing conflict between the classes, ET could shake audiences out of their passive relationship with the script. Brecht accomplished these goals by gauging the audience's response to a particular play and then rewriting the script according to their objections and demands. Today ET is seen as a groundbreaking critique of Aristotelian theater, which it denounces as mere entertainment. Nevertheless, many question whether ET or TO truly go beyond mere entertainment.

In his work in Latin America in the 1960s, Boal integrated Brecht's ideas from the 1930s and 1940s within a Freirian context that called for a cultural revolution demanding greater engagement from spectators and students (Sandi Diaz, 2007). Both Boal and Freire attempted to educate the masses by asking them to view their oppression with a critical mind. In the Latin American context, the primary challenges to liberation were rooted in the colonial legacy of inequality, widespread poverty, and sweeping cultural imperialism, mainly from the North (White, 1998). As such, Latin Americans saw in the Cuban Revolution of 1958 the negation of the same debilitating colonial politics and ambitions that they were fighting, and thus regarded Fidel Castro and Ché Guevara as "Davids" against the topographical and political "Goliath" of the United States. Aligning the aims of PTO with the hope and optimism evoked in the wake of the revolution, Boal devised tactics informed by several sources, including Brecht; the overall ethos of the revolutionary times; and *liberation theology*, a doctrine embraced by

Freire that, reflecting the optimism of the time, and expressed the belief that Christianity could be employed in Latin America as a means of fighting for social justice. Reflecting its origin in these sources, FT was devised as a popular form irreverent in its dismissal of Aristotelian theater and expressing a deep optimism rooted in a humanist influence. Moreover, it was a democratic form and an invitation for collective, critical examination of the mechanisms used by oppressors of Latin America, such as the technologies of capitalism; promotion of unchecked consumption; and propagation of distorted images of people of color, women, and the poor by mass media and advertising.

FT was thus one of the local pedagogies that arose to counter growing imperial control over local cultural and aesthetic forms, expressions, representations, and sensibilities by giving voice to the marginalized through a process of education. Eventually, Boal, like Brecht, would claim to find ways to delegate the power to spectators so that they could use their bodies, words, and cultural forms as the means of production and a way to speed the process of their political awakening and consequent liberation. While I came to believe in the process of FT and to accept its most fundamental tenets as true, I still questioned the effectiveness of these forms, as reflected in the questions that I formulated for this dissertation. To aid in my examination, I also reviewed the theoretical constructs that supported my critical thinking process throughout the dissertation research process in Chapter 1.

<u>Theoretical Constructs</u>

I begin this section by explaining why, in referring to FT participants, I use the designation *Subject/subject* to elucidate the relationship between *people* and *discourse*, as I understand it, and to describe how individuals exercise power in and through discourse. The composite term *Subject/subject* explains power outside of a binary relationship and elucidates the ambiguity of such power. As creative beings, individuals are *Subjects* who can generate powerful language and ideas. However, as performers and imitators of discourse or *subjects*, individuals engage in language that precedes them; we often move the power of previous speakers forward and, in that way reproduce their power. (Note that I use the terms *language, utterance,* and *discourse* to mean the ways in which individuals explain the world around them through what they do and say with their bodies and words). Thus, the term *Subject/subject* suggests that individuals exercise the power of discourse both as the ingenious originators of expressions and their uninspired repeaters. For example, origin stories, such as those found in Christianity, are instances of the Subject exercising power by engendering a discourse to make sense of the world. The subject or imitator of the discourse forgets that such stories are not heaven sent but simply constructions, and eventually becomes lost in them and subjected to their power (Strozier, 2002).

Foucault's ideas regarding power help to explain the relationship between discourse and power and the way in which collectivities and individuals tap into that power. According to Foucault (1977), when people begin to rebel against, reject the worldview of, and forge a new language and identity distinct from those of a sovereign or sovereign power who appointed himself as the central authority, a counter-historic discourse emerges. This discourse reflects the intentions and desires of a people who no longer identify with the sovereign and his version of history. The ways that events are recounted in the new discourse thus come not from a single and powerful source but from complex deliberations that include a group's multiple perspectives and diverse concerns. This counter-historic discourse demonstrates that different versions of the same event can have differing impetuses and produce different outcomes. Thus, the process of producing and tapping into discourse is revealed as a tactic and a contentious place in which powerful meanings can be defined, circulated, and restrained.

When this discourse begins to include the aspirations and ideals of a newly imagined collective trying to define itself, it becomes the arena where the politics of a nation's identity are played out. Once a people begin to organize separately from the sovereign, an independent juridical state begins to take shape that, as it evolves, begins to exercise its power by laying claim to universalist truths or principles that apply to all people. However, as this process progresses, those whose identities fall outside the boundaries of the universalist truths find themselves powerless, while those with power can use that power against those who do not ascribe to the nation's precepts. The truths embraced by the nascent nation—for example, what freedom means, what role religion will play, and which language the collectivity will speak—come to be powerful vehicles through which the nation charts its sense of what it will become, as well as who belongs and who does not. By this process, universalist truths become the discursive means by which a collectivity taps into power and diffuses it.

Our performances of these truths are the powerful conduits through which they are naturalized and their power perpetuated. In her work on gender as a universalist truth, Butler (1990) uses the idea of *performativity* to refer to the way in which individuals use words and move meanings forward or give them durability with their bodies. In her invocation of performativity, Butler signals that she is not referring to an essence underneath the surface of a body but rather signaling that the processes of embodiment and emulation give the illusion of an internal core or substance to gender. Gender is thus an achievement of performativity whose power lies greatly in its repetition. To create gender, we constantly enact the rituals that we have inherited, which reflect both the cultural norms and the entrenched knowledge of gender that have been imparted to us through complex discourses, whether scientific, juridical, or economic. In my analysis of the first forum, the universalist truth that I examine is one that we perform daily: English as the official language of the nation. Every ritual performed through our bodies and in English embodies the repetition of this truth and becomes the conduit of its power. We, as subjects who believe and live this truth, lend it credibility and power as that which gives the nation its identity.

In addition to drawing on the work of Butler, I draw on Bakhtin's formulations regarding discourse due to their utility in describing how discourse and power move and are moved through a collectivity. To explain the dynamics of the conflicting meanings of *heteroglossia,* the plurality of ideologies and meanings inside discourse and the links among diverse groups, worldviews, and conflicting or competing projects, Bakhtin (1981) used the idea of *centripetal and centrifugal discourses*. He explained that within the vortex of authoritative discourses, centripetal forces, such as the discourse that English is the "official" language, push towards the center to discipline, regulate, and unify meanings with objects, thereby generating rigid and static meanings. In contrast, centrifugal discourses, which include unofficial forms within discourse that reflect a diversity of backgrounds, experiences, ideologies, and times, push outward against the vortex to separate things that have previously been compacted. I soon realized that the centripetal vortex is quite powerful; as collectivities, we get swept away by the power of inflated centripetal, rigid, unchanging, and unifying discourses, such as those that define and unify ideas around gender.

Chapter 3 The First Forum: The Discourse of Diversity and Its Power

In Chapter 2, I employ the constructs of the Subject/subject, performativity, heteroglossia, centripetal and centrifugal discourses, and the power of universalist truths to examine the discourses within the first FT piece that I explore. Specifically, I identify the Subject/subjects who had participated in the FT and the discourses that they had performed to examine whether and how power had been manifested in and through those discourses and performances. I start by answering several questions regarding the forum: Where did it take place? What was the makeup of the community that came together around the forum? What was the process like? Who constructed the forum? How were the topics chosen and how was the piece presented? I explain that I chose this particular forum for my analysis for three reasons: (1) it addressed the issue of diversity and difference, which figured prominently in my experience both as a student and a teacher in ECS; (2) it was directed by Boal—the creator of FT—and thus personally compelling; and (3) it used a script that was a composite of the experiences of a group made up of progressive and seasoned theater academics and TO practitioners from across the United States that, I believe, could assemble a representative and adumbrative FT, if any group could. As the language used in the script provides much understanding of how diversity is discussed, explained, and opposed inside classrooms, we can see in the dynamics of the forum why language is such a polarizing issue and how people in those classrooms tap into the power of particular discourses to position themselves vis-à-vis others and the institution.

I begin my analysis of this forum by challenging the way that power is defined within it and in FT in general. Using Foucault's notion of power as a foil, I take on Boal, who, as the facilitator and creator of FT, exerted enormous power over the FT process by imposing the terms that guide it. For example, he positioned FT in a binary relationship with Aristotelian theater such that the latter came to be regarded as a repressive form that turned audiences into unthinking masses whereas the former came to be regarded a form that could set audiences free. His formation of binary relationships did not stop there; he also drew a line between the stage and the audience by positioning the spect-actors as those who—by design—fight a clearly delineated oppressor. In this sense, both the FT form and its participants were placed in opposition to a sovereign power: the oppressive force. For this reason, the process lacked self-reflexivity because it did not allow for a deeper examination of power outside simple binary relationships.

Furthermore, the minimal instruction Boal gave to the participants was detrimental to the process. Boal opened up plays for interventions by simply saying, "If you don't like something, go on stage and change it," as if that in need of change is opposite of and outside of ourselves. However, by examining the process through the lens of my constructs, we can see that the tools used in FT are merely discursive and performative. Therefore, if change is to be achieved, both language and the way that we perform must be examined. Beyond giving the simple directive above, Boal never explicitly told a group how to fight power. FT participants must realize that constantly engaging language and its power is central if the process is to be a self-reflexive, critical examination, which requires that the entire process is defined not as a rehearsal for a revolution, but rather as an opportunity to create awareness of language, its performance and its power.

The Vortex of Difference

Using Bakhtin's constructs of centripetal and centrifugal discourses, I identify the discourses in operation and the ways in which people, through their repeated performances of these discourses, tap into their power and become the force behind them. In light of the distinction between centripetal and centrifugal discourses, one of my main arguments is that the discourse of diversity or difference (I use the terms interchangeably) moves in a centripetal direction, fixing categories of identity to its objects; in other words, as Ford (2005) explained, it moves through what have become canonical categories bundling race and culture. By such means, *Latino, Black,* and *American Indian* as meanings have become established orthodoxy and have come to restrain the possibilities both within discourses and the performances of difference.

I describe how the discourse of difference gained prominence after the Supreme Court ruled in the *Bakke* case that affirmative action programs were a violation of the Equal Protection Clause. In the end, a diversity rationale emerged which deradicalized affirmative action and a final compromise that claimed that the admission of diverse students to higher educational institutions would benefit those institutions by creating a broader dialogue wherein multiple perspectives entered the conversation. My argument is not against this goal, which I believe worth pursuing. Rather, drawing on Ford's critique in *Racial Culture* (2005), I suggest that the students, following the advice of their counselors, "played up" their race or culture to justify their presence at these institutions. However, in the process they used fixed categories of difference that—while advancing the interests of diverse communities—have come to confine and control how students define themselves; how they think about themselves; and most importantly, how they relate to the world and to others. For example, the definition of difference has resulted in performances of separateness that continue to create deep chasms among people convinced that they live strictly within discrete categories. I see our separation within these categories of difference as a breach of our obligations and loyalty to one another beyond the categories. As an example, I highlight a particular performance of whiteness in the forum as evidence of the estrangement that comes as a cost to and in exchange for the many entitlements claimed by this white character.

I contend that the teachers in this forum are unable to see how these categories can be detrimental because they are part of and caught up in the vortex of these discourses. Whiteness, difference and separateness are ingrained early in the educational process. All subjects, including theater, history, geography, and literature, are explained by focusing on discrete groups of individuals who occupy clearly delimited territories and have a unifying language and culture. The white antagonist of the diversity forum repeatedly evoked English-only discourse to exercise her power and reproduce particular boundaries and relationships. In her insistence that English must be the language of her American classroom and her rendering of Japanese, Japanese theater, and the student performing them as foreign, she equated white Americans and English as hers. Japanese, Japanese theater, and Japanese students are not only out of place in her curriculum; she was certain that they did not belong to her, her identity, or to the identity of her nation—a nation that continues to equate speaking English with patriotism despite the fact that millions of people living within it speak languages other than English, whether in their communities, in their places of worship, or around their dinner tables. In the end, an audience of progressive students and professors, for some of whom English was not their first language, were not only implicitly aligned with the English-only tenet but also far from being able to see, let alone articulate, that the binary understanding of the differences that we have constructed is now the means of our disconnection and estrangement.

The historical context in which we find ourselves is one of multipolarities, where the binaries erected by race are no longer able to contain the complexity of our ancestral lineage. Within this context, the discourse of difference acts with the force of a violent vortex. Indeed, it seems nearly impossible to share history, study cultural forms, or communicate with one another in a way that does not separate individuals and polarize discrete groups. We are unable to disarticulate the accustomed performances of race to open spaces where we can imagine something else. It is clear to me that one of our fears is that we will not be able to fight the enduring legacy of inequality without the categories of difference through which people have organized the fight. I argue that because the fight is just as important as ever, we must not only renew our efforts to do away with the legacy of racism and discrimination that still plagues us but also rethink race because it has become a hollow and polarizing category. Although these two projects might stand in contradiction, they reflect the contradictory forces in language that are precisely what Bakhtin's idea of heteroglossia entails. It is this push and pull that keeps language alive and changing and presents us with both challenges simultaneously.

Halting Power: Centripetal Forces

My research has led me to consider the categories of difference and dedicate myself to seeking alternative discourses. In this context, I discuss the manner in which one documentary film, *Latcho Drom*, provides an example of a centrifugal force moving against the vortex of categories of difference. This film tells the story of a migration without using geographic borders, ethnic lines, or chronology as organizing tropes to trace the routes that migrants follow. Thus, the film rethinks difference by hinting at the vastness and complexity of the human experience and suggesting that the result of thousands of years of migrations, amalgamations, and exchanges are impossible to categorize. In other words, it demonstrates that who we say we are cannot contain where we have been, what we have done and do, and the enormity of the field of possibilities of who we could become.

I offer more examples of the ways in which the centripetal forces of discourses work to limit what we see to prompt additional consideration of difference, including the way in which Winant (1998) analyzed the discourse of institutional racism. Although this discourse has been central in differentiating racism from individual prejudice, it has worked in a centripetal direction because it prevents the circulation of other meanings, such as the racial interpenetration and racial hybridity that emerged after the Civil Rights Movement. Winant clarified that although racism is very much alive in the United States, racialized groups are no longer powerless. As such, centripetal unifying discourses, such as that of institutional racism, obscure the complexity of a heteroglossic experience which today includes different performances of race within contexts in which institutional racism is no more an absolute force.

Based on this argument, I provide examples of how forum participants can become trapped within centripetal ways of defining race and racial relations, showing how inflated discourses blind us to the possibility that a new context has already been established in which new performances of race are possible. For example, some of the students in the first forum responded to whiteness and the white antagonist as omnipotent forces as if they had not considered that their presence within an institution of higher education had already reshaped the context such that whiteness was no longer inexorable. Based on my observation, I contend that, beyond and outside institutional racism, it is possible to enact different performances of race vis-à-vis whiteness that do not reproduce the binaries associated with black and white.

Chapter 4 Racialized Subject/subjects and Power

Based on my analysis of Bakhtin's notion of dialogism, I suggest that the performance of a particular discourse is always dialogized such that we can change it according to our own intents and purposes with our later retelling of it. Discourses come charged with accents and aspirations from the past; as Subject/subjects we move them forward as we receive them, or imbue them with new desires and direction. In Chapter 3, I examine whether racialized audiences respond to problematic discourses about race in ways different than white audiences to determine whether, given their experiences with these oppressive discourses, the former are more adept at reframing these discourses and injecting them with new ideas, desires and aspirations, or whether they simply repeat them, reproducing with them the same oppressive contexts of usage.

The group that participated in the second forum was primarily composed of individuals who self-identified as racialized, and thus unlike the first one. This group did not write a composite story regarding a problem that they were facing but reviewed specific scenes from the film *Crash,* written and directed by Paul Haggis, to examine racism and stereotypes and to reclaim the devastating images of people of color repeated by the film. After I identify the group, forum setting, organizer, and facilitator, I explain how the forums differed in other ways beyond the racial composition of their participants. David Dynak, the facilitator of the second forum, introduced two significant changes into the process that led his forum to differ greatly from that of Boal. First, he did not engage the binary concept of oppressor/oppressed, instead using a Foucauldian definition of power to instruct the audience to identify the source of power in the scenes. Second, Dynak did not adhere to the central rule of FT as envisioned by Boal: that the oppressor could not be replaced because rehearsing for the revolution requires fighting against a formidable opponent, and thus interventors could replace anyone besides the oppressor in a scene. This rule is integral to the process because, according to Boal, replacing the antagonist with a kinder opponent would be the equivalent of training for a boxing match with a disabled athlete.

In my analysis I argue that because the second FT group faced no oppressor/oppressed binaries and saw power as a much more fluid force, it was better prepared than had been the first group for engaging in the process. Additionally, by relaxing the rules, Dynak had opened up the process so that all characters and their discourses/performances could be interrogated. Due to this new set up and the group's (likely) greater awareness of the issues of race and inequality, I believe that this group was more disposed to identifying and reclaiming harmful discourses and the distorted performances of the "other." The representations of racialized characters in the film on which the forum had been based are profoundly problematic, being repetitions of some of the most toxic stereotypes that circulate regarding racialized people. I show how both the film and the forum tapped into disparaging discourses and performances of the "other" that feed into irrational fears and reproduce devastating power dynamics through my analysis of one character, Farhad. By evoking Neo-Orientalist tropes and images of Arab terrorists wreaking havoc on innocent victims, Farhad characterizes the use of these tropes in both film and forum, thus validating Wingfield and Karaman's (1995) argument that Arab men are repeatedly and inaccurately portrayed, particularly in film, as nothing more than "violent terrorists, oil 'sheiks' or marauding tribesmen." I show that even a racialized audience can become trapped in the powerful vortex of this discourse to the same extent as a white audience by describing how, in the search for alternative endings, the group was incapable of countering the distorted discourses and performances deployed to represent the "other."

Despite their differences, both forums demonstrate the existence of a Subject/subject who reacts as if categories of difference were objective facts of experience rather than discursive and performative constructions. The ignorance of the "other"—alienated in a different and separate category—traps participants within the centripetal discourses evoked by both film and forum. Together with these categories, the actors in the second forum accepted and performed inside a context of interracial conflict and estrangement. In the end, the experiences of the Latinos, Native Americans, and African Americans participating in the second forum were understood and performed in the usual way—separate and far removed from that of the "other." In their representations of Farhad, they demonstrated that, isolated within our own worldviews, we are incapable of delving deeper into the "other's" experience of the world, let alone able to claim that experience as our own. As the force behind the vortex of repeated discourses and performances, we look inside the accustomed contexts of difference and estrangement at the same discourses and performances, searching for the clues to reclaim the representation of the "other," in order to recast characters in more recognizable ways.

When Dynak asked the group where the power resided, I, as an observer, hesitated to respond. In retrospect, I would have responded that the answer lay somewhere between the trite and toxic discourses that officiated over each interaction and everyone who looped into the discourses without hesitation; therein truly lay the oscillating power of the Subject/subject. As participants in the forum, we became lost inside the script that we had borrowed, unable to grasp that construction scripts and characters could be challenged by not engaging them but rather by halting their repetition. Herein lies the usefulness of Butler's notion of the performative. It takes us away from the idea of a core of identity, allowing us to see each other in a different light where bodies (race) and categories (culture) are not fixed entities but rather engaged in a dialogic process with what has been and could be. The notion of centripetal forces and the idea of repetition show how our enactment and engagement of categories give durability and credibility to those discourses and performances. We can embark on the exploration of our own bodies and performances, the discourses that we have helped sustain, and the possibilities that open up once we understand that there is power in our repeated performances and possibilities in the spaces that open once we halt the repetition. The metaphors of centrifugal movement and inflation can explain how the amplification of discourses, such as those of institutional racism or Neo-Orientalism, feed on our fears and obscure the diversity that there is: a multipolarity of ancestral lines that cannot be reduced. They also help us visualize how these forces entwine the Subject/subject and allow us to understand that we must rely on our energy, focus, and anger to push meanings forward unchanged.

Chapter 5 Implications

Identity is not a fixed origin to which we can return (Hall). It is rather a process. As Dolby and Rizvi argue (2008) globalization has dislodged identity from its traditional moorings; rigid categories can’t contain any longer the performances of identity now informed by transience, and displacement for example. People pull from multiple and complex symbolic resources to fashion an identity. In my own experience I have not lived inside stable or continuous frames of reference to define my identity. Quite the opposite, my life is a daily crossing of cultural linguistic and other boundaries. Yet, we continue to speak of identity as a unifying formative experience. For example in her book *Affirming Diversity The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education* (Sixth edition, 20211) Sonia Nieto acknowledges that nowadays students draw from a multiplicity of cultural ways of being in the world in order to integrate into one very complex identity. Yet, her entire book is grounded on a collection of case studies where the experience of one individual can help us understand the experiences of others like him (37).

This approach has left culture under-theorized because the labels we continue to use reinscribe its meaning as a collection of rigid and bounded values, language, and practices. On the other hand, people's identities unfold away from nation, ethnic or racial affiliations. Maalouf (2001) uses the example of a young man born in France of Algerian parents. He can not live his multifaceted life as an exhilarant experience given the richness there is to explore. If he is forced to live within the categories, says Maalouf, some might look at him as a traitor while others will think of him as a renegade. So we tell single stories about people showing them as one thing over and over until they become that thing.

The process of my analysis was to find a different vocabulary to talk about someone's difference by way of multiple stories. I found in the research on the Vezo of Madagascar an example of a way to speak about difference in ways that evoke impermanence and constant motion. The Vezo are people who based their identifications in the shifting moments of their everyday doings such that one could be a Vezo while sailing and cease to be one if one made a mistake. I give other examples of the inconstancy of identifications in the way in which young people today move with ease from one association to the next enacting a number of commitments as they transit from one environment into the next. I show how their performances of difference include a number of personas as if they lived exploring all of a multiplicity of options.

In the end, I try to imagine what our conversations in the Multicultural education classroom would be like if students included in their definition of difference ideas like changeability, inconsistency, contradiction and restlessness. In remembering my own experiences of a classroom emotionally charged as single-minded students speak to each other from an uncompromising stance about who they were and stood for. I propose building a curriculum where we depart from this approach to difference so that students work first in discovering their own complexity. Through a process of self-reflection students would look at their performances and study the discourses manifested in those performances. We could reread historical accounts jettisoning the idea that we live inside internally homogenous and externally distinctive and bounded objects like billiard balls destined to clash and bounce off of each other. We would have to learn to tolerate the ambivalence, contradiction and tensions that might emerge and work toward a new understanding of difference.

CHAPTER 1

METHODS

Who I Am and How I Understand Race

How did I arrive at the topic of this dissertation? In seeking a topic that would sustain my attention and enthusiasm, I stumbled upon TC, a form of PT whose appeal as a dissertation topic is multifaceted. I found that I appreciated the humanist ambitions and social justice orientation of TC and, later, FT as creative, ingenious, vibrant, and theatrical sympathetic forms. Additionally, I found TC personally seductive in a different and unexpected manner. After discovering that its roots reflect the insights and teachings of Mayan and Aztec ancient oral cultures (Broyles-Gonzalez, 1994), I grabbed onto TC as an expression of regionalist pride in the cultural richness of a chicana/chicano identity that alluded to a golden era of the Americas.

At that time, a part of me needed to align my foreign self with the department's ethos and its politics, which included celebrating faculty members' and students' ethnic roots. It did not occur to me that I was born thousands of miles away from the geography associated with this particular Native American ancestry, nor that its cultural forms were in no way linked to the Colombian identity ascribed to me. I was trying to delineate an identity within a context I did not completely understand. Even though I have come to see the significance of what Foley (2010) refers to as “unambiguous color-coded identities” (quoting Jorge Klor de Alva, 148) in a U.S. historical context, these identities have never made sense to me. I grew up in Latin America, where people define identity mostly in terms of culture, class, and/or nationality (Foley, 2010).

Before I came to the United States, I had always understood Americans as a block, defined not in racial terms but by their global standing, singular history, and far-reaching capitalist exports, among other factors. Regardless of that understanding of self and my views of the world, once in the United States my ascribed identity shifted to that of a person of color. After living in the United States for more than twenty years, I remain convinced that this unambiguous category encoded and encodes an incommensurable life journey of which no one can take account. In my experience, the arbitrary markers used in delineating the categories of difference cannot contain the complexity of the life that I have lived, neither in the United States nor in Colombia. I have never experienced my identity as anchored to things; I have always experienced it as open ended, rootless, and in motion.

The contrived identity I tried to build for myself had elements of an imaginary fashioned from the pieces of a social studies narrative that began in elementary school in Colombia. There, among other identities, we were *mestizos* and *mulatos,* explained to us as a cross between the European, the African, and the Indian. In this explanation, however, the complex amalgamations behind labels like *European, African,* and *Indian* were never deconstructed. Regardless, the idea of my hybrid identity always remained that—an abstract notion. Whatever I understood about it I expressed as academic knowledge, with no strong emotions attached to the narrative. It was therefore surprising that when I attempted to explain my *mestizaje* in an ECS class, I came face to face with another's certainties regarding her fervent identifications. As I merely passed along what little I had learned, merely trying to articulate a complexity that I have yet to understand, I was confronted with her profound sense of connection to who she was, a clarity that translated into a firm understanding of where she belonged and of what was hers. When I described my mixed heritage— part Indian, part European, part African— my classmate heard calculations of blood quantum and, in her eyes, I was yet another threat to her rightful claims.

In the consternation and confusion the rest of my story was lost. In that setting, we did not get to explore my worldview. My life journey was such that I had no significant visceral or political attachments to the idea of *mestizaje*, let alone any devotion to national allegiance or group membership. From then on, my original dispassionate, nonaligned stance toward the narrative of identity began progressing to a conscious repudiation. I did not get the chance to share, for example, that I had always had misgivings about the arbitrary nature of what defined me in the environment in which I had been raised, where class was not linked to socioeconomic status but to family name and, sometimes, the relative lightness of one's skin. Class—not race—was the construct used to define who we were. As I moved along in my education the more that I understood the subterfuge, the less that I had left with which to fashion an identity.

As my conflict endured, I continued to feel pressure to decide what and who I was at every turn. During my early years in the United States in the late 1980s, a narrative aided by Hollywood and a sensationalist media conflated Colombia, the place where I was born, with cocaine, drug cartels, and unspeakable violence. Images projected in popular films depicted morally inferior *mafiosos* and smugglers perennially defeated by the triumph of American virtue. As soon as people learned I was from Colombia, their comments made me painfully aware of the profound and widespread ignorance many in this country had regarding the supply and demand dynamics behind the illegal drug trade. Moreover, I resented how U.S. news outlets rarely covered the horrific bloodshed in that country. The power and the weapons that brought Colombians to their knees were the results of Americans' unquenchable appetite for drugs and the exorbitant profits that resulted from the drug trade. Despite my deeper understanding of the conflict, I found myself wanting to shift the narrative and, at the same time, escape my given nationality. For the first time in my life I was actively denying and refusing an identity that I had never embraced. Even though I repudiated all labels, I did not want to be defined by the ugly stereotypes or identified with the grotesque images shaping the imaginary of that time.

Both Morrison and Morales argue that immigrants to the United States soon understand that "estrangement from blackness is the key to success in America" (as cited in Foley, 153). I did not renounce my racialization because I had bought into this idea. I had begun questioning the categories of identity even before coming to the United States because I understood the profound unfairness of such capricious groupings. Furthermore, I understood that acceptance of these groupings antecede estrangement and becomes the requirement to discriminate, marginalize, and denigrate. I experienced this estrangement during my early years in the United States as I witnessed the reporting on the 1980s "War on Drugs," which reflected the fabrications of both the United States and Colombia regarding their roles in the conflict. The United States had responded to the drug threat by deploying the biggest military aid package ever received by Colombia, making it the third largest recipient of U.S. military aid after Israel and Egypt (Livingstone, 2004). Even though the president of Colombia had asked that the world's nations assist Colombia in attacking the roots of inequality, poverty, and political exclusion in order to bring about peace, this aid package was intended to fund "Plan Colombia," which focused not on the root causes of the problem but on helping the country consolidate the power of the state and armed forces (Livingstone, 2004).

Even though the devastating effects of the illicit drug trade wreaked havoc across boundaries, the narrative never focused on how it had created a very complex system of exchange in which poverty and violence were used as lighting rods at both ends of the conflict. Furthermore, little was said of the shattering effects the war had had on the Colombian population, as the carnage and environmental devastation had remained inside the border, and thus invisible (Silva Cano, 1990). Silva Cano also reported that since 1990, 450,000 drug-related homicides have been committed and more than 5 million people have been internally displaced by violence in Colombia, a scale of displacement that has no parallel in the history of the Western Hemisphere (Silva Cano, 2010). In my reading of the conflict, I always felt that the strong identification with national borders, ethnicities, and racial groupings on one side meant the negation and sometimes complete erasure of the "not-American" on the other side. There was never in these public conversations the self-reflexivity to understand and speak of shared pain and responsibility to *all* the victims of such complex conflicts and systems of exchanges. I believe that the alienation of the "other" outside *our* national borders, the estrangement between the two conflicting sides, and profound ignorance of the plight of those on the other side of the boundary were given shape by the categories of nation and race.

A Critical Inquiry

My strong rejection of any identification with categories such as nation, ethnicity, race or class helps shape what I have seen, thought, and written. My refutation of categories of identity as arbitrary, my understanding of my ascribed identity as one that does not reflect the movement and rootlessness of my experience, and my belief that a label can't capture my trajectory nor what I yet do not know or have not done ultimately informed the way that I conceptualize and understand identity. This trajectory also informed the way I went about my research and analysis. Given my critical approach and the theoretical frame informing my assumption I was not after universal, unalterable facts or accuracy. Quite the opposite, I wanted to free my approach from any dominant ideologies, oppressive regimes of truth or any notions of superiority. I wanted most of all to be self-reflexive and to achieve—through my narrative—an epistemological and performative awareness of the discourses of identity I reinscribe daily (Tyler, 1986). I hoped that the diversity in the context and interpretation of my data as well any relevance my analysis might bring to bear on the power dynamics of the Multicultural classroom would be the devices that gave a different kind of authority to the text (Crapanzano, 2003).

The method for a self-critical, self-reflexive exercise such as this one is Critical Ethnography (Scholte, 1971). Scholte situates the beginnings of Critical Ethnography at a time when some scholars were calling for a more critical and emancipatory Anthropology (Crapanzano 1986, Dwyer 1982, Clifford et al., 1986, Geertz 1988). This Anthropology would desanctify the authority of the researcher; acknowledge the researcher's position at the center of the research; and embrace an analysis as produced within relationships beyond the observer-observed dyad; its brand of research would be acknowledged as subjective, partial, fragmentary and at times full of contradiction. This critical turn away from objectivism and empiricism also sought to bring an end to Anthropology as an imperial form (Marcus and Fisher, 1986) and move toward an engaged research whose purpose was, in part, to empower the people it studied (Kincheleo and McLaren, 1994) while exposing unequal relations of power (Lather, 2001).

This new orientation took into account the poststructuralist notions I have subscribed to that problematize received epistemological assumptions and understandings and in this case categories; for example, the social construction of reality (Rosaldo, 1993) the embodied nature of knowledge (Hacking, 1999) the unity between the doer and the deed (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2006) or the relationship between research and colonialist impulses (Benesch, 2007). This critical turn gave way to a scholarship that addressed theoretical questions in the pursuit of social justice and equality. It was also a creative turn that unmoored ethnography from anthropology and allowed for the development of more interdisciplinary inquiry and insights. The work of Victor Turner, (1982) and Dwight Conquergood (1992), for example, took on the idea the idea that culture and cultural memory travels through stories, rituals, traditions and identity. In this way the emphasis on text as a primary means of communicating culture was put into question allowing for a different kind of inquiry that could analyze the embodiment and recontextualization of cultural understandings through ritualized behavior. Theater and the performances as a body-centered method of knowing (Alexander, 2005), and as a mode of ethnographic inquiry (Fabian, 1999) were established as theoretically sophisticated, self-reflexive as well as committed to action in the world (Conquergood, 1992).

My research abided by the tenets of critical ethnography by bringing together a theoretically sophisticated frame and a theatrical process to interpret identity as performance. It focused on how power is manifested through being in the body to engage and empower those who might benefit from the analysis. I was exposed to this new ways of studying and interpreting culture during my training in ECS. In Donna Deyhle's Anthropology class I read another transformative text that helped me articulate my understanding of identity: James Clifford's Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century. In this class—and particularly through this reading—I consolidated a view of globalization as an ancient and ongoing phenomenon where people continue to cross paths through exploration, colonization and the dynamics of capitalism. It was Clifford who had me thinking about identity and culture in new ways when he suggested that the locale for the study of culture was not the village but a hotel lobby or even a bus. Also, I needed to explain identity not as a set of cultural understandings and practices anchored to a single place but as a collection and amalgamation of different and differing ways of knowing and ways of being in the world that result from the multiple crossings that characterize global trade and migrations. We do not stand still and neither do our discourses or our performances of identity. This postmodernist view of identity helped me articulate why I saw the categories and politics of identity as serving both uplifting and nefarious purposes. Closed categories of difference are not only a negation of these ceaseless wanderings; they have been used to erect an insurmountable chasm—both between economic opportunities but also between the coming together of different races and nationalities.

As I layered a point of view based on these readings of Clifford, Bakhtin, Butler and Foucault I began to acquire and use a different vocabulary or set of meanings to both understand and perform identity. For example, more and more I saw my body as a meeting ground for multiple facets of different cultures. What people perceived as my ethnicity I began to understand as a process where I was constructing and reconstructing my identity based on a life journey where a complex amalgam of sensibilities, beliefs, styles of the flesh, affinities and affiliations converged on the surface of my body. This complexity turned me into a hard-to-pin down hybrid. I began to notice, for example, that in a Latino context many would not address me in Spanish. Some were even surprised when I responded fluently in the language. I did not seem to fit inside the boundaries within which they had parked meanings such as *latina.* I remember standing in line at a theater and getting a group of Iranians to claim me as one of their own and speak to me in Persian.

In a recent trip to Brazil prior to landing, the flight attendant handed me the immigration forms given to Brazilian citizens. She reacted with surprise when I informed her that I was not Brazilian. She, like many others—myself included—are often tempted by the desire to give order to the elements that manifest in a phenotype. I believe that a genetic test would reveal far more beyond what people project from their imaginaries. As part of my education about us, mestizos, in South America little was unpacked about who the Europeans who arrived in North and South America in the late 1400 and early 1500s had been. Today the phenotypic manifestations of the multiple and unknown ancestral lines that crossed paths before me create confusion. Those trying to fix what they see to their understandings of nation, ethnicity or race have little more to go with that the capricious ways of manifest biology. However, I have come to like dwelling in the confusion that occurs when that biology does not match the expectation. This approach is very much in sync with my understanding of identity as irreducible, as a journey through space and time that is labyrinthine and disorderly. Our performances shift as the landscape of our connections and affiliations changes daily.

Forum Theater Education and Change

My thinking about identity evolved into a critical inquiry very late in the process of writing this dissertation. It has taken me a long time to articulate the connection between the definitions of identity I puzzled together with my theoretical constructs. And the performances of difference that were central to the Boal's forum. My inquiry did not begin as a critical one. I have explained how when I attended the conferences and workshops led by Boal and his disciples I had bought into the profoundly idealist and optimistic worldview of PT and FT and their tendency to anticipate the best possible outcome. At the time learning how to change the world through theater seemed fitting in the process of my formation as an educator. I saw myself as a teacher of teachers who would device ways in which these young educators could incorporate FT into their classroom to transform them. Initially my inquiry was about understanding how change was realized through FT. Yet I never experienced any change nor did I ever see any material effects on the people participating in the forums.

In retrospect, I had gone to the FT conferences looking for ways to create meaning out of an educational experience that was all consuming emotionally and intellectually and that—at the time—it seemed to lead nowhere. I wanted to find purpose through enacting the sort of change Boal had advocated. He and his disciples defined change as the social and political transformation of communities and the lives of the people living in them. These communities, according to Boal and TO's tenets, could find the way out of oppression and injustice through a theatricalized dialogue that would lead them to action. In FT in particular, Boal would instruct participants to reach collectively beyond themselves for something new and through their FT interventions open spaces where a better future could be rehearsed.

The conclusion I eventually reached through my analysis put me at odds with this interpretation of change. If one were to look at identity and the categories of difference as the scripts that inform a character in a theater play, one could conclude that they confine an actor within limited and powerful centripetal discourses. The centripetal discourses I focused on—conflict and estrangement—create a chasm between people who understand themselves as different and separate from one another. When asked to reach beyond themselves for something better the collectivities in the two forums I examined reached back. In searching for cues to re-cast performances anew they repeated the old and well-rehearsed scripts that reinscribed difference. In my analysis, repetition emerged as a significant force in the entrenchment of performances of identity as difference. Through repetition we consolidated and naturalized particular categories creating the illusion of an internal core to them. In this sense repetition became a vehicle for power both as we enacted it but also in the possibilities that would open up if we halted it. There is as much power when we repeat and reinscribe the categories as when we don't and embody the directives of an unrehearsed script instead.

The communities with which I participated in FT were not aware of the power in the discourses they were deploying. Without this insight we could not undergo any sort of transformation. In the end, the only change I can account for is my own. Through my study, writing and analysis I achieved a critical consciousness of the role my body has played and plays in the repetition of particular discourses of gender and race. As Freire thought of it, this consciousness or *conscientização* proceeded, for me, through the identification of generative themes, or relevant insights from the data that had a powerful impact in my daily life. I began to reflect daily upon what I was discovering about identity and performance and have since embodied daily a bodily awareness of the power of the repetitions I engage. Gradually and through my understanding of the theoretical constructs I wove, I became more present (both cognitively and affectively) in my way of relating to others. Gradually, my bodily enactments have become more fluid and less rehearsed. Instead of embodying received discourses of difference I have begun to examine and change those discourses through daily enacting of small performative transmutations on the surface of my body. As I will explain in the implications chapter this conscientization and subsequent practice can be put to the service of a transformative pedagogy in the Multicultural education classroom that invites this kind of change. A teacher with a deep understanding of the theory might use FT as a pedagogical space to guide students through a gradual affective and cognitive bodily metamorphosis.

Getting to this place of very modest transformation was for me an arduous and long road. It has also been an enormous challenge both intellectually and emotionally. Initially I struggled with the data. I could not find my way into it so I let all my fear and insecurities about my abilities as a writer and as a researcher paralyze me. For a long time I would just sit in front of the computer and accomplish very little; or I would avoid the task altogether. Eventually a number of events converged and I gave up the project completely. In the summer of 2005 I became pregnant with my daughter Lila and soon after, I was recruited by a former mentor who offered me a great job at a conservation organization. I embraced both roles wholeheartedly and my new responsibilities became more than sufficient reasons to entirely abandon what I had started to see as a pointless task. For the next four years I focused all of my energy on what had become my life's priorities: enjoying my little daughter and fulfilling the responsibilities of a new and demanding job. During that long hiatus, however, my unfinished project was a persistent source of stress. I felt deeply disappointed at myself for having stopped working on it; the many years that I had spent gathering data, studying hard, writing papers, and completing a successful preliminary exam and dissertation proposal weighed heavily on my conscience. Additionally, I carried the guilt of having misused the financial resources that one of my mentors had so generously procured.

While I wrestled constantly with the idea of returning to the manuscript and finishing what I had started, it was not until my daughter was four years old that I had the energy and presence of mind to decide that I would continue my writing. My little one had stopped napping in the afternoons and started to go to bed earlier, which had made my daily schedule more manageable. Guilt and a new sense of purpose brought me back to the project. For one, I did not want any regrets. Eventually a more powerful incentive developed. I was now a role model for my daughter. I wanted her to value learning and I wanted to teach her about perseverance and determination. I decided that I would read and write nightly after she went to bed.

As I sat down with the manuscript I realized that much had changed. I was reading through different eyes and I felt a certain measure of emotional distance between me and my writing. For example, I had lost my fear of putting my thoughts to paper and had, in general, grown less idealistic and more self-assured, particularly about what I could say and whether I could say it. Also, having a job at which my work was recognized and that allowed me to provide for my family helped me avoid the anxieties and fears that other students might confront. For example, I did not have to think about launching an academic career, nor did I have to anticipate navigating the institutional politics of the job search process; I did not have to think about my performance of self as an academic, nor how my research would position me vis-à-vis the culture of a prospective department.

I drew on all the good academic advice that I had been given, particularly how one trusted professor's had admonished me not to divorce my experiences as a student, teacher and instructor from my research, and instead strive to find the connections between these two spheres in my analysis. I began looking at the connections between the conflict written in the scripts of both the diversity forum and the forum on the film Crash with my own experience of the clashes between white and racialized students in the multicultural education classroom. The hostile encounters I witnessed had been emotionally taxing and had often left me feeling perplexed and defeated. What I had lived both as a student and a teacher in those classrooms still haunted me. With a new frame of mind, I realized that my analysis would provide a space in which I could examine those classroom dynamics away from the intensity of the emotions that they had elicited. I thought that, perhaps, I could think and write my way toward compassion and away from the hurt and frustration engendered during those difficult years.

After several weeks, a clearer understanding of what the analysis entailed developed. As I examined my research question—how do participants achieve change through the process of FT—and through the process of recalibrating my theoretical frame, I began to see that I was looking at the enactment of power through daily performances of centripetal discourses. The tools available to forum participants were discursive and performative therefore I could never discern what the material effects of the FT process on its participants were. There was no way to measure that kind of change. I could, however, examine the connections between discourse and performance and the palpable tension in the multicultural education classroom. How were those discourses and performances deployed as tools of power?

While the participants in the Boal forum were mostly white those in the Crash forum identified as Latino, American Indian and Black. Having the two forums meant that I could explore the nuances of different representations of self by whites and racialized students (Stake, 2005) via their performances. Were there differences in the way white and racialized students performed the discourses of difference to position themselves as powerful or not? I also wanted to articulate further what repetition and implicit acceptance of practices of power meant.

Both forums and their scripts amounted to composite stories and therefore exemplars of how groups of students and educators across the nation experienced racial representations in the multicultural education classroom. The performances during the forums also showed students and teachers enacting power through their performances.

Reading and rereading the forums allowed me to explore key discourses used within the scripts and how power was being ascertained through these discourses. I used Foucault's definition of power to make sense of the process. Students would tap particular *universalist truths* and used them as the arena where they positioned themselves to assert their influence. In the first forum for example, Diane—the white student—enacted a forceful performance of her white entitlement by invoking English as the official language of the classroom. She placed herself as entitled to a curriculum that coincided with her worldview and instruction that had to be delivered in English. Any classroom input outside the realm of English was rendered foreign, inappropriate and out of place.

Why Diane's performance was so powerful and effective? How she was able to leverage this oft repeated universalist truth without challenge baffled me for a long time. The idea that the U.S. is a multilingual and multipolar nation where millions communicate, learn, worship and live day-to-day using languages other than English was never brought up. The few appearances other languages make in the classroom are no match to the maelstrom of English. It is as if English as the *official* language is blasted daily through a megaphone while other languages come through as occasionally as whispers. The metaphor I used in my explanation was not one of loudness but of strength. Bakhtin explains a powerful discourse like English Only as a centripetal force that unifies meaning; while centrifugal or diversifying discourses countering this force in other directions to layer and diversify meaning. Given the idea that there is no universe out there other than the one we help construct via discourse and performance, however, I came to see that we participate in the construction of these discourses and we exercise power both in the repetition and interruption of powerful discourses.

In the case of Diane's performances there were no interruptions. She gave momentum and force to this truth while aligning herself with the vision of a monolingual English speaking nation. The responses from racialized students did not come in the way of counter-discourses challenging and decelerating the legitimacy of her claims. Quite the opposite, those performances seemed to move in a centripetal direction. Wasim had retreated behind a turned-over chair as if disciplined into the idea that there is no room for him in the classroom. Wasim gave into Diane's notion that the institution is there for her to accommodate her needs and expectations. Wasim performed the silenced student, while Hiroki acted perplexed and grateful at the opportunity to recite a Japanese play in Japanese. Their reactions seemed anachronous. As Winant (1998) argued we have arrived at a historical moment when amidst real prejudice, discrimination, racism and structural inequalities, "it is highly problematic to assert that racially-defined minorities are powerless in the contemporary U.S." (23). In Bakhtin's terms, race and racism have changed. They have been layered with new significance. Racialized people cannot be subjected to systemic and large-scale discriminations. Institutions have been transformed so that there are plenty of available roles for empowered racialized minorities to perform. There are a myriad ways to express that we no longer live in a "white man's country".

Large Scale Versus Small Change

Part of moving away from the ideas and the cultural and structural practices that afford systematic privilege to whites is enacting *in the flesh* the power we can tap into given our gains toward equality. At the very least, it means countering Diane's sense of entitlement with stalwart presentations of what our own freedoms and privilege might mean in the context of higher education. It also means sitting across the table from students like her to voice a different set of *truths* informed by the multifarious experiences of those now present at that table. These daily transmutations on the flesh do not translate in the kind of radical systemic change that transforms the social and political landscape of a community. They are instead small but enduring interventions that come from an affective and cognitive awareness of our implication in structures of inequality. These unpretentious efforts become a force—albeit small—for change that translates into more mindful bodily interactions with people and institutions in the communities where we live. The contexts for these new performances of identity support them. There are new narratives of a changing American identity where minoritized communities are coming into a different understanding of who they are. New discourses have emerged that endow minoritized groups with transformative political power.

As I will argue in the implications chapter the role of the FT facilitator is to help students create a script and understand it in its social and historical context. This means being able to discern what are the discourses at play in the script that inform and support particular performances of identity. Additionally this facilitator helps them identify generative themes—in this case the discourses at play that have a powerful impact on the lives of students. This work must be informed by a robust understanding of the theory behind performativity. The constructs of difference are not *objective facts of experience*. Rather they are constituted through powerful discourses. When we deploy these discourses of difference through our bodies we become an instrument of power. Conversely if we understand how power operates through discourse we might be able to manipulate it as we might manipulate a script to recast the performances it supports.

Diane tapped powerful truths to buttress her privilege. I saw the intricacies between discourse and power as minoritized students deployed powerful language oblivious to the historical recklessness and violence that charged it. In this piece the *truth* used to disperse power was a well-rehearsed and widespread story that we all accepted and recirculated as real. Power is both manifested and wielded in the constitution of the Arab other. It is just another single story of a man, Farhad, that represents the Neo-Orientalist understanding of Arabs, Middle Easterners and Muslims. We accepted this dangerous depiction of a crazed, volatile and dangerous man as an inevitable fact rather than a socially constructed idea (Daniel, 2001). By engaging this meaning as truth we all continued to participate in the collective construction of an explosive Orient debasing a complex culture that spans multiple and diverse countries (Said, 1979). Orientalist scholars built for the West a centripetal discourse with which to deal with the East. The fabrication accomplished through literature, philosophy and so on both guided and justified emerging relations of domination. Today those tropes are part of a Neo-Orientalist moment where the character, religion and aspirations of an Arab world have been conflated with tropes like terrorist and foe. Although we saw them only briefly, there were centripetal discourses during *the Arab Spring* that revealed more than terrorists, 'sheiks' or marauding tribesmen (Wingfield and Karaman, 1995) living in these vast territories: We saw the faces of secular, educated young men and women mobilizing for change, some willing to die in order to establish more democratic institutions and free and fair elections. Orientalism has been an inflated centripetal discourse given force by way of its amplification and repetition. Wingfield and Karaman (1995) pointed to film as one of the amplifiers. However, I am arguing that as we all engage a dehumanizing understanding of another we help shape public opinion in an era where we have waged war based on that understanding.

The forum led by Dynak where interventors repeated the same understanding of Farhad over and over eventually let me see that we were all trapped, limited by our narrow understanding of Farhad. We clashed like the billiard balls of Wolf's example hardened by our unyielding understanding of each other. I realized that the only way to take that forum in a different direction was to recast Farhad by way of a collective conscientization of the power in engaging distorted and toxic discourses.

I read the transcripts of these forums the lens of constructs I borrowed from Foucault, Butler, Bakhtin. Eventually, a narrative began to take shape regarding the dispersion of power through discourse and performance. Bakhtin's idea of centripetal discourses served in explaining how a Universalist truth such as English Only can be deployed as a disciplining truth. English Only pushes towards a unifying center where the language and the nation's identity seem inextricable. The vortex of centripetal discourses makes it appear as if there is no space for counter-identities. The use of any other language is rendered illicit and out of place. The metaphor of centrifugal forces and in this case the absence of these forces suggests that there was no push in this forum, against the centralizing vortex of English legality and officialdom. Bakhtin's metaphor alludes to the possibility of forces pushing against totalizing or neo-colonialist ideas in favor of a flurry of counter-discourses competing with each other and taking into account the multitude involved in constructing discourses.

The constructs borrowed from Butler, particularly the ideas that embodiment and repetition give the illusion of an internal core or substance to identity, and that the power of the illusion lies greatly in its repetition; I began to see that our performances are not preordained. We construct them and we can alter them. We have the power to be self-reflexive about them, to assess them as construct against the discourses they reconstitute. Embodying an understanding and a worldview constitutes and fortifies that particular imaginary. Bakhtin posed that there is a gap between an idea and its object—for example between English and the identity of the nation or Middle East and any disparaging adjective—there is an infinite space. That space is a critical space, a pedagogical space where we, as individuals, have the power to insert other meanings and shift our performances given new understandings. This is the definition of change I was moving toward.

Despite my belief that FT is neither a place where we rehearse for revolutions, nor a place where radical transformative experiences can take place, in the end I wanted to salvage it for its potential as an instructional theatre (Denzin, 2006 citing Turner) where the performative is pedagogical (Denzin, 2006). Performances are a way of knowing and constituting the world around us and as such are a site of important self-reflection and understanding. One of the most critical revelations in the process of my analysis was seeing that we do exercise a certain kind of power through our styles of the flesh or repeated performed discourses. As Maalouf wrote keeping the distance between your body as an object and the meaning you attach to it transforms that space in a place of possibility. The arena where ideas were previously at odds with each other could come to coexist.

Power, however, goes on unchallenged in the assumption that a ritual or performance that gives meaning to gender or race is the only possible one. Bakhtin explained how the foreclosure of meaning is the work of power. On the other hand, interrupting those performances and enacting unrehearsed ones reveal that beyond repetition there exist other possible meanings. Furthermore, interruption opens a space beyond the inherited script where change becomes possible. When I became aware of how this consolidation of power through the conflation of objects and meanings gets done. I began to think with my body about ways in which this power could be countered. Through Butler I became aware of how halt the repetition of particular discourses and performances opens a space for alternate imaginaries while revealing the mechanism through which meanings and objects are coupled and given durability. Repetition exposes our own implication in the politics of identity as repetition implies an agreement with the particular cultural practices we enact. Text, performance, repetition are the daily doings that make up cultural practices. These practices establish parameters within which people define themselves, *live*.

By doing so, Diane for example, had very effectively aligned her interests with much larger ones by claiming, for example, that English was the only appropriate language for classroom interaction. Employing the idea of a Subject/subject helped me explain how, as a Subject, Diane had exercised power through deploying powerful discourses to her advantage. As I searched the transcripts for other examples of the ways in which actors had used discourse and tried to articulate how power circulated in those exchanges, I saw how they had engaged Neo-Orientalist and Islamophobic discourses in the second forum to rouse the fears that those discourses exploit and sustain. I saw how repetition of those discourses ensured their endurance and how we had consented to the legitimacy of the discourses that conflate *Arab* and *terrorist*. Despite having tapped into the power of a particular discourse, we had not become its ingenious manipulators; on the contrary, we had become its uninspired repeaters. As performers and imitators of discourse, we had become its force.

Putting together Butler's idea that repetition is a powerful force and Bakhtin's metaphor of the centripetal forces of discourse that discipline and fix meaning, I articulated how discourse can act as a compressing force that fuses meaning and object. This visual metaphor illustrates how individuals can exercise power as they tap into and move forward a powerful discourse. In engaging Neo-Orientalist discourses in the manner that we had, we had accepted Farhad as a credible character, thus becoming the force of repetition, part of the whirling and irresistible force that gives longevity to a discourse. When Bakhtin spoke of *centrifugal forces* of discourse that push back against the unifying forces, he was referring to unofficial forms of language that reflect a diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and ideologies. These forces reject the fixity of authoritative meanings, such as the notion that because the United States is and has always been a polyglot nation, to propose that the belief that a shared ancestry is reflected in a multiplicity of languages, particularly within higher education institutions, is neither ridiculous nor preposterous but representative of who and what we are. Considering that the characterization of Farhad is, at best, that of a caricature, we should critically examine it as well as those of others like him to gain insight into the effects of discourse on our bodies and relationships.

However, as I continued my analysis, I found that neither heteroglossia nor other counter-discourses emerged; instead, I saw in the forums collectivities caught inside the vortex of discourse, pushing centripetal, rigid, unchanging, and unifying discourses and becoming complicit in their power. Describing discourse as a contentious place where meanings are defined, circulated, and restrained, Foucault explained that tapping into a particular discourse is a means of vying for the power embedded in that discourse. The more that I understood this idea and the more that I thought about these performances and repetitions, the better I understood the usefulness of Butler's performance/performativity metaphor. Departing from the premise that discourse is only an approximation of *the real* , I found that the idea that there is no essence of identity underneath—that we achieve who we are through performance and repetition—to be very much in synch with my worldview. What we are takes shape as we invoke and perform larger discourses. With those performances we recreate cultural norms, entrenched knowledge and ideas that are, in the end, imposed by the collectivity of which we are part. Through enacting these rituals, buying into certain ideas, and mimicking certain performances, we collectively agree to maintain meanings such as race, gender, and nationality. By such means, collective repetition gives endurance to the illusion of an internal core or substance to identity.

<u>Living Without *truths*</u>

I did not set out to test a hypothesis using enough data to draw a set of conclusions. I depart from an understanding that whatever lies outside of the discourse of identity is a vast unknown that cannot be apprehended through language (Foucault, 1972). The principal supposition underlying my worldview is that my understanding and explanation of what is *out there* is merely the projection of the theoretical constructs that I bring forth. I pose that in and with discourse, we, quite literally, belittle what is otherwise unexplainable as we attempt to delimit it and impose a particular order through *meaning*. Therefore, what I ultimately gave shape to is a series of limited and limiting stories that sought to present a new vocabulary to speak of the relationship between power and discourse. This vocabulary resonates with my lived experiences, my anxieties over the injustice embedded in the categories, and aspirations (for me and for my child) to live in the world, and to experience it and others with an open and supple mind and heart. Critical ethnographers are unavoidably subjective because they interpret in the context of their previous experiences while looking at the data through a theoretical frame they built.

I am always wondering how I can perform, how I can better *live* my understanding. I struggle to figure out how to help my daughter grow without the need to classify phenotypes and pin her learned assumptions about people down to a specific geography, ethnicity, race. I have tried to help her grow familiar with a wide arrange of cultural practices when it comes to identity. As much as possible, I want her to be comfortable in a multiplicity of cultural contexts and able to relate to complex and sometimes contradictory understandings and practices. Since she was a baby we chose books written for and by Japanese, Chinese, Iraqi, or Egyptian children from our city library. We have always visited the many festivals and gatherings that bring a multitude of people together here in our city. I want her to relate to any of these events with familiarity and to be moved by people's experience of joy and pain without having to conflate one or the other with ideas of patriotism or authenticity. There are no traditional foods in our house. The house—and I hope her memories—are filled with the smells of curry; I have taught her how to make ravioli, sushi or empanadas with the same ease. I take her regularly to the Asian supermarket in our neighborhood and have taught her that chili paste is as much hers as adobo. We keep venturing farther and deeper within the space of our home and in the simple things we do daily; we travel in our conversations across bowls of Vietnamese broths, thick Sudanese sauces or in the rice we cook inside plantain leaves.

The idea that difference is a construct we reinscribe in daily doings has changed the way I go about my days. I began to search in myself and others for the traits, the physical features, the cultural practices, or the ideologies that defy categories as a way to remain aware of the ways in which we help naturalize or defy the categories. Today, I look at performances of race, ethnicity or gender as forging power dynamics and I constantly aim at discerning how through those dynamics opportunities are given or taken away. In my self-reflexivity I ask daily which new ways of defining and performing difference can transform performers, audiences and their interactions. In the implication chapters I specifically ask whether the performance metaphor I use could incite those who read this text to critically examine the performances and discourses they deploy through their bodies.

A Critical Self-examination of the Performance of Identity

The critical aspect of this examination refers to the reflective process I chose to make value-laden judgments of meaning and method while challenging objectivism and empiricism in favor a more creative and critical approach (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). From start to finish this analysis has been an embodied reflection on my own experience (Denzin, 2003; Jones, 1994) that inherently rejects positivism's research methods

(Faulkner, 1982). I have positioned myself at the center of the research making it a subjective and partial account. Through gazing back at my own performance of self I have made of my body "a specific cultural site for social commentary and cultural critique" (Alexander, 2006) within which to understand how the discourses of power and identity shape self (Denzin, 2003). Part of that critique is intended to make the connections between the cultural practices that comprise the performance of identity and the discourses that make those performances possible. Like Critical Ethnography which situates itself within political struggles for inequity and justice (Carspecken, 1999) this self-reflective critique looks at my interactions with the ones I have othered to understand how the construct of race has been the means of erecting social and political boundaries that have instituted enduring and oppressive orders (Morrison, 1992).

Because the identity I seek to understand is so much part of our bodily enactments or what Butler has called styles of the flesh, I want to engage the audience in a different way. By using performance as a metaphor my goal is to develop a vocabulary that turns the reader into the spectator of a story they could imagine as being about them. I want to effectively demonstrate the connection between our individual discourses, bodily performances and power in a way that moves us to examine our own styles of the flesh and the effect they might have on the discourses we deploy and naturalize. With this critical approach I aim at exposing the naturalization of inequity while breaking with objectivism, empiricism and subjectivity. Through this critical and self-reflexive approach I actively challenge the validity and effectiveness of traditional methods of social inquiry, in which an objective researcher—or, at the very least, a researcher distant from the subject of inquiry—is situated outside of a setting looking in. Far from being a detached observer, I see myself as embodying and implicated in the constructing of the discourses and performances I look to understand. I have thus forfeited any claim to truth (Denzin, 2003). Furthermore, as the one who identified (with) selected theoretical constructs, I gave my interpretation a certain order. The narrative I built is just that; another story that attempts to make sense of what I see.

Validity and Reliability

My hope with this analysis is that my use of FT, the theoretical constructs that I have used to build a framework and the questions that have emerged from the order I have given to all the meanings might help explain in a novel way the relationship between the performance of identity and power. My own inquiry and a more self-reflexive bodily understanding of my implication in the power dynamics that emerge through my repeated performances have changed me. I am now more deliberate in my bodily performances of ethnicity, and nationality—though I still struggle with a well-rehearsed and very predictable performance of gender. However, I am always asking whether the transformation of my outlook could translate into a transformation of my world and my relationships. Is it possible that a novel way to understand the relationship between discourse, our performances of self and power could transform the way we figure in the dissemination of that power?

Validity and reliability as they are used in positivistic research employ experimental methods and quantitative measures to test hypothetical generalizations and emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). With the advent of critical approaches to inquiry, new ideas about the nature of reality and the purpose of research, the concept of validity has been extended to include critical views. The aim of critical researchers according to Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) is to attempt to move beyond received and assimilated experience to a critical stance that questions and confronts the way power is reproduced in our co-construction of reality. My definitions of validity and reliability—like the rest of my paper—intentionally problematize the assumptions of positivist approaches and grapple with questions of purpose and significance. I have adopted a more transgressive definition of validity (Lather, 1995) based on the degree to which I see my research as usable and transformative. I don't aim at reproducing or cementing any understanding of identity; quite the opposite. To be consistent with my theoretical assumptions any ideas generated through this exercise must be presented as situated, partial and tentative—the opposite of consistency overtime and repeatability of results and observations (Joppe, 2000).

According to McLaren, "the final arbiter of any critical ethnography is its power to affect the world through praxis" (Denzin, 2003 quoting McLaren, 2001, 125). Pati Lather, for example, uses the idea of Catalytic Validity (1986) measured by the degree with which research energizes those involved to transform the world they are learning to understand. Altheide and Johnson (1994) extend this definition as they speak of validity-as-relevance-and-advocacy (VAR) or the utility of research to uplift those involved. While looking at ways in which I could layer this definition I looked in a thesaurus for synonyms of the word validity and found, together with effectiveness and substance, the idea of goodwill. Once we understand that through performance we reproduce the power of certain meanings, what do we do with this understanding, with our power vis-à-vis those oppressed by those meanings?

In the end this self-reflexive examination of performances of identity helped me focus on the effect that my enactments have in my relationships with others. My intent is to continue examining the effect of our agreement or refusal to repeatedly perform scripted, canonical and privileged gendered, ethnic, racial or national identities? Based on the understanding that the repetition of rehearsed and agreed upon performances of identity reproduce cultural conventions, and, on the other hand, their interruption calls attention to repetition as the force behind enduring presentations of self; we can begin to interrupt or recast those enactments that feed canonical categories of gender, race and ethnicity. This interruption and alteration of expected performances can be understood as one way to exercise a certain kind of thoughtful power with the wellbeing of others in mind.

Forum Theater and Performance Ethnography

To be sure, I do not see PT or FT as catalysts for change. However, I used this participatory form to point to the power that we carry in our bodies. Boal had claimed that in FT people could change the script to change their condition and their future. Through this research I realized that changing the script would not accomplish much. However, we could critically read the script or discourse for ways in which we participate and reproduce oppressive practices of identity then read the performances of our daily engagements and think of ways to rewrite the things we can rewrite on the surface of our bodies. I chose the forum on diversity because it dealt with an issue that was important for me to understand. It was also a place where I could be self-reflexive about my own performances and the ways in which I or any of the students deployed or relinquished power through our performances of identity. However there was another thing that made Political Theater compelling from the start.

Turner and Schechner (1985) saw that our cultural and bodily expressions are intrinsically theatric. Boal's PT also recognizes this theatricality. Putting those expressions up for examination under the spotlight in staged theater, while blurring the line between performer and audience, opened up the space for a methodology that could give us insight into culture without turning the other into the object of the paternalistic gaze (Conquergood, 1985). There is no observer/observed dyad in FT but a dialogic give and take. Furthermore, FT staged performances that dealt with political conflict head on in search for resolutions. Both the discourse and the bodies of the performers who enacted those expressions could be the surface for a critical examination of the politics explored. These traits made this inquiry more than ethnography. By itself ethnography describes and reflects on the meanings and understandings within culture. Performance ethnography has sought to describe social beings as performers and culture as a script that writes the larger politics of class, gender, etc. Within performance ethnography the script can be read and understood within the context of its time, place and history (Alexander, 2006).

By looking at the two FT I sought to inquire into the performative nature of the power struggles that emerge in the multicultural education classroom as students vie for power through their identity performance. Engaging the language of the metaphor and using performance as a method allowed me to describe these cultural practices of difference as doing—a doing naturalized by its daily repetition of bodily enactments.

Witnessing performances that could be our own showed powerfully the discourses and power dynamics we naturalized by our enduring consent. The larger implication was to take participants and audiences to understand the scrip they engaged as synecdoche to the larger politics of identity and their performances as integral to the script. In this sense, FT as part of performance ethnography would be a form of textual critique and scholarly production committed to the critical examination of the social processes through which meaning is made.

Because in performance ethnography the subject matter is the experiencing body, this focus on the body would engender a novel way to do inquiry on the dynamics of power in the Multicultural classroom. Examining these performances as part of the curriculum charts a path towards self-understanding. Furthermore, this sensory experience can short circuit accustomed ways of understanding and or resisting arguments about race and power given the sensory immediacy of the involvement. Because the actors, scripts and performances resemble people's experiences and ideas, the performative event could become a more accessible way to bring students face-to-face with their own daily rituals and enactments of identity and power. By engaging the body, the students are encouraged to listen and to learn in a different way.

Within FT specifically, audiences are drawn into the script and directed at re-writing it. Through the process of dialogue and action audiences are asked to talk back, intervene and recast themselves or others to change a script. The ultimate goal of FT is to extend that contained event outside of its theatricalized site and into the community in question. In this particular inquiry performance ethnography goes beyond entertainment to become a method through which the audience can explore, know and share meanings they can embody. The performance metaphor as a frame and as a method can potentially push an audience to critically access their own performances and assess daily embodiments as part of the process of production and naturalization of larger cultural practices.

Through the metaphor I began reading the theory in ways markedly different to my usual engagements of writing about identity and difference. I realized that along with the text I was reading my body and began to see my own experience as it is connected to the larger politics of difference and the naturalizing of the very world within which my interactions take place. I understood that in my flesh I had the power to negotiate difference in alternative and unrehearsed ways. I began sensing the immediacy of a power over my own body that could transform my relationship to others, how I saw them and how they saw me. In this sense this performance ethnography has been a powerful and effective way to critically inquire into my own performance in multicultural classrooms and how my body vis-à-vis students' enactments was very much part of the way power was negotiated. My performance confined me within the boundaries of my assumed and ascribed identity. More importantly it separated me from the way my students were experiencing their own bodies. I now wonder what sort of conversations we could have embarked on if we had departed, not from fear—but from a commitment to understanding how our bodies figure in the shaping of meanings around difference.

CHAPTER 2

THEATER AND THEORY

Forum Theater: A Historical Perspective

In this chapter, I explain the history of FT and why it came to be seen as a pedagogical tool for liberation. I begin by situating FT within PT and positing both as part of a specific historical–political climate in Latin America and in Boal's Brazil. Next, I explain how this pedagogical and political tool eventually crossed the border into the United States as *teatristas,* discovered Boal. Finally, I look at how FT was de-radicalized, even before it crossed many borders, as from the beginning it was evident that some of FT's aspirations could not be aligned with the desperate realities participants used it to tackle.

FT extends the avant-garde ideas of Brecht, the German Marxist playwright and theater director. Brecht (1974), disillusioned with Aristotelian theater, offered his own brand of ET as a critical aesthetic. Brecht also offered ET as an alternative to Aristotelian theater, which he described as a stupefying and apolitical form. FT is also seen as part of what came to be known as Nuevo Teatro, or the New Theater (Pianca, 1993), a Latin American theater form that reinvented itself given the highly politicized and conflicted context in which it unfolded.

Brecht (1974) contended that traditional Aristotelian theater—associated with white elites—was incapable of representing the great themes of his time: war, famine, disease, and growing conflict between classes. He wanted theater arts to find a new vocation. In his context, Brecht set out to challenge what he saw as a theater whose tendency was to show events as natural, unchanging, and unfolding around the inexorable fate of an unexamined hero. From the darkness, which he argued had been instituted below the stage, he wanted to awaken the unseen spectator, who had been forced by traditional theater to submit in a trance-like state to a total and uncritical identification with the hero. Furthermore, Brecht wanted to problematize the actors, who were in a trance of a different sort, because they were tasked with bringing the spectators to closely identify with characters and events, thus creating a peculiar environment. Aristotelian theater was, simply and problematically, entertainment as scripts, and characters did little more than reinscribe particular norms, beliefs, and ways of being in the world, asking little of spectators.

Many theater directors in Latin America during the 1960s and 70s traveled to Europe to be influenced by the work of Brecht (Pianca, 1993). As they returned, their translation and interpretation of Brecht became part of the articulation of the Nuevo Teatro. Boal's theater work had elements of Brecht's Marxism and Freire's humanism (Pianca, 1993). The merging of these two influences helped articulate what Boal eventually named Theater of the Oppressed. Echoes of both Freire's and Brecht's worldviews are present in TO's definition as a theater art with an important social and political purpose. In TO, as in Brecht's Epic Theater and Freire's pedagogy, spectators are part of a collective event and are expected to read and critically respond to the problem that is being presented. Learning and coming to awareness, or conscientization, are ideal outcomes of a democratic and collective endeavor whose ultimate goal is to transform the world.

The world in which Freire—and later Boal—began to develop PTO was a dissatisfied and rebellious Latin America. At the time, a number of insurgent groups across the continent were waging war to overturn neocolonial relations imposed by a tyrannical trilogy of dictatorships, social inequality, and imperialism (Luzurriaga, 1978; Pianca, 1993). According to Pianca (1993), the Cuban Revolution of 1958 was a watershed that channeled a desire for change for which many in Latin America longed. The revolution ousted dictator Fulgencio Batista and the corrupt interests he represented: big U.S. landowners and transnational corporations, which many thought were sucking the life-blood out of the country, creating mass unemployment, misery, malnutrition, and widespread illiteracy. After its triumph, the revolution and its dizzying effects—land reform, welfare programs, and massive literacy campaigns—had a powerful influence on many activists and educators across the continent, including Boal and Freire (Luzurriaga, 1978).

Taaffe (2000) compared the impact of the Cuban Revolution on other Latin American struggles to that of a massive earthquake. Several factors made the revolution an unprecedented and rattling event. First, the revolution was a negation of U.S. policies and ambitions across the hemisphere. It established a socialist regime under the nose of the imperialist oppressor. Second, Castro and Guevara were charismatic figures who wrested the power from a corrupt regime that was similar to many in Latin America at the time. Finally, this new government of a small island in the Caribbean was able to bear the ire of the giant, the United States, both topographically and politically. The reforms undertaken in Cuba were, indeed, revolutionary, and not surprisingly, the revolution garnered overwhelming support from and sparked the optimism of youth, peasants, and workers around Latin America and the world.

Within the optimism PT was an awakening wherein activists like Boal and Freire came together to understand how power operated within the imperialist, colonialist, and self-colonizing ideologies and systems of government that followed imperialism and colonialism (Pianca, 1993). Dictatorships like the ones in Cuba and Brazil, for example, contravened the unfolding of autonomous identities within various nations in Latin America (Luzurriaga, 1978). Violent and corrupt regimes delegitimized local cultural practices, religion, art, medicine, and systems of science and government (White, 1998). Theater activists used theater as a vehicle to build solidarity in the fight against oppression and in the nurturing of critical thinking and action among those struggling for human rights (Pianca, 1993). PT was a space where people who did not identify with, or did not see a place for themselves in, official, state-controlled oppressive structures could work collectively to produce their own representations of self and reality (Boal, 1979). Live performance, as a form of popular representation and symbol of freedom from the technologies of consumption, was one of the few places where a more-or-less free and locally produced political expression was still possible (White, 1998).

White (1998) argued that PT emerged as part of a larger movement for justice in communication as an essential human right—that is, the right to receive and impart information in a community's own terms. Modernization designs that were extensions of oppressive colonial policies brought about a system of international communications that became the basis for a global hegemony. Industrialized nations transferred technology and capitalist cultural values to poor nations through music, film, books, television comedies, and a toxic brand of news that represented and protected corporate interests and ideologies of wealthy external and internal (to poor countries) elites. By driving the content of programming, the advertising that controlled the media introduced insidious topics and trends that, among other things, distorted images of women, the poor, and minorities. These sexist and racist contents also sponsored consumer tastes that continued to promote the legacy of inequality instituted in colonial times. The official media and its advertisers produced the devastating ideologies of individualism, youthfulness, romance, elitism, affluence, power, officialdom, privatization, the free market, and corporate dominance (White, 1998). At the same time, the media suffocated critical examination, debate, and criticism due to social conditions.

Popular movements turned to communication models that felt more autochthonous, democratic, and participatory. White (1998) recounted how Latin America, India, and Africa saw the revitalization of old popular theater forms with renewed impetus. In urban contexts, popular presses and radio—and later, video production—also gave access to ideas and perspectives that did not have a voice in the dominant media. This alternative communication sought to create a new collective language and a collectively owned frame of reference for understanding the structure of power. Here was a response to the First World–Third World dichotomy where the poor and oppressed had been forced to identify themselves and their projects as lesser and in opposition to imaginary progress and industrialization. These alternatives to mass media represent an effort by activist communities to reclaim the freedom to find and name who they are for themselves in terms that dignify and respect their cultural and ethnic identities (Servaes and Arnst, 1993; Shinar, 2003; White, 1988).

Facundo (1984) positioned the scholarship and activism of Freire and Boal within this popular movement and in the context of the repressive conditions of Brazil in the 1960s and 70s. To the different ideas that influenced Freire—and through him, Boal—Facundo added liberation theology. In Latin America, the doctrine of the Catholic Church was appropriated against its original colonial intent. Liberation theology tried to mobilize the poor against incompetent and corrupt regimes. With evangelization at the base, the commitment of liberation theology was not only to denounce injustice but also to take action to achieve equity and freedom from oppression. Some of Freire's philosophical tenets emerged from this Christian ethos. One tenet that is still a pillar of PTO is the notion that the process of history is not driven by fate. The circumstances we inhabit are changeable and may be rectified. Thus, the process of liberation involves humanizing the masses through education about participation in the transformation of the political process and in the project of liberation.

The other pillar of PTO that emerged as part of the anticolonial populist movement was the democratizing of education. Freire wanted to do away with the teacher–student dichotomy. He wanted the relationship between student and teacher to be one of reciprocity. Teachers were expected to create curriculum in collaboration with students and their communities. The participation of the poor and the marginalized in the process of their education was necessary in their humanizing, politicizing, and, ultimately, their liberation. Popular participation in the creation of culture and education would break with colonizing and imperialist notions—for example, the idea that only the elite was competent and knew what the needs and interests of the society were (Torres, 1994).

This reciprocity, this collective participation in conscientization, is present in Brecht's ET and Boal's TO, specifically in their calls to tear down the fourth wall of theater. This wall instituted a dichotomous relationship between actors and spectators. In Aristotelian theater, the script is unmovable as the exclusive domain of the playwright. The stage is reserved only for the actors. However, once the wall is brought down, spectators become what Boal termed spect-actors, or an audience free to participate in the rewriting of the script and in bringing the script onto the stage.

Boal's early writings framed PT as a profoundly political endeavor linked to a larger struggle for social justice (see *Técnicas Latinoamericanas de Teatro Popular*). "Many things in life should belong to the people: the power of the state, the factories, the beaches, universities, nourishment and, of course, theater" (Boal, 1998, 74). In this struggle, it is paramount that the people have their own aesthetic as a means of bringing the world closer so it might be closely and critically examined, understood, and reinterpreted (Boal, 1998). Through PT, the masses can imagine the best of all possible worlds through a collective, open, and democratic dialogue in a language that all can understand (Boal, 1998).

Boal, Theater of the Oppressed, and Forum Theater

According to Boal (1979), TO unfolded in Brazil during the late 1950s and early 60s amidst a concrete oppressive situation. Boal recounted how President Joao Goulart's policies were rapidly moving to the left, so with the help of the United States, the military overthrew his government and, among other assaults against the people, suspended constitutional guarantees. Traditional theater as a place of gathering and a means for local cultural exchanges had been censured and was largely forbidden in its accustomed venues, so Boal's group, Teatro Arena de São Paulo, worked at devising a number of techniques that could make theater available as a source of news, public entertainment, and mainly a communal space for conversation and debate. The aesthetic forms that emerged were, needless to say, shaped by their historical context. That is, they were politically minded and intended to voice opposition to the ideological impositions of the oppressive regime.

TO evolved under these dangerous circumstances. Out of fear, and in order to protect themselves from persecution, the group devised Invisible Theater. "We were afraid of the police and we had good reasons to be afraid of the police," Boal explained (personal communication, April, 2004). The theater was invisible because it was performed on the streets and in the subway in front of unsuspecting audiences unaware that what they were witnessing was theater. The invisible actors would talk about unemployment, the indignities of poverty, or the deep chasm between rich and poor. Spectators could intervene in the action as though it were a nonprepared scene. When spectators became actors and turned the actors into spectators, the traditional hierarchies of theater were disturbed. The experiment also evidenced what Turner and Schechner (1985), and so many others before them, tried to theorize: Much of reality is fiction, and much in fiction comes from the "real."

FT, in particular, began to take shape during Boal's years in exile in the early 1970s when he worked in Peru within a most interesting hybrid: the Revolutionary

Government of the Armed Forces led by General Juan Velasco Alvarado (Boal, 1995). The government sponsored a massive literacy campaign and wanted to include the languages of art: photography, painting, theater, etc. Working from a Brechtian/Marxist aesthetic, Boal was looking for ways to transfer the means of artistic production to the people. Boal, like Bakhtin, saw this highly charged political moment as an opportunity and wanted to hand people a tool with which they could find their own expressions and representations. Through ET, Brecht allowed the spectators to delegate power to the actor who performed on their behalf. Boal wanted the spectators to use their bodies as a means of production, so he endeavored to develop techniques for individuals to use their bodies in finding new ways to make meaning.

Boal was doing simultaneous dramaturgy: The actors performed a story that belonged to the community who was watching. The performers would stop the action at the moment of crisis and ask the audience for suggestions. The audience was entitled to intervene by correcting and pushing actors to strictly adhere to the instructions the audience provided. Essentially, the audience "wrote" a script as the actors simultaneously performed it; thus the name. Although simultaneous dramaturgy pierced the fourth wall of theater, which separated actors and audiences, it was the evolution toward FT that finally brought the wall down. A woman, frustrated that the actors were not responding to her suggestions to her satisfaction, asked to be allowed on the stage. As Boal explained it, when the spectator was given the right to come on stage, the process was cracked open and democratized; no ideas were imposed and all ideas proposed could be tried.

"When the spectator herself came on stage to carry out the action she had in mind," she brought a distinctive perspective done in "a manner that was personal, unique and non-transferable, as she alone could do it" (Boal, 1995, 7). Her unique experience carried the potential and power of fresh ideas that the collectivity could develop. Furthermore, as the spectator "desecrated" the stage, it ceased to be "the altar" where actors presided over an audience. The hierarchies that conventional theater depended on were overturned and the space became a communal place where women and men could embody their desires and learn together.

Early on, however, Boal understood that the expectations about what FT could achieve could not be set too high. Boal wrote of a significant event in *Rainbow of Desire:* Early on, the group Arena de São Paulo traveled to the northeastern Brazil to perform in front of an audience of peasants. At the end of the play, the group sang, "Let us spill our blood," encouraging the peasants to revolt. The peasants, inspired, decided to answer the call and proposed that, with the troupe and the troupe's weapons, they rise together against the landowners. Boal, embarrassed, conceded that the weapons were mere imitations making it clear that the blood that was to run, as the peasants concluded, would be only theirs. On that day, he decided never again to embolden people to take risks he was not willing to take himself, nor to give any advice to audiences with whom he interacted. The changes he envisioned were more in line with the Freirian creed and, many have argued, could not move from the ideological to the material.

Boal (1995) was forced to more clearly articulate what the place of TO was within a larger struggle for social justice: "It was not the place of theater to show the correct path but only to offer the means by which all possible paths could be examined" (141). Theater, as a pedagogical weapon, was potentially empowering as a place of creativity and growth. But growth and change remained at an ideological level. However, through

Legislative Theater, Boal was able to realize some structural change.

After many years in exile, Boal returned to Brazil in the mid-1980s and became involved in politics again. He ran for office on a Workers' Party slate and was elected to the City Council of Rio de Janeiro. Not surprisingly, once installed in office, theater became part of his tactics. He began to organize communities through theater workshops offered by a number of troupes that he helped create in communities around the city. Theater workers would poll the residents of the *favelas,* unearthing what were thought to be critical issues in need of resolution. Through these projects, the theater workers would gather ideas and recommendations from community members. Later, Boal and his two lawyers would produce a project of law. Eventually, thirteen laws concerning the region came into effect during his tenure–for example, the first Brazilian law for the protection of witnesses. This was the birth of Legislative Theater, which up to that point had been no more than a succession of suggested ideas (O'Sullivan, 2001).

Forum Theater

Here, I return to FT to more clearly define its principles and to describe its process as they relate to my questions about performativity. Fundamentally, FT is a question that is theatrically asked and through the performativity lens is primarily concerned with identifying the oppressive discourses in operation. A forum begins at a gathering where individuals in a community tell a story about a pressing and problematic issue in their community. Because individuals work in groups to bring the story to life, the script is a multilayered composite of the many responses the theme evokes in the group. However, the central theme is the same. In my inquiry, and because the group I observed was made up of educators, the question centered on diversity.

Once the problem is established and a scene is built, the situation is theatricalized. The story usually involves a less-than-ideal situation in which a protagonist facing a problem is opposed and defeated by an antagonist force. As Boal explained, an effective scene presents a tangible problem and clearly delineates the purpose of both protagonist and antagonist (personal communication, April, 2004). In one forum, a teacher was tasked with covering diversity in his drama class, and there was clear opposition from some administrators—and more forcefully, a student adamantly opposed to a foreign language being spoken in her classroom. Not surprisingly, English-only discourse was deployed and repeated several times during the play and consequent interventions.

After the play was performed in its totality, it was performed a second time, and the spectators were invited to "invade" the scene (Boal, 1979). As soon as the play arrived at a point where an observer considered an intervention could be helpful, the observer yelled stop and came onto the stage to replace the protagonist. The implication was that the protagonist was defeated because she did not have effective ways to respond. The possibility presented was that a new protagonist might know better. The spect-actor brainstormed performatively, through discourse and with her body, to solve the problem that the protagonist could not.

The end purpose of FT is to change the original script in one way or another. In other words, the collective goal is to use discourse through performance to achieve a different outcome—ultimately, to do something with words. Because the scene is a composite story, as an utterance, it is multivoiced, built, and taken apart by a group. The group brings distinct experiences that are sometimes separated by geography, age, or ideological affiliation. One shortcoming I consistently witnessed while observing and taking part in FT was the lack of direction participants are given as the play is opened for intervention—even though FT is used as a pedagogical tool. Boal would open interventions by saying to the audience, “If you don’t like what you see, go change it!” He would compare the situation to facing an obstacle, oppression, or injustice in real life and would warn spectators, “If you don’t take action, things are going to go on unchanged.”

FT presents a rich text for the examination of discourses. It is built and layered by a collectivity. As the script is built and during the interventions, it is possible to discern what discourses are deployed as individuals try to defy power or tap into it. Through this examination, it is possible to detail how discourses are performed and repeated and whether they may be interrupted. Finally, given FT’s stated goals, it is possible to determine whether oppressive relationships or conditions may be changed. To put it differently, what do the discourses in operation accomplish? Ultimately, what is being done with words?

Examination of a succession of interventions is rich and fascinating because in the end, they reveal meanings that are collectively produced and sustained collectively. The result is a layered, multivoiced, and dialogical response to the original text.

Once an intervention is exhausted, the process calls for more spect-actors to come on stage to complicate the interventions, or to intervene at different and problematic places in the process. One of the Freirian assumptions in the process is that since the problems are complex, the solutions offered by one individual are generally incomplete. Thus, the process is repeated several times to democratize the process so that new and multiple perspectives on the subject can be offered. In a typical FT session, individuals from different professions and at different stages in their lives come together. People came to see Boal from faraway places like India, Mali, Germany, and Japan. Participants were highly motivated and were eager to bring their ideas to the stage in their desire to work for change. They collectively responded to the script and proposed a different reality than the one presented.

One of the central rules of FT is that interventors may replace only the protagonist. The question often arises, why did Boal tell individuals who ask to replace the antagonist that it is not possible? He would explain the answer as follows: In fighting against an antagonistic force, individuals fortify themselves in preparation for the time when they will face a real antagonist. Replacing the antagonist is tantamount to having "a boxer fighting a paralyzed man. One has to train well to be ready for the real fight" (personal communication, April, 2004). In the diversity forum, the antagonist repeats repeated English-only discourse in multiple ways, and in each intervention, a different audience member responded to that discourse using whatever cultural resources he or she brought with his or her body to the stage.

Finally, FT as a critical dialogue that aims at exploring critical questions cannot happen without an engaged audience. Boal had an ideal audience: Members came of their own accord, out of a desire to participate in a communal conversation guided by Boal. They were usually TO practitioners or students of the technique who had a deep faith in the potential the process offered. Usually, the question that was asked collectively through the script, activated the community and engendered a spirited dialogue. Boal would tell participants that they were rehearsing for the revolution and their goal was to subvert a problematic reality.

What I found was, to me, unexpected. I admired Freire's and Boal's work and was moved by their humanism and revolutionary spirit. In my classes at the University of Utah, I communicated certain TO techniques to my in-service students to use in their classrooms to engage pupils more effectively. To my surprise, neither an experienced audience of TO practitioners nor a small group trying FT for the first time could do much through their performances and with their words. When faced with powerful opponents and the conduits of cruel and racist discourses, neither audience is adept in identifying the discourses in operation, much less effectively interrupting or countering those discourses.

Theoretical Constructs: The Subject of Discourse

Before I arrive at an in-depth explanation of my observations, I present and define the theoretical constructs that guide these observations. Through the following theoretical constructs, I detail how self and discourse are deeply interpenetrated and how, to a certain extent, the limits of language are the limits of the self's universe. I also present arguments to explain the power of discourse and how individuals accomplish their goals through words.

My foil is the Cartesian split between the subject and the universe. In *Flight to Objectivity,* Bordo (1987) traced the birth of modernist notions of the self to Descartes' insistence that any continuity and interpenetration between human beings and world, a perspective reflected in the arts and literature of medieval times, had to be abandoned as an infantile source of prejudice and distorted thinking. The anxiety of this separation was replaced in a defiant gesture of independence by the commitment to this separation as a necessary condition for objectivity, knowledge, and progress (Bordo, 1987). The mind must transcend the body as opposed matters: The former is capable of intellectual processes, and the latter, incapable. The objectivity that Descartes advocated promised to give us complete intellectual independence from our bodies and more: “The pain of separateness was thus compensated for by the peculiar advantages of separateness: the possibility of mastery and control over that [on which] one was dependent.” The groundwork was laid to advance “a cool, impersonal, distanced cognitive relation” to any unthinking matter. The universe and our bodies became “the well-lighted laboratory of modern science and philosophy” (99).

Within this modernist framework, identity is defined in opposition to a universe from which individuals constructed themselves as separate. Kirby (1996) offered cartography as a specific example of a science and technology that helped make the detached observer master of his or her realm. Cartography reinforces the relationship it creates between subject and environment (Kirby, 1996). Kirby sought to answer the question what sort of relationship does mapping establish between the cartographer and the space mapped (or the self and her realm)?

Kirby (1996) analyzed several examples of early-1600s European mapping. At the time, mapping was a way of inventorying lands that were being appropriated. For Europeans, mapping was part of mastering the vast unknown to which they were laying claim. Owning through mapping and mastering produced a particular worldview whereby the immeasurable vastness of a landscape and its immense topographic and biological diversity were homogenized and standardized. Maps erased the distinguishing traits of a locale, including its idiosyncrasies and anything that might connect it to the cultural and subjective. An otherwise unknown and unpredictable world was, thus, stabilized and rationalized through clearly delineated boundaries. These simplifications and reductive representations began to mediate the relationship between the cartographer and his world. Maps created an illusion of containment. And because a mapped environment was a tamed environment, it was diminished and simplified, and its dangers were excluded from the sterile, two-dimensional interpretation. Finally, an emotional or physical relationship was rendered impossible.

For early explorers and cartographers, understanding a place and orienting oneself inside it meant separating oneself from it. The opposite, a cartographer who found himself in an unruly space, incapable of removing or differentiating himself from his surroundings, was considered lost. If there were interpenetration between the observer and his domain, the cool, rational, and disembodied distance necessary for a cognitive relation was breached. These European cartographers went to great lengths to maintain their distance (Kirby, 1996). The separation they established was physical, emotional, and intellectual, so the world they possessed and greatly influenced could not substantially inform them in return. Cartography produced a world that is seen and understood through an imposed order where detachment and control go hand in hand. Much as Descartes equated continuity and interpenetration between humans and the universe as infantile, Europeans scoffed at the closeness of natives and the land, their interpenetration with it, and contrasted it to the detached sophistication of their mapping.

The self/space dyad of cartography is a fitting example of the Cartesian split between subject and universe. Within this worldview, the binary has an integral explanatory scheme in Western thought. In this scheme, there are two possible values in a relationship: Each produces and excludes its opposite. Usually, as Derrida saw it, “One term governs the other or has the upper hand” (as cited in Coe et al. 2004, 41). A hierarchy is constructed in which one term is always marked and the relationship between the polarities is, more often than not, unequal and even violent.

With the postmodern turn, theorists have undertaken a radical reappraisal of Cartesian rationality and certainty, as well as the assumptions behind the dualisms this worldview spun. Critical theory, for example, has challenged the construction of rationality as ethnocentric and has called attention to how rationality and certainty have been the means to erect social and political boundaries that institute particular and oppressive orders (Morrison, 1992). For example, among Europeans, the science of cartography was deemed superior to the puerile interpenetration of natives and lands and was part of a violent history of colonization and destruction.

In the language of Bakhtin—which is central to my argument—binary discourse acts as a centripetal force, pushing diversity out of the way and obscuring what lies between (or beyond) the two terms in question. Centripetal forces create simplified and controllable arguments; they effect a certitude—a unified language—which is easier to pit against its polar opposite (for example, virtue vs. terrorism). Between, or beyond, the binary lies heteroglossia—another Bakhtinian construct—which describes the multiplicity of discursive modes contained within a language and reflects a myriad of groups involved in the production and accentuation of discourse. These groups, according to Bakhtin, are culturally, ideologically, generationally, ethnically, politically, geographically, or otherwise different. These terms explain why the definition of *binary* negates heteroglossia and the contradictions, dissonance, and ambiguity that live within it.

In the course of my studies, I became interested in theoretical attempts to disrupt the binaries of Cartesianism that have framed the modern subject as separate from its milieu. The theoretical constructs that I bring to bear in my inquiry tend to explain human beings not as separate from the known (understood here as discourse), but as profoundly implicated in it. I am particularly intrigued by the explanations between or beyond the binary that attempt to theorize a self that is neither trapped by nor completely outside of discourse. The designation Subject/subject includes the notion that the self is the simultaneous originator of discourse and repeater of the language it writes. This tension is the crux of my inquiry and elicits multiple questions that may be summed up as follows: What is the Subject/subject's potential as originator of discourse? How does power become entangled with discourse? Finally, what is the relationship between the uninspired repeater and the ingenious originator of discourse?

Next, I describe the various theoretical constructs that are useful in understanding the Subject/subject of discourse and the power that he or she exercises through that discourse. I begin with the Sophists and a useful paradigm to paint a picture with the broadest strokes that provide the tools to explain the ambivalence that underlines the idea of a Subject/subject and the notion of repetition. I add a second layer of complexity to this somewhat general picture by using Foucault's ideas about power and its historical progression from a single center power held by a single figure, the sovereign, to power that circulates along a complex web of interactions, interests, practices, and calculations. These ideas help to explain how power becomes entangled with discourse. Finally, I use Bakhtin's theory of language to add more-intricate details. Bakhtin's constructs help to further imagine the complexity of this entanglement and the multiplicity of interests, practices, and calculations that Foucault insisted must be analyzed in order to understand the power in discourse.

Subject/subject

In examining historical constructions of the self, Strozier (2002) discussed the Sophist theory of subjectivity as a paradigm and, thus, framework within which to examine how subjectivity has been explained in Western thought. For Strozier, the origin story is a bastion of the Sophist worldview and a way of ordering the universe that is prevalent in traditional Western ways of explaining and justifying existence. In the origin story, more often than not, an a priori male Subject appears and culture and the subject, who is merely his emulator, follow. The latter represent the now absent Subject, but only as its weak imitation (Christianity is an example). Strozier stated that the Sophist story is one of reproduction. It is the story of a subject who brings a Subject to life because it needs a maker to justify its existence. In the Sophist ordering, the Subject/subject is one who, from the beginning, is situated both inside and outside of discourse, always exercising and undergoing power (Strozier, 2002). That is, the Subject/subject has the power to produce that which possesses the ultimate power: the power to create. However, the Subject/subject is also capable of relinquishing that power and becoming lost inside its own creation and thus subjected by it.

There are two reasons why the denomination of a Subject/subject is interesting and useful to my analysis. First, although this designation is, at first glance, a binary one, it also is full of ambiguity and vacillation. For example, I see oscillation in how power is exercised and manifested. The subject creates the Subject only to be his servant. Furthermore, the subject's production of the Subject is an extraordinarily creative move. However, written inside this brilliant design are both the subject's salvation and condemnation. In other words, the Subject/subject is capable of engendering a discourse that is simultaneously powerful and dangerous because, as Bakhtin wrote, we become unaware of how discourse could serve multiple and competing projects/masters all at once.

When Strozier examined Foucault's pronouncements using the Sophist model, he found that Foucault's (1977) ideas about the Sovereign fit the model. Next, I explain how Foucault's assessment of power and its evolution help to understand the power of the Subject/subject. Even though Foucault has been frequently criticized for not providing theoretical tools to explore the question of who can effect power and how, he did provide very complex and useful tools to explain what power is and how it becomes generalized. For Foucault, in early iterations, power was the power of the monarch deployed from a single center as the monarch allotted rights or constituted people as his subjects. However, as nations began to emerge and these subjects began to imagine themselves as a collectivity with a particular identity apart from that of the monarch, such power began to move in different ways. Much later, with the emergence of the nation state, political authorities began to exercise power by laying claim over universalist meanings and values like unity, democracy, freedom, and cultural heritage. Conversely, as collectivities identified and allied themselves with these meanings or values, they tapped into that power and deployed it in a new direction (Neil, 2004).

Power and the law were dispersed as they became mediated across multiple networks of relationships by a subject or subjects, who became the agents of the larger power. In an earlier text, Foucault (as cited in Morris and Patton, 1979) used an analogy to explain the diffusion of power: the *lettre de cachet,* or a letter signed by the king and stamped with his seal, which contained his arbitrary rules and commands. Once a subject got his hands on the letter and was able to tap into its powers, he could use those powers against another subject in a new set of circumstances.

The vehicle through which the collectivity taps into power is a counter-historic discourse. As Foucault explained in *Society Must Be Defended* (as cited by Neil, 2004) the discourse that emerged to reject the history that exalted the monarch constituted a reaction to his power. This discourse evidenced a collectivity that no longer identified with the sovereign and reflected a new recognition by the collectivity that the monarchy had been the source of its subjugation, in part, because these rulers were first conquerors who had taken ancient lands from them. As the collectivity began to develop its own ideas about the self and a shared sense of history, it developed a new language that did not include the monarch and his historical claims. This counter-historic discourse had the power to unmask—rather than glorify—the sovereign. With this new awareness, power could no longer emanate from a single center. Rather, it began moving along a web of new relationships that now contained multiple and competing interests, practices, and calculations.

The new historic-political discourse claimed the power to name a new historical truth apart from the monarch. The way events were recounted began to incorporate several concerns, considerations, and deliberations. Because different versions of the same event began to produce different outcomes and advance new interests, discourse turned into a tactic. Because it included the aspirations and ideals of a newly imagined collective, it began to define the politics of identity. As competing interests took shape, a struggle over the definitions of larger principles and ambitions emerged. Identity and power became entangled in charting the nascent nation's sense of self. (Neil, 2004).

As a juridical state grew, it laid claim to meanings and Universalist truths. As the state's ambitions and aspirations aligned with those of a particular collectivity, a nation-state was established. This nation-state became the juridical and philosophical arena where universalist ideals (e.g., unity, freedom, racial supremacy, and the like) were defined, circulated, and restrained. These meanings became weapons, both juridical and discursive ones, as they masqueraded as critical truths.

Bakhtin and Heteroglossia

I take issue with Foucault in that the tools he offered were for investigating power as it was circulated and redeployed. Foucault argued that there is no exteriority to power (1980) but left the subject trapped inside a knowledge–power network. For Foucault, there is no escaping the mechanisms through which power effects are created. His construct "regimes of truth," in the language of Bakhtin, was monoglossic—that is, a powerful, authoritative word that becomes the final word. It closes the possibility for dialog and, therefore, hybridization of the utterance. It also functions centripetally as part of a language that, while centering certain discursive possibilities, leaves out others potentially in operation.

I introduce Bakhtin at this point because he provided language that helps me to articulate how the subject/Subject of discourse can operate beyond the enclosure and foreclosure of a regime of truth. Bakhtin subscribed to the same notion, that discourse is central in understanding the constitution of subjects. However, his orientation was toward *heteroglossia* and how discourse is put together and kept alive by a diversity of voices that is colliding and in conflict, moving inside itself in a constant dialogic relationship. Whereas Foucault saw the power of knowledge to subjugate, Bakhtin saw movement, interaction, and intense competition over meaning. Bakhtin's notion of dialogism explains how, when a word becomes dialogized and we become aware that there are competing meanings, that word is relativized and opened for investigation.

Next, I explain Bakhtin's constructs in greater depth, particularly those from his essay "Discourse in the Novel." I discuss how they might be useful as I proceed. As a whole, they form a grid with which to explain the self who shapes the language that shapes the reality which in turn shapes him or her. Bakhtin provided multiple tools to theorize about a Subject/subject. In his writings about the dialogical becoming of an individual (Warshauer, Freedman and Ball, 2004), he spoke of the movement between authoritative and every day, or internally persuasive, discourses. Authoritative discourse, according to Bakhtin, comes from lofty spheres, or as he put it, authoritative discourse is *the word of the father*. There is no arguing with it because it comes already stamped with authority and representing the official doctrine (scientific or religious truths, for example). Internally persuasive discourse, on the other hand, comes from hybridization, or a diversity and multiplicity of social discourses. Internally persuasive discourse takes the authoritative word and, by adding new accents and modifications, stands in opposition to the normative meanings of the authoritative discourse. Internally persuasive discourse uses the power that language can exercise, and thus, it remains in a dialogic relationship with authoritative discourse, responding to it in a struggle for meaning where uncertainty might constitute a space for new meanings to emerge (Bakhtin, 1981).

Using the ideas of heteroglossia and dialogism, Bakhtin thought that the most intense and productive life of culture takes place where centripetal (unifying) and centrifugal (diversifying) forces collide, not in those areas where meanings are limited by their own specificity (McLemee, 1997). For the purpose of this research, Bakhtin's work helps me to probe the ideological differences, clashes, and contradictions that make up a discourse. Bakhtin's work could be interpreted as a departure from the rigid discourse of Foucault, and his theoretical constructs might help in mapping a multiplicity of linguistic resources available to the Subject/subject for recreating meaning beyond the limits of a regime of truth. For example, in his notion of heteroglossia, Bakhtin described discourse as a place of inherent diverse and multicultural creativity where the unofficial forms of a language *also* live. The language of a particular group or geography, Bakhtin said, is saturated with conflict and struggles of the ideologies past and present that shaped and continue shaping it. In enumerating everything that inhabits within that discourse, he included street dialects, the jargon of professions and age groups, the distinctive speech of a locale, constructs of a particular ideology, words of passing fads, and on and on. Bakhtin opened the field of vision beyond centripetal discourses or regimes of truth to include the power inside heteroglossia, a place where the authority of discourse is constantly contested and undermined.

Bakhtin argued that the geography of discourse is vast and complex. He began to articulate its complexity with a metaphor from the physics world: Forces within the struggle inside discourse are the centripetal forces, or forces of regulation, simplification, and discipline. The unifying tendencies of centripetal forces negate diversity and imprison a speaker within the values, ideas, and goals of a particular ideology. Foucault seemed to have put too much emphasis on these regimes of truth. Colliding with the centripetal forces are centrifugal ones, which work in the opposite direction: toward diversification and stratifying language with the words and intentions of a multiplicity of points of view in constant dialogue with the authoritative word. Centrifugal forces fight against dogmatism, stagnation, and challenge the power of fixity by trying to shift them. In heteroglossia, forces of stratification widen and deepen a complex discursive landscape and have the potential to stir it in ways that are difficult to measure.

Finally, the notions of *hybridization* and *polyglossia* point to the fusion of a multiplicity of consciousness, social languages, and other epochs within a single utterance. Interactions between two thoroughly divergent languages create a critical interanimation, or interillumination. For example, for Bakhtin, only polyglossia (or the interaction between two or more different languages) could, “fully free consciousness from the tyranny of its own language” (1981, 61). Through polyglossia, one could see one’s own universe through the eyes of another’s consciousness. In writing about the author and the novel, Bakhtin created a slightly different, more nuanced idea. Borrowing the notion of polyphony from music, he explained how an author was capable of constructing an utterance that contained differing viewpoints, worldviews, and characters including those that were ideologically different from his own. The contradiction and conflict built into these polyphonic utterances could be such that they were not completely understood by the author. This construct serves to point to the incongruity and antagonism that may be contained in a single utterance.

The idea that the Subject/subject both shapes and is shaped by language is not new. However, Bakhtin's constructs help to explore how this tensile relationship occurs through dialogic dynamics in a social context that contains a multitude of voices vying for hegemony. Even though I am not searching for any durable truths, I find Bakhtin's definition of truth interesting because it points at a place beyond the binary and inside a messy discourse. "Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person; it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction" (Bakhtin, 1984, 110).

The Uncertain Power of the Subject/subject of Discourse and the Power of the Performative

Butler (1999) illustrated how universalist truths are achieved in collectivity through discourse and performance. Gender is a process continually performed within its entrenched binary (Butler, 1999). When individuals perform gender, they emulate prior utterances that come to them in the form of rituals and cultural norms. By repeating utterances, individuals produce and reproduce gender and consolidate the laws that govern it. Through their performances, individuals participate in long-standing practices that have been given legitimacy by the very repetition that is our performance. Repetition of cultural norms by a collectivity, Butler argued, creates continuity and lends the illusion of an internal core to gender. This illusion has engendered enduring institutions like marriage and the apparatus of gender.

Gender, according to Butler (1999), is not something one is born with; it does not just happen. Rather, it is continually done. This doing encompasses the activities that individuals perform daily at multiple levels: particular discursive enunciations, political/religious pronouncements, and complex rituals such as those of a "legitimate" marriage. When Butler spoke of gender as something that does not happen but is done, she spoke of performativity. Repeated statements, rituals, gestures, and enactments produce the illusion of a coherent internal core or substance. However, the word *performance* is used to emphasize that there is no essence, no interior, underneath the fabrication that is gender. Yet, part of the power of this fabrication rests in the collectivity's tacit agreement to repeat, sustain, and thus institutionalize gender as a cultural reality.

If convention is given legitimacy through repetition (or a collectivity's pushing for unification), possibilities open as, Butler argued, individuals misappropriate a performative or fail to repeat it. In *Excitable Speech* (1997), Butler used the example of Rosa Parks as she sat in the front of a segregated bus to demonstrate the breaking of a tacit agreement in a her refusal to repeat the performance as it was previously done. Thus, authoritative and internally persuasive discourse came in conflict. Parks chose a new way of being, and her performance, as an utterance, broke with prior context. In that severing, it gained a different kind of force (Butler, 1997). Butler also used Bourdieu's analysis of the liturgical ritual as a foil. Bourdieu argued that the liturgical ritual—in fact, any ritual—is rendered false if there are any alterations to its formula. Butler countered that it is *precisely* in the alteration of the formula where possibilities arise. A false, or wrong, invocation of the ritual, according to Butler, disrupts or interrupts its current iteration, thus revealing what could be a future form of that ritual. In the language of Bakhtin, within heteroglossia the forces of diversification collide against a static discourse. In the same way, Parks altered one of the accustomed formulas and daily rituals of desegregation.

She halted a particular repetition to introduce a different enactment—one that eventually gained as an accepted ritual and endures in its collective repetition. This example illustrates the certain kind of power that is deployed through a singular performance. I am not arguing that Rosa Parks' enactment changed segregation once and for all. However, the collective agreement that endures today is produced and reproduced daily as we all singularly perform desegregation in buses, restrooms and other public spaces. When Rosa Parks sat in the front of the bus, she had no prior right to do so given the segregationist conventions of the south at the time. And yet, in laying claim to the right for which she had no *prior* authorization, she endowed a certain authority on the act, and began the insurrectionary process of overthrowing those established codes of legitimacy. (Butler, 1997)

By interrupting an old, often-repeated performance and giving it a new kind of force Rosa Parks altered the formula of a particular ritual and showed what it could and would become. She broke the ritual's continuity and revealed that the authoritative word was neither sacred nor written in stone. Rather, segregation and racism are a doing, and this doing and its repetition lend them legitimacy. Echoing Derrida, Butler wrote, "The failure of the performative is the condition of its possibility" (Butler, 1997, 147). As a performative that is supposed to function as a credible reproduction of authority is interrupted it fails—as was the case of the segregationists' conventions of the Rosa Parks example. In its new iteration, the performative revealed that it was only a repetition and that repetition alone was its force. Once continuity was broken, a space opened where possibilities emerged (Butler, 1999).

When Butler spoke of the effects of discourse on bodies and the illusion of coherence created by repetition, she echoed Foucault. The subject is, in many ways, spoken, and his or her body is stamped and violently shaped by discourse—such is the case with the effects of discourses like compulsory heterosexuality, the science that supports it, or religious pronouncements declaring that homosexuality is an abomination. All have a force that powerfully acts upon bodies, delimiting the range of performativity. In the Parks example, her body breaks with convention and the centripetal force of the law by enacting a different style on her flesh. This new performance layered the discourse of race anew. Rather than being spoken by discourse Rosa Parks acted on discourse, bestowing it with a new kind of power. She responded to a previous utterance and imbued it with her own intentions and desires, dialogizing and layering it. An enduring utterance considered to be authoritative was deprivileged by a competing meaning that was powerfully introduced.

Austin's Speech Act Theory (1975) provided some constructs that help in extending the argument about the ways in which we achieve something by means of performance and discourse. Austin used the terms *acts* and *utterances* as actions that can do something with words. There are several kinds of speech acts: *locutionary,* or the act of saying and *illocutionary*, or the utterance that, as it is spoken, puts pressure in the relationship within which it was engendered. For example, making a request, pleading, inviting, ordering, promising, warning, and affirming go beyond words to elicit a reaction. Finally, a speech act could be *perlocutionary*; that is, it could bring about a particular effect or accomplish something with words. Beyond the pressure of requesting, warning, or ordering, perlocutionary language produces a clearly perceivable outcome: and leaves distinguishable traces on the body. For example, imposing a life sentence on a criminal has clear implications on not only where that body is to dwell, but also on how its daily functions are managed. Other instances are the appointing of an individual to a particular position or, more dramatically, the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. A classic example given by Austin (1975) is that of the marital proscenium as a real and symbolic space in front of an altar or under a ceremonial trellis where language in the form of rituals accomplishes much. The speech acts of "I do" and "You are now pronounced husband and wife" not only make the relationship official, they demand specific performances from the two who exchange the vows and the other participants who, with their expectations of the couple, help reproduce and sustain the legitimacy of the institution of marriage and the legal system that sanctions it. Thereafter, the embodied relationships between the newlyweds—the styles of their flesh—and their relationship to the community and law are profoundly changed through the acceptance of "I do." Butler (1997) similarly described the use of the performative to both reestablish the contexts of domination and to challenge and renegotiate the legacies of usage that support particular relations of power.

Although segregationist laws as speech acts controlled and managed the day-to-day of a particular group of people, in her performance and the subsequent bus boycott, Parks and the many who participated not only halted a performance that had, for a long time, inscribed black bodies in a dramatic way, they also challenged the context in which those performances unfolded. By enacting a new kind of performance, they reconstituted themselves as entitled and opened the way for a new context where the segregation of black bodies might no longer be possible. In this analysis, I do not wish to imply that the Rosa Parks incident alone dismantled desegregation. Rather, I aim at illustrating how language and performances can be instruments through which a certain kind of individual power can be exercised; a power that needs to be not only examined but calibrated.

Speech Acts and Performance of Race

In this section, I describe how Butler's argument about gender may be extrapolated to analyze race as a construction that is given force in the repetition of rituals, discourses, and so on. Some of the most enthralling arguments I encountered during my training at ECS were aimed at delinking biology and race. Hall (1997) stated that nothing in nature determines in any sense the authenticity, effectiveness, or value of any cultural practice. Hall's idea was most intriguing given my experience of race as a given, which placed enormous and relentless pressure on bodies and relationships, and of the way institutions functioned and interacted with racialized peoples. Similarly, understanding that physical variations—like skin color, the angles of one's face, and the texture of one's hair—have absolutely no meaning other than the ones that have been culturally assigned gave me pause because, as I see it, by and large, the construct of race has a stranglehold on the collective imagination. I experienced the relativization and hybridization of a discourse that, up to that point, had been, for me, unquestionable.

The American Anthropological Association's (1998) statement on race argued that the meanings that eventually evolved into "race" were assigned to justify emerging power relations. In the beginning, the construct of race "subsumed a growing ideology of inequality devised to rationalize European attitudes and treatment of conquered and enslaved peoples." As meanings were ascribed, whiteness and blackness were defined as two opposing values in a binary, and in Butler's language, through sustained corporeal signs and other discursive means, whiteness and blackness are produced as mutually exclusive—superior/inferior, rational/irrational, beautiful/repulsive, and free/enslaved. Thus, racial differentiation was the rationale for allocating or denying duties, rights, and liberties so that whites would end up free, legally entitled, and powerful vis-à-vis enslaved and brutalized blacks. As the legal framework was laid out—in the form of the Slave Codes in the Americas, for example—white skin and the performance of whiteness became a guarantee of economic and political privileges and protections (Harris, 1993). On the other hand, an obligatory performance of blackness left one outside the protection of the law and subjected to the horrors of slavery.

The Slave codes, and the law in general, may be considered perlocutionary speech acts of the highest order. As explained earlier, perlocutionary speech acts go beyond the push of an invitation or an order, because the force generated by perlocutionary utterances exerts such pressure on the bodies they affect that they quickly produce clearly perceivable effects. (Recall the earlier example of sentencing an individual to prison and the immediate effects the utterance of the sentence has on the body and the behavior of the convicted.) Laws, according to Butler's analysis, are given legitimacy partly through repetition. In the case of the Slave Codes, the body's iteration of the imposed regulations—Butler's "styles of the flesh"—helped institutionalize the law and over time, through repeated enactments, statements, and rituals, produced the illusion of a coherent substance: bodies that recognizably became *slaves.* This coherent substance, Butler warned, is nothing other than a daily doing. Following this logic, the materiality of slavery was, in part, the outward manifestation—or the daily performance—of the laws and beliefs that were brutally and arbitrarily imposed and slowly taking hold: frequent public floggings that scarred, forced labor, shackling with metal collars, and above all, the denial of bodily autonomy and economic and political self-determination (Davis, 2000). Bodies were simultaneously controlled and produced as enslaved.

The language of one of the Virginia Slave Codes of December 1662 reads, “Be it therefore *enacted* and declared by this present Grand assembly, that all children born in this country shall be held bond or free only according to the condition of the mother” (italics added for emphasis). Etymologically, the word *act* comes from the Latin root *agree,* which means to do or to perform. The new law, thus, arbitrarily demanded—based on a previous condition and, in a great number of cases, based on the fallacy of race and its hierarchy—collective agreement to do/perform the cruel and dehumanizing practices that produced and sustained the institution of slavery and of enslaved bodies.

Clearly, these doings, enactments, and performances did not occur in a vacuum. They were part of an economy of slavery, a formidable force to turn race into an inflated centripetal and unifying discourse. Race as a construct and as a performance took hold, and the discourse of slavery served as the foundation of the European colonial economies in the Americas from the sixteenth century onward. Slavery remained at the center of the U.S. economic and political life for a long time after that. Plantation-grown cotton, produced by unpaid slave labor, was a major component of the economy and would allow the emergent nation to position itself as a global economic leader. At the local level, slaves were a source of tax revenue for state governments, and politically, the three-fifths compromise allowed states to count their slaves in the calculation of a state’s representation in the U.S. Congress (Stuckey, 1987). The rituals of slavery and the daily bodily iterations of the imposed regulations moved an enormous economy along and helped position the nation at a global level. Similarly, daily doing and iterations, or the repetition of cruelty and inequity, continue to place an enormous value on whiteness. This arrangement has generated incalculable wealth and benefits for generations of whites to come and has denied blacks the economic benefits of two hundred years of back-breaking labor (Davis, 2000).

Race and Polyphony

As an utterance, race was, of course, dialogized (Bakhtin, 1981)—that is, written collectively, with multiple accents and meanings emanating from a myriad of groups, ideologies, and geographies. For example, scientists worked diligently to promote a valid basis for race by collecting data and manipulating it until the results mirrored the prejudices already in place (Gould, 1981). Or, as Smedley (2007) stated, "The scientists themselves undertook efforts to document the existence of the differences that the European cultural worldview demanded and had already created." (27). Different accents have come from alternative stories of resistance, courage, and grace. We know, for example, of the tenacity and strength of those who undertook their journey north toward freedom, of the enormous relevance and influence of African music and art. We have read accounts of the immeasurable resilience of people who held on despite the suffering they endured (Stuckey, 1995). These layers humanized a population counterpoising positive discourse to the denigration reflected in every institution. However, I argue that these accounts—the horrifying and the uplifting—moved in a centripetal direction and tended towards unification, all the while reconstituting the black/white binary. They were part of the same discourse that racialized and dehumanized one group of people while at the same time sustaining whiteness. Each opposing value produced the other in an unequal and problematic relationship. Generally, resistance stories should complicate and oppose the dominant narrative. These might have brought a different accent to race and might have served a different purpose; yet, all helped in unifying and strengthening the notion of race.

Inside the story of race, a diversity of voices juxtaposes vast individual and ideological differences, varying economic groups, and voices of a myriad of experiences that span a dark past of slavery and segregation, as well as hopes for a freer future. This would seem to be a classic illustration of heteroglossia in discourse. However, Bakhtin used a more nuanced construct to explain the ambiguity and contradiction that makes an utterance a double-edged sword. The term *polyphony* refers to the collective quality of an utterance. However, it also points to another trait: An utterance that I consider mine will embody someone else's utterance even though it is mine (Park-Fuller, 1986), whether I am aware of it or not. Young (2001) stated that Bakhtin borrowed the term *polyphony* from music, where it describes music that contains multiple melodies that are harmonically connected but maintain their linear uniqueness. "The melodies are slightly different but explore a complementary theme" (Lore, 2001, 5).

The notion of polyphony suggests that a collectivity—sometimes from ideologically opposed sides of the spectrum—can speak simultaneously in the same utterance. Moreover, because of its polyphonic nature, an utterance can serve two masters and their antithetical projects at the same time. This predicament makes it so that an individual can exercise agency and undermine his or her own project all at the same time. From its inception, the powerful utterance of race has been saturated with inequality. Yet, race is also the ideology on which a group of people—out of necessity—built solidarity, self-respect, collective pride, and their freedom.

I argue, using the AAA's statement on race, that race as a construct has been used to give power and legitimacy to an unequal and cruel power structure that society has not yet finished dismantling. The same fabrication gave focus and strength to the people who came together in the Civil Rights Movement. The utterance of race contains vast ideological differences and echoes of different times and multiple and conflicting intentions. It contains elements uttered under a particular set of circumstances that, when taken up in a new context, have produced unexpected and deeply contradictory meanings and intense confrontation. Because, as Bakhtin argued, language is never free from the intentions of others, even though race has been used to uplift and liberate, it has always been weighed down by its powerful and negative associations.

The implication is that when in deploying a polyphonic discourse, individuals invoke both its auspicious and detrimental voices. Meanings around race have been accentuated and reaccentuated to accommodate multiple worldviews and to justify vastly differing projects. For example, Churchill (1998) explained how the category "Indian"—similar to the category of "black"—was produced in part to serve whites' economic interests. Up until the time of contact, indigenous peoples had no notion of heredity (Churchill, 1998). The discourse of Indianness was imposed from the outside, after contact. In one instance, with the passage of the 1887 General Allotment Act, Indian identity was reconfigured, and blood quantum requirements were changed to "not less than one-half degree of blood" (9) so that the availability of properties for distribution among European settlers could be increased. According to Churchill, large groups of people with legitimate claims to the land were removed from federally recognized lists, and in this way, "Some 100 million of the approximate 150 million acres of land still retained by indigenous nations for their own exclusive use and occupancy at the outset 'passed' to whites in 1934" (8).

As a polyphonic utterance, race as blood quanta and requirements for authenticity served whites' economic interests. Thus, race came to be embraced—and eventually celebrated (Daniel, 2001)—by various indigenous groups. As Indian lands were absorbed into the U.S. territorial mass, and benefits to Indians that had been granted by treaty were increasingly terminated, blood quantum and other requirements were changed once again. The government could increasingly rely on Indians themselves to enforce shifting racial stipulations.

Racial categories—as an example of a centripetal unifying discourse—have become, as Daniel (2001) argued, so well-crafted that they have come to be seen as "an objective fact of experience rather than socially constructed ideas" (20). For example, the passing of the Act for the Protection of American Indian Arts and Crafts prohibited anyone not federally recognized as a member of a tribe to sell Indian arts or crafts under penalty of fines, imprisonment or both (Act for the Protection of American Indian Arts and Crafts, 1996). The law gave license to a self-appointed "purity police" to bestow authenticity to both people and artifacts. Historically, regardless of who the implementer might have been, the pertinent definitions and requirements have been the domain of the federal government, controlled by whites. Polyphony, in this case, sounds ideas of reverence and respect, with less wholesome fabrications in the same utterance.

An important thread in my analysis that runs across the length of the entire argument is that the ordering and the hierarchies imposed by the construct of difference are, in the end, more detrimental than not. These hierarchies seem to be prerequisite in erecting unequal power structures. Alternative ways of understanding ourselves are hard to come by. Churchill recounted how, by the 1830s, between one-third and one-half of Indians had already intermixed with both white and black groups. (As I argue, these groups were already hybridized). It followed, Churchill argued, that in the many conflicts that raged in the struggles between groups to maintain sovereignty, prevent the loss of lands, and preserve cherished practices, blood quanta did not play a role in securing allegiances. There were “full-bloods” among the accommodationists who undercut some tribes’ abilities to resist enemy forces by collaborating and advocating negotiations with the invading forces. On the other hand, “half-breeds” and even non-Indians exercised political leadership and demonstrated their deep commitment in their courage and discipline when the time came to galvanize military resistance against the enemy (Churchill, 1998). The story that took hold, however, distilled complex events and conflicted beings to flat, incomplete, two-dimensional clashes between Indians and non-Indians.

Winnant (1998) pointed at how the central notion of race has remained the same even though experiences of race and racism have changed significantly over time. Concepts of racism developed in the early post-Civil Rights Era, said Winnant, were so forceful that they were blinding and took hold of the collective imagination. Although racism could no longer explain what was happening when it came to racial relations, these inflated discourses pushed a number of ideas out of view. For instance, institutionalized racism was declared so ubiquitous and entrenched, explained Winnant, that Americans were unable to recognize any accomplishments or progress made. Additionally, rigid notions of race, in general, allowed little recognition of phenomena like racial hybridity and cultural amalgamation, which are a large part of the day-to-day life of millions who are both white and black or occupy other racially ambiguous positions. More insidiously, argued Winnant, “The ‘inflation’ of the concept of racism translated into a deep pessimism that might have potentially served as a ‘self-fulfilling prophecy.’” (41).

Although the discourse of discrete racial categories has remained sharply demarcated and static, racial hybridity and cultural amalgamation have always represented another way to tell the story. However, society has not developed interesting ways of speaking about them. The black–white binary has pushed aside claims of the most accepted theories about the origin of modern humans: that we all come from Africa, for example, or that as humans migrated out of the continent, an intricate genetic and cultural mixing took place (Daniel, 2001). The obscuring of these ancestral ties, argued Daniel, has been central to the white supremacist project, which relies on the discourse and performance of racial purity. The idea of mutually exclusive racial categories has supported and served the most chauvinistic and xenophobic projects, as well as the cruelty and injustices these projects seek to justify. However, the argument of racial purity comes crashing down once these points of view are brought to bear. Daniel noted that if individuals come to understand one another guided by the premise that there is no such a thing as distinct races, and that human populations have never been separate and pure, society could begin to chip away at the binary and the dichotomizing and hierarchical valuation of black and white.

Multiracial identities are not a new phenomenon. Modern identities are multilayered given the global circulation of peoples and goods. Daniel argued that even though there has been a lot of historical denial surrounding miscegenation, 75% to 90% of African Americans in the United States could claim a multiracial identity. However, many don't, and the reasons are many and very complex. Daniel posited that Jefferson and the children that he fathered with Sally Hemings were examples of the mixing that was "part and parcel of the historical and sociological development of the U.S." (114). The children who went on to live as white also evidence another unaccounted phenomenon: the unnamed percentage of whites who could claim African as part of their ancestral make-up.

As the multiracial identifier inevitably enters the discourse of race, there is a strong push back toward the binary. As Winnant explained, signifying upon race immediately brings a shift in social and structural terms because racial signification and racial structuration are "ineluctably linked." A multiracial identifier shifts political orientations and institutional arrangements, as well as economic and social benefits. With good reason, some see it as a serious threat to the African American community and the important political gains it has made (Christian, 2000). The dangers of including "multiracial" in the official racial classification would have consequences for the enforcement of legislation coming out of the Civil Rights Era. It would change how patterns of discrimination are tracked and might derail the pursuit of economic equity for groups that have used a strong black identity as the basis for mobilization (Christian, 2000). Yet, there is a profound irony that one important political victory of the Civil Rights Movement was the dismantling of desegregation and subsequent repealing of antimiscegenation laws. Part of the momentous achievement meant that from then on, races could freely mix.

The particular reaccentuation of race that points at hybridity and racial ambiguity was inevitable. The discourse of race, as any other discourse, must change as part of the process of how discourses are lived. New multiracial identities layer the discourse and open it by means of heteroglossia. As Daniel (2001) described, the young perform particular iterations of a multiracial identity that tend to be integrative and pluralistic without exhibiting any white guilt or black self-hatred. These identities use multiple communities as reference groups, and elements of all groups are blended without displaying any of the psychosocial pathology of colorism. New utterances of race look inside multiple communities of reference as they are remade. This is precisely the definition of heteroglossia: In the emergent moment, the exploration of a multiracial identifier seems to have a centrifugal tendency away from the unifying discourses required by the binary.

Shih and Sanchez (2009) reviewed some of the studies of multiracial groups. Their representation of multiracial identities is similar to Daniel's idea of race as adaptive and always in motion. It also is a dialogical response to the binary that embodies an integration of the polarities. This integration seeks to influence future discourses and performances of race while expanding the definitions that preceded it. Finally, Shih and Sanchez argued, because multiracial performances of race are not encumbered by rigid definitions of race, as a group, those who deploy the new identifier might not buy into stereotypical definitions and, therefore, tend to show less racial bias toward their and other groups.

Within these mobile subjects lies the possibility of a performance of race that breaks with previous context, defies the expectations of our past collective agreements, embraces the notion of multiple ancestral currents, and enacts new styles of the flesh that reflect no racial bias and a complexity reminiscing of the mobility and unpredictability that have always been part of traveling and intersecting cultures (Clifford, 1997). Geographical displacements and the continuous circulation of people cause cultural goods, and cultural practices to blend, mutate, or fade away. Today, as always, individuals cling to their circumscribed identities and defend their group memberships even to their deaths. The discourse or race that aligns one's culture (in terms of practices, ideologies, and cognitive maps) with one's genealogy has been and continues to be a powerful narrative with much currency. Precisely within this climate, I experience a sense of urgency to complicate and reaccentuate this powerful discourse. The context of racial relations has changed, and with this movement, meanings must be reaccentuated, or at least challenged.

Ford (2004) offered a scalding critique of the consolidating discourse of race. (The term he uses is *hegemonic*.) He accomplished this by way of several powerful examples. First, Ford recalled Rene Rogers, a flight attendant who sued American Airlines over her right to wear her hair in cornrows, arguing that the hairstyle was a historical marker of the essence of a black identity. Ford's objective in using this example was to highlight the dangers of what he called "racial cultures," that is, the idea that races come bundled in a package of racial/cultural traits. Ford stated that invoking the essence of blackness is both a productive and hegemonic move and an exercise in power that produces—rather than characterizes—the identity it purports to name while simultaneously imposing that designation on the larger group. In the language of Bakhtin, Rogers helped move a powerful discourse in its centripetal direction. By declaring that cornrows were the cultural essence not of those who chose to wear them, but of all black women, Rogers issued a hegemonic call. Some black women might not want to wear cornrows and might not see them as part of their identity, said Ford. Tying certain traits to particular racial groups comes with dangers (Ford, 2004). A designation of what a black identity is controls and put limits on the ways in which race may be performed; directs how individuals should identify themselves; and prohibits access to traits, such as a specific hairstyle, to individuals from other groups. Ford presented the example of white women who wear cornrows and are deemed as inauthentic cultural trespassers.

This example of the cultural trespassers is not the only one Ford used to make his point that racial categories themselves produce race and racial segregation. The second example involves a telemarketing corporation that makes get-out-the-vote calls for political candidates. The company segregates white and black callers so black callers call black voters and vice versa. These practices, according to Ford, not only participate in the production of racial cultures, they also call on individuals to assimilate and conform to canonical identity categories that dictate who they should be, how they should act, and where their alliances should be directed. Other practices Ford cited are ethnically targeted marketing, identity-oriented TV, and segregated student organizations.

Racial categories act with a centripetal force. As Bakhtin (1981) explained, centripetal forces attempt to eliminate diversity to present a unified discourse. These canonical categories end up being used to police loyalty, authenticity, and the right to group membership. The power of discourse makes lasting marks on bodies, demanding from them the repetition of particular patterns of behavior that have become recognizable as rigid identities. Butler (1999) proposed that bodies could be the occasion for a myriad of possible identities and "the occasion of a number of different genders" (147). In using the story of Herculine—the hermaphrodite whose sexuality was the focus of Foucault's interest—Butler posed that Herculine's sexuality was a series of free-floating, incongruous, gendered features in a body without a category to order them. Like Ford, Butler argued that discourses and the embodiment of the dictates of those discourses impose an oppressive order to what are otherwise incongruous and free-floating identity traits. Gendered and racialized bodies have never been an expression of the unpredictability of the unfolding of history. Rather, they have been produced and constituted as *different* through prohibition. As we engage the categories, we become the performance and the prohibition.

In this chapter I offer a critical postmodern and anti-Cartesian approach to meaning making that highlights the power of discourse and the performative nature of identity production. I argue that we are not separate from a universe that we can come to understand and control. In fact, I believe there is no universe out there but the one we construct daily through language. Unlike cartographers we can't separate ourselves from what is constantly projected on and performed by our bodies. We are so much part of what we construct that we get easily lost in it. To explain the power in discourse I use the specific example of the *universalist truths* used to govern and control a nation's identity and aspirations. Defining religious principles, delineating the contours of citizenship or adopting the nation's official language are constructs designed to control, police and exclude. They are what Foucault called regimes of truth.

To expand on how I see discourse as powerful I layer Foucault's regimes of truth by adding Bakhtin's notion of monoglossia or the idea that an object and its meaning are one and the same. For example, regimes of truth—as Foucault used them—operate like a monoglossic utterance. That is, the idea forecloses meaning leaving no room for other discursive possibilities. Foucault has been criticized for having left the subject trapped inside the power knowledge network. However, in using heteroglossia, the opposite of monoglossia, Bakhtin signaled a layered, polysemic and open field of understanding where meanings are always colliding and eventually re-created beyond final words or hard truths. In other words, discourse is powerful but it is also dynamic and changing; All meanings are and should be open to interrogation including Foucault's regimes of truth.

This is how I begin to frame my critique of race as a construct. The rigid categories that we use to define race push other things out of sight. I argue that race, as a meaning, is heteroglossic. That is, since its inception the construct has been layered with powerful negative and positive connotations. Bakhtin borrows the metaphor of polyphonic music to argue that heteroglossic meanings are forged collectively thus, harmonious and discordant melodies live together in one piece of music. To use a different metaphor, the same utterance can be put to the service of different masters at once. In the case of race, the meaning emerged to justify an absurd hierarchy of human valuation and to establish of a profoundly unequal society. That same meaning was later embraced by those brutalized and enslaved in the name of the hierarchy to building coalitions, solidarity, self-respect and pride. Eventually the construct fueled the fight for freedom and imprisoned human possibility inside ideas such as purity and authenticity.

We have not theorized fully the experience of racial amalgamation, racial adaptability, racial mobility or the infinite possibilities for alternative performances of race beyond the binary black and white. Furthermore, heteroglossic discourses and performances suggest that in order to approach meaning in its complexity one should consider the many cultural collisions and coalitions, as well as ambiguities and contradiction that are the result of constant amalgamation as people move across land masses, time periods, languages and so on. While I use Foucault to understand how power moves inside discourse, Bakhtin's constructs of monoglossia/heteroglossia and the centripetal or unifying and centrifugal or diversifying forces of discourse help me understand the multiplicity reflected in the layering of the discourse. They also move me to ask whether power is refracted as it moves across the layers.

Finally, Butler's definition of performativity helps me explain how these powerful discourses and particularly the ones that relate to identity are deployed onto the surfaces of our bodies. That is, there is no interiority to who we are. We are ascribed or we assume the cultural traits and rituals associated with categories of identity. We lend them legitimacy thorough our daily repetition. The illusion of interiority comes in the repetition of meanings through their embodiment in the form of rituals for example. I illustrate this point with the example of Rosa Parks. The power of individual performances that as taken up by the collectivity, gain legitimacy over time in our collective and tacit agreement to perpetuate segregation and de-segregation.

CHAPTER 3

WHAT CAN DISCOURSE ACCOMPLISH? THE FORUM ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

The first forum I decided to examine was held at the PTO Conference in Omaha, NE on April 22, 2004. This forum was particularly interesting to me because it addressed diversity, an issue that I had studied in depth during my training in ECS due to my interest in how people construct identities using the discourse of difference. As I discussed in Chapter 1, because I had previously known race to be a biological phenomenon, learning that anthropology had debunked this assumption was one of the greatest revelations that I had experienced during my education. This forum was also unique in that it was directed by Augusto Boal, the creator of the form. The participants were a number of his better known disciples, including Doug Patterson the man who began the PTO international conferences. One purpose of these conferences has been to promote the work of Boal and Paulo Freire in the U.S.

I look at this forum as a case study because it provides an opportunity to learn something important about the issue of diversity. The forum serves as instructional theatre (Denzin, 2003 citing Turner, 2005) and the performative as a pedagogical site (Denzin). That is, FT can be a space of critical inquiry where the script, the characters, and their relationships expose the discourses in operation on the stage and on that same place open them up for examination. The script as the source of information is made more complex because it is a composite and layered account of how multiple educators across the country have experienced and interpreted the difficult dynamics of the multicultural classroom. In probing this script I have sought to gain a better understanding of the sort of discourses that emerge in multiple classrooms (Stake) and the way in which power is moved through them. Testing the metaphor of performativity and repetition against those scripts not only could add to the existing understanding of the multicultural classroom. It can be an inquiry into whether the scripts that emerge can be rewritten; the performances of actors recast and the dynamics of power renegotiated.

The approximately thirty registrants who attended this two-day FT workshop were a diverse group that included three professors from a university in Edinburgh, a Pakistani student, a Japanese student, two therapists from Argentina, and a large number of university professors and students. We agreed early on that we would prepare a play to be *forumed* as the opening piece at the actual conference. After leading a morning of exercises and multiple games, Boal asked us to come up with ideas to be explored. We came up with issues on both a national and global scale, including the war in Iraq, gay marriage and equality, education as a tool of oppression, the dangers of patriotism, the effects of global trading, police brutality against African Americans, and anti-immigrant fervor in wealthy nations in the Western hemisphere. After we agreed that these problems were too broad to serve as the foundations of a forum piece, Boal reminded us that FT is a "learning together" process that begins when one individual acknowledges, "I have this problem and I don't know how to solve it." He then directed us to think of a specific moment when we were faced with a problem that we did not know how to confront and felt utterly defeated.

After we discussed the issues as a larger group, we joined one of four groups according to our interest in one of four issues—the war in Iraq, gay marriage, education as a force of oppression, and white resistance to multicultural education—so that each group could individually build a story around its ideas. From this group work emerged four stories. The first story concerned the painful place in which an antiwar activist found herself when she discovered that her child wanted to enlist in the National Guard (in April 2004 her child had already been sent to Iraq). The second story concerned the blatant discrimination that a gay couple faced from a group of tenants when applying for housing in their community. The third story concerned the conflict that a teacher felt when trying to incorporate her students' interests into the curriculum while facing pressure from the administration to continue to follow an established curriculum. The fourth story concerned the resistance that a drama teacher faced from a student who, when the teacher expressed the desire to incorporate the work of a Japanese playwright in Japanese, demanded that the class be conducted in English and challenged the relevance of the play for the class. I joined the group preparing the antiwar story. My group spent a large part of the day constructing the play, and then convened the following day to rehearse.

At the first day of the conference, more than one hundred attendees gathered in a small room to participate in the all-conference opening event: FT as jokered by Boal, with *jokering* the technical term given by Boal to the individual who facilitates the FT process. We then presented the four plays to the audience. In the first story, a teacher succumbs to political pressure from the administration to ignore her students' interests although she considers them very important. In the second story, a gay couple is baffled and humiliated after having been denied housing by a group of community residents. In the third story, a mother fails to stop her younger daughter from volunteering to serve in the National Guard in the Iraq war, which she vehemently opposes. In the final story, a professor clashes repeatedly with a stubborn student who is adamant that a Japanese play has no relevance to her theater class. Boal asked the audience to choose two stories to be "forumed" based on the idea that the process would be more democratic if a larger audience could decide which play they wanted to explore. "Perhaps you want to take a couple of minutes to discuss which one irritates you the most, and you want to change, you want to modify" he directed. "Talk to each other, even to strangers."

At that point the room turned raucous with very animated talk. It was clear that this group was very eager to participate and to have a say in the decision. After ten minutes, Boal took a vote regarding which play to perform, asking the workshop participants to refrain from voting. Each play received the following number of votes:

Voiceless children in the classroom (15)

Housing discrimination against gay couples (7)

Diversity (31)

Iraq War (18)

What follows is the transcript of the Diversity forum.

As the diversity group received the most votes, Boal called the members of this group to the front of the room and introduced the play as a conflict about teaching diversity in theater. Within a room shaped like an upside-down L on whose right side stood a wall, the group moved to the space designated as the stage, which was at the point of the right angle, and at whose back stood a curtain (the curtain covered and all-glass wall facing a corridor that led to the hotel's restaurant). The audience was seated to the left and in front of the stage, on which the group moved quickly to set up the necessary props: six chairs in a semicircle, with the second chair from left to right tipped over. Warren, the man playing the professor, walked in, turned his back to the audience, faced the curtain, and motioned as if he were erasing an imaginary chalkboard. He then pulled the chair at the apex of the semicircle, straddled it, sat so that his upper body was covered by the back of the chair, and rested both arms on the top of the back of the seat.

The woman playing the dean walked in and said, "Hey, Warren, how's it going?"

Warren started to get up to greet her.

"Sit down, sit down," the dean commanded and went on, "Well, here we are, cross-cultural approaches to theater."

"Yeah …" answered Warren, looking up at the dean, who had decided to remain standing.

"New course for our department, there is a lot at stake here. You know, diversity is really important for our department and it is the first time we have actually required this in the major." The dean stood with one hand on her waist and the other clutching an agenda.

"It is a great course," Warren answered eagerly, "I am quite excited about it. There is lots of energy!"

"Are you sure you got things under control?" the dean asked, "I have been hearing grumbling from the students, maybe it is because is required … or something."

She was now pacing left to right on the stage, as if taking possession of the space, while facing the audience with her back to Warren. “Well, I am hearing things that are not too reassuring and some of the other faculty are too and, you know, they have their own set of issues with our decision to add another course to the major. This diversity stuff … you know they think we are teaching theater.” She placed the agenda under her armpit and with her two arms drew a big box in the air in front of her. “Which we are,” she said, while looking at Warren, “so I will just assume that there won’t be any more complaints.”

“No, no, you know how our students are …”

“Okay, great!” she interrupted. “You know how to get in touch with me, right?”

“Yes, yes.”

“Good!” She then walked out.

Two students, one played by the Japanese man and the other by the Pakistani man, walked into the classroom.

“Hi, Hiroki, Hi Wasim.” Warren greeted them, shaking both students’ hands, then asked, “Hiroki, do you still want to present the section of the play?”

Hiroki bowed his head lightly. “Yeah, may I really do that?”

“Yeah, that would be great!” answered Warren.

Hiroki proceeded to find a seat in the center of the semicircle to the left of Warren. Wasim found the one chair that was tipped over and sat uncomfortably on one of its edges. As Wasim looked Middle Eastern, I read this positioning of the chair as a symbolic critique of institutional disregard toward a certain type of student and the student’s response to the way that he is positioned. Three other students walked in, all of whom were young and might have been students in real life, and took their place in the semicircle.

Warren began, “Last week I assigned Spring Blossom for homework, a great play. Spring is in the air and we are really fortunate to have Hiroki in this class. Spring Blossom is a Japanese play and one of Hiroki’s favorites. He came to me after the last class and asked if he could read a portion of the play to you in his own language and I said, ‘Sure, sure, sure.’” Warren turned to Hiroki and motioned to him to proceed. Hiroki got up, bowed deeply, and addressed the audience, “Enjoy.” He began to move around the room while reciting some lines in Japanese. Wasim looked on with a smile on his face. Jamie, sitting to the right of the stage, moved her chair slightly outward, did not look at Hiroki, and seemed to be expressing disengagement by reading over some papers and writing notes. Woman 2, seated to the left of Jamie, was listening intently. Diana, who was seated between Wasim and Hiroki, appeared annoyed, repeatedly rolling her eyes and sighing as she tapped her fingers on one of her notebooks. When Hiroki finished his performance, the entire audience erupted in applause.

Warren asked, “Okay, what did you think?”

Diane replied, “I don’t understand why you had him read that in Japanese.”

Woman 2 responded, “It’s a Japanese play, I guess.”

Visibly irritated, Diane asked Warren, “How am I supposed to understand a single word of what he said? I don’t speak Japanese!”

“You listen to the rhythm of the language,” Warren responded kindly.

Diane retorted defiantly, “How about we listen to the rhythm of English? I should not be forced to listen to a language I don’t understand in an American classroom!”

As she was speaking, Wasim changed his position, moved around his turned-over chair, and sat on the floor. He was now positioned in a way that his whole body was hidden from the audience’s view such that all we could see was his head in his hands.

“What do you think, Jamie?” Warren asked.

Jamie answered, “Are you going to tell us what’s on the exam?”

The audience exploded.

She went on, “Will it be multiple choice?’

Diane interjected, “I have a question about the exam: Will it be in English?”

“Of course! Don’t be ridiculous,” answered Warren, now turning to Wasim.

“Wasim, have you ever read plays in your language to a class? How does it feel?”

Wasim said very softly, “It’s okay.”

Hiroki stated, “I am really confused. I don’t understand why she is so angry.”

Woman 2 leaned forward, looked directly at Diane, and stated, “She is angry because she thinks theater is about dead White men.”

Warren got out of his chair quickly and moved between the two women. “Wait, wait!”

Woman 2 shouted, “This smells of White supremacy!”

Diane shouted at woman 2, “Are you calling me a racist?” She then interrogated Warren, “Are you going to sit there and let her call me a racist?”

Warren softly replied, “Let’s just have a discussion around language and theater.”

Clearly agitated, Diane cried, “You as our professor have a responsibility to intervene here!” and, with that rejoinder, stormed out of the room.

In the background I could see Diana talking to the dean.

Warren continued with the class. “Jamie, what is the role of language in theaters from other cultures?”

Jamie answered, “I did not get to the readings.”

Warren responded, “Be sure to read them for next week’s meeting.”

At this point, Diana walked in with the dean.

The dean asked, “What is going on?”

Warren responded matter-of-factly, “We are talking about Spring Blossom in the context of theater in society and the role of language in a theater that is vibrant…”

The dean interrupted, “And you are teaching …”

Warren answered, “We are discussing this as the theme of the class … it is in the curriculum …”

The dean interrupted Warren, “Diane came to me saying that someone called her a racist. I think you and I need to have a talk.” She turned to the students. “The hour is almost up and I need to have a talk with Warren.”

Warren addressed the students, “Wait! No! We are not finished with our discussion!”

Jamie, Wasim, and Diane swiftly left the room (the audience laughed at this) but Hiroki stayed behind.

The dean turned to Warren. “Diversity is great, but this is not a class about racism! We have no problems with racism in our department. The bottom line is, Warren, that I really don’t want to hear any more complaints. I do not want to hear in the evaluations anything about racism. We will talk later. You know where to find me.”

Warren answered softly, “This is uncalled for.”

Hiroki covered his face with his arm.

The audience clapped.

Boal described our way of performing as somewhat “bare bones” because of the circumstances. “In a community,” he explained, “you could use its music and dance, for example.” He made it clear, however, that no matter how the play was constructed, the model always had to address a complex problem so that we could ask the audience, “How can you try to solve this problem?” Boal explained, “The rules of the game go like this. They,” pointing at the actors on stage “are going to do the play as closely as possible to the initial presentation. At any moment that you believe there is a problem, the protagonist, the teacher is not handling the situation, well, you say, ‘Stop.’ The scene freezes and you come to the stage, take the place of the teacher, and then you act your opinion, not just a thought, but action, you embody your opinion. If you don’t say stop, the play is going to go on exactly the same way as before, but that is exactly as life is. If there are things you don’t like and you don’t say ‘Stop!’ nothing is going to happen, nothing will fall from the heavens. This is a theater of combat. All theater is theater of combat, but here even more. You have to fight your way to try to find a different possibility.”

Finally, he set the interventions in motion. “Everything can be changed, so go there and change it!” As he said this, he pointed to the stage and then walked out of view of the spect-actors.

Warren took a seat, exactly as he done before. The dean walked in and stated, "How are you doing? Well, cross-cultural perspectives in theater. This is new for our department and new for our students to have it required in the major. Faculty aren't too happy about that either. I have to let you know I have heard some complaints from both sides. I really want this to fly, diversity is really important."

Warren replied, "Well, there is lots of energy in the class, and we will see progress."

The dean rejoined, "Great, great. I just want you to know that there have been some complaints, and I want you to have everything under control, okay? We will have evaluations at the end of the semester, so keep up the good work."

Someone in the audience shouted, "STOP!" Boal interjected, "STOP! Someone just said stop." He pointed to the person in the audience who wanted to intervene and ordered, "Come and take the place of the protagonist." The audience loudly applauded. He then directed the audience, "Now observe his intervention because if you did not agree with the professor, you might not agree with him (he pointed at the interventor) either." A white man in his fifties walked up and asked to take the place of the dean. Boal explained that he could not take her place. "Not because I don't want you to," he said, "the thing is that if you replace the antagonist for someone who is nice and gentle, what is the use of it? That would be magic, magic! You are the teacher now and she is going to treat you in exactly the same way she treated Warren." And with that the intervention began.

The dean walked in. "Hi, how are you doing? This is great, cross-cultural approaches to theater.”

Spect-actor 1 had taken the same position as Warren, straddling his chair and covering his chest with the back of the chair. However, when the dean walked in, he, unlike Warren, stood up so that he could be at the same level as the dean.

The dean stated, “This is testing the department a little bit. Students are rumbling, they got a new requirement …”

Spect-actor 1 retorted, “Oh really? Nobody said anything to me. Would you point them out to me?”

The dean sheepishly responded, “Well, I have to keep certain things confidential … but it isn’t just the students; faculty also worries about putting something new in the major.”

Up to this point she had been talking to both Warren and his replacement with her back toward them, facing the audience. Spect-actor 1 turned around and placed himself directly in front of the gaze of the dean. “Excuse me, would you look at me when you’re talking to me?”

The audience laughed and some people clapped.

The dean reacted, “Don’t worry about it, don’t worry about it. You will be fine.” She put her hand on his shoulder and said, “I am hoping there won’t be any problems with the evaluations at the end of the semester.”

In turn, spect-actor 1 put his hand on her shoulder and said, “I am concerned about you a little bit.”

The dean exclaimed, “What!?” As he was walking out of the room, she stated, “You know where to find me.”

From the audience came a cry of “STOP!” Boal interjected, signaling that this was the end of the first intervention, and said to the audience, “He did something very different already; what was it?” A woman responded, “He stood up and confronted her face to face.” Boal explained, “Warren’s physical attitude was already defeated. If you are in a discussion and you are here [he moved toward the chair and exaggerated Warren’s stance, crouching as if he were hiding behind the back of the chair], you are already defeated.” The audience laughed loudly. “What he did,” continued Boal, “was, first stood up to be at her same level, and then he also said, ‘Look at me when you are speaking to me.’ And the third thing he did was to question her statement that students were complaining. He wanted to know who, since he had heard no complaints. She protected herself by saying, ‘I have to keep this confidential.’ He did not accept this weapon, which was ‘They are saying, people are saying.’ That is a terrible weapon that can be used against us, but he refused it.” Boal thanked spect-actor 1 and then called the person who had stopped the action onto the stage. He then directed her to start in the same position as Warren and then proceed in whatever way she wanted.

The dean walked in and began speaking about cross-cultural approaches. Spect-actor 2 grabbed her hand and shook it. “Please, have a seat.”

The dean refused, saying that she was busy.

Spect-actor 2 stated, “I am busy too.” With that, she pulled a chair next to the dean.

The dean refused her invitation to sit down for a second time.

Spect-actor 2 asked, “So what is this about?”

The dean explained, “I want to see how you are doing here ...”

Spect-actor 2 replied, “I am doing fine, the students are fine, the course is going well, we are exploring diversity…”

The dean interrupted her and loudly stated, “Great! But I have to tell you, I have heard some complaints.”

Spect-actor 2 dared her, “Oh yeah? Bring them in, what are those complaints?”

The dean explained, “Well, it could be because the class is required. The faculty doesn’t see the importance of doing this all the time.”

Spect-actor 2 asked, “And what do you think about it? What do you think about it?”

Dean: “I think this is so important for us to be doing.”

Some in the audience laughed loudly.

Spect-actor 2 (S2): “So I have your support?”

Dean: “Well, we are going to base things on your evaluations at the end of the semester.”

S2: “But you really support diversity in this department?”

Dean: “Well, it is kind of being handed down to us from the administration, but I am trying to do my part here.”

The audience laughed again.

S2: “Well if you support me, it is really important that you allow me to control my classroom, and also allow me to deal with the students.”

Dean: “Of course, of course, you have total say in here.”

S2: “So, if students come to you I am going to suggest .... Here in the classroom we are going to talk about the urgency of diversity, the necessity of it, and I am going to have an open forum with the students."

Dean: "You are going to be teaching about theater?"

S2: "Absolutely! This is theater!"

The audience laughed loudly.

Dean: "I have to go to a meeting. You know where to find me."

S2: "You know where to find me too, and tell the students to come to me."

The interaction ended and the audience clapped. Boal stepped in. "What did she do differently? I think she took all the hints from the previous interaction and she went further. In which ways did she go further? What else did she ask for?" An audience member answered, "She asked for her support." Boal explained, "Which is very important; to expose her and say, 'and what about you, what is your opinion?' So the dean said she agreed with her goals so S2 asked for her support. It is important. She fought as an equal coming from under a position as subordinate or oppressed." Another audience member pointed that she had made it clear that the conversation in the classroom should be open so that students would not have to take problems outside of the classroom. Boal responded, "Yes. She was very honest about what was going to happen in her classroom." Another audience member highlighted that the woman had touched the dean. Boal replied that the dean had showed dislike at that moment because she liked having the upper hand and then asked, "Is there a third intervention? If not, we will go further in the scene."

After a long pause, Boal directed the actors to continue. The play reverted back to the scene at which Warren begins the class. Warren once again stated, “So, last week we had the reading of the Spring Blossom ....” “STOP!” shouted a woman in the audience. Everybody clapped. She walked in, and moving swiftly, began to change the set up in the room. She asked Jamie to turn around because there would be a presenter in the room, and thanked her. She then asked woman 2 to uncross her legs and open up her body, and moved toward Diane to ask her to change her position in her chair.

Diane: “I am not moving.”

S3: “Oh really? Why is that?”

Diane: “I am quite comfortable like this.”

S3: “Well, I am not comfortable with you like that, so what I want you to do is put your legs down, and if there is a problem we will talk about it later on.”

Diane: “Wait. I am sorry, am I in college or in preschool? Oh yes, college.”

S3: “You may leave now. You are disrupting this environment. Goodbye.”

Diane (raising her voice): “I am a college student. I am paying for this class, so you can’t ask me to leave!”

S3 (interrupting her): “Would you like me to help you remove yourself from this environment? Miss?”

Diana: “No Ma’am!”

S3: “Well, you are destroying this, so if you could please keep your comments to yourself!”

Two people in the audience yelled “STOP” at the same time. Boal asked one of the audience members, “Why did you say ‘stop’? Because you want to replace her, or is it because you don’t think that what she is doing is possible, is magic?” The woman replied, “I think it is possible, but I don’t think she would last very long.” S3 asked, “Do you want to replace me?” The woman replied, “I would replace you.” Boal asked, “But first, what did she do differently?” Someone from the audience said that she had made some changes to the space. Boal responded, “The organization of the space. Spaces are always organized to give power to some people and take it from others. It is true in the church, in the classroom, in the tribunal, and at a Sunday dinner. Sunday dinner is prepared to give power to someone and take power away from others. Always. No geography, no architecture is innocent. She saw that this architecture was against her.” While speaking he walked toward Jamie and put his hand on her shoulder. “But she fought. The teacher moved her, but later she returned to her not-so-convivial position. So the teacher understood that the architecture in the room was not good for her and she tried to change it.”

Boal signaled the fourth interventor (S4) to come onstage. The audience applauded S3’s intervention. S4 came onstage and Boal asked her where she wanted to start. She replied, “From the beginning of class.” She straddled the chair so that its back covered her upper body, and then asked the students to have a meeting before class started. Then she asked that everyone turn their chairs into more of a circle. Everyone complied, including Diane.

S4 began, “That is great, thank you. I have to tell you that I just talked to my department chair, who told me that there have been some complains and concerns about the course. We have been trying to create a democratic classroom, so I am really interested in hearing those complaints here. I am not going to judge, I won't think any less of you. I am really interested in knowing how the course is going for you and if there are any problems. Does anyone have anything they want to share?" As she asked this, she looked around the room. Everyone remained quiet.

"STOP" came from the audience. Boal directed the intervention to continue.

Woman 2: "My only complaint is that I wish people would take this class more seriously. I feel like this class is really valuable, and I feel like our discussions get stopped prematurely or people are not really contributing as much as they could. I think that we could all get a lot more out of it if we all put more energy into it."

S4: "Okay, other thoughts or disagreements with that?"

Diane: "My problem is that you are teaching a class in America and you insist in teaching languages I don't understand."

S4: "Do you understand all forms of English?"

Diane: "I am sorry, all forms of English"

S4: "Yeah. If someone is speaking a dialect, do you always understand it?"

Diane: "At least that is English words."

S4: "Okay."

Diane: "This is ridiculous. You have a responsibility to make sure your students understand what you are teaching them, and so far you are not doing a good job."

S4: "Okay. So would it help in the classroom that when we did something that was not in English we also did a translation of it?"

"STOP" again came from the audience. S4 turned to Boal to ask if he wanted to stop. Boal walked toward the center of the improvised stage and asked, "Okay, so what did she do? Would you do the same?” From the audience I heard a number of people saying that yes, they would try the same approach. Boal asked, “So is that the same that you would do?” A woman in the audience shouted, “Discussion!” Boal reiterated, “To open up the discussion prior to the new class. She acknowledges someone is complaining about the class outside of it, so she opens up the discussion. But what she says,” pointing to Diana, “is a very big accusation. She said, you are supposed to be doing your job and you are not doing your job.” He asked the audience, “Would you react like she did?” A man from the audience responded, “I think what I am willing to do is I am going to ask how she is feeling and I am going to validate Diana’s position. At some level I think that she keeps being invalidated.” A lot of “Yeahs!” emerged from the audience. “Should I try?” the man offered. Boal said, “Come, come” while signaling with his hands. He then turned to the woman leaving the stage and thanked her. All the audience members moved their chairs back to the position that they were in before the last intervention and loudly applauded. Boal interrupted, “Let’s make clear what she did.” He pointed at the woman who had just left the stage. “Fundamentally, she is saying, ‘Let’s bring in the problem before it explodes.’” A woman from the audience added, “Not only that. She did not say, ‘This is the problem and here is how we are going to solve it’ ... there was a long silence where she was allowing the students to formulate their own voices ... she was not pushing them.” Boal asked, “So you mean to say that it was a difference in the way she was talking delicately, gently, in a way ...” The woman interrupted, “It was not a power struggle.” Boal replied, “There were no accusations. No fighting. She opened up the space for them to speak. Okay, now let's see the third intervention at this point."

The man picked the chair up and placed it at the base of the semicircle, facing everyone with his back to the audience. "So, what I hear you saying is that you are feeling uncomfortable when other languages are spoken in the classroom. What does that feel like to you? What is your experience with that?"

Hiroki leaned forward in his chair. Wasim seemed more engaged than in the previous intervention. Woman 2 raised her hand asking for a turn to speak. The man was looking directly at Diana, who was still clutching her notebook to her chest and covering it with a raised leg.

Diana: "Well, I am in a class to succeed. I am a good student, and how am I going to succeed if I don't understand a single word of what is being said?"

I noticed Wasim acting as if he were frustrated.

S5 (turning to the right side of the semicircle): "Somehow there is concern that if you are not understanding the language and the content of what is being said you are going to be missing something. Does anyone see that perhaps there is something else we are trying to understand here besides the content of the language?" He gave the floor to woman 2.

Woman 2: "I guess I feel what we are trying to understand here is how much more energy we have put into looking at white Anglo-Saxon English experience and this class is supposed to go against that. So far I feel like we have only been talking about white people's experience around multicultural education."

The tension is again palpable. S5 notices that Diana appears angry and tries to stop her from speaking.

Diana (angrily): “How do I even know what these languages are that are being spoken and I don’t understand? How do I even know if it is actually the play or something valid? How do I know that they are not saying something against me or against you?” (Pointing to the teacher with her pen) “You don’t know that, so how can you permit that this happen in your classroom?”

Wasim grabs a notebook and acts as if he were working on something else.

Woman 2 and Diana appear not to be paying attention either. It seems that only Hiroki, with his hands resting on his quads, is trying to follow the interaction.

S5: “One of the things that I think is important that I hear you both saying is that there needs to be a sense of everyone being understood. ... That there has to be a white perspective being understood, or validated, an American Anglo perspective; that a Japanese perspective needs to be understood (pointing at Hiroki, who responds by nodding politely) and part of it is, I am hearing, is that we need to understand the context of what we are doing and presenting. Perhaps it is important that sometimes we understand the language and the content (pointing at Diana) and sometimes it is the context (pointing at Hiroki).”

I notice that Boal is looking at the audience, apparently gauging our reaction.

S5: “And what I hope we do here is create a safe space for your feelings to be validated. Do you see this is a new experience for people? And I think that it is okay, for us to have some differences and some conflict, and that is part of what theater is about.”

Wasim looks at his watch and shakes his leg, which gets a laugh from the audience.

S5: “And that is part of what multiculturalism is about.”

S5 turned to Boal who said “Okay” ... the audience clapped. Boal pointed at the next person who wanted to intervene, a theater professor and one of Boal’s most prominent pupils among the PTO crowd. Boal addressed the audience. “Okay, so what did he do that was new? One thing that strikes me, I like very much, as I am here to direct is, I look at the image, and one thing I saw is that the space changed from a semicircle in which he had lost his power and he came here” he moved to the base of the circle “where he took his power back ... because of course the teacher has power! The point is not to abandon that power, is how you use democratically your power .... Just as in theater of the oppressed, you have this space here that is powerful” (he pointed at the improvised stage). “The problem is not to keep this power for us but to democratize it. The process is not to eliminate the differences but to democratize the power and allow everyone here to use it. That is what he did. What else did he do?”

A woman from the audience replied, “He asked for her experience, ‘What is that like for you?’ instead of shutting her down, opening that up and then he found a common interest between Diana and Woman 2.” Boal added, “Yes. He was more Socratic, by using questions he brought out their knowledge. What else?” After a pause he pointed at Warren, who was ready for the intervention, and asked him where he wanted to start. Warren answered, “This is pretty close.” Boal replied, “Okay,” then turned to the man leaving the stage. “Thank you very much.” The audience clapped. Warren took the chair and asked Boal, “Should I stay here or should I go back to the semicircle?" Boal replied, "Whatever you want."

Warren took the chair back to its original place, but instead of straddling it and hiding behind the back of the chair, he sat in a more conventional way, like the rest of the students. "Hey class, I want to give us a break just for a second. There are some things I need to deal with, so just take a five-minute break, can you? Just go out have a smoke, whatever." He looked at all of them and then got up, moving and pointing toward Diana, who darted out of the room. This got another laugh from the audience. Wasim followed Diana. Hiroki hesitated and Jamie remained seated to write something.

Warren addressed Diana. "Can I talk to you for a second?"

Diana: "Why are you singling me out?"

Warren: "I am not singling you out at all. . . ."

Diana: "Wait, everybody else gets a break but me?"

Warren: "I will give you an extra break later."

Diana: "Wait, why are you singling me out?"

She stayed seated and Warren, a tall man, towered over her.

Warren: "Listen, we have talked before, and I know you are not happy with the class."

Diana crossed her arms in front of her and directed her body away from him.

Warren: "This is the syllabus, and in the syllabus we talk about reading these languages ..."

Diana: "I know, I have a copy of the syllabus."

Warren: "This is what it is that we will be doing..."

Diana: “You know, if I had a choice I would not be in this class …”

At this Warren interrupted her and raised his voice a bit.

Warren: “This is also in the catalogue …”

Diana interrupted him and the conversation heated up.

Diana: “The class is required and you are the one insisting on teaching it in a language I don’t understand!”

Warren: “This is also in the catalogue, this is in the syllabus, this is the way in which the course was designed. And I should remind you that the syllabus is fundamentally a legal document.”

The audience laughed and some clapped.

Warren: “This is the way in which I teach the class.”

Diana jumped out of her chair.

Diana: “You know what? That does not mean that is okay …”

Now Warren and Diana spoke over each other angrily, making it difficult to determine what each was saying. People in the audience yelled, “Louder, louder!”

Diana: “You are the professor and you have the responsibility to make sure that everybody is understanding!”

Now she was really close to him and in his face.

Warren: “That is right, and if you don’t want to take the class, that is fine! That is fine!”

Diana: “No! It is not okay! I am required to take this to graduate, and if I am going to graduate I am forced to sit in your class!”

Warren: “I would be very happy to withdraw you from the class; you have been an obstruction!”

Diana had been gradually getting louder and louder and more excited.

Diana: “If I am going to graduate I have to take this class to get a degree!”

At this point she was screaming and gesturing with both of her arms while repeatedly tapping the syllabus, which was in the professor’s hand, with the tip of her pen. Warren was trying to get a word in when the dean walked in.

The dean asked, “Hey, hey, hey, what is going on? The noise is getting into the hall!”

The audience was now cheering loudly.

The dean repeated, “What is going on?!”

Warren replied, “This is a disruptive student!”

Diana interjected, “He is telling me to withdraw from the class...”

The dean got into Warren’s face and screamed, “I think you need to understand something!” and climbed on a chair.

The audience was now hysterical, some laughing, some cheering, some talking.

Warren climbed on the chair next to the dean’s and signaled to Jamie and Hiroki to leave. They obliged. Raising his voice, he asked the dean, “Are you the chair of the department?”

The dean screamed back, “Yes, I am!”

Warren: “Well, you don’t have to be the chair. You are there at the advice and the counsel of the faculty!”

Diana: “He singled me out of the entire class.”

Dean: “You are too tall!”

Warren: “We got you here by a vote of the faculty. I can go to the faculty. You are not supporting us. This is not a grade school. We don’t live for your power, we live to teach and this student is disrupting the class, I am telling you! If you want your position… “

Diana: “You have no leadership. You have to make sure that all your students understand!”

She pointed at him with her pen while the dean looked on with her hands still on her hips.

Warren: “Let’s see what the president of the university has to say!”

Dean: “This class is offered on a provisional basis, so your status is provisional.”

Warren: “The only provisional person in this room is you! As the chair you are here provisionally at the will of the faculty. Get out of the classroom!”

He forcefully pointed his long arm toward the door.

Warren: “Get out! Get out! This is my classroom! Get out!”

Warren was screaming so loud and the audience laughing so much that it was difficult to hear what else was being said. He raised both arms in the “V” of victory and the audience clapped, laughing, whistling, and hollering. At this point Boal was moving toward the center, laughing too. Warren got down from the chair and hugged both the dean and Diana. Boal asked, “Is this possible? Is this possible? Or is this magic?” The audience responded, “Magic! Magic!” Boal pointed at the dean. “There is a very important new element. Her power is not an eternal power, it is not a power that belongs to her; she has a delegate power. As it was given to her, it can also be taken away. However, she was behaving as if she was the ultimate power. Doug's intervention was to let her know that she also is under control. 'It is not only me who you are evaluating, we are evaluating you!" We have run out of time. Everybody is laughing, the room is in chaos, and the all-conference opening comes to a close.

The Subject/subject and How Power Is Disseminated Through Discourse

The notion of a Subject/subject suggests that we are creative beings, capable of generating powerful language. However, words and meanings that precede us can also move through us while we are unaware of their prior contexts of usage. As we invoke them in our performances we move the power previous speakers assigned to those words further diffusing that power. As I have said elsewhere the tools available to FT practitioners are both discursive and performative. Thus, the critical examination that is FT has to include being able to identify the discourses in the script and the power being invoked through them. However, as I read the forum transcript looking through the lens of my theoretical constructions and specifically the Subject/subject I was struck by Boal's simple directive as he opens the forum for Interventions, "If you don't like something, go there and change it!"

At the very center of TO and FT in their definition and as a process there is a worldview that both drives and limits the outcomes. The very goal of Theater of the Oppressed invokes a binary: The oppressed must defeat their antagonist or the oppressor. As I have argued throughout the binary simplifies ways of explaining events or processes obscuring heteroglossia. From its inception Boal counterposed his popular and revolutionary theater to an overly straightforward and conservative representation of

Aristotelian theater (Dwyer, 2005) as an authoritative and repressive form. However, as Dwyer goes on to argue there has been much popular resistance within Aristotelian theater; indeed, there must have been cases when Aristotelian drama was audience driven or situations when it encountered boisterous and unruly audiences—the type of audience who talked back.

Similarly, in the directive "if you don't like something, go there and change it!" Boal sets up a binary relationship drawing a line between the stage and the audience. He positions the collective as observers, perhaps even innocent victims fighting a clearly delineated oppressor. Boal has always insisted that for the process to work there has to be a "strong and well-defined antagonist." This clear delineation assumes a sovereign power and prevents different approach to and understanding of power. The invitation to audiences to "go there and change it!" signals that the movement is in one direction from the audience to the stage as the spect-actor steps on the scene to challenge the antagonist and enact change. The impulse to change is never self-directed because they oppressor is always identified as separate and away from the spect-actor.

In the words of Bakhtin, Boal's binary framing functions as an authoritative word or as the word of the father. It turns participants into subjects of these terms as they move them along without examination. What could otherwise be a critical engagement of relationships of power lacks the self-reflexivity necessary for the interrogation of the participants' own implication, and their own power vis-à-vis the situation at hand.

I was always confused by the contradictions evidenced in the group's understanding of and approach to power. The Pedagogy and Theater of the Oppressed conferences were founded on Freire's principles of liberatory pedagogy. I think specifically of the idea that breaking the binary of the teacher/student is a fundamental part of the process that leads to self-determination. However, Boal was allowed to exert an inordinate amount of power. During the process and unlike everybody else, he did not wait to take his turn and, unlike the rest of the participants, he could talk to anybody, interrupt as he deemed necessary, and redirect the general conversation in the direction that he chose.

To be sure, Boal was exercising the role of *the joker*, another meaning in FT's discourse and TO's process in general. According to the established definition (Cohen Cruz and Shulzman, 1994), the joker is responsible for establishing the rules of the event, facilitating the interventions, and synthesizing them for the audience. The term is borrowed from that of a card in a typical deck of playing cards. In the deck, the joker is a wild card or the one that has not been assigned any specific value. In TO's subversive context, this was taken to mean neutral to any ideology. However, within a more Foucauldian understanding of power the definition of a wild card is also one whose value can be determined by the person who holds it, and in this case it gives the joker unpredictable and strategic power.

Regardless of the name the role is given, it appeared to me that Boal was overly interventionist particularly since FT purports that audience members must think for themselves through a democratic process that leads them to their own conclusions. At this conference, and at every other one I attended, Boal was always the main event and the lofty source of FT in its *purest* of forms. He enjoyed a kind of celebrity status as the ultimate and preferred facilitator. He was the source and the master everybody had paid to see and to hear. In fact, during my stint as a member of the board of directors of the

Pedagogy and Theater of the Oppressed PTO conference from 2005-2007 I learned that high conference registration fees were necessary to pay for first class tickets and high honorariums Boal required.

Diversity as a Centripetal and Powerful Discourse

After looking at the terms of FT and realizing the power hidden within the discourse that frames it, I turned to the specific discourses of the Diversity forum. I used the ideas of the *centripetal* (tending toward unification) and *centrifugal* (tending toward diversification) forces of language to explain how I saw the diversity discourse as powerful because it is a call to comply with the canonical categories of difference. Bakhtin used this metaphor of physical forces to explain how the centripetal power of language pushes meanings toward a central point, fixing meanings to an object and creating the illusion of coherence between the two. This coherence is achieved by ignoring the centrifugal forces. Centrifugal forces represent *heteroglossia*, or the multitude of voices within a language: a myriad of opposing ideologies, a multiplicity of conflicting political tendencies, the many jargons of groups, professions, generations, locales, historical periods and on and on.

According to Bakhtin, the dialogical and untraceable relationships across this complex web of worldviews keep meanings open. Given this constant tension created by the clashing and merging of meanings, these meanings cannot be foreclosed. These collisions and comings together expose the dissonance of a discourse that is alive and unfolding. Thus, fixed meanings are the work of power, argued Bakhtin. They impose a final word meant to impose, enforce, exclude, and police. The discourse of diversity allows limited utterances and performances of self representation that follow the rigid path of the categories it constructs. Whatever lies outside of this fixed meanings—or heteroglossia—is rendered foreign, inauthentic, or aberrant.

Ford (2005) provides an explanation of how diversity ended up being a series of requirements (for example, proving one's authenticity or even loyalty to the meanings attached to the group). He begins with the Allan Bakke case and how the discourse of diversity was constructed as a site of a struggle within institutions of higher education. In 1978, Allan Bakke, a white student who had been denied admission to the UC Davis School of Medicine, sued the university when he discovered that minoritized students with lower scores than his had been admitted under an affirmative action program. He argued that the university had violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. When the case eventually came to the Supreme Court as *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, the court was forced to issue a plurality opinion, as there was no consensus or a clear majority. Two opposing four-person plurality decisions were issued and, according to Ford, the discourse of diversity as we know it today began to take shape

Writing the opinion for one of the groups of four, Justice Brennan argued that remedying past societal discrimination was sufficient reason to justify the use of race in admission policies. Writing for the opposing group, Justice Stevens argued that race could not be used as a basis for exclusion from federally funded programs. This underlying principle won the day, and the radical roots of affirmative action programs were lost.

Diversity, according to Ford, was a bad deal sold to liberals by the Supreme

Court, and specifically by Justice Louis Powell, who cast the deciding vote in the split 4-4-1 decision. In what came to be known as the *diversity rationale*, an argument that has become one of the most powerful regarding diversity, Justice Powell argued that although race was not a reason to consider a student disadvantaged, a new narrowly tailored race-conscious admission process could be fashioned that would bring more diverse students to institutions of higher education. Their admission could be construed as benefiting universities through the creation of an atmosphere where different worldviews would foster new conversations, experimentation, and creativity.

According to Ford (2005) before the *Bakke* ruling, diversity had been one of the many rationales that were used to justify the establishment of affirmative action measures, and was certainly not the most radical. Ford cited the special admission policies for minoritized students at Stanford University School of Medicine in place *before Bakke* to illustrate how universities had previously approached the issue of inequality much more aggressively and had articulated the rationale for affirmative action in more emphatic terms. At Stanford, these programs had been justified as necessary to remedy long-standing past societal discrimination that had kept minorities from entering medical professions, and to increase the number of minority physicians available to improve access to and quality of medical care. Diversity became the rationale used to get discriminated groups into institutions of higher education only after decades of backlash when more aggressive approaches to affirmative action began to be dismantled and the need to “achieve a more diverse student body” was the only viable argument left to use.

However, Ford (2005) argued that this argument was ultimately detrimental because it shifted a conversation regarding reducing the socio-economic effects of bigotry in education to one regarding achieving cultural understanding and tolerance. One consequence of using this argument has been that racial and cultural differences began to be conflated so that certain cultural traits are now bundled with particular racial labels. In this sense, diversity has become part of the (re)production of a dichotomous discourse of race according to which meanings must be and remain fixed. For example, one consequence is that when students are told by their teachers and counselors that their cultural distinctiveness would boost their chances for university admission, they play up their imagined cultural diversity.

Ford (2005) has argued that instead of enriching a student's academic experience, the call to diversity has turned into a call for compliance, as the categories of diversity to which students conform reduce who students can be and only reflect the stereotypes that have congealed around these categories. In this sense, the discourse of difference has restrained diversity or heteroglossia by requiring students' worldviews to be aligned with those that fit specific racial/ethnic meanings. Students must define who they are, what they do, and how they think about themselves in relation to others inside these rigid discourses. Butler (1990) similarly argued that binary gender identities are the performance and repetition of limited and limiting available cultural repertoires that tend towards unification and normalcy. The same and known rituals, beliefs, and other means of performance enacted in our bodies, through repetition, become styles of the flesh. These styles performed repeatedly and over time, in turn, unify the discourse, creating the illusion of cohesiveness and a core of gender identity. Thus, diversity is not the multiplicity of experience that brings more creativity or new conversations and experimentation. Instead, the categories created under the idea of diversity serve to contain and reduce what is otherwise a heteroglossic and complex human experience.

The production and performance of stable and established categories obscure a multiplicity of iterations. In the case of gender identity, the iterations might be there, yet there has been no creative conversation. Instead, the argument that deemed those performances abhorrent has been the unifying discourse. Butler (1990) and Ford (2005) have thus both argued that identity categories cannot capture the ever-evolving, and therefore always incomplete performances, that make up the human experience. The unifying discourses keep us from understanding that creative performative space in the border between centripetal and centrifugal forces in which Bakhtin (1981) observed new cultural meanings coming into view. Butler described this space as “a permanently available site of contested meanings where evolving cultural repertoires” are expressed (21).

Despite our intolerance of these evolving cultural repertoires of gender, the heteroglossia in the discourse of gender is more visible, and the struggle for cultural meanings is reflected on multiple performances or styles of the flesh that, unlike race, we have all experienced. Even though society considers genitalia to be the determining factor in gender assignment, certain societies recognize a multiplicity of gender-variant individuals and categories (Weiss, 2009). In our society, terms such as *transgender* and *intersex* layer the discourse and help articulate a complex gender-variant experience. However, there is no equivalent language with which to describe a race-variant experience.

Even though, as Daniel (2001) has argued, the imaginary boundaries of race should have been eroded by contact, as interracial mixing has been part of the historical development of the United States, our discourse and performance of separateness constitutes the ways in which we organize ourselves and understand our connections and obligations to one another. We perform race and ethnicity within a framework of limited occasions and predictable types that constrict how we think about and enact race. Our definition of difference, which focuses on the elements that separate contrasting entities and situations, justifies the hierarchy that unequally values individuals. Thus, diversity, expressed as the policy meant to benefit students with a more creative dialogue and collective experimentation, is part of the same discourse that has encouraged a partisanship where membership to a group demands adherence to accepted and recognized identities in order to prove one's authenticity or even loyalty to the meanings attached to the group.

This is made clear by the interactions in the forum. Multicultural Education is a partisan affair where separateness and aversion go hand in hand. As such, the performance of our differences is also the enactment of our continued segregation from one another. Through these enactments, we prolong the long-standing lack of meaningful contact between people who consider themselves members of distinct and separate racial groups, and broaden what by now seems like an insurmountable distance between groups. More insidious still, difference as it was understood in the beginning—as the negation of the other in us— underlies the discourse of racial purity. Although difference is the construct that allowed groups to create and maintain a sense of community, dignity, and purpose, necessary in the victories achieved by the Civil Rights fight. It was and is the same construct used to institute de jure miscegenation. *Loving v. Virginia*, 388 U.S. 1 (1967) was a landmark civil rights case through which the Supreme Court declared

Virginia's antimiscegenation statute, the "Racial Integrity Act of 1924", unconstitutional. However, today among the total of marriages, the number of interracial marriages continues to represent an absolute minority. According to the United States Census Bureau, the number of interracially married couples has increased from 310,000 in 1970 to 651,000 in 1980, to 964,000 in 1990, to 1,464,000 in 2000 and to 2,340,000 in 2008; accounting for 0.7%, 1.3%, 1.8%, 2.6% and 3.9% of the total number of married couples in those years, respectively (U.S. Bureau of the Census Table 60 Married Couples by Race December 2012). Difference is an utterance charged with the dark accents of the past and previous intentions; it was also reclaimed by a powerful movement for equality before the law. Yet, as we push it forward it is still at the service of opposing masters. Here is the Subject/subject tapping the power of a discourse and dispersing that power through a performance of race that has also been a weapon used against her. The implications of the past, such as the hierarchical orders that have been imposed, are entangled with the ramifications of the present, and discourse is revealed as imbued with ambiguity.

In the Boal forum, this notion of difference was a powerful centripetal force, a collective assumption that gave way to the interactions that we observed. It was, however, woven so tightly within the text that it was virtually invisible. One way in which power became manifest was in how whiteness was repeatedly constructed, both in the original script and subsequent interventions, as untouched by and disconnected from the lives, histories, and languages of racialized others. In this way, the stubborn Diane character could insist on a very rigid and narrow definition of an American classroom. In one instance, she is adamant that Japanese theater does not belong in a theater class and that the class must be conducted in English. Her performance of whiteness requires the repeated safeguarding of the boundaries around it, as demonstrated by an exchange that occurred immediately after the Japanese student had finished performing his theater piece in Japanese to the class:

Warren asked, “Okay, what did you think?” Line 60

Diane replied, “I don’t understand why you had him read that in Japanese.” Line 61

Woman 2 responded, “It’s a Japanese play, I guess.” Line 62

Visibly irritated, Diane asked Warren, “How am I supposed to understand a single word of what he said? I don’t speak Japanese!” Line 63

“You listen to the rhythm of the language,” Warren responded kindly. Line 64

Diane retorted defiantly, “How about we listen to the rhythm of English? I should not be forced to listen to a language I don’t understand in an American classroom!” Line 66, 67

Diane’s performance was directed at drawing clear lines around who she was and was not. To do so, she called forth a particularly powerful discourse—English only—that she used to boost her power in framing her entitlement as the real American. Many of the assumptions that she brought forth about language, knowledge, and classroom procedure were both written in the composite script by the group, and left unchallenged by the interventors. For example, there is a theme voiced here by Diane and the dean where Multicultural Education is not seen as a desirable and democratic means to achieve a more complex understanding of history, literature or theater. Instead, it is voiced as a heavy imposition. The dean, a characterization of a certain institutional power, complains that Multicultural Education, “is kind of being handed down to us from the administration, but I am trying to do my part here.” Line 205 Similarly Diane encapsulated in a performance an attitude I often saw among a significant number of students in my class: I am sitting here because "I am [forced to and the class is] required to graduate." Line 419

As Eric Wolf (as cited in Shohat and Stam, 1995) has argued, the distinguishing lines around the categories that organize our imaginaries begin to be formed from the orderly subjects that make up the curriculum. For example, history, geography, and anthropology are always taught with a focus on populations who inhabit clearly delimited territories. Thus, it is first in school where we learn of distinct and separate societies and nations with stable and internally homogeneous cultures. Wolf decried the dichotomizing and the imaginary sustained by such teaching:

By endowing nations, societies, or cultures with the qualities of internally homogenous and externally distinctive and bounded objects, we create a model of the world as a global pool hall in which the entities spin off each other like so many hard and round billiard balls. Thus it becomes easy to sort the world into differently colored balls, to declare that "East is East, and West is West," and never the twain shall meet. (Wolf 1982, cited in Carrithers 1992)

Within classrooms, these reified categories around content bring order and unity to a historical, cultural, linguistic, and genetic complexity that might be undisciplinable. Representations that attempt to move away from the grouping and classification are difficult to identify and not easily understood. For example, none of the interventors, many of whom are professors of theater, brought up the idea that the discourse of theater in a theater classroom should reflect its heteroglossic nature. What we have come to call Western theater includes in its movement circuitous migrations, and mixings that might very well include Kabuki, Noh drama, and Balinese theater, among many other influences.

According to Bodden (1997), who shaped a genealogy of theater that could be voiced against Eurocentric versions of Aristotelian theater, our belief in Brecht's theater has been so far reaching that it has influenced a multiplicity of theaters, including Latin American and Asian theater. However, on closer examination, Chinese theater, as well as the Japanese No and Kabuki forms of theater, was part of the complex of meanings within which Brecht's artistic ideas developed and that constantly influenced what Bodden characterized as his continuously changing creative approach. Theater's history contains the language to disarticulate Diane's entitlement and claim that Aristotelian theater conducted in English should structure her curriculum and classroom. The experience of theater as we know it today encompasses the participation of such a multiplicity of forces and voices in its evolution that a single course could likely neither contain nor organize it.

The borders of theater as the racial categories that we have created have always been indistinct. Theater is not single voiced, as Diane stubbornly insisted; its horizons and its archeology are dialogic and heteroglot and, as such, reflect the merger of cultures that would be better articulated as rootless, traveling, and intersecting, even today (Clifford, 1997). If such a worldview were commonplace, categories of race might be more nuanced and layered. Within Diane's classroom or Multicultural Education classrooms in general the presence of a Japanese-identified form in a discussion about theater would not be seen as one group's intrusion into another's cultural realm and entitlements. Hiroki's performance might have been an everyday occurrence and he would not have had to ask for a concession. When asked by Warren if he wanted to present his section of the play we saw him bowing to ask, "… may I really do that?" Line 40. Within a worldview that acknowledged the multiplicity behind our cultural meanings and practices, Hiroki would be as entitled as Diane, and she would understand Japanese theater and language as her own.

However, notions such as rootlessness or traveling, intersecting, and changing cultures do not circulate freely within educational discourse. I argue that the ways in which we have deployed difference within academic discourse support Diane's powerful performance of Eurocentrism; because Eurocentrism thrives on its definition as a distinct and autonomous entity, whiteness, according to Morrison, defines itself in stark opposition to its black shadow. In order to gain access to what it wanted it had to separate itself from that it would eventually use as criteria to demonize the other. As Morrison has explained whites gained their humanity by dehumanizing the other. They projected onto dark bodies what they did not want to acknowledge as their own and victimized them based on the traits it inscribed in them effectively victimizing them for their demonization at the hands of whites. Then using the privileges whites gained with this demonization to increase the value of whiteness (Liptsitz, 1995). This inversion resulted in the erasure of deviancy from whiteness. Once whiteness demonized the other as irrational, barbaric and violent it could enslave it, violent it and then retreat to that place where it isn't anything in particular, prior and apart from anything else it names. Whiteness has been achieved by buttressing an identity against a number of fears. The selfhood, freedom and autonomy was attained through the profound disconnect from the feared dark other. Whiteness as Diane performs it thrives on the rigid binary that denies any affinity, familiarity or shared ancestral lines and have always given her the upper hand. The Eurocentric certainty that she enacted has been the means for instituting well-entrenched hierarchies, such as the one that she wants to impose. The clear-cut boundaries around *traditional* theater, an *American* classroom, and English as the language of instruction are well supported by the discourses that have shaped her education.

Diversity Versus Rootlessness or Evolving Cultural Repertoires

The way that I experienced PTO conferences defies the problematic categories of which I speak. Practitioners cross borders in unpredictable patterns to learn from and influence one another; the hybridity of their art is palpable. Indeed, I have met theater makers from Israel using PTO to explore paths to peace in the volatile conflict with Palestine and theater makers from Pakistan providing health education work in Vietnam using a form of theater with Boalian—and perhaps many other—influences. At one of the conferences, I interviewed two educators from Nigeria using a hybrid theater of local forms and FT elements to explore gender oppression in rural communities around the university where they worked. This FT work is the work of traveling cultures, dialogized and layered by the myriad of ways in which people around the globe use and experience it. However, even though hybridity *is* dominant in these intersecting cultural forms (Bhabba, 1994; Gomez-Peña, 1996) and even though we crisscross, exchange, and synthesize the form, our language does not match our experience.

I consider part of the problem to be that identity is measured by what we *say* we are rather than what we *do*. As Ford (2005) has argued, when we speak of identity, we rely on discursively constructed differences—identities already packaged, labeled and seemingly static—valued as aspects of diversity. However, the oft-repeated “we are this, while they are that” does not necessarily establish who we are or what we do because these categories cannot contain the complexity of our performances. Although we, as TO practitioners, might live complex lives that move and intersect with others as our art collaborates across frontiers in unexpected ways, we all introduced ourselves at the PTO conferences by highlighting the boundaries that separate us. When we state our country of origin, the ethnicity that gets attached to our semblance conjures all the baggage attached to its meaning. However, this ritual of stating, “I am from [   ], this is who I am” is a long-standing, widely accepted, routinely repeated practice that helps shape the illusion of an internal and coherent core to unitary identity categories. This accustomed repetition might capture a momentary snapshot of our existence but cannot contain the density and depth of what have been traveling lives.

Despite this fact, these categories remain part of the centripetal discourse of diversity; they are commonplace, pervasive, and widespread. In the paragraph above the last, as I build a critique of the equivalence culture/identity and try to move away from fixed articulations of identity, I am encumbered by the problematic categories (Palestinian, Pakistani). However, in using them to make the point that their repetition is their power, I repeat them, thus bolstering their power. As flawed as these words might be, I use them as best as I can.

When Diane demanded, “I should not be forced to listen to a language I don’t understand in an American classroom!” Line 66, 67 she voiced a widespread, decidedly monoglossic discourse: that because English monolingualism is a defining trait of

American identity, knowledge and content must be delivered in English in an American classroom. Even though the audience members were likely all progressive educators, no one denounced her assertion; not one got up to explain that in rural and metropolitan communities across the United States, people speak Arabic, Yiddish, Spanish, Chinese, Greek, Navajo, Polish, Hawaiian, Russian, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and hundreds of other languages. The counter-discourse that remained unspoken was that the United States has always been a polyglot and multicultural nation speaking a myriad of languages. The idea that the United States is a monolingual, English-speaking nation is an incomplete abstraction that reflects only a fractional although visible side of our performed national identities. The United States has been linguistically diverse since the colonial period (Crawford, 2000) yet *English is our official language* functions as a powerful, centralizing, and unifying discourse: A universalist truth repeated constantly by public, prominent, and authoritative bodies.

This phenomenon is a good example of how Foucault explained the diffusion of power. In the case of state-sponsored English-only mandates, the impetus behind the artifice of Universalist truths is the aspirations and goals of groups that operate out of deep-seated xenophobia. This technique of appropriating and deploying a widely-embraced *universal truth* to achieve a less overt political goal is an exercise in power. The group taps into a sovereign power, such as the doctrine behind the nation's identity, and diffuses it as part of a tactic in advancing a different set of interests and in keeping a particular group out. As in the forum, a challenge to Diane's English-only demands becomes the site of a larger struggle where authoritative words are challenged through a number of diverse interests.

In the initial forum when the idea was presented—even if mockingly—that a language other than English could be central in how learning is disseminated in this particular classroom, it was immediately dismissed as ridiculous and absurd. It is clear that Hiroki's was a one-time performance, decidedly not entitled to repetition—at least not on any official stage. Diane's assertion—that English has a privileged place at the front of the classroom—is, as Bakhtin (1981) would argue, like any other assertion, dialogical; it has its impulse, and it has its objects. It protects a particular historical *truth.* What is more, it is directed toward those who do not speak English, and situates them outside of this specific definition of the collective identity. And it is founded on the problematic binary established as whiteness and difference come to be.

We object to performances like Hiroki's and continue performing this sense of national self in English. Whether in front of the classroom or in front of the camera delivering the news, our individual utterances are part of the daily powerful maelstrom of English-only. If a giant ear were suspended above the United States, it would pick up a cacophony of sounds: a church service in Vietnamese in San Jose, CA, a group of students speaking in Arabic while watching Al Jazeera at a university in Illinois, the sounds of children at play in Cantonese somewhere in the Northwest, and the different cadences of the Spanish spoken from El Paso to Miami and New York. This swelling of sounds would be a loud clamor challenging the definition of our collectivity in English-only. However, it is easier for people like Diane to lay claim over the massive territory that makes up the United States if they homogenize and overlook its boundless complexity so that an *us and them* can be established. Here is the power of a centrifugal unifying discourse that allows them to sustain a version of nation that accords with their perceived needs and ideas about who they are.

As such, they are like one of the cartographers in the Kirby example that I described in Chapter 1 to explain the modern subject. For them mapping was not necessarily about understanding what actually existed, but rather about rationalizing the world in a way that accorded with their ideas about who they were in relation to it. The immeasurable vastness of a landscape that must have been—and probably still is—indomitable and impassable was impossible to reduce. However, they could control it and claim it as their own, only if they presumed knowing it—and to know it they had to organize it and bring consensus on that ordering. The coherence and boundedness of cartography and Diane's orderly and univocal nation exemplify the kind of power that can be exercised through the discourse of difference.

How does one halt this particular performative? I often ponder how we can do away with convention or categories of difference, but no ideas ever congeal in my mind. The closest I have come to viewing an irregular and jumbled iteration of identity appeared in a documentary film that I saw many years ago. Its cluttered and disobedient narrative was visible particularly in how critics reviewed it at the time. Most had qualms with the story's haphazard and bumpy feel, as no geographies or national boundaries were used in developing the story (Holden, 1994). To me, the criticisms missed the point. *Latcho Drom* or *The Good Road* (Gatlif, 1993) was intentionally dislocated and jumbled. It followed the Rom people—notably a group that has been everywhere yet belongs nowhere—in a westward trek, beginning in the Rajasthan-Punjab region of Central Asia and through the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe, showing neither maps nor a clear route and providing no narration. If we claim to know of the countries and musical genres in the story, it is only because viewers and critics filled in the spaces and ordered and cataloged what they saw as Gatlif's (1993) messiness and omissions. The organizing tropes are neither geographic nor ethnic but rather musical, as the film simply follows the wanderings of a people through their musical lineage and records the shifting of that lineage as they transit through a multiplicity of places and come into contact with other groups and musical forms. Gatlif's camera focus on vibrant and colorful dances and songs results in a dazzling pageant of spectacular color and variety.

In *Latcho Drom,* Gatlif (1993) hinted at the impossibility of recounting, let alone organizing, the vastness and intricacies of hundreds—perhaps thousands—of years' worth of migrations, movements, and amalgamation. Thus, what we see is the layering of beautiful and colorful images of the vibrant music, striking instruments, and arresting dances. What emerges is, at best, a circular chronology in which we hear the echoes of a *santoor* from a moonlit ancient bridal ceremony in an early scene heard in the joyful cimbalom of the old man in the World War II village, or the wooden castanets of a contemporary Spanish Flamenco in the last scene as they talk back to the metal talams of an earlier celebration somewhere in the Middle East. Through the eye-catching dances, the rhythmic clapping, and the countless faces, we are left with a jumbled web of untraceable influences and linkages that cannot be untangled to make a linear narration.

Latcho Drom is indeed messy, as are human migrations in which groups of people who might have started their journey together go in different directions, setting off new lines that cross a river here, climb a mountain range there, or die in a desolate desert over there. Still, if we wanted to find our bearings, there is plenty to which we could connect (Gatlif, 1993). We could connect to the pain and suffering that punctuates the film from its beginning, from the opening scene in which a small boy cries out in thirst to the scene in which a holocaust survivor recounts her deportation to an extermination camp to the last song, a protracted *quejio* ballad recounting the hatred that the Rom have felt from the outside world. It is noteworthy that the few times that Gatlif mentions the term *Rom* is to allude to the unspeakable hatred and scorn endured by this people. It is as if he were voicing my own belief that hatred of a people requires the language of diversity: that they be known, contained, and precisely identified; that their bodies be marked; and that their complex stories be rendered static as if stopped in time. Once this has been understood and the other subsumed, we can establish the distance required to hate.

The Role of Repetition in Power

Once we have order, we can revisit it, look it over and over as we left it, stable and recognizable. The performance of gender as Butler (1999) has described it, the repeated gestures, the revisited knowledge, the accustomed norms, produces the illusion of a coherent internal core or substance. Bakhtin's (1981) metaphor of the centripetal forces of discourse is a useful visual of a compressing force that compacts and hardens a particular meaning as it pushes in a circular motion toward the center. I am extrapolating from this metaphor when I assert that the repetition of performances, rituals, and discourses that identify one as belonging to a particular racial or ethnic group gives that group coherence and brings it legitimacy or illegitimacy over time.

Butler argued (1997) that if repetition is the force of legitimacy, failure to repeat a performance breaks its continuity; if we break with prior context, we open up space for a new kind of performance. Similarly, Bakhtin (1981) wrote that when a meaning is interrogated and heteroglossia (that is, other meanings) are allowed in, that meaning loses its coherence. As the unity between that meaning and its object is broken, a space is opened between the two where other performances can take place. Using the example of Rosa Parks, Butler explained that when she sat in the front of the segregated bus, she halted a performance that had been repeatedly enacted in a historical context. Through this new performance, she broke with the past and began shaping a new context by claiming a right that up until then she had not been given. In doing so, she infused this new performance with a certain kind of power, and she performed race in a new way. Even though she belonged to a class of people for whom the law offered no protection or guarantees she publicly performed defiance not deference; disobedience in the place of victimhood and aplomb in the face of injustice. She recast her characters on a historical script that at some point had considered her not fully human as entitled to the same protections and guarantees that were offered to whites.

To confront racism as it is experienced today, Winant (1998) has called for more of this type of remaking. He has argued that although both racism and its context have shifted, the discourses—and I add, performances—have not kept pace with this change. In a sense, some performances of race have not broken with prior historical conditions. He provided the example of the term *institutional racism* as one effectively deployed during the 1960s yet no longer helpful in explaining what racism means today. Institutional racism, argued Winant, had allowed activists to articulate what was once rarely understood, a type of racism that was much more insidious than what was being described as mere individual prejudice. More specifically, the term called attention to a deep-seated system of exploitation and abuse against racialized groups that was an intrinsic part of the country's history.

The term *institutional racism*, however, became problematic when it inflated the idea of racism to a point where it obscured some of the successes of the Civil Rights Movement (Winant, 1998). After it did so, it began operating like a centripetal discourse that prevented us from seeing, let alone examining, the phenomena that emerged after segregation such as racial interpenetration and racial hybridity. Racism and its effects, according to Winant, were amplified to such extent that we were not able to clearly articulate the gains of the Civil Rights Movement, and the discourse of institutional racism may have weighed so heavily on our collective imagination that it might have served as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Some of the victories of the Civil Rights era like the legislative resoluteness regarding the desegregation of education or the termination of restrictive covenants preventing blacks from buying homes in white neighborhoods enforcement did not come willingly. However, the stage was being set so that performances that fit a more egalitarian society could be possible. I understand, as Winant (1998) adamantly clarified, that the argument is NOT that racism is a vestige of the past. The argument is that racism—as race—mutates. To be sure, some of its new forms include the resurgence of eugenics as a way to justify enduring inequity, the angry backlash that has fiercely defended White privilege by decrying reverse discrimination, and the undercutting of the gains made possible by affirmative action. Furthermore, the institutions that afford systematic privilege to Whites have not been fully transformed, and the belief that the United States is a "White man's country" is still firmly planted in many people's imaginations. Nevertheless, today race and racism are different. According to Winant, they now exist within a multipolar racial landscape where hierarchical and social structures have sufficiently shifted to bring real privilege to segments within racialized minorities.

Additionally, the rigid lines of exclusion and segregation imposed so long ago are not nearly as immobile as they once were. Members of racialized groups can and do occupy—without legal challenge—positions of power and influence in institutions of higher education; in the corporate world; and, more recently, at the highest possible rank in the global political order. In other words, this new context allows for new performances of race. However, those new performances have been slow in coming. For example, ending miscegenation laws was a victory of the Civil Rights movement, yet interracial dating and interracial marriages are still disallowed within some of the same communities that fought so hard for these relationships to be possible. Referring to these old inflated discourses of racism in a new era, where race and racism need to be reassessed, Winant affirmed (1998), "Today we live in a situation in which 'the old is dying [and yet] the new cannot be born.'" (Winant, 1998 quoting Gramsci, 1971, 275).

The stage has been set for the new to be born. Yet, I see long-standing performances of race still being deployed that leave certain contexts of usage—many of them oppressive—undisturbed. In 2001 Christine Sleeter spoke about the difficulty some racialized students had in teacher education programs vis-à-vis what she called the overwhelming presence of whiteness. By this she meant overwhelmingly white classes, with white students and white professors driving an agenda where racialized students and their interests can't seem to find a space. In such classes, according to Sleeter, racialized students either felt silenced or would 'lose their voice' (102). Similarly, in the Boal forum

Wasim and Hiroki's performances seemed to lack a firm and self-assured voice as they responded to Diane's white ignorance and entitlement with their own sense of displacement, even dispossession. By sitting on the overturned chair and in an uncomfortable position Wasim reasserted as he reenacted his disadvantage vis-à-vis Diane. Hiroki, on the other hand, repeated the surprise and disbelief of his "May I, really?" Line 40 when he was invited to perform the Japanese play at the front of the classroom.

I contend that racialized students are performing on a changed stage where new contexts of usage can be realized. Even the watered-down diversity rationale which replaced more potent race conscious policies can be used as the backdrop for a confident performance of racialized students' rightful place in the Multicultural education classroom. Without invoking race or ethnicity, the rationale—as Moses and Chang have detailed it—calls for the fostering of the diversity of views that come from different ways of being in and experiencing the world. Citing Martha Nussbaum's book, *Cultivating Humanity*, the authors conclude that solving our most pressing problems requires engaging the complexity of a multiplicity of perspectives as well as reconciling opposing understandings of the same issues. As the authors put it, an environment where a student finds disparate and contrasting views is a space for an intelligent rethinking and a critical examination of their own history, culture and beliefs. More importantly, even though the rationale is insufficient in addressing equality and social justice, by facing the experiences of others, students could see that their own actions affect a larger community; and that their own wellbeing is inextricably linked to the wellbeing of others (Robertson, 1992). The most profound of outcomes could be that students would learn to feel a deep sense of responsibility for others as well as for themselves.

Part of Winant's argument was that inflated ideas obscure alternative ones. Diane's overwhelming performance of whiteness went on without challenge. Her huge entitlement created a whirlwind of discourses she inflated to keep the status quo. I suggest that even with a blunted diversity rationale the legal entitlement, the language, the precedents are there so that students like Hiroki and Wasim can enact a counter-historic discourse that includes complex deliberations, multiple perspectives and diverse concerns, and reflects the desires and intentions of a new kind of student. This student would sit tall around the table and speak without hesitation to resist Diane's definition of the American Identity and would challenge the discourses that support her arguments. Through a more structured and directed FT process Hiroki and Wasim could be instructed to use their performances as tactics inside a contentious space where students compete for meanings and power.

One of the ways in which we exercise power, as Butler (1997) demonstrated with the example of Rosa Parks, is by banishing or at least restricting prior contexts of domination by creating new ones in which entitlement is not based on whiteness. The space is there for different performances of race—adaptive, in motion—to position ourselves differently, as Rosa Parks did, pushing both the contexts and discourses that preceded us and the ones that follow us.

Dialogism in discourse signals that the discourses that preceded us come to us with the ideological baggage of prior contexts. By drawing on heteroglossia, we can imbue discourse with a new kind of power. As McLaren (2005) wrote, in performing and furthering oppressive discourses, we are like hosts who have both afforded subsistence to and propagated poisonous mutating viruses. I argue that in our performances, we either repeat or carry forward in our bodies and language the investments that they bring or we challenge them by inserting new desires and new intentions to create the conditions where unrehearsed performances can flourish. Then, the question becomes, when we move forward powerful discourses, as in the case of English only, or when we perform new aspirations and new creeds, how are our lives changed in more tangible ways?

Discourse and the Power to Transform Lives

The question of whether people have experienced life changes through the FT process is difficult to assess. Can change be enacted by discursive means? One of the challenges in answering that question is that FT unfolds in contained spaces separate from the day-to-day experiences of the participants. However, as Boal has explained, FT is rehearsal for the revolution. Thus, one must ask, what kind and whose revolution is it, and what bearing does FT have on it? What I found was that PTO critics have had much to say about the relationship between PTO and people's material reality. For example, Blanca Facundo's critical evaluation of Freire's work looked at its effectiveness especially once it had been translated to First World settings. In broad terms, Facundo denounced Freire's optimism within the Latin American complex political and economic dimensions and rigid class structures. She argued that in his work Freire had shied away from theorizing fully the horrific violence and the misery that have characterized Latin American class struggles. Facundo also pointed at Freire's middle class and relatively privileged upbringing and asked a very pointed question: where was Freire's romanticized revolutionary willing to commit class suicide in order to help the oppressed become more fully human? The Latin American revolution seemed much more complex than Freire characterized it and he had little to do with what was happening at its very core where poverty and hopelessness still endure.

Facundo also examined a number of Freire-inspired projects in the U.S. that she had engaged and concluded that as his ideals had crossed the border to appear in the north, they did not translate nor fare very well either. First, here, there was no equivalent violent and protracted class struggle. Freire's theory did not account for long lasting and volatile dynamics of a deeply unequal social structure in Latin America. Neither could it answer for the complex subject positions that were emergent in the U.S. and that existed beyond the oppressor and oppressed binary he had constructed in Latin America. In the U.S., the shadow of a postmodern subject obscured everything: Beyond their class, individuals were raced, gendered, with, sometimes, multiple national affiliations thus, in many ways fragmented ideologically speaking. In the United States there was neither class warfare nor the insurmountable class differences within which Freire and Boal developed their ideals. Facundo concluded that a philosophy that had initially been intended for the work of "revolutionaries" in a rural, impoverished corner of a developing nation lost its purposes as it was appropriated and put to the service of what she called, the cultural bourgeoisie of an industrialized wealthy nation (Facundo, 1984 quoting Alvin Gouldner, 1982. In this new context, and in contrast to their original goals, the purpose of the philosophy turned selfish and self-centered particularly as participants lost sight of the cruel and miserable conditions that the whole philosophy had intended to ameliorate.

O'Sullivan (2003) in her article, Searching for the Marxist in Boal, leveled a similar critique on TO. It was the same judgment—she argued—that Marx brought against Hegel: Thinking alone would not change the world. Human thought was only a response to and a reflection of the problems that surfaced out of the material and social conditions under which people lived. In this sense, “idealism was profoundly conservative as a point of view. It indulged in the thinking that the battle of ideas was a substitute for change of the material and social conditions of which thought was a reflection” (87). Both Facundo and O’Sullivan saw PTO as a progression of suggested ideas. They were both guilty of decontextualizing and ignoring the complexity of the wider social and economic reality (O’Sullivan). According to the critics, Boal and Freire’s work was Hegelian—simply, a successive adaptation of new ideas, where material reality did not have any bearing on the practice. In the end, TO was reduced to a mere therapeutic and unproductive exercise that might change individuals but could not change the organization of production.

Boal (1995) attested this criticism in the telling of the following event in his *Rainbow of Desire*. Early on in his activist work, his troupe Arena de São Paulo traveled to the North East of Brazil and was performing in front of an audience of peasants. At the end of the play they sang, “let us spill our blood” encouraging the peasants to revolt. The peasants, inspired, decided to answer the call and proposed that with the troupe and the troupe’s weapons they could rise together against the landowners. Boal, embarrassed, conceded that the weapons were mere imitations making it clear that the blood that was to run, as the peasants concluded, would be only theirs. On that day he decided never again to embolden people to take risks he was not willing to take himself; or to give any sort of advice to the audiences with whom he interacted.

The question as it is posed by Boal’s critics forces the analysis into a dichotomy.

On one side there are the language, knowledge, and ideas circulated by people. On the other, there are the tangible and material conditions of their lives. And there is no discernible connection in between. With my chosen theoretical framework, however, and in the development of my analysis my intent has been to bridge discourse and materiality and understand the power in words. I have interjected the idea of performativity to articulate how individuals move meanings forward with and through their bodies. These meanings, I have argued, can mediate the process of change. For example, in Butler's explanation of gender identity the experience and materiality of gender is a daily doing manifested in the repeated outward bodily performances of our understandings and knowledge about gender. These rituals and embodiments of gender are the materialization of established norms of conduct.

Through their performances of particular cultural norms and agreements bodies are shaped as they participate in cultural exchanges and events. In turn, cultural meanings and cultural processes might be changed as a result of unique and transformative performances and performers. In Rosa Parks' example her performance of race broke with the prior contexts of usage and the conventions of the time. She put forth a new performance of race, and with it, the conditions for a different kind of event. Or in Butler's terms –as she challenged Bordeaux—in Rosa Park's performance we witnessed a wrong invocation of a ritual. That disruption in the ritual's accustomed iteration opened up a space of possibility and a glimpse into future iterations. The transformative performance is part of heteroglossia or the force of diversification. It is these divergent performances what breaks the fixity of a particular meaning and its object. In the space that is opened between the two resides the possibility for change. Furthermore, Parks' halting of segregation as a repeated cultural event revealed that the very repetition of these performances was what gave them continuity and legitimacy. Thus, both in the repetition and the halting there is a certain kind of power.

In the forum, Diane's assertion that she should not be forced to listen to words in another language in her classroom is a repeated performance of entitlement and whiteness. She taps the power of the Universalist truth that regularly and unopposed links English-only with a white American identity. However, this performance unfolds within a context where other performances are possible. In a university where racialized students sit around the same table Diane does, they don't have to go on giving her entitlement and privilege center stage. Yet, when Diane is enraged by one of the students who said, "This smells of White supremacy!" and her response was "are you going to sit there and let her call me a racist?" Wasim reacted by shifting his position, from sitting on a turned over chair to sitting on the floor behind that chair, with his body hidden from the audience and his head in his hands. The scene seemed to convey that as Diane's concerns—yet again—took center stage, Wasim was rendered invisible.

I contend that the context in today's institutions of higher education could and should support racialized performances that are endowed with power. One of the ways in which we exercise power, as Butler (1997) demonstrated with the example of Rosa Parks, is by banishing or at least restricting prior contexts of domination by enacting unrehearsed performances. In this case entitlement could be performed as a ritual that is not based on whiteness. Performances of race that are adaptive and dynamic could push both the contexts and discourses outward showing the heteroglossia outside of accustomed centripetal discourses. For example, the idea that English is the nation's official language and should be the language of instruction has already been rebuffed by a number of academics (Crawford). What we have not seen in this forum or elsewhere are repeated performances where languages other than English are used in academia to take on authoritative discourses like history or classic theater. This alternate iteration of the ritual—if repeated enough—would stop being preposterous and loosen the fixity of the meaning and its object, English and officialdom.

As McLaren (2005) wrote, in performing and furthering oppressive discourses, we are like hosts who have both propagated and afforded subsistence to poisonous mutating viruses. There is power in carrying forward in our bodies and language the investments and intentions of previous masters. However, in our interrogation of those intentions and investments and a defiant assertion of new desires and new intentions through new performances we exercise some kind of power.

CHAPTER 4

CRASH

With this second forum, I wanted to understand whether an audience that self-identified as diverse and who came to the forum to interrogate race and racism, could be more adept in spotting and challenging the problematic discourses regarding race. The majority in the group identified as Latino, Black, or American Indian and they had come to the forum because they were interested in the topic. This was an event within the University of Utah 2006 Martin Luther King Jr. celebration. That year's theme had been: "Past or Present? Racism and Oppression in the United States." As the Vice President for Diversity had explained at the celebration's opening remarks, that year's event aimed at exploring how the concepts of racism and oppression had changed since the death of Dr. King. The FT had been the last event and the script of the forum was a re-enactment of scenes from the film *Crash* (Haggis, 2004), which had also been screened during the week-long celebration. After the film showing, David Dynak, the organizer of the FT and then-chair of the theater department, had invited the viewers to join him the following day in an exploration of the complex portrayal of racial tensions that they had just observed. He explained that it would be an FT and what the process entailed.

As I looked around the space, the group that assembled together for the forum was unlike the first one in Boal's forum. Twenty-three out of thirty-four people identified as American Indian, Latino or Latina, African American, or Asian American. With their agreement to participate in what promised to be a difficult conversation, they had demonstrated a singular interest in and motivation to probing race and racism. Dynak had asked them to identify the stereotypical or detrimental representations of racialized peoples in the film and to reappropriate them in a way recognizable to them. I had assumed, as perhaps Dynak had also, that because these participants were at the receiving end of stereotypical and dubious representations of the racialized other, they would have found it easier to recognize the maligned discourses and associations projected onto racialized actors. I had also expected that they would have had plenty of ideas on how to spot the discourses, take them apart and denounce the stereotypes. I thought they would have been better suited to understanding the inaccuracies, simplifications and generalizations.

Furthermore, unlike Boal, Dynak hat set up the terms for a much more self-reflexive and critical conversation. He did not engage the oppressor/oppressed binary and instead introduced a Foucauldian definition of power where power did not emanate from a single source and instead could shift given the actors and their interactions. Furthermore, Dynak. positioned the group much differently vis-à-vis the discourses of race by transgressing Boal's cardinal FT rule: he allowed the participants to replace anybody on stage including the oppressor. This opened up the interventions so that any discourse enunciated by either oppressor or oppressed could be examined, challenged and even changed. What I observed is that this group was just as ineffective as the previous one in discerning the ways in which power manifests through discourse.

In the previous chapter I argued that discourses that fix objects and meanings are the work of power because they close the possibility for other meanings to emerge; they also obscure the heteroglossia or the forces of diversification and contestation present in discourses. I also noted that as subjects of discourse we repeat these fixed meanings through our performances reproducing their power. That is, through repetition we naturalize them, ensure their durability and sustain their legitimacy. I used the example of the discourse and categories of diversity. As meanings fixed to their objects we use these categories—White, Black, Latino and others—to impose an order to what could otherwise be represented as incongruous and free-floating identity traits.

However, as Bakhtin argued, a word cannot coincide perfectly with its object because meanings are always open ended as they are dialogized or in conversation with other meanings. We are always infinitely more than what we say we are. For example, if we consider that our performances are always in response to the unpredictable performances of others and that those interactions are part of what are always evolving cultural repertoires. Thus, the categories of difference foreclose meaning because they are used to impose, demand, enforce, and exclude. They impose particular and limited utterances and performances of self demanding from bodies the repetition of patterns of behavior attributed to rigid and recognizable identities. They enforce a particular order in which people are expected to perform within preordained parameters of authenticity with which some are deemed insiders while others are excluded as cultural trespassers.

I have also explained how the fixed discourses and meanings of difference have been at the foundation of structures of inequality and the source of much estrangement between members of the groups created by the categories. Difference entails the negation of the other, saying to that other, I am not you and you are separate, different and unequal. In the case of black and white—difference was constituted to justify an enduring system of inequality where blacks are still more likely to live in poverty and have limited access to education, adequate housing, health care and so on. Besides the economic gaps, there is another gap created by lack of meaningful contact between the groups that we have set up through difference. In our ignorance, fear becomes the means through which the other is accessed. Today, it is difficult to imagine a different way to understand one another, indeed to understand oneself, that is not founded on the fallacy of race.

What follows is a reenactment from the film Crash by a group of theater students. The scene is offered as an opportunity to identify the discourses or race, their distortions so that as a group, we can reclaim those discourses so that they are more recognizable to us. The film accurately portrays racial tensions as the result of our profound ignorance and fear of the other. However, the film also re-enforces the rigid categories of diversity in a way that renders some of the characters as mere stereotypes wandering through an old story in need of a more nuanced retelling. Some in the FT audience identify Farhad as the oppressor in this scene. However, I will argue that power is manifest through the discourses and performances of new-Orientalist expressions that characterize Farhad.

Racialized Actors and the Performance of Race

These are the texts of the original scene followed by the students' interpretation and reenactment of the scene.

In the scene of the film Daniel a Latino locksmith is finishing the door lock for Farhad, an Iranian shop owner who needed the backdoor of his store fixed. Daniel checked the lock one last time and then walked towards Farhad who seemed to have fallen asleep on his chair.

Daniel: “Excuse me, excuse me sir?”

Farhad: turned his head towards Daniel and said, “did you finish?”

Daniel: “I replaced the lock but you got a real problem with that door.”

Farhad: got up from his chair and approached Daniel saying, “you fixed the lock”

Daniel: “No. I replaced the lock but you got to fix that door”

Farhad: walking away, “just fix the lock”

Daniel: grabbing Farhad’s arm so that he turns around to look at him, “sir, sir, sir, listen to me, what you need is a new door.”

Farhad: Incredulous, “I need new door?”

Daniel: “Yeah.”

Farhad: getting really close to Daniel’s face, “Ok, how much?”

Daniel: Confused. “I don’t…sir you are going to have to call someone who sells doors.”

Farhad: “You trying to cheat me right? You have a friend that fix doors?”

Daniel: “No, I don’t have a friend that fixes doors bro”

Farhad: Screaming, “then go and fix the fucking lock you cheater.”

Daniel: Lifting a piece of paper from the counter. “You know what? Why don’t you pay for the lock, I won’t charge you for the time.”

Farhad: forcibly grabbing what looks like an invoice from Daniel’s hand and screaming, “boy you think I am stupid, you fix the fucking lock, you cheater!”

Daniel: I’d appreciate if you stop calling me names.”

Farhad: Screaming in Daniel's face "Then fix the fucking lock"

Daniel: Screaming, "I replaced the lock you gotta fix the fucking door"

Farhad: Screaming "You cheat, you fucking cheater!"

Daniel: Exasperated, grabs the piece of paper, crumples it and throws it in a nearby trash can, "Fine, don't pay"

Farhad: surprised, "What?"

Daniel: turns to look at Farhad and with a smile says, "have a good night" and walks away

Farhad: "No! Wait! Screaming, "You come back here, you fix the lock, come back here you fix the lock! Fix the fucking lock."

The following is the students' improvisation:

Farhad (*loudly*): Did you fix it?

Daniel: I replaced the lock, but you are going to need a new door.

Farhad: But you fixed the lock, right?

Daniel: I replaced the lock. You are going to need to buy yourself a new door.

Farhad: Why didn't you fix the lock?

Daniel: I replaced the lock. You are going to need a new door.

Farhad: Why? Why do I need a new door?

Daniel: Sir, I replaced, the lock, the lock is fine, the door is broken.

Farhad (*screaming*): Why did you break my door?

Daniel: I replaced the lock!

Farhad: Yeah, you replaced the lock, what is wrong with the door?

Daniel: You need a new door, sir.

Farhad: Oh right, I need a new door. You are trying to cheat me? You are trying to cheat me. You probably have friends who sell doors, don't you?

Daniel: Look, you won't have to pay me for my work.

Farhad: You come here and you are supposed to fix something, you break my door, and then you try to cheat me.

Daniel (*screaming*): I replaced the lock!

Farhad: Don't cheat me, why are you trying to cheat me?

Daniel crumples the bill that he was presenting and throws it at Farhad, then turns around and walks away.

Farhad (*screaming*): What is this? Come back, cheater!

When Dynak introduced the exercise to the audience he started by explaining that his students would reenact some of the scenes in the film in FT style. He clarified, "We will play a little bit of the scene and then we will try to fix it, and if you want to join in and be one of the roles in that scene, just say 'Freeze' or 'I'd like to step in.'" His approach was that of a teacher with his students, encouraging everyone to make the most of the experience by participating. In this way he informed us that we would have a deeper dialogue that would enrich our understanding of the issues. His style as a facilitator was markedly different from Boal's in that he was lenient and flexible regarding specific rules. He was also inconspicuous in a very soft sort of way, and even though he wanted the audience to take risks, he let the interventors do what they wanted for the most part. Dynak's final comment before he took his seat in the audience was that the students would play the scene as an improvisation, as he did not want them to feel that they needed to be completely true to the script of the film. Our purpose, he had said, was to examine the general ideas presented by the film.

Dynak's style also differed sharply with Boal's in the way he positioned this group differently vis-à-vis the text and the task at hand. He had jettisoned "oppression" as a foundational idea in favor of the notion of "power." For example, he established from the outset that there could not be any innocent victims in the struggle. His understanding of power was Foucauldian in that he saw it as moving through the scene and changing hands depending on the interactions and context. As the interventions began, Dynak tasked the group with figuring out, "Who had the power in the scene?" thus making it clear that power does not emanate from a single center, namely a powerful and oppressive force. Instead, power is dispersed, changing hands as both dynamics and context shift for the actors. In this way, he offered every character's performance and utterance for interrogation.

In the scene we see Farhad a self-identified Persian immigrant who had carved a modest life for himself and his family by operating a small convenience store. The back door of his business had been broken, so he called on Daniel, a Latino locksmith, to fix it. As it is apparent both in the original scene and the reinterpretation, the encounter between the two was marred by confusion and misjudgment: Daniel had failed to communicate to Farhad that the door was broken at the hinges so that fixing the lock—what Farhad had asked him to do—would not resolve the problem. While Daniel was trying to explain this to him, Farhad became quite abusive because his perceptions had been tainted by Farhad's assumption that Daniel was not to be trusted and was simply trying to take advantage of him. Not wanting to endure Farhad's abuse, Daniel had left the store with the lock replaced but the door not fixed at the hinges. Tragically, that night burglars vandalized the store, and Farhad and his family found it in complete disarray the following morning, with shelves overturned, merchandise strewn across the floor, and racial slurs spray painted on the walls.

After this first scene had ended, Dynak got up to ask, "Boal uses the term *oppression*, but I want to use the word *power*. Where is the power in this scene? Who has got the power?" A woman in the audience responded, "It seems like the one with the loudest voice." Dynak asked, "And who is that?"

A man chimed in, "The shop owner."

Dynak responded, "The shop owner had the power." He looked around the room looking for other suggestions, "Maybe? Yes?"

A woman said something that was inaudible.

Dynak stated, "Yes, but at the end he does not get paid. He does not get any money for the lock or his time!"

The woman opined, "It seems like they never communicated. They never got through to each other. They kept going back and forth like they didn't understand what each was trying to say."

Dynak affirmed, "Okay. Great. Can we try and fix this scene? Can we make it better? Can anyone take one of these roles?"

The Power in the Discourse of Difference

Dynak's transgression of Boal's rule brought me to think that the rule has been more an obstacle than an incentive in the group's efforts to defeat the oppressive force. FT concerns reimagining the script and recasting performances as ways to explore how to get to different outcomes. However, Boal's insistence that the oppressor remain unmovable and undefeatable is problematic at multiple levels. It casts the oppressor/oppressed relationship as a binary where the terms are mutually exclusive. Because the oppressor is the single source of power, participants are never explicitly directed to examine their own implication in the oppression they are witnessing. In an exercise designed to be transformative, allowing the oppressor to go on unchallenged bars participants from critically examining, let alone altering large sections of the script. Furthermore, when the oppressor repeats the poisoned discourses that it usually deploys over and over unchallenged the repetition lends these discourses durability and legitimacy.

Some in the group believed that Farhad was the oppressor in this forum. I think, however, that it was the discourse of Orientalism which makes a character like Farhad possible. We engaged that discourse as it came to us, an instrument of a colonizing force, drenched with the negative imperialist connotations that have given shape to an imaginary layered with distortions and insults; ultimately, an imaginary manufactured to justify violence and war. In his seminal book *Orientalism*, Said (1979) detailed this discourse as one with which the West—that is, Western science, literature, philosophy, economics, and so on—constructed the Middle East as its other. Orientalist scholars gave the West a discourse and therefore a reality through which it could deal with the East. Said's argument is much like the AAAS statement on race that I cited earlier. The binary was fabricated to support emerging relations of domination. This unequal other was imagined so that enfranchisement, freedom, and virtue could be allocated on the Western side of the binary. Eventually this discourse locked East and West in their performances of identity. Said pointed to a centripetal discourse that is given force by way of its amplification and repetition.

These Orientalist discourses and performances have gained force through their repetition in film. For example, in their 1995 article “Arab Stereotypes and American Educators,” Wingfield and Karaman argued that Arab men have rarely been portrayed outside enduring negative images. Instead, Arab men *repeatedly* show up as either “violent terrorists, oil ‘sheiks,’ or marauding tribesmen” (8). Their reference to Disney’s Oscar-winning film *Aladdin* is quite telling: The film’s opening song, Arabian Nights, sets the tone: Oh, I come from a land/From a faraway place/Where the caravan camels roam/Where they cut off your ear/If they don’t like your face/ It’s Barbaric, but hey, it’s home. This song is representative of the way the Orient is cast as a distant, alien and exotic world. We know who its inhabitants are and they are not us (8).

Both in the scene of *Crash* enacted and in the movie itself, Farhad is merely the repetition of a stereotype of a Middle Eastern man whose ordeal reflects the larger narrative of the extremist or terrorist who unleashes horror on innocent victims. As such, he evokes in the audience the accustomed “Orientalist tropes” (Howard 2008, 187) that help inflate the discourse: He is dangerous and backwards; he is unshaven, his face always in a twisted and pained expression; and he is always about to explode in anger. We have seen this performance before. In the film, it is once again repeated; blaming Daniel for the vandalizing of his store, Farhad goes to his house, crazed and armed, where he ultimately shoots Daniel’s young daughter, who has thrown herself in front of Daniel to protect her father.

Difference, the way it is deployed here, fits Ford’s (2005) criticism of it:

Arabs/Middle Easterners/Muslims are reduced to the alienating traits that have come to define them; they are fanatical, unpredictable, and dangerous to us. This bundle of race/culture, as Ford argued, obscures the complexity of a term like *the Orient*, which encompasses, as Said (1979) explained, numerous and vastly different countries that have been lumped under one label. We relate to categories like *Muslim, Indian,* and *Black* as if they were "an objective fact of experience rather than socially constructed ideas" (Daniel, 2001, 20). Both the forum and the film audience receive Farhad's performance without pause as if the object and its meaning were one. We witnessed the repetition without interrupting its continuity. And we allow the imaginary to go on as if it were a fact of experience.

Regardless of how progressive the film maker intended these performances to be, they are part of the daily repetition of these devastating categories/stereotypes, their deployment constantly amplifying noxious discourses and evoking our paranoid fears and hateful reactions. As Adjei (2008) described, the belligerent persona of Farhad reinscribed the Neo-Orientalist, Islamophobic stereotypes and the underlying discourses of fear that sustain them. Even though Dynak gave the group creative license to reinvent or "fix"—as he put it—"the oppressor," and even though we could have been more entuned to racist and xenophobic discourses. It did not occur to any of us to reject Farhad's representations and recast his character, thus unraveling the tight race/culture bundle that has affixed "Arab" to fanatic and terror. FT aims at inventing a new set of circumstances, to take the succession of events to a new outcome. As a group, however, FT participants have not understood that the process requires understanding how discourse sets the stage for particular performances and how if we rewrite a performance we are also rewriting the script.

People looked at each other smiling, some shaking their heads. After a long pause, Dynak pointed to a young White woman and gestured for her to come up front, encouraging stating, “Come on, you can do it.” After the woman got on the stage, Dynak asked her, “Which role do you want to take?” Dynak shifted the rules of FT in a way I thought might bring the participants to a different awareness of the dynamics of power. Dynak broke *the* cardinal rule in FT that the oppressor cannot be replaced. In defending the logic behind this rule, Boal likened the process of FT to that of a boxing match; if the spect-actors were allowed to replace the oppressor to change him into a kinder being, the exercise would not be, as he called it, rehearsal for the revolution. In his words it would instead be more like rehearsing for a boxing match with a paralyzed man. Boal argued that the oppressor must always stay strong, as the more powerful their opponent/oppressor, the more opportunities that the interventors have of developing effective tactics to defeat him. Boal would thus dismiss any quick fixes—like diminishing the oppressive force—as “magic.”

Dynak continued with the intervention. He stated, “Good, super” introducing the new scene and the person now representing Daniel, and said, “And here is the fix.”

Farhad: What are you doing? Why didn’t you fix my door?

Daniel: I fixed it because you asked me to fix it.

Farhad: Yeah, I asked you to fix it, but now you are telling me the door is broken.

Daniel: I don’t work with doors, I don’t know much about them, I can only fix the lock.

Farhad: Then why is the door broken?

Daniel: I don’t know.

Farhad (*screaming*): What do you mean you don't know? I asked you to come fix it and now it is broken. The lock needs to be fixed. I don't understand. Fix it, I beg you!

Daniel: I can only fix the lock; you will have to find another person to come and fix the door.

Farhad: Oh, I see, I understand now. Another person to fix the door . . . you have friends who fix doors, don't you? Maybe one of your gangbanger friends will come and fix my door and then my store will be broken into. Who is your manager? Give me the number!

Daniel: All I can tell you is that you need to get your door fixed.

Farhad: Yeah you have told me. Where is your number? Give me this (*grabbing a copy of the receipt from Daniel*). I am going to get you fired!"

The woman who has come onstage to replace Daniel is looking around. She leans forward and lets out a loud sigh in a gesture of resignation. The scene has proceeded without any changes. However, the Farhad character seemed to have gotten louder and more threatening. Dynak came onstage and asked, "Did she fix it?" Different voices from the audience agreed, "No, it got worse." A white woman added, "This needs a third person. I don't know if two can fix it." Dynak asked, "Does anybody know how to fix the scene? Come on, somebody has an idea of how to fix this. Do you want to fix it?" Seeing that no audience members came forward, he encouraged one of his theater students in the audience to come onstage. The intervention then proceeded as follows:

Daniel: So I fixed your lock, but your door is broken.

Farhad: You fixed my lock, good, good. My door is broken?

Daniel: It was broken before.

Farhad: My door is not broken.

Daniel: Do you want me to show you?

Farhad: No, don't show me the door, you crook.

Daniel: I did not break your door.

Farhad: The door was fine, the lock was broken, you fixed the lock and now my door is broken.

At the previous forum, I had felt completely alienated as one after another interventors had performed like the highly trained and experienced theater professors or students of theater that they were. Here I felt differently; I felt comfortable because the majority of the attendees had no theater training, and the only actors in the room were a handful of students from the theater department, all half my age. Emerging from behind the video recorder, I handed it to a friend in the audience and shouted, "Freeze!" I had seen enough forums to give this a try. Dynak smiled widely. "Come on in Maria," he beckoned from the stage. I asked, "Can I come in from a different place?" He responded, "Absolutely." I moved to the opposite side of the stage, where there was an actual door. As Daniel, I signaled with my hand for Farhad to come closer.

Daniel: Sir, could I show you something?

Farhad: What?

Daniel: Come, come, I want to show you what I did.

Farhad: What do you have up there?

Daniel: This is your door right here, come here, let me show you.

I signaled for him to come closer.

Farhad: No, you show me from over there.

Daniel: Come a little closer.

Farhad: No, I am fine here, show me.

Daniel grabbed the lock on the door.

Daniel: I replaced the lock.

Farhad: Okay, good.

Daniel: It is brand new. This is what I do. Now here (*pointing to the hinges on the door)*, this is broken, and I don't know how to fix that.

Farhad: No.

Daniel: So I fixed what I know how to fix right here (*pointing to the lock*)*,* but this (*pointing to the hinges)* is broken, and I don't have the tools to fix it, so you need to find somebody.

Daniel approached Farhad.

Farhad: No, wait, wait.

Daniel: You need to find somebody to fix that because if you don't, somebody can break in tonight.

Farhad: Somebody already broke in, and that's why I got you to fix my lock.

Daniel: That is why they can break in again, because you haven't fixed what is broken.

Daniel walked back toward the door, pointing at the hinges.

Farhad: No, no I fixed what was broken. . . .

Daniel: This is what is broken.

Farhad: You fix that!

Daniel: I don't have the tools you need.

Farhad: So I have to find somebody who can fix the door, and you know somebody who can fix the door.

Daniel: No, I don’t, you will have to find somebody else, otherwise. . . .

Farhad: I have to find somebody else? It is late.

Daniel: . . . otherwise somebody will come in, break in. That is how someone will break in because you have not fixed what is broken.

Power Dispersed

I looked at Dynak, signaling that I did not know where else to proceed with this. Dynak moved toward the center of the stage and said, “All right. Let’s freeze this.” From the audience I heard someone say, “Good, good.” Dynak answered, “You guys like this. Good work Maria, that is not in the movie. That is one thing that Daniel doesn’t do. He doesn’t try to communicate. Maria tries to show, tell, illustrate, and demonstrate.” I looked at the young actress playing Farhad and said, “You have to yield now,” wondering if she was extending the character in the direction of more abuse when it might not have been necessary. Dynak seemed to agree, and turning to the audience and referring to the actress playing Farhad, he said, “She is a strong person, but did you notice how this time around her voice was having a hard time getting to that previous high level? If we were to fix this scene in the movie, what would need to happen is communication, communication, communication, and maybe there are many other scenes where this occurs as well.”

I went back to my video recording completely disappointed in my attempt at an intervention. As I drove home alone, I kept trying to identify a different way that I could have communicated with Farhad. Only much later did it occur to me that this conflict might not have been about communication between the Daniel and Farhad characters.

The problematic began with the original story: Why did we accept Farhad's performance and the new-orientalist discourses that allowed his casting as a given? When Dynak asked where the power was, in retrospect I would have said that the answer most likely lay between the powerful discourse that officiated over each interaction and all of us who looped into those discourses without hesitation. The new-Orientalist tropes that delineate Farhad are like that *lettre de cachet,* signed by the king and stamped with his seal, containing arbitrary rules and commands.

By buying into it, engaging it as believable we take that letter and disperse its power within a new relationship. We tap that power and disperse it. We repeated the discourse extending it and its effects, thus contributing to their durability. We enliven them by believing them.

<u>The Power of the Subject/subject</u>

We in the forum were lost inside a map we charted; unable to grasp that the Orient and Orientalism are our construction. We have taken categories like Arab, Latino, Asian, and White as discrete, separate and real. Inevitably, they crash into each other, like the hard and round billiard balls of Wolf's metaphor. As I repeatedly read the interventions, I recalled how we were not only very comfortable engaging the stereotypes that we were given as well as the context of interracial conflict that allowed those confrontations. As a discursive structure, our hostility to one another is written in every historical account. Racial conflict as the script we have inherited is a hugely inflated discourse, a repeated ritual uninterrupted. It is a historical virtual and figurative shouting match saturated through and through with the metanarrative of antagonism and distrust:

"You cheat!" "Don't lie to me you crook," "I am going to get you fired," "Maybe one of your gangbanger friends will come and fix my door and then my store will be broken into." These performances—centripetal, recurring, well-rehearsed—are deeply entrenched in our imaginaries. There, they recreate the same coarse interactions that generate more estrangement and fear; and they came way too easily to these young improvisers. I realize that in these forums there are neither transformative performers nor new or unrehearsed performances.

The repetition of these categories of difference are possible in a context were different ethnic groups are in competition with one another so that conflict and resentment have become almost inevitable. Another related and often unstated assumption is that different ethnic groups can have no common interests which make any form of unity or even amity impossible. I have argued that the portrayals of these groups by the media, the ways in which they have been legally defined, the pronouncements of science to solidify these definitions, and the knowledge imparted through and disseminated by our educational system have instituted a hierarchy that has created real inequality, and that inequality as performativity needs to be examined. Both Churchill (1998) and Smedley (1998) have argued that earlier conceptions of human identity were not determined by the color of our skin; ancient peoples defined themselves by traits other than those that were physical or biological. As Smedley explained, examination of records from the Old and New Testament suggest that individuals have historically acquired new cultural characteristics and languages after migrating to new areas or being incorporated into a new group. Most recently, Astuti's (1995) study of the Vezo of Madagascar articulated the existence of a people that derived their sense of identity from fleeting moments within specific contexts in the present. Members of this group seemed to understand and accept that one is not born Vezo—one becomes Vezo—and that the past "is constantly shed as people move from one context to another, from one moment to the next" (153). As Astuti described, being Vezo was not a permanent reality, as one's identity was more of an intermittent doing. For example, the Vezo were a sailing people, but if one made a mistake while sailing, one stopped being a Vezo, or if one moved from the coast to the interior, one ceased being a Vezo and became a Masakoro.

It is very difficult to extend our contemporary understanding of identity to accommodate the notion that *heredity and permanence* need not be part of the definition. As Smedley (1998) has argued, among ancient peoples, new contexts and new languages were the avenues to new social identities, which were by definition fluid and changeable. These peoples could be Christian in one context and Muslim in another without any uncertainty as to which approach to follow, and their ability to speak several languages allowed them to gain access to multiple cultural perspectives and worldviews. Because fluidity and changeability were the primary characteristics of this world, no social meanings were attached to what we today understand as physiological variations among people, and structures of inequality were not tied to the color of one's skin.

Today, there is a permanence and a fixity to the discursive categories that mediate racism. As Ford (2005) explained, we learn these categories through a shared system of cultural meanings that have become bundled together with the categories as if they were one and the same. For example, as Wingfield and Karaman (1995) explained, the terms *Arab* and *terrorist*, have, aided by popular media, become bundled and reduced to what we understand as *Muslim*. As a discursive structure, the category has taken permanent residence in our imaginary as a way to understand certain selves. Whatever relationship could have been established between Farhad and Daniel was mediated by these repeated meanings. The forum thus demonstrated that even a group of racialized peoples deeply invested in liberatory goals and in changing the racial landscape of our contemporaneity is unable to establish new meanings. Here an old metaphor might be useful: We are like fish in water experiencing what aquarists call Old-Tank syndrome, living in murky surroundings in which they are saturated with a moldy and diseased film. The environment is toxic and, predictably, the fish have only grown to the size of their container.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS

Identity and Teaching in the Multicultural Classroom

Nieto's Anchoring and Dolby's Unmooring

I have struggled finding the language to explain identity without anchoring it to something larger than itself. There is a difficulty in reframing identity as it continues to spill out of the categories. On one hand, we continue to invoke ethnic or racial groups and the very definition of identity that we are trying to move away from: identity as a social category that describes a group brought together by a unifying and formative common experience. For example, in her seminal text on multicultural education *Affirming Diversity*, Sonia Nieto acknowledges that students draw from a multiplicity of cultural ways of being in the world in order to integrate into one very complex identity. She has written that, "Language can capture only imperfectly the nuances of who we are as people" because identity is a process in constant flux. "Such is the inexactitude of language" she goes on to say, "that it can never completely capture the complexity of our lives" (11).

Yet Nieto's entire book pivots on students' case studies which for the most part—even if tentatively—reinscribe the idea that the experience of one individual can help us understand the experiences of others like him (37). As an illustration, she says, "James

Karam, the Lebanese Christian student whose case study follows Chapter 5 does not reflect the experiences of all Lebanese students in U.S. schools. However, describing James's experience within its sociocultural framework can help us understand many experiences of other Lebanese students." (37) My own experience, nevertheless, negates this assertion. My own journey cannot help explain the experiences of any one or multiple Colombians—much less Latinas or Latinos in general—as our lives develop in unique ways and far from our "roots." Nieto's conundrum is similar to the one Winant described where—regarding identity and race—the old is dying and yet, the new cannot be born. In the end as Nieto generalizes while trying not to overgeneralize, she voices the dangers of describing culture as a product instead of a process and explains, "Culture is too complex and too varied for us to conclude that all those who share a particular background behave in the same way or believe the same thing" (159).

This hesitation has left culture under theorized as the continued usage of the labels—even as we try not to generalize—reinscribes culture as a collection of rigid and bounded values, and linguistic and folkloric practices (Dolby). On the other hand, Dolby contends that hybridity and globalization have separated culture from place. There exist new patterns of racial reconfigurations, cultural rearticulations and amalgams now informed by new forms of affiliation. In the group of South African students she studied those who have been displaced by war, poverty, and strife fashion identifications away from geography and ethnic or racial affiliations. More and more, she asserts, we see "youth in developed nations and around the world, who are not at home in the nation where they were born, nor in the world" (289). Her contention is that in order to understand this youth, in order to teach them, we must find ways to address this cultural rearticulation, hybridity and multiplicity. The reconfiguration around ideas and performances of representation that is taking place translates—for the youth—into tension, multiple contradictions and the absence of clearly demarcated attachments. It is these contradictions and new reconfigurations that need to be explored and understood as students find their way in the world.

Maalouf's illustration of complex identity configurations is helpful as an initial attempt to convey what is meant by tensions and contradictions. He explains the circuitous navigation "A young man born in France of Algerian parents" must learn to master, because beyond the two obvious cultural influences that he can assume, there are numerous and divergent components to his identity. "The language, the beliefs, the lifestyle, the relation with the family, the artistic and culinary taste, the influences—French, European, Occidental—blend in him with other influences—Arabic, Berber, African, Muslim." The experience of living at these intersections should be enriching and exhilarant if as Maalouf states, "the young man feels free to live it fully, if he is encouraged to take upon himself his diversity" (287). However, as I have argued, if he is forced to live within the categories subjected to arbitrary notions of authenticity he loses the opportunity to live his experience fully. And as teachers we can't encourage this exploration nor nurture it. "His route can be traumatic" adds Maalouf "if each time he claims he is French, some look at him as a traitor or a renegade, and also if each time he emphasizes his links with Algeria, its history, its culture, he feels a lack of understanding, mistrust or hostility" (288).

Some of the tensions and contradictions Maalouf describes are directly linked to colonial legacies and the hostility that remains between colonizers and colonized because of the violent interaction between groups and, the subjugation and land expropriation indigenous populations were subjected to. Other tensions he attributes to the sort of amalgamations made out of what he says are *incompatible* identity components. Maalouf's examples include "a person born in Belgrade from a Serb mother and a Croatian father. Or a Hutu woman married to a Tutsi" and finally, "an American that has a black father and a Jewish mother" (287). The intricacy and unevenness doesn't always come from the coming together of disparate or adversarial groups.

These multiple components that make up a life experience manifest as a culturally complex and rich experience that can't be traced back to each individual element. Even the hybrid or bicultural students Nieto foregrounds to illustrate the complexity of students' lives can be problematized. Yahaira Leon is a young woman of Dominican and Puerto Rican parents who—in Nieto's book—referred to herself as being "half and half." Yet that is not the whole story. Both halves evoke two divergent, bounded and static experiences. However, beyond and outside her Dominican and Puerto Rican designations there is a life: an ongoing journey, away from both geographies, that implies multiple relationships inside the crossings undertaken daily, and a myriad of environments and influences that inform and shape her sense of meaning and purpose in unexpected and unrehearsed ways.

Both halves need to be unpacked and once they are they can't possibly be halves anymore. When unpacked the reference to country reveals the confluence of unexpected cultural practices from near and far. The Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie spoke of this confluence as overlapping stories in her July 2009 TED Talk titled The Danger of a Single Story. By single story she refers to the incomplete story told about a people that reduces them to stereotypes. She says, "Show a people as one thing over and over again and that is what they become." She countered the single story about Africa with multiple examples of the cultural cross-pollinations taking place in her own country. For example, in music, she explained, contemporary Nigerian artists mix English, pidgin, Igbo, Ibibio and Yoruba to fashion an expansive style that does not fit any particular genre. The rhythms can be influenced from afar by the music of Jay-Z, or Bob Marley; as well as by that which is near, like their own Fela Kuti or an individual musician's own trajectory (TED Talk, July 2009).

The Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces in Motion

One useful description of identity and culture as I understand them: ongoing and unfolding outside boundaries; in the confluence of clashing and improbable elements; within shifting environments, and in between fleeting relationships is the one used by Rita Astuti as she described the Vezo of Madagascar. The Vezo identified each other as such based on day-to-day processes—specifically what they did within variable contexts in the present moment as they moved from one activity to the next. The Vezo are who they are in fleeting movements and their identity changes with the transit out of one environment into another. The Vezo were a sailing people, but if one made a mistake while sailing, he stopped being a Vezo. Similarly, if they moved from the coast to the interior, they ceased being a Vezo to become a Masakoro.

But even Astuti's description of the Vezo as constituted within shifting contexts and in between fleeting relationships is problematic. As she drew a picture of the Vezo she constituted an idea of the Vezo that was restraining. Her description brought the process of identity to a halt. I have argued that language is not mere description. Written language in particular, by its very nature, fixes an object to its meaning even if—as in Astuti's case—the reference is to the transience and mobility of a culture. Once a meaning is attached to an object and repeated the two fuse. In repeating those meanings we give the illusion of a core to that object. It is as if the object had an immutable innermost and durable essence. Finally, these centripetal forces of discourse make it difficult to account for its diversifying tendencies which are always moving, always in competition, adding complexity to meaning.

Heteroglossia and the Pope

The heteroglossia of the discourse of identity and its competing forces were evidenced in the recent public's reaction to Francis the new pope of the Catholic Church who was elected on March 13^{th}, 2013. Many wanted to claim him as their own. However, giving meaning to his identity proved apocryphal. In ascribing him to geography many rejoiced in the first non-European pope. Yet, as Jenkins wrote in the Chronicle of Higher Education, some conservative Europeans dubbed Francis—born Jorge Mario Bergoglio—the "most European alternative and the closest thing to an Italian." Nevertheless, as Jenkins pointed out while Argentina might be quintessentially European in today's Latin America, with it come the values of a brazen new world where, for example, same sex unions were legalized in July of 2010.

The incongruent voices and competing meanings were also present among reactions in Latin Americans. There, the election of the pope was seen by some groups as a matter of regional pride. Many received the decision of the papal conclave as "a huge gift" for the region (Bratu and DeLuca, 2013). Others, however, immediately questioned whether Bergoglio was truly Latin American. Commentators highlighted the well-known worldview that Argentina is different from other countries in the region due to its large European immigrant population. And this might very well be true. Unlike the U.S. where ancestry is linked to ethnicity and race, in Latin America group identification has been based on a variety of discordant features that include culture, class, phenotype and nationality (Tellez and Flores, 2011). So how does Latin America come together as a coherent group to claim Bergoglio given the enormous diversity among its peoples?

Adherence to unity cannot be too scrupulous when it comes to identity in this region. While Argentina might have been an exception to the mestizaje that took place in many Latin American nations (Gudmundson, 1984), Brazil has been a melting pot where, for example, the options in accounting for race in its national census include white, black, mixed, Asian and indigenous (Tellez and Flores). And whereas Argentina is white and Brazil is multiracial 45% of the peoples of Peru are indigenous belonging to a multiplicity of different etnias—Achuar, Aguaruna, Ashaninka, Shipibo, Huambisa, Quechua and Aymanra—who have vehemently rejected the idea of integration through miscegenation (Arocena, 2008). Can the pope then be linked to Latin American roots via his first language? Similarly to race and ethnicity, language can't be used as a common denominator in the region given that Brazil—by far the largest country (measured by its size and population) speaks Portuguese rather than Spanish. Thus, the answer to the question of whether the pope is Latin American or European might remain unsettled.

Even if Latin Americans were to agree that the pope is Latino, Latinos in the U.S. have cited the ethnic differences between them and Italian Americans to add to the confusion. Amidst the disagreement one thing was certain: Diverging discourses on the ethnicity of the pope abound. In reaction to one blogger's assertion that Francis is the first Latino pope a woman commented by mudding the definition of Latino, "Jorge Bergoglio is not the first Latino pope; most of his predecessors were Latins (Roman Italians). Pope Francis is a Roman born in Argentina." All in all the discursive activity generated by Francis revealed the heteroglossia in discourse and the conflict and contradictions intrinsic to the competition for meaning. There might not be consensus on how we define identity. Even though the categories presume to bring together a set of cultural or linguistic traits. It is getting more and more difficult to live up to the expectations of authenticity. Arbitrary notions of purity fly in the face of identity as it is lived even by the pope: an enriching experience of multiple attachments to different geographies, multiple languages and incongruous ideologies.

Towards a New Definition of Identity

The pope's example above illustrates the centripetal and centrifugal forces of discourse. It also bolsters Dolby's argument that the components of identity attain from beyond cultural influences readily apparent. Today, identity seems to take shape beyond well-rehearsed cultural influences in the context of its cultural rearticulation. For this reason we have to retool the discursive means we have used to define and teach identity in the Multicultural classroom. There is a lot of movement and cross-pollination unaccounted for that happens as young people live their lives transiting from one influence and environment to the next, from one performance of self to the next. We have to devise pedagogical strategies to acknowledge honor and nurture the multiplicity of ways our students find their way in the world.

As Maalouf wrote, people who embrace the multiplicity within them can act as the “arenas for allegiances currently in violent conflict with one another.” Identities crisscrossed by ethnic, religious and other fault lines “have special roles to play in forging links, eliminating misunderstandings, making some parties more reasonable and others less belligerent, smoothing out difficulties, and seeking compromise” (202). Redefining the contradictions of identity in the Multicultural education classroom as the arena for dialogue where students explore allegiances, affiliation as well as conflict away from the arbitrary designation of the categories, is a departure from the clashes I witnessed as students delineated their identities in opposition to and apart from those they saw as distinct and separate. Providing more examples like the one above might bring students closer to an understanding of identity as process.

On the X Factor, a popular reality TV program that looks for new musical talent I saw a recent example of this youth. During his audition, Willie Jones, a 17-year-old from Shreveport, Louisiana performed a series of personas that could not be described by using any one particular label. He came on stage showing off his muscular biceps in an acid-washed denim vest with ragged edges. A camera behind him revealed a large U.S. Flag stamped on the back of his vest while a smaller one was elegantly placed in the front pocket in the form of a handkerchief. An old-school box top Afro was framed by shaved zigzag shapes just above the ears. Around his waist he had wrapped a blue plaid flannel shirt; and a pair of tight faded jeans and white Michael Jordan shoes completed the getup. After the small talk between Willie and the judges was over, the audience settled down for a rap. Willie Jones, however, astounded everyone when he opened his performance with a low rumble and deep country voice to sing a popular hit, *Your Man* (Baby lock them doors and turn them lights down low).

As he finished his performance the judges were smiling in shock and amusement. One of them remarked, "Willie Jones, you are an absolute original" and with this, the audience went wild. Willie Jones' soft-spoken, smooth twang revealed a charismatic and unassuming southern gentleman. All the judges offered feedback and praise about his humble manner, unusual low voice, and the surprising misalliance between his appearance and the musical genre he had mastered. All of them agreed that he was quite likable and even more so marketable. However, one of the judges praising his demureness used what I saw as a particularly fitting turn of phrase: "I love that about you. Save *that* person too."

I understood that to mean that she, like me, had seen Willie Jones enacting several personas. He moved with ease from one association to the next: body-builder-cowboy-with-the-hip-retro-high-top-and-a-smooth-southern-hip-hop-gentleman-manner. On his black body the judges saw representations *dislodged from their traditional moorings*. The amalgam of traits evoked symbols and cultural practices often understood as at odds with each other. Willie Jones' performance, his outfit, his low rumble and country twang soft-spoken gentleman manners felt as if he lived by experiencing all available options. He enacted a number of divergent commitments as he transited from one moment to another, from one person to the next. Willie Jones captivated me. To my eyes he was exercising another kind of power: The power to manipulate the meanings we write daily on the surface of our bodies.

I see Willie Jones' body as a frontier zone. He is a moving parleying landscape that gets broader as the story of his life unfolds.

I anticipate much skepticism about my argument that we need to rethink identity. Even though I recognize that identity is as significant as a matter of survival for groups who have built solidarity, strength, pride, and the impetus to fight for their rights around their identities. I suggest that today, globalization, has "dislodged [identity] from its traditional moorings" (Dolby and Rizvi, 2008, 9) and people draw strength and build solidarity across geographies, political contexts, ideological tendencies and social networks that include multiple age groups, and different and conflicting affiliations. I argue that rigid categories of difference now delimit the ways in which we can be in the world and impose a regime to our affiliations and loyalties. Most importantly identities are produced through rather than reflected by their categories and the traits associated with them parcel what is otherwise a wide-open field of possibilities. As I have explained, I anchor my argument in the premise that we produce the universe we name and in the process we reduce the richness of our experience. Ultimately, our experience, as Amin Maalouf (2001) has designated identity, is "a person's whole journey through time as a free agent; a process through which we acquire and discard our beliefs; our own individual tastes, our sensibilities and affinities. In other words, identity is simply 'life itself'" (2).

I am aware that without identifiers it would have been very difficult to invent the rationale to coalesce around a common purpose during the Civil Rights Era (Christian 2000). Furthermore, there are a number of institutional arrangements, particularly economic and social benefits that could not be claimed had these constructs not been used. Today, without those identifiers, it would be difficult to track patterns of discrimination that underlie deep inequality and the pursuit of economic equity. The irony that I have pointed to though is that the hierarchy of human valuation on which a structure of inequality was built was made possible only by the categories.

Piecing Together a Pedagogy of Identity with My Theoretical Constructs and the Process of FT

Departing from my insights on identity I submit that defining identity within the struggle for representation is central in the teaching of Multicultural education. Through this process teachers learn that categories of difference are constituted through discourse and co-constructed in dialogic relationships. Diversity, in this sense—like heteroglossia—refers to the idea that within cultural meanings co-exist a multiplicity of voices, ideologies and incommensurable worldviews that are constantly in flux given the competition for meaning. According to this definition both cultures and identities as meanings are always evolving inside the centripetal and centrifugal forces of unification and diversification of discourse. Teachers can explore this competition for meaning to understand how it resists closure and that any attempt at fixing it—as it is the case with the categories of difference—is the work of power.

The constructs that I have chosen—though at first glance abstruse—can be put to the service of a pedagogy of empathy aimed at addressing the question of difference particularly as it becomes a source for tensions within the Multicultural education classroom. The goal of this pedagogy would be, among others, to bring students to a cognitive and affective awareness of their identity and the identity of others as discursive performance. They would also learn to see how power operates through discourse and through performances and how in engaging them through our bodies we can become instruments of that power. Empathy that is based both in a cognitive (strong understanding of the constructs) and affective (bodily self-awareness) discerning of how discourse moves through our bodies might help in shifting the power differentials present in the classroom (Nowak 2011).

Teaching the Power of Discourse

FT can be used to theatricalize conflict brought about by the categories of difference in the Multicultural education classroom. The role of the FT facilitator is to help structure the FT process so that students can find their way inside of it. As part of a critical pedagogy the facilitator also helps students identify generative scripts or scripts that are relevant to their lives as teachers. One recent and pertinent example of a relevant script is the public protest against the Associated Press and the New York Times use of the term *Illegal Alien* to report on the plight of undocumented immigrants. The facilitator could guide the students through the exploration of this problematic by using the theoretical constructs I brought forth. The group would unpack the discourses at play and how power is being negotiated by the various actors involved.

The theoretical guidelines to be used in exploring the controversy over the use of illegal immigrant would include, 1) that constructs of difference are not *objective facts of experience* but rather are constituted in dialogic relationships and through powerful discourses; 2) that identity—in this case illegal alien—is a daily doing or a daily performance of received discourses that get projected on the surface of our bodies; 3) that power is not held by sovereign individuals; instead, it is disseminated through discourse and within particular relationships and dynamics; 4) that part of the power of a discourse such as illegal immigration lies in its repetition; 5) that we exercise and deploy the power of such discourse when we participate in its repetition while giving it durability and legitimacy; 6) that halting the repetition of a discourse and performance is just as powerful as participating in it because without repetition there is no continuity to discourse and without it the illusion created by the continuity cannot endure.

With these discursive tools students could unpack the discourse of illegal immigration in the same way a group of Linguistic Anthropologists led by Jonathan Rosa did. As Cristina Costantini (2012) reported they took on the news outlets to remind them that terms such as illegal, illegal alien and illegal immigrants are neither neutral nor accurate the way an AP editor had maintained. Language, the linguists wrote, does not reflect reality. Rather, it constitutes it. When the media asseverates the illegality of individuals daily they become vehicles of the power of such discourse. In this case they take politically charged language to mislead the public while branding a stereotyped group with the stigma of criminality. Worse yet, as Rosa wrote, the stigmatized bodies have become the target of violent acts.

Additionally, according to Rosa, the repeated discourses have shaped a public perception of immigration laws as long-standing legal pillars that have governed the acceptance of people into the country for time immemorial. What these repeated and centripetal discourses have obscured is that immigration law is a fluid construct that has reflected the nature of the power structures that produced them. These laws have also been the measure of the political will at the time. For example, the arduous, expensive and lengthy process many immigrant poor are subjected to has not always been in place.

From time to time the arrival gates in this nation are flung wide open granting an easy path to citizenship to wealthy investors or highly qualified professionals in selected fields. Rose is warning the press and the public that the language of illegal immigration is an actual practice that has produced a class of *undesirables and criminals* who have become the target of hate crimes. This national tragedy calls for a different sort of language that could lead to immigration practices that are welcoming, inclusive and just.

FT in the Classroom

This particular denunciation of the discourse of illegal immigration as a script can be presented to the Multicultural education classroom. Armed with the theoretical constructs I listed they are prepared to answer questions such as: How is power deployed through the discourse of illegality? What are the forces pushing for foreclosure of meaning? How do we become vehicles of the power of this particular discourse? What are the centripetal and centrifugal forces of discourse at play. How is power used to designate identity as an oppressive force? Conversely, once students understand how power operates through discourse how might they be able to manipulate power as a script so that other performances can be propped up?

As I have explained through my analysis I understood that FT was not a process through which social or political change could be brought about. However, FT also fell short of my expectations as a pedagogical tool in part due to a lack of structure or guidance on the part of its facilitators. However, I propose that the form can be salvaged as a pedagogical process through intentionally structured exercises, generative discourses that are relevant to the lives of students and strong theoretical guidelines to help students take apart the scripts given. A thoughtful and well-prepared FT facilitator can put together a self-reflexive exercise in the service of an empathic pedagogy. The ultimate goal of such exercise is to bring students to an affective/cognitive transformation where students change what they can: the way discourses are deployed and redeployed once we understand the power they carry.

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